

Illustration by Ranjit Barman

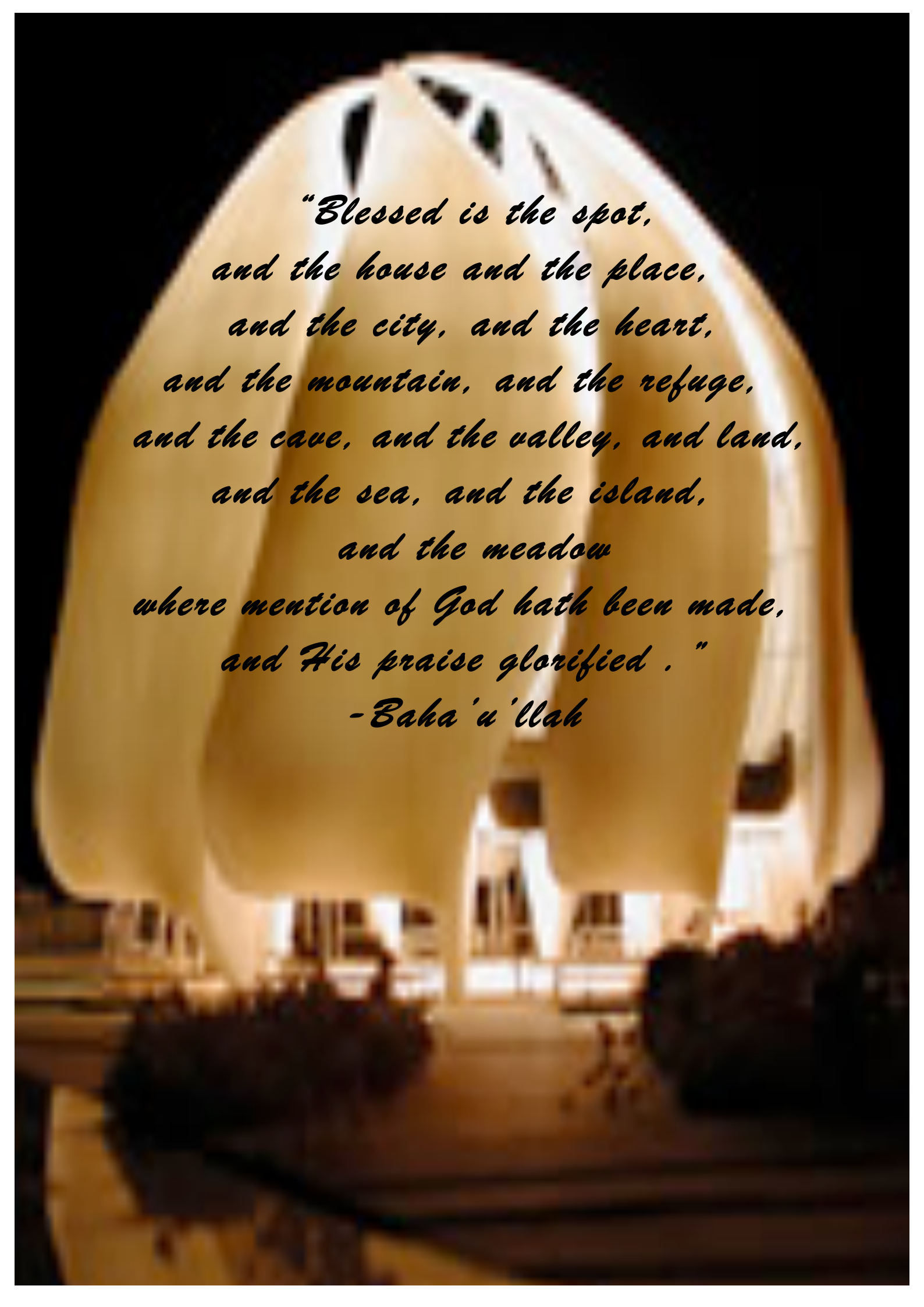
Hiru no

Hoshi

No. 261

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*"Blessed is the spot,
and the house and the place,
and the city, and the heart,
and the mountain, and the refuge,
and the cave, and the valley, and land,
and the sea, and the island,
and the meadow
where mention of God hath been made,
and His praise glorified . "*

-Baha'u'llah

It was a warm, spring day and the five little children in Okinawa were with Mother and Father visiting the Shuri Castle in Naha. They were just leaving, as Father pointed out, and explained to the family about the Shuri Castle's Sacred Stone Gate.



