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HAIFA

HAIFA, a port city in northwestern Israel and the site of a number of significant Bahai holy places, administrative buildings, and historical monuments. Bahais consider it their most sacred location after the shrine of Mirzā Ḥosayn-ʿAli Nuri Bahāʾ-Allāh(d. 1892; q.v.), the prophet of the Bahai faith (q.v.), situated across the bay in nearby ʿAkkā(Acre; Shoghi Effendi, 1945, p. 92). The history of the Iranian Bahai Community on Mount Carmel may be traced back to 1868, when the Ottoman Sultan ʿAbd-al-ʿAziz (r. 1861-76) ordered the exile and imprisonment of Bahāʾ-Allāh, his immediate family, and a number of his followers to ʿAkkā, which was then a desolate provincial port in Ottoman Palestine (Shoghi Effendi, 1944, p. 185). On a visit to Mount Carmel in 1891, Bahāʾ-Allāh identified a site on the mountain as the permanent resting place for the remains of Sayyed ʿAli-Moḥammad Širāzi, the Bāb (d. 1850, q.v.), the precursor of Bāhāʾ-Allāh according to the Bahais, entrusting the execution of the plan to his son ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ (q.v.; Balyuzi, 1980, p. 374; Shoghi Effendi, 1944, p. 194). The foundation of the shrine of the Bāb was laid at the end of the 19th century, and now forms the heart of the Bahai architectural complex, whose structures can be seen in three main categories: the shrine with its surrounding garden and monuments, the Bahai World Administrative Center, and the future House of Worship (*Mašreq al-aḏkār*) and ancillary sites. All the developments were funded exclusively through the voluntary contributions of individual Bahais worldwide. The Bahai writings attribute spiritual and religious significance to both the buildings and the locale, seeing it as the representation of Judeo-Christian and Islamic prophecies (see Isaiah 2:2, 35:2; Amos 1:2; Matthew 6:10; Qurʾān 69:17). Bahai ideas and symbolic numbers

influence the architecture of the shrine, monuments, and the site to a certain extent.

The shrine of the Bāb and its surrounding garden and monuments. In 1898, ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ made arrangements for the remains of the Bāb to be removed from their place of concealment in Tehran and brought to ʿAkkā, where they arrived on 31 January 1899 (Shoghi Effendi, 1944, p. 274). The first section of the Bāb's mausoleum, comprising six rooms, was completed in 1907. On the day of Nowruz in1909, ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾplaced the remains of theBāb in a marble sarcophagus donated by the Bahais of Burma and had it interred in a vault in the shrine's south central room (Ruhe, p. 138; Balyuzi, 1971, p. 126). ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ (d. 28 November 1921) was buried in the north central room, adjacent to the tomb of the Bāb. It was in 1942 that Shoghi Effendi (d. 1957), the then leader of the Bahai faith (*Wali-e amr Allāh* "Guardian of the Cause of God"), commissioned his own father-in-law, the prominent Canadian architect William Sutherland Maxwell (the architect of the Manitoba Provincial Legislature), to design a superstructure encasing the original shrine. Although Shoghi Effendi approved the plan as early as 1944, actual construction did not start until 1949 and was completed in October 1953 (Shoghi Effendi, 1969, p. 244; Giachery p. 67) at a total cost of 750,000 US dollars (Shoghi Effendi, 1965, p. 141).

The shrine's superstructure is described as the shell enshrining the pearl; the original building, erected by ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ(Shoghi Effendi, 1965, p. 79), consists of several distinct features. The colonnade, the octagon, the drum, and a gilded tile dome. The architect, inspired by Shoghi Effendi, implemented a number of features in the design. He combined diverse architectural traditions as a reference to the unity of mankind. Each of the colonnade's four sides consists of seven Venetian ogee arches, which along with the octagon's eighteen lancet windows reflect the Middle Eastern influence. The white marble brim at the spring of the dome and the bell shaped cover of the lantern are reminiscent of Indo-Islamic architecture, while the composite Corinthian columns of the colonnade and the lantern on the top of the dome suggest the Classical tradition. Shoghi Effendi's esteem for the classical domes of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and St. Paul's Cathedral in London inspired Maxwell to fuse elements of both structures in his design. Some resemblance may also be observed to the Church of Beatitudes in Galilee, which is said to have been favored by Shoghi Effendi. The column shafts are made of Rose Baveno granite, while the capitals and the rest of the building are made and clad in Chiampo marble

