



## THE MOUNT CARMEL TERRACES OFFICIAL OPENING

### *Inaugural Events Office*

1 April 2001

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Further to our letter of 1 November 2000, we are now able to provide you with additional information concerning the events marking the Official Opening of the Terraces on Mount Carmel in May 2001.

#### Currency and Banking Information

While you are in Israel, you will need Israeli sheqels for local purchases. After you arrive, cash or traveller's cheques in the currencies listed below can be converted into sheqels at banks and at most post offices and hotels. Sheqels can be obtained using Automatic Teller Machines. Currencies other than those listed below CANNOT be converted into sheqels and should be exchanged in your own country before you come to Israel:

Austrian schillings	Finnish markkaa	Norwegian kroner
Australian dollars	French francs	South African rands
Belgian francs	German deutsche marks	Spanish pesetas
British pounds sterling	Irish punts	Swedish kronor
Canadian dollars	Italian lire	Swiss francs
Danish kroner	Japanese yen	United States dollars
Dutch guilders	New Zealand dollars	

The United States dollar, British pound sterling, French franc, and German deutsche mark are the easiest to exchange in Israel.

Banks in Israel are usually open during the following hours:

Sunday through Thursday	09:00 to 13:00
Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday afternoons	16:00 to 18:00
Friday mornings	09:00 to 12:00

Banks are closed all day Saturday.

Major credit cards, i.e., Visa, MasterCard, