

center, to be called the Haziratu'l-Quds, should be for general meetings for prayer and reciting of scripture, for meetings of the spiritual assembly, for meetings for teaching the Bahá'í Faith, and for Nineteen Day Feasts (q.v.). He states that it is desirable that the Haziratu'l-Quds be on the same site as the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar (AVK 4:371). In later letters, Shoghi Effendi recommended that the Haziratu'l-Quds become the central focus of all administrative activities, including the work of committees.

A Haziratu'l-Quds can be either purchased or rented.

Shoghi Effendi states that the Haziratu'l-Quds should consist of the following components: the secretariat, the treasury, the archives, the library, the publishing office, the assembly hall, the council chamber, and the pilgrims' hostel. He considered that the functions of the Haziratu'l-Quds

would be complementary to those of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar and envisioned that: "From the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar . . . the representatives of Bahá'í communities, both local and national, together with the members of their respective committees, will, as they gather daily within its walls at the hour of dawn, derive the necessary inspiration that will enable them to discharge, in the course of their day-to-day exertions in the Haziratu'l-Quds--the scene of their administrative activities--their duties and responsibilities as befits the chosen stewards of His Faith" (GPB 339-340).

Shoghi Effendi states that, unlike the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, it is permitted to have pictures and other art in the Haziratu'l-Quds; it is also permissible to hold theatrical performances, provided these conform to Bahá'í standards and are, preferably, on Bahá'í themes. He encourages the use of the building for youth activities (Muntakhabat 452-3); it could also be used for lectures, conferences, and other social and educational activities. Although these communal functions may be necessary in the early stages of the development of a Bahá'í community, because other

facilities are not available, Shoghi Effendi considered that eventually the Haziratu'l-Quds should only be used for administrative purposes (LG 913:271).

From the time of the receipt of Shoghi Effendi's letter of 1925, the acquisition of a Haziratu'l-Quds became one of the main goals of many Bahá'í communities in the East. During the late 1920s and early 1930s, most of the larger local Bahá'í communities in the East, and particularly in Iran, acquired or built a Haziratu'l-Quds. Among the earliest were: the Haziratu'l-Quds in Tehran, a large domed building in a prominent position in the city, begun in 1932 and completed in 1947; Iraq, completed in 1939; Cairo, completed in 1944; New Delhi, purchased in about 1944; Wilmette, Illinois, probably the first Haziratu'l-Quds in the West, dedicated in 1940; and Sydney, purchased in 1944.

From 1944 onwards, the acquisition of a national Haziratu'l-Quds became part of the process of establishing all new national spiritual assemblies (MBW 93). In recent years, a large number of regional and local Haziratu'l-Quds have been built or acquired, particularly in areas where large numbers of people have become Bahá'ís. Between 1986 and 1992, for example, some 5 national, 50 district, and 334 local Haziratu'l-Quds were acquired throughout the world (Six Year Plan 124-25). Not every local Bahá'í center should, however, be designated a Haziratu'l-Quds; Shoghi Effendi instructed that some of the simple huts that were being used in Africa in the 1950s, should be designated as "Bahá'í Centers" until such time as a more dignified structure could be erected (UD 301).

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