(Giachery, pp. 66-67, 73). On the roof level of the colonnade rests an octagon, which holds the drum of the dome along with eight minaret-like spires extending from each corner of the octagon. This is believed by the Bahais to be a symbolic reference to the Koranic verse69:17: “And eight [angels] shall bear the throne of thy Lord above them on that Day.” Each corner wall panel of the colonnade is crowned by an elaborate green oval medallion carrying at its center the symbol of the “Greatest Name” (*esm-e aʿẓam*; see BAHĀʾI FAITH). The eighteen lancet windows on the clerestory allude to the first eighteen followers of the Bāb, “Letters of the Living” (*ḥoruf-e ḥayy*). The golden dome consists of eighteen marble ribs, golden tiles, floral ornamentations, and a lantern that rests at the apex of the dome. The balustrade panels at the top of the arcade are decorated with frames of green and red glass tiles, green symbolizing the Bāb’s lineage from the prophet Moḥammad, and red his martyrdom. The dome is covered by tiles that have a gold layer burned onto the glaze, all fabricated in the Netherlands (Giachery, pp. 96-98, 103-6). Under one of the triangular marble rosettes of the dome rests some dust of the Bāb’s prison fort in Māku, Azarbaijan (PLATE I; see also BĀB).

Extensive terraces and gardens envelop the shrine of the Bāb. Work on them began in the 1920s and expanded during the 1950s. Shoghi Effendi was responsible for the construction of the nine preliminary terraces ascending from the foot of the mountain to the shrine of the Bāb. The construction of a further nine terraces above the shrine, and the extension of the gardens began in 1987. It was designed by the Persian Architect Fariborz Ṣaḥbā, the architect of the Bahai House of Worship in India. The total of nineteen terraces alluding to the Bāb and the Letters of the Living, span one kilometer from the foot to the ridge of the mountain. According to the architect, the nine terraces emanating from the shrine of the Bāb are inspired by a passage in Shoghi Effendi’s writings that describe nine concentric circles, the innermost circle representing the sarcophagus of the Bāb and the outermost circle symbolizing the planet. Moreover, the inclusion of cypress and orange blossoms and rose gardens are believed to be reminiscent of Shiraz, the birthplace of the Bāb.

Located on the upper eastern part of the shrine are gardens that, taking advantage of the slope of the mountain, are in the shape of a far-flung arc (the Arc *Qaws* Garden). At the base of this arc rests the Monument Gardens, where the immediate family of ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ (his sister Bahiya Ḵānom, d. 1932, his mother Nawwāb, d. 1886, his brother Mirzā Mahdi, d. 1870, and his wife Monira Ḵānom, d. 1938) are buried. These four monuments were constructed

between 1932 and 1942 (Rabbani, 1988, p. 117). The monument of Bahiya Ḵānom is considered by the Bahais as a symbol for the Bahai administration: the steps representing the local Spiritual Assemblies (*maḥā-felruḥāniya maḥalliya*), the columns symbolizing the National Spiritual Assemblies (*maḥāfel-e melli*), and the dome signifying the Universal House of Justice (*Bayt al-ʿadl-e aʿẓam*), which is the supreme governing body of the Bahai faith (Bahiyyih Khanum, p. 92).

The Bahai World Administrative Center. The passage "Ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee" in Bahāʾ-Allāh's Tablet of Carmel (*Lawḥ-e Kārmel*) (Bahāʾ Allāh, tr. Taherzadeh et al., p. 5) was later interpreted by Sho-ghi Effendi as an allusion to the future establishment of The Universal House of Justice on Mount Carmel. Sho-ghi Effendi designated the world administrative buildings around the Arc Garden to be the Bahai International Archives, the Seat of the Hands of the Cause of God (*Ayādi-e amr-Allāh*, q.v.), the Seat of Guardianship, and the Seat of the Universal House of Justice (Shoghi Effendi, 1958, p. 74). Afterwards, the Seat of the Guardianship became the Center for the Study of the Texts building, and the Seat of the Hands of the Cause of God became the International Teaching Center building; the Bahai International Library, the last building of the complex referred to as the Arc buildings, has not yet been built. The Bahai World Administrative Center, according to Shoghi Effendi, symbolizes the "seat of spiritual and temporal power" and will serve as "the seat of the future Bahai commonwealth" (1958, pp. 73-75).

