



*"O Carmel. . . . Rejoice, for God hath in this Day
established upon thee His throne"*

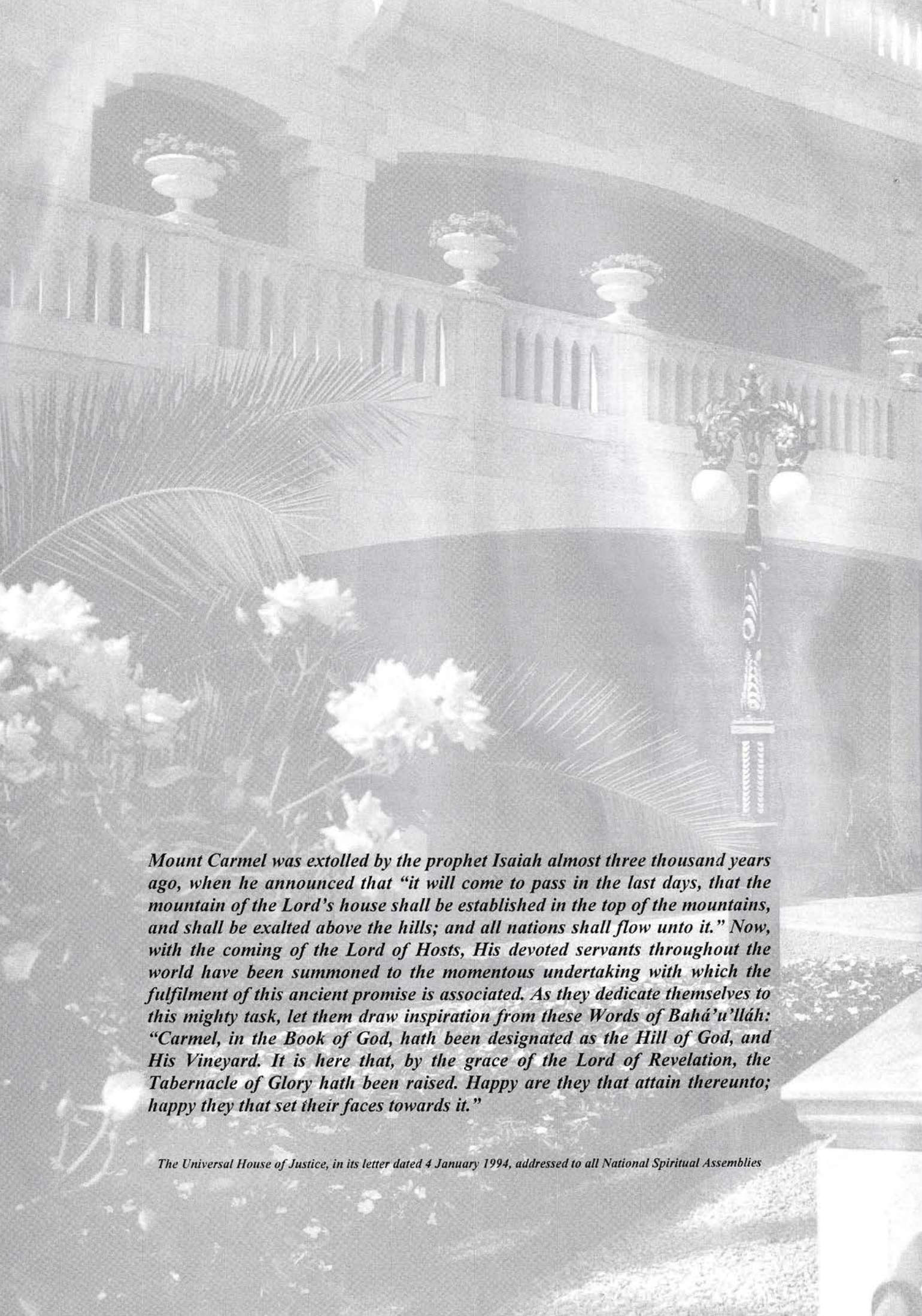
Vineyard of the Lord

MOUNT CARMEL BAHÁ'Í PROJECTS UPDATE

Number 38

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Mount Carmel was extolled by the prophet Isaiah almost three thousand years ago, when he announced that "it will come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." Now, with the coming of the Lord of Hosts, His devoted servants throughout the world have been summoned to the momentous undertaking with which the fulfilment of this ancient promise is associated. As they dedicate themselves to this mighty task, let them draw inspiration from these Words of Bahá'u'lláh: "Carmel, in the Book of God, hath been designated as the Hill of God, and His Vineyard. It is here that, by the grace of the Lord of Revelation, the Tabernacle of Glory hath been raised. Happy are they that attain thereunto; happy they that set their faces towards it."

