



ḤOSAYNIYA

ḤOSAYNIYA, buildings specifically designed to serve as venues for Moḥarram ceremonies commemorating the martyrdom of Ḥosayn b. ‘Ali (q.v.), and to accommodate visiting participants (Dehḵodā, *Loḡat-nāma*, s.v.). This name has also been used for certain branches of early Shi‘ism and as a place name. Ḥosayniyas had been built in the major cities of Baghdad, Aleppo, and Cairo by the end of the third/tenth century, originally in the form of annexes to mosques (Ayoub, p. 154). They served as the starting-point for local ‘Āšurā (q.v.) processions. There is no evidence of the building of *ḥosayniyas* in Persia before the Safavid period, during which their history remains poorly documented. ‘Āšurā processions could start and end in any religious building or next to shrines, and therefore did not require a building specifically designed for this purpose. However, it is reported that from the early 17th century the Portuguese Augustinians were based near the Masjed-e Jāme‘ in Isfahan, in a district called “the Ḥosayniya quarter,” which suggests the presence there already of a *ḥosayniya* of some kind by this time (see Richard, I, p. 26).

In the 1780s, the development of dramatized Moḥarram rituals led to an increase in the building of venues for them (usually called *takias*), particularly in Caspian areas of Persia (see Peterson, pp. 65 ff., 72). The functions of *takias* and *ḥosayniyas* thus began to overlap (Homā-yuni, p. 287). The Maydān-e bozorg at Zavāra near Arde-stān (q.v.), “built” under Āḡā Moḥammad Khan or during the early years of Fath-‘Ali Shah’s reign, is considered to be the first *ḥosayniya* of the Qajar period. This *ḥo-sayniya* had both covered and open



areas in order to enable the performance of Moḥarram ceremonies in all seasons (Homāyuni, pp. 72 ff., 120; see the photograph of the covered arena of the Ḥosayniya-e kučak at Zavāra, in Peterson, p. 72). Although the building of *ḥosaynias* now increased rapidly all across Persia, only those with intrinsic architectural or artistic importance, such as the Ḥosayniya-ye Mošīr (q.v.) in Shiraz and the Ḥosayniya-ye Amini in Qazvin (Fontana, p. 44, n. 67), have received a significant amount of attention.

Ḥosaynias are generally built according to a similar design as that of a *kārvānsarā*. Their basic requirement is a large amount of space, open or covered, in which to perform the Moḥarram ceremonies, and lodgings for visiting participants. Thus the lodgings are built around a courtyard (*maydān*), which contains the stage, in the form of a square or circular platform (*saku*). Expenses for the maintenance and running of the *ḥosayniya*, such as for the invitation and housing of visiting participants and feeding the poor, have normally been met by charitable contributions and endowments (*waqf*).

During the constitutional revolution of 1905-11, Moḥar-ram gatherings began to take on a political character, a tendency which was later revived by opponents to the rule of Moḥammad-Rezā Shah Pahlavi. In 1965, an institute called the Ḥosayniya-ye Eršād was established in Tehran, where lectures were held between 1967 and 1973, most famously by ‘Ali Šari‘ati (1933-77; see Momen, p. 258), who is considered to have been a major influence behind the Islamic Revolution.

In India, the most common equivalent term for a *ḥosayniya*, and for a *takia* as well, is *imambara* (*emāmbāra*, also sometimes called ‘*āšur-kāna* and ‘*azā-kāna*). The Ḥosayniya (or Ḥosayni) Dālān built at Dacca in 1052/1642 is considered to be the oldest *imambara* in the Indian subcontinent (Hassan ul-Ameene, IV, p. 198 ff.).

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