Shuri Castle's Sacred Stone Gate (Utaki)

“What does ‘skakred’ mean Mommy?” asked little Anisa.

The other children laughed, and Asma explained, “Sacred, Anisa, it means Holy!”

“Full of holes??” exclaimed Anisa, as the others children laughed even harder.

Anisa started to cry, and Mother comforted her and frowned at the children for teasing her.

“Anisa, ‘sacred’ and ‘holy’ mean close to God, spiritual...what you can’t see, but feel...like love! So sacred places are places of worship, where people pray and feel close to God and the unseen spiritual world. These places are centers of meditation and love, and it helps the people to grow closer together as a community. ”

“Like when people go to graves to pray for people that died; they can’t see them, but they feel close to them when they pray, right Mom.” said Shahla.

“That’s right,” agreed Mother. “Where are some other places of worship?”

“Worship means prayer, right Mom?” asked Riaz.



Buddhist Temple in Hawaii

“Praying and Praising, being thankful to God.” explained Mother.

“OK!, Got it! So,...Temples where the Buddhist go to pray!” suggested Asma.

“Oh, and Shinto Shrines! People go there on Festival Days and throw money and ask for things...they

look like they are praying, so they must be talking to God!” said Riaz.

“Oh, and of course Churches! Christians go there on Sundays to pray and worship.” added Mona.



Shinto Shrine



Christian Church

“There are all kinds of Churches, Catholic, Lutheran, Mormon, and they all look so different!” said Asma.

“Yes, but they all worship the same God!” reassured Mother, “Even if some of them don’t think so.”

“Yeah, the same God that they pray to in the Mosques, the place of worship of the Muslims! They pray there five times every day!” said Mona who had just finished studying Islam in Social Studies Class.



Mosque

“How about the Jewish people, where do they worship God?” asked Mother.

“I know, I know!” said Riaz, “The synagogue!”

“Very Good, Riaz!” exclaimed Mother.

“You don’t have to be so surprised...I listen in Children’s Class.....sometimes...” defended Riaz.

By now the family had arrived at the parking lot where everyone piled into the van and got ready to head for home.

“Ok, let’s see, what other Sacred Places are there? Hmmm, how about the Hindu people?” asked Mother from the front seat.

The children just looked at each other. Mother looked at Father, and he said,

“They have Temples too, like the Buddhist.”

“So,” continued Mother, all religions have a house or place of worship, a center where everyone’s prayer are focused...You know like when you use a magnifying glass and focus light in one spot, it can start a fire! When you focus prayer in one spot, it can set the world ablaze! It can change the world”

“Wow!” the children were quite impressed with that.

“From ancient times, in every culture all around the world, each group of people had sacred places, places of worship to focus their spiritual energy. Can you guys think of anything like that?”

“We studied about Stone Henge in England, it is a very ancient place of worship.” explained Mona.



Jewish Synagogue



Hindu Shrine



Stone Henge



Mount Haleakala,
(Sacred Volcanic
Crater in Maui,
Hawaii)

“The Australian Aborigines have Sacred Mountains where they worship.” put in Riaz. An Australian friend had recently given him a boomerang and had told him about the Aborigine culture.



Temple of Amun in Egypt

“Oh, the Native Americans, Indians!! They have sacred places all over the U.S.! You see it on Cowboy movies!!” added

Shahla.

“And Pocahontas!!!” shouted Anisa, “she had a Holy Tree that was like a grandmother!” All the children laughed.

“Anisa! That was a Disney Cartoon! Not real!” teased Riaz.

“But that is the right idea, Anisa!” comforted Mother.

“Now,” said Mother, “what do you children know about the Houses of Worship that Baha’is build?”

“They have nine sides and a dome roof!” said Riaz.

“They are the Bahai’s gift to the people of the world!” Shahla said proudly.

“They are places of Worship where anyone of any religion can come and pray.” said Mona.

“Well, it looks like everyone is listening in Children’s Classes.” laughed Mother. “Yes, you are all correct...the nine sides all around the

House of Worship symbolizes that anyone of any religion can worship there, entering through their own path, and I guess the dome symbolizes that the same one God covers them all.”