The Universal House of Justice, in its letter dated 4 January 1994, addressed to all National Spiritual Assemblies

PROGRESS REPORT

Ongoing landscape work around the International Teaching Centre continues to enhance its environs

The Teaching Centre/Common Area Building comprises more than 19,000 square metres. For ease of access to such a large area, the landscape around the complex has been designed to have several pathways, to serve various purposes. For instance, pedestrian access to the main entrance of the Teaching Centre is available through the arc path just above the Monument Gardens, and the extended upper arc path, which connects all the buildings on the Arc. Pedestrians will also be able to enter the complex through the main entrance to the Seat of the Universal House of Justice. Vehicular access will be available through Golomb Street, adjacent to the main gate to the Seat.

As part of extensive landscape work being undertaken around the Teaching Centre, several garden paths have been constructed, outlined with curbstones, and covered with crushed gravel. Planting along these paths is under way. In the patios which cover levels 1 to 4, tuff (porous volcanic gravel) and planting mix (combining peat, fine tuff, compost and fertiliser) have been laid out, ready for topsoil cover.

Interior finishing work continues apace

While the external landscape is being rapidly transformed, the internal spaces of the Teaching Centre are coming alive with the warm tones of maple, mahogany and cherry wood.

Befitting the dignity of the Council Chamber in the International Teaching Centre, and in keeping with the woodwork finishes of the doors, the central conference table and other millwork in mahogany, and windows in teak—all hard wood—the floor is covered with Brazilian cherry with its beautiful red brown colour.

Inside the Auditorium, maple wood has been used on the stage floor to harmonise with the maple panels on the walls and the balcony railings. Installation of audiovisual equipment and stage lighting has also been completed. Seating for the Auditorium is expected to arrive shortly, and as soon as it is installed, the carpet will be laid. When this is completed the final balancing of the acoustic system will be carried out.

In the Library at the uppermost level of the Teaching Centre, the large arched windows facing each other have been framed in mahogany, to match the bookshelves, filing cabinets and furniture. Installation of this millwork is nearing completion.

Office furniture for the entire complex is now on site, and installation is in progress in the areas where the carpet has been laid. On levels 1 to 6 the floor has carpet tiles, while the levels above have broadloom carpet. With the exception of level 9 and the Auditorium, the rest of the areas have been carpeted.

Plans under way to refurbish the Seat of the Universal House of Justice

Several offices have been relocated from the Seat of the Universal House of Justice to the Centre for the Study of the Texts and the Archives Extension, and a few others will be relocated in the Common Area of the Teaching Centre complex, necessitating the reorganization of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice. As part of this process, new furniture and carpet have been ordered for the areas of the Seat affected.

The mechanical room under the parking bay of the Seat has been redesigned and enlarged to accommodate facilities to support the mechanical system of the Centre for the Study of the Texts and the International Teaching Centre, including air conditioning and electrical equipment.

Photos on page four:

Above right: Inside the Auditorium, located in the International Teaching Centre.

Below right: Handrails being installed along the steps descending into one of the lightwells in the International Teaching Centre.

Far right, above: The entrance façade of the International Teaching Centre, seen from the Monument Gardens.

Far right, centre: A view of the International Teaching Centre from the rear of the building.

Far right, below: Preparing the access road leading to the parking areas in the building of the International Teaching Centre, adjacent to the main entrance gate to the Seat of the Universal House of Justice.

