

## THE CENTER OF NINE CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

For, just as in the realm of the spirit, the reality of the Báb has been hailed by the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation as "The Point round Whom the realities of the Prophets and Messengers revolve," so, on this visible plane, His sacred remains constitute the heart and center of what may be regarded as nine concentric circles, paralleling thereby, and adding further emphasis to the central position accorded by the Founder of our Faith to One "from Whom God hath caused to proceed the knowledge of all that was and shall be," "the Primal Point from which have been generated all created things."

The outermost circle in this vast system, the visible counterpart of the pivotal position conferred on the Herald of our Faith, is none other than the entire planet. Within the heart of this planet lies the "Most Holy Land," acclaimed by `Abdu'l-Bahá as "the Nest of the Prophets" and which must be regarded as the center of the world and the Qiblih of the nations. Within this Most Holy Land rises the Mountain of God of immemorial sanctity, the Vineyard of the Lord, the Retreat of Elijah, Whose return the Báb Himself symbolizes. Reposing on the breast of this holy mountain are the extensive properties permanently dedicated to, and constituting the sacred precincts of, the Báb's holy Sepulcher. In the midst of these properties, recognized as the international endowments of the Faith, is situated the most holy court, an enclosure comprising gardens and terraces which at once embellish, and lend a peculiar charm to, these sacred precincts. Embosomed in these lovely and verdant surroundings stands in all its exquisite beauty the mausoleum of the Báb, the shell designed to preserve and adorn the original structure raised by `Abdu'l-Bahá as the tomb of the Martyr-Herald of our Faith. Within this shell is enshrined that Pearl of Great Price, the holy of holies, those chambers which constitute the tomb itself, and which were constructed by `Abdu'l-Bahá. Within the heart of this holy of holies is the tabernacle, the vault wherein reposes the most holy casket. Within this vault rests the alabaster sarcophagus in which is deposited that inestimable jewel, the Báb's holy dust. So precious is this dust that the very earth surrounding the edifice enshrining this dust has been extolled by the Center of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, in one of His Tablets in which He named the five doors belonging to the six chambers which He originally erected after five of the believers associated with the construction of the Shrine, as being endowed with such potency as to have inspired Him in bestowing these names, whilst the tomb itself housing this dust He acclaimed as the spot round which the Concourse on high circle in adoration.

To participate in the erection of the superstructure of an edifice at once so precious, so holy; consecrated to the memory of so heroic a Soul; whose site no one less than the Founder of our Faith has selected; whose inner chambers were erected by the Center of His Covenant with such infinite care and anguish; embosomed in so sacred a mountain, on the soil of so holy a land; occupying such a unique position; facing on the one hand the silver-white city of Akká, the Qiblih of the Bahá'í world; flanked on its right by the hills of Galilee, the home of Jesus Christ, and on its left, by the Cave of Elijah; and backed by the plain of Sharon and, beyond it, Jerusalem and the Aqṣá mosque, the third holiest shrine in Islám--to participate in the erection of such an edifice is a privilege offered to this generation at once unique and priceless, a privilege which only posterity will be able to correctly appraise.

(Citadel of Faith, pages 95-96)