“They are the Masriq-u-l-adkar!” said Asma proudly.

“What does that mean?” asked Anisa.

“Masriq-u-l-adkar is Arabic, and it means ‘Dawning Place of the Mention of God!’” answered Asma.

“That means it is where people come together to praise God. Like when the sun rises at dawn, it goes from dark night to the beginning of day.” explained Mother. “The Houses of Worship are centers where people gather to focus their spiritual energy. When say, a hundred people



House of Worship
Uganda



Ship Rock (Sacred
Mountain to the
Navaho)

each say a prayer alone in their home, it is a hundred prayers...But when those one hundred people gather and hear ten people say or chant prayers, that is ten times one hundred prayers! One thousand prayers rising up! It is focusing the power!"

"People don't do sermons and stuff inside the House of Worship do they Mom...just the prayers and Holy Writings right?" said Asma.

"That's right," agreed Mother. "No man made words, only the words of the Manifestations of God, like Christ, Buddha, Muhammad, and Baha'u'llah." explained Mother.

"There is suppose to be schools and orphanages and old people's homes around the Houses of Worship, right Mom?" said Mona.

"Yes, that's right Mona," agreed Mother, "the function of the Houses of Worship is to combine worship with all aspects of life....educational, social and material."

"Wow, you all seem to know so much about the Houses of Worship." said Mother proudly. "Do any of you know which House of Worship was

the first built?"asked Mother?

"Hmmm, the one in America?" answered Mona hesitantly.

"No! I remember! There was one in Russia at the beginning of the 1900s, that got

destroyed by a typhoon or something, after it was taken over by the government there!" said Asma, excitedly.

"Yes, that was the House of Worship in Ishqabad, it is very special because it was the first one, and the first House of Worship in the western hemisphere is the one near Chicago in the United States, that was started in 1912, but wasn't finished until 1958. You know, those two countries did not get along very well, for a long time, they almost had a war...I think that the two Houses of Worship, with their focus of spiritual energy, have helped bring unity between those two countries, little by little." said Mother.

"Now, there are Houses of Worship on each continent, but in the future there will be one in every country, and some day, every city and town." said Mona.



First House of Worship
Ishqabad, Turkmenistan



Baha'i House of Worship
(Wilmette, Illinois)

“You know, I lived in Papua New Guinea before I came to Japan and met Daddy, I want to see that House of Worship, when it is built.” said Mother “Yeah, I want to see the one in Germany, I wish I could pray there all by myself! said Asma.



House of Worship
Frankfurt, Germany

“I want to see the one in India! The Lotus Temple!” put in Shahla.



House of Worship,
New Delhi



House of Worship,
Sydney, Australia

“I want to see the Sydney, Australian one, and see some kangaroos, too!” said Riaz.

“God willing, you all will!” answered Mother.

“I want to see the one in Okinawa!” said Anisa, and everyone laughed.

“There isn’t one in

Okinawa, silly.” said Shahla.

“Well, there will be, one day, and I want to see it!” insisted Anisa.

“God willing!” smiled Mother.

“Look!” shouted Riaz, just then. “There is a park we haven’t been to yet!

“Oh that would be a nice place for a House of Worship!” said Anisa!

“Stop the car and let us play...Please Daddy!”

“PLEASE DAD!” shouted Riaz.

“PLEASE DADDY!” shouted all the kids at once.

Father looked at Mother, and Mother nodded, smiling. Father turned the car around and pulled

up to a parking place, and all the children ran to play in the playground.



House of Worship
Panama



House of Worship,
Samoa



House of Worship,
Chili



The
lights of the All-
Glorious Realm, the rays of the
Supreme Horizon, will be cast upon such bright
assemblages, for these are none other than the
Mashriqu'l-Adhkars, the Dawning-Points of
God's Remembrance, which must, at the direc-
tion of the Most Exalted Pen, be established in
every hamlet and city...These spiritual gatherings
must be held with the utmost purity and conse-
cration, so that from the site itself, and its earth
and the air about it, one will inhale the fragrant
breathings of the Holy Spirit. 'Abdu'l-Bahá

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Illustration by Cary Enoch Reinstein