Photos on page five:

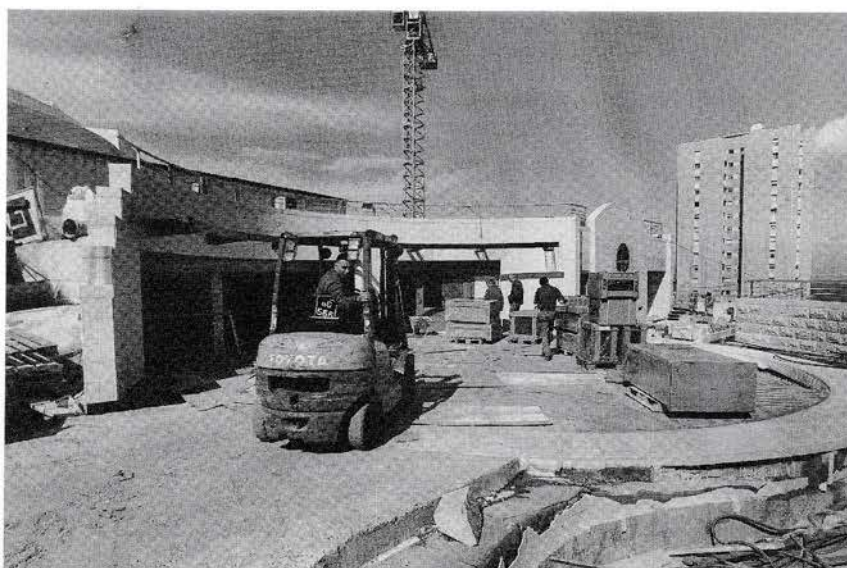
Above right: Work in progress on Terrace 12, above the Shrine of the Báb.

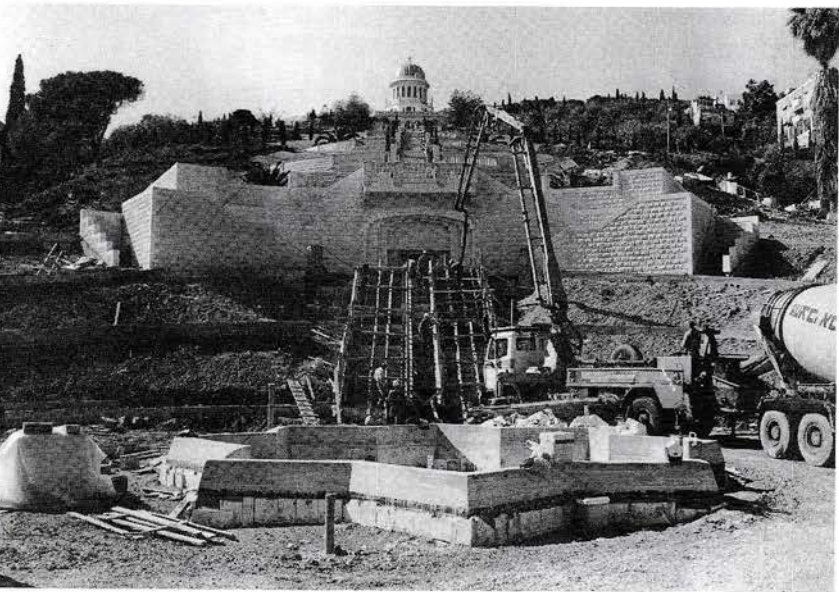
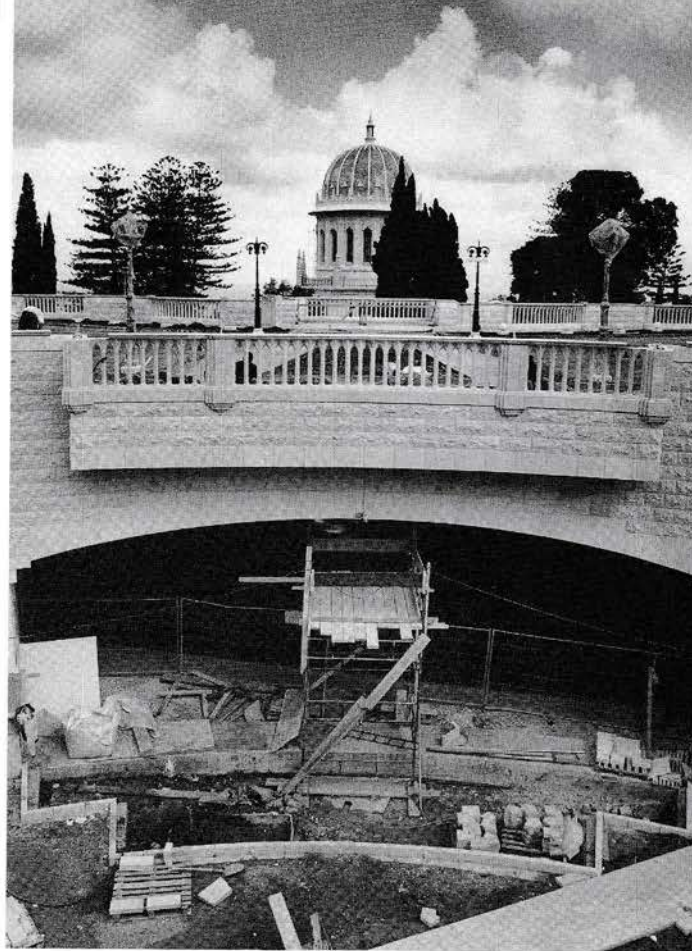
Centre right: Concrete pour under way on the structure of the central water cascade and the stairs flanking it in the Entrance Plaza.

