

BAHJI

In September 1879 'Abdu'l-Bahá rented a mansion that had been built by 'Údí Khammár near 'Akká. Named Bahjí (Delight), it was to be the home of Bahá'u'lláh for the remaining twelve and a half years of His life.

The mansion provided the space required by Bahá'u'lláh and His family to meet visitors and friends that came to see Him as His religion continued to grow beyond Iran and the Ottoman Empire.



Bahá'u'lláh characterized the Mansion of Bahjí as the "lofty mansion," the spot which "God hath ordained as the most sublime vision of mankind."

While living there, Bahá'u'lláh wrote the last great work of his Ministry, the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf:

"In the name of God, the One, the Incomparable, the All-Powerful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Praise be to God, the Eternal that perisheth not, the Everlasting that declineth not, the Self-Subsisting that altereth not. He it is Who is transcendent in His sovereignty, Who is manifest through His signs, and is hidden through His mysteries.

He it is at Whose bidding the standard of the Most Exalted Word hath been lifted up in the world of creation, and the banner of "He doeth whatsoever He willeth" raised amidst all peoples."



An Arabic inscription placed over the door by the original builder in 1870 reads: "Greetings and salutation rest upon this Mansion which increaseth in splendour through the passage of time. Manifold wonders and marvels are found therein, and pens are baffled in attempting to describe them."

While at Bahjí, Bahá'u'lláh elucidated His teachings and sent tablets to various parts of the world. They included references to His most pivotal social teaching — the oneness of humankind. All His other social teachings are means of achieving and sustaining the practical unity of humanity so that people may fulfill the purpose of their creation, to peacefully carry forward an ever-advancing civilization.

Bahá'u'lláh renewed the great spiritual teachings found in earlier religions, foremost among which is the need to recognize the Messenger of God in the era in which He appears, and follow His teachings.

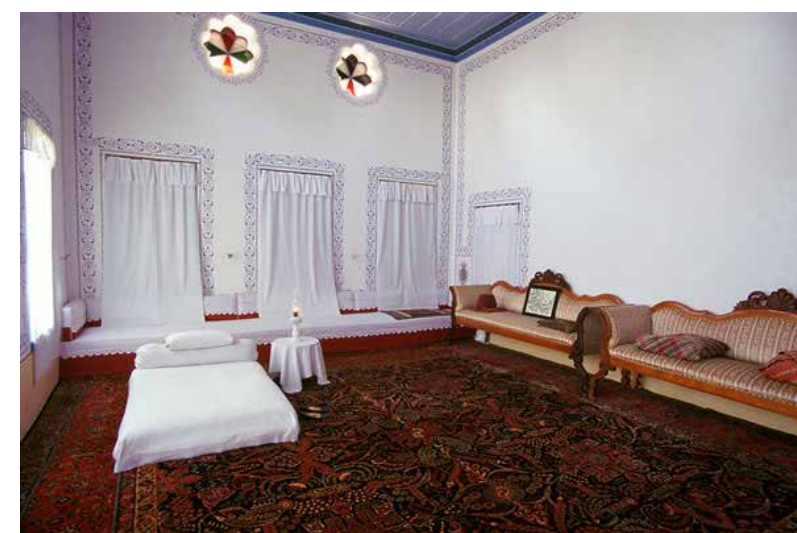
In one of His best-known tablets from this period, Bahá'u'lláh counsels:

"Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer to the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be an ornament to the countenance of truth, a crown to the brow of fidelity, a pillar of the temple of righteousness, a breath of life to the body of mankind, an ensign of the hosts of justice, a luminary above the horizon of virtue, a dew to the soil of the human heart, an ark on the ocean of knowledge, a sun in the heaven of bounty, a gem on the diadem of wisdom, a shining light in the firmament of thy generation, a fruit upon the tree of humility. We pray God to protect thee from the heat of jealousy and the cold of hatred."



Bahá'u'lláh would watch from the balcony of the mansion to see His dearly loved son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, arriving from 'Akká. Referring to 'Abdu'l-Bahá as "the Master" and "the Most Great Branch," Bahá'u'lláh appointed him to be the Center of His Covenant and His successor as head of the Bahá'í Faith.

Bahá'u'lláh lived here in the utmost simplicity, surrounded by family, disciples, and pilgrims. He saw occasional visitors, including Professor Edward Granville Browne of England, one of the few westerners to meet Bahá'u'lláh.



In April 1890 Professor Edward Granville Browne of Cambridge University met Bahá'u'lláh in four successive interviews. Professor Browne wrote of his first meeting: "The face of Him on Whom I gazed I can never forget,

though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow.... No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain."

Bahá'u'lláh stated at that meeting:

"... That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled — what harm is there in this? ... Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come.... Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind."(29)