Quiz

1. Where were the family visiting?

2. Where do Buddhists go to Worship?

3. What is the Jewish House of Worship called?

4. How many times a day do Muslims pray?

5. What is the House of Worship of Islam called?

6. Where do Christians worship?

7. Where are the places of worship to Native Americans and other indigenous people?

8. How many sides are there to a Baha'i House of Worship?

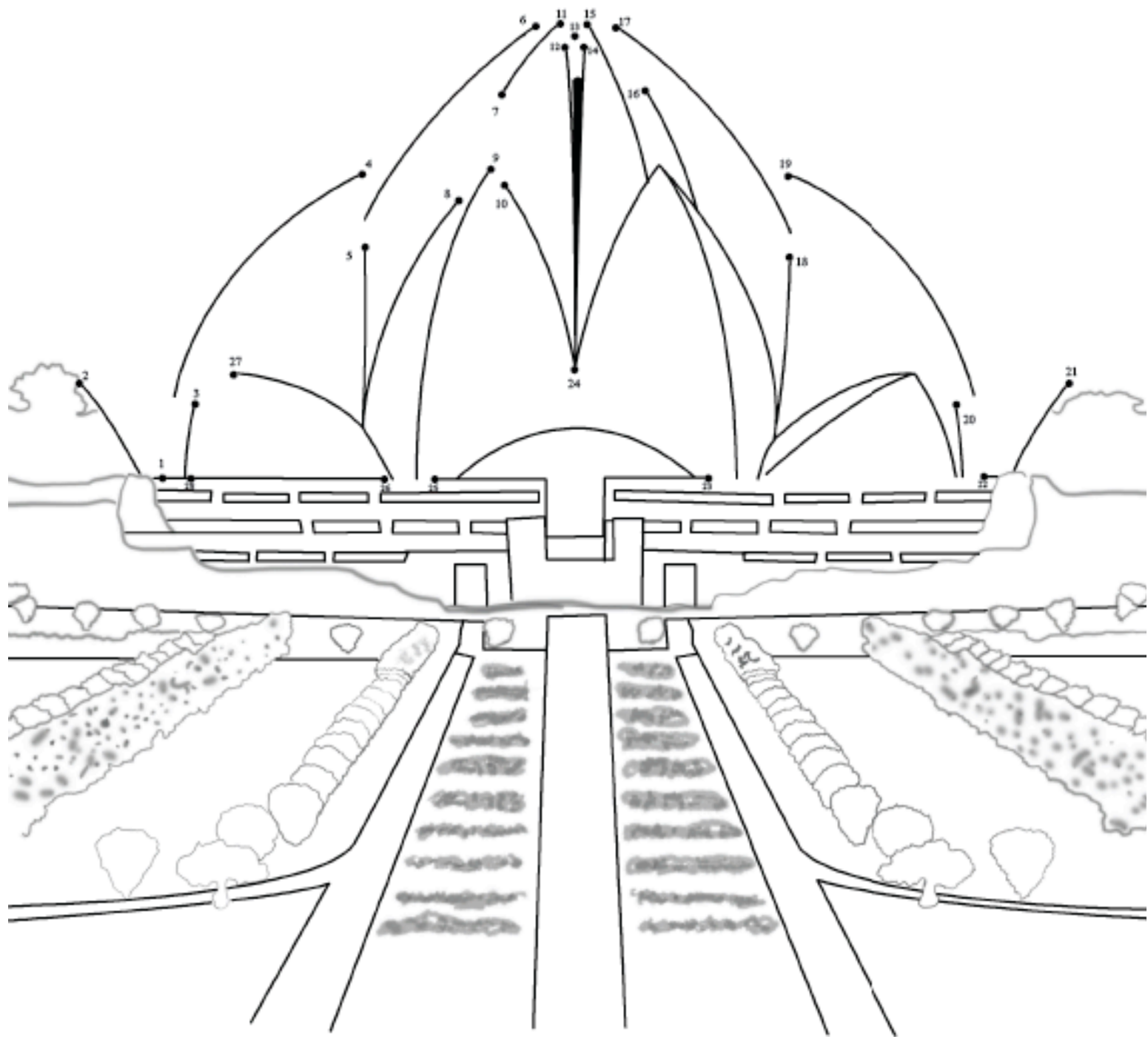
9. What kind of roof does a Baha'i House of Worship have?

10. In all these different places of worship do the people pray to the same God even if by different names? _____

How did you do? Did you get them all right? The answers are on the Parents' Page.