Below right: Extensive stone paving on the floor and walls enhance the courtyard leading to the Visitors Centre in the Building under Terrace 11.

Far right, above: The bridge on Hatzionut Avenue, which connects the Terrace of the Shrine of the Báb with the Upper Terraces.

Far right, below: One of the water features on the Terraces of the Shrine of the Báb.





Haifa - Bride of Carmel

The rapid progress towards the completion of the buildings of the Arc and the Terraces of the Shrine of the Báb is not only enhancing the World Spiritual and Administrative Centre of the Bahá'í Faith on God's Holy Mountain, but also making a significant contribution towards beautifying the city of Haifa, eliciting warm accolades.

Some time ago, the Director of Foreign Affairs in the Municipality of Haifa sent a letter in response to New Year greetings he received from the Bahá'í World Centre. In it he shared information about a reception arranged by the authorities in Haifa in honour of the Ambassador of the Vatican, His Excellency Archbishop Pietro Sambi. "As part of the introduction speech", he wrote, "the Deputy Director-General for Arabic Affairs of the city said that the nickname of Haifa in Arabic literature is *The Bride of Carmel*. I am convinced that the Bahá'í World Centre is the shining jewel of that *Bride* for all to admire and enjoy."

Terraces above the Shrine of the Báb

On Terraces 11 and 12, stone work has been completed, which includes installation of balustrades, coping, paving and stairs. Inner and outer landscaping has also been done. Preparations are under way to install an automated gate to the Bahá'í property from Crusader Road. This gate will provide vehicular access to the parking area in the Centre for the Study of the Texts and the Archives Extension building, as well as to Terraces 13, 14, 15 and 16. An area has been prepared to the west of Terraces 17 and 18 as a viewing point, which provides a spectacular vista of the Shrine, the Arc Buildings and the Upper Terraces. The area, approximately 6 metres by 10 metres, has been paved with local stone. It will be bounded by durable hedges.

New pilgrim facility on Hatzionut Avenue

In its Ridván Message of 156 BE, the Universal House of Justice

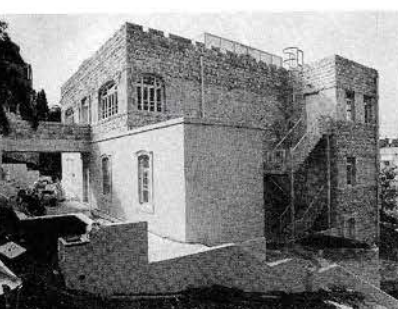
conveyed its decision to implement an expanded pilgrimage programme with groups of 150 pilgrims. It wrote:

"We feel compelled to mention at least two other developments at the World Centre... First, the decision to raise the number of pilgrims in each group to 150 from 100—this to take effect when the revamping, now in progress, of the newly acquired building, situated across the way from the resting place of the Greatest Holy Leaf, has been completed and use can be made of its provision of a pilgrim hall and other facilities for the administration of an expanded pilgrimage programme..."

The remodeling and restoration of this property, in the close vicinity of the Shrine of the Báb, has recently been completed by the Mount Carmel Projects Office. The property comprises two beautiful structures, which had served as medical laboratories until a few years ago. The larger of the two, built during the time of the British Mandate, had served as a hospital in Haifa. The second structure, smaller in size, has a distinct Middle Eastern flavour to its architecture with its beautifully patterned ceramic floors and stone arches.