International Bahai Archives. Construction work began in November 1954 and was completed in the summer of 1957 at the cost of 250.000 US dollars. It was designed by the architect, Mason Remey (the concept Architect of the Bahai Temples in Sydney, Australia, and Kampala, Uganda), in the Greek classical style as a replica of a Greek temple. It measures 14.98 m by 36.53 m (Ruhiyyih Rabbani, p. 265) and is "the first of the ma-jor edifices destined to constitute the seat of the World Bahai Administrative Centre" (Shoghi Effendi, 1958, p. 95). The exterior of the building is composed of a colonnade of Ionic columns in Chiampo marble, and the roof is covered by turquoise color-glazed roof tiles like all the other buildings. The structure consists of a display hall, a surrounding balcony, and a large underground extension, completed with other buildings in 2001. Within it are kept Bahai historic relics and writings, such as personal items of the Bāb, Bahāʾ-Allāh, and ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ. The choice of classical Greek style demonstrates Shoghi Effendi's admiration for classical architecture, which he considered to have a "lasting value" (Shoghi Effendi,

1969, p. 264). Given the Mediterranean location and the serene and meditative environs of the gardens, where the intricate architectural details can be appreciated, the choice of this style is well-placed. While all these buildings have a classical exterior, the use of modern building technology has allowed the interiors to be functional and flexible, so that in the course of time their function can be easily modified.

The Seat of the Universal House of Justice. The second administrative building on the Arc was designed by the Persian architect Hossein Amanat (the architect of the Šahyād monument in Tehran in the Āzādi Square) and constructed between 1975 and 1982. Measuring 68 m by 36 m, it has a total floor area of 11,000 m2 and includes a council chamber, a banquet room, a reference library, and extensive office space. Built in the neo-classical style in its exterior to harmonize with the Archives Building and the gardens, the core is composed of reinforced concrete and covered by Pentelikon marble from Greece cut and carved in Italy. Situated at the apex, it is the most prominent structure of the Arc. The Corinthian colonnade around the building with the shallow marble dome above is complemented by some elements of traditional Persian architecture in the geometry of the building and its interiors. The deep portico with six-columned porticos (*ayvan* q.v.), creating an inviting impression at the entrance, is reminiscent of Persian architecture, a theme carried through in the other buildings of the Arc Complex. Moreover, the interior domes based on an octagon in the core of the building follow the principles of Persian *rasmi-sāzi* geometry, one of the techniques of placing a round dome on square walls.

The construction work of the Center for The Study of the Texts, International Teaching Center, and Archives Extension designed by Hossein Amanat and Associates, started in 1987. In order to preserve the harmony of existing surrounding gardens (known as the Persian Gardens) and to respect the natural terrain, the first two buildings are designed as round pavilions. For the same reason, the third building, and the major parts of the other two, are built underground with day lighting provisions like light wells and skylights.

The Center for the Study of the Texts. This building with its exterior round portico (*ayvān*) 20 m wide with 7.75 m high Ionic columns, is a research institute for the scholars who aid the Universal House of Justice by consulting the Bahai writings and preparing translations and commentaries. This eight-story building with three stories above the ground, consists of rooms for resident and visiting scholars, meeting and conference rooms, a large

reference library, a secretariat, and other ancillary spaces (*Bahá'í World 1994-95*, p. 67). The circular entrance portico of this structure consists of eight Ionic white Carrara Piestrone marble columns and is reminiscent in its shape to the *ayvān* style prevalent in Persian architecture (*Bahá'í World 1996-97*, p. 115). The rest of the building is designed in the mountainside with its exterior sur-faces in local beige colored stone that blends gradually into the landscape. Light wells, patios, and skylights are other features borrowed from Persian architecture, providing natural light to nearly all the offices of the building. The entire section of the roof, except for the turquoise-color tiled dome, is a series of landscaped terraces and flowerbeds blending into the gardens on the slope of the mountain. The archives extension, providing easy underground access to the International Archives building, stores a conservation vault for manuscripts and relics with several work areas, conservation laboratories, and offices.

The International Teaching Center. Also known as the Center for the International Counselors (appointed members responsible for the protection and propagation of the Bahai faith), it was inaugurated in January 2001. Eight columns of the Ionic order 8.1 m high, creating the semi circular entrance *ayvān* stand at the front and twelve Tuscan columns at the rear. The International Teaching Center is a nine-story building with three and a half levels above the ground. In order not to overshadow the existing gardens, only a portion of the building is exposed by using the slope of the mountain to hide most of the spaces while having natural light where required. The building consists of executive offices, meeting and conference rooms, a secretariat, and a reference library. A 400-seat auditorium, staff dining and cafeteria, underground parking, and other ancillary office spaces are provided in the lower floors operating independently from the upper part.

The Mašreq al-aḏkārand other ancillary sites. An obelisk marks the site near which Bahāʾ-Allāh is believed to have revealed the *Tablet of Carmel* (Taherzadeh, IV, p. xiv), and also where the future *Mašreq al-aḏkār* will be standing (the Bahai house of worship). The travertine marble obelisk measures 10.85 m high and bears the symbol of the “greatest name.”

Other ancillary buildings include the House of ʿAbd-al-Bahāʾ, and the former eastern and western pilgrim houses. There is also a Bahai cemetery in the vicinity of the lower cave of Elijah.

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