Dot to Dot



Creating a House of Worship

This issue we are going to try something a little different with the Art Page. We are giving you an idea...suggesting materials, and will wait for photos to see what you and the children came up with.



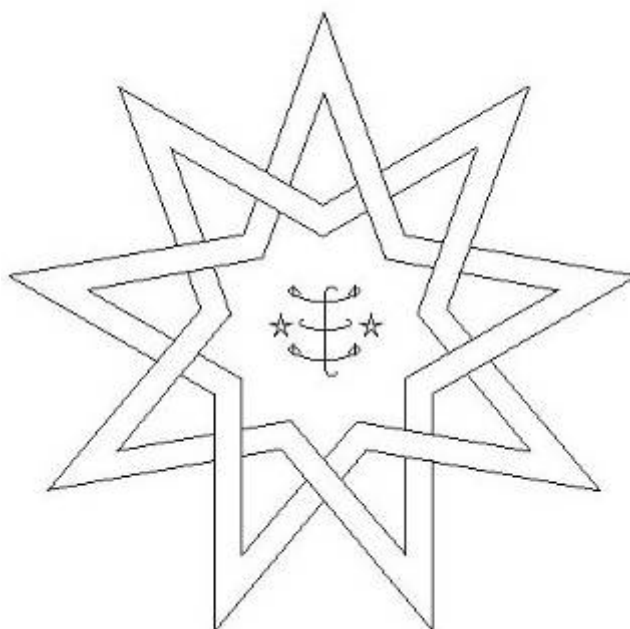
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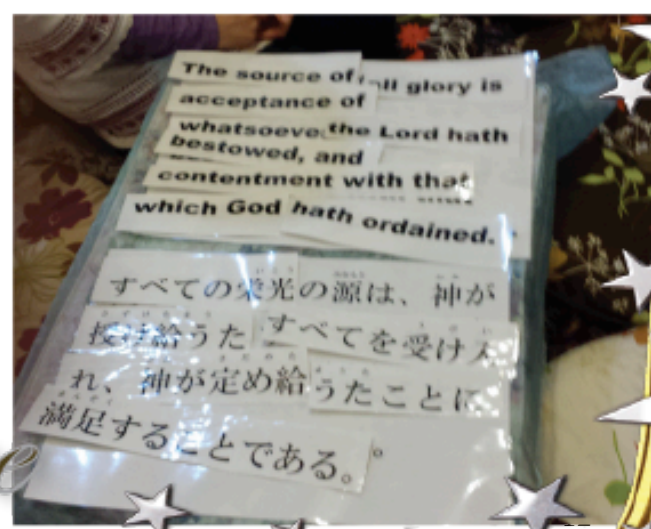
Picture of a 9 pointed star
9 pointed star cookie cutter
Paper cups
Clay
Aluminum foil
Styrofoam bowls
Paints
Crayons
Scissors
Tape
Pipe cleaners
Tooth picks
Construction paper
(anything else you can think of)



Method

- *Use a 9 pointed star to make 9 marks around a paper cup or bowl, or on the clay. Build a 9 sided, House of Worship, that you would like to see in your town.
- *Use any material you want.
- *Put the House of Worship on a piece of Construction paper, and create beautiful gardens around the House of Worship.
- *Take a picture of your House of Worship and send it to us for our next issue.





Photopage

Parents Page

“Hasten now to ‘Ishqabad, in the utmost detachment and aflame with the fire of attraction, and convey to the friends of God ardent greetings from ‘Abdu’l-Baha. Kiss thou each one’s face and express this servant’s deep and sincere affection to all. Do thou on behalf of ‘Abdu’l-Baha move the earth, carry the mortar, and haul the stones for the building of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkar so that the rapture of this service may bring joy and gladness to the Centre of Servitude. That Mashriqu’l-Adhkar 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...in a short time, this Edifice may be revealed to all eyes, the loved ones of God may engage in making mention of the Abha Beauty, the melodies of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkar may rise at dawntide to the Concours 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.”

‘Abdu’l-Baha



Answers to the Quiz

1)Shuri Castle. 2)Temple. 3)Synagogue. 4)Five times. 5)Mosque. 6)Church. 7)Holy Mountains or other sacred places. 8)Nine. 9)Dome Roof. 10 Yes!



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