Work on remodeling these structures, to increase their capacities, commenced in July of 1998. While the original features of these buildings were restored and their external beauty enhanced, the structures were, nevertheless, totally revised and their interiors fully remodeled to create large formal spaces. A hall, with a seating capacity of 350, was created in the main level of one of the buildings, with lounge, kitchen and dining facilities to match the number. A pedestrian bridge was built to connect the two structures into a composite complex.

All interior and exterior finishing work has been completed. Furniture has been ordered and is expected to arrive shortly. Landscaping around the complex is under way. □



NEWS HIGHLIGHTS . . .

An historical connection with the city of Haifa unearthed during a visit to India

In the last week of February 2000 Mr. Fariburz Sahba visited New Delhi, India, to review the construction progress of the new Information Centre at the Bahá'í House of Worship. Preparatory to his visit, the ground was prepared for his meeting with the Minister of State for Urban Development to address a long standing concern of the Bahá'ís, namely, the beautification of the approach road to the lotus-shaped Bahá'í Temple. With one thing leading to another, Mr. Sahba met not only the Minister of Urban Development, but also the Lt. Governor of Delhi, and the Union Minister for External Affairs.

What caught the attention of the Lt. Governor and the Minister of Urban Development was Mr. Sahba's suggestion of developing the more than 250 acres of green zone land surrounding the Bahá'í House of Worship, with three other important temples in the vicinity, into a "Spiritual Garden"; a garden with an appropriate ambience where people could come to meditate, be imbued with spiritual serenity, or just visit to enjoy a beautiful environment and make their tryst with nature. This suggestion created a lot of interest and enthusiasm, and, after Mr. Sahba's departure, several newspaper reports appeared about the proposed garden and the involvement of the architect of the Bahá'í Temple.

The meetings also provided Mr. Sahba the opportunity to share information about the Terraces of the Shrine of the Báb in Haifa, which greatly impressed the Ministers. They were presented with the Temple book, *Forever in Bloom*, and the booklet produced by the Municipality of Haifa, *Bahá'í Shrine and Gardens on Mount Carmel, Haifa – Israel*. Both the Ministers expressed admiration for the outstanding beauty of the Lotus Temple, and interest to visit the Bahá'í Shrine and Gardens sometime in the future.

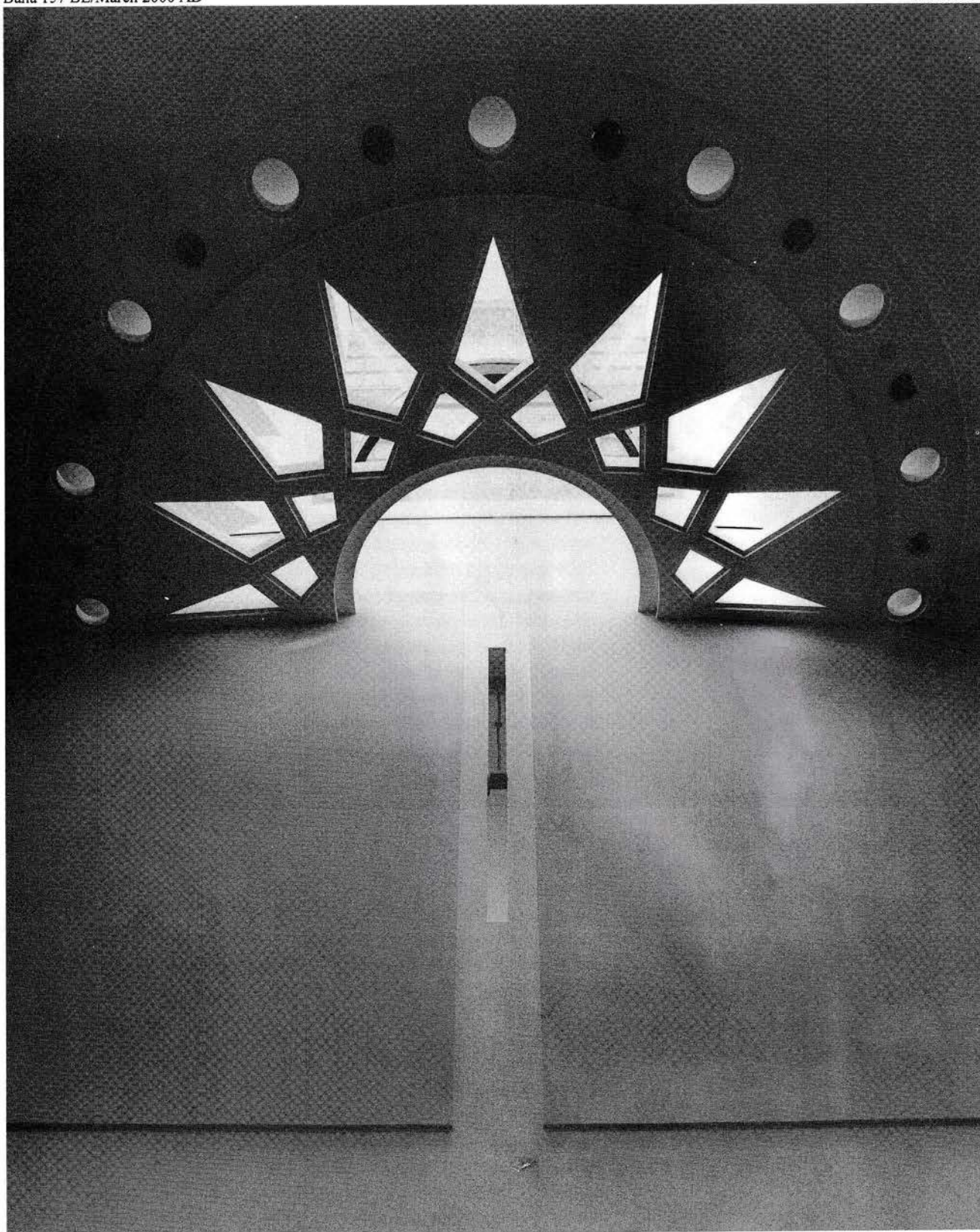
An interesting fact emerged during the meeting with the Union Minister of External Affairs, the Honourable Mr. Jaswant Singh. While graciously accepting the presentation material, the Minister remarked that he was very familiar with Haifa as his father belonged to a regiment called "The Jodhpur Lancers", the battalion that had helped liberate Haifa in 1916 under General Allenby. He mentioned that to this day September 23rd is commemorated by the Jodhpur Lancers as 'Haifa Day', and that a very prominent landmark on one of the most well known avenues in New Delhi, Teen Murti, is actually called "Haifa Memorial" to commemorate that liberation. The monument comprises the figures of the soldiers who fought during that event, with the plaque describing what took place. It was explained to the Minister that the reason this amazing coincidence meant so much to the Bahá'ís was that the Personage who was freed as a result of this event was none other than 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Son of the Prophet Bahá'u'lláh!¹

Twinning of Erfurt with Haifa

What an amazing coincidence that places as far apart as India and Germany should discover links, or forge new ones, with the city of Haifa in Israel! In early February, representatives of the Bahá'í community of Erfurt, as part of a selected list of guests, witnessed the signing of a town partnership between the Mayors of Erfurt and Haifa, declaring them sister cities. Mr. Mitzna, the Mayor of Haifa was very happy to greet the Bahá'ís during the formal introductions, and talked in glowing terms about the Bahá'í World Centre and the projects. The Bahá'ís presented each Mayor with a framed picture of the Bahá'í community in front of the local Bahá'í Centre with a beautiful caption. While accepting the gift Mr. Mitzna inquired if they had seen the brochure about the gardens on Mount Carmel published by his office, and said "I am unable to express how beautiful everything has become."² □

1. Based on reports received from India.

2. Based on a report from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Germany.



□ With the freshness of spring in the air, in this joyous season we take the opportunity to greet all the dear Bahá'í friends - "A very happy Naw-Rúz and Riḍván" - and dedicate ourselves, like you, to pursue our "God given duties" with "a recharged energy, and a reconsecrated spirit". The beloved Universal House of Justice has exhorted every Bahá'í to perform "deeds that will ensure for you celestial blessings—guarantee for you, for the entire race, a future beyond any earthly reckoning." Dare we hesitate or halt?

*Mount Carmel Bahá'í Projects
Office of the Project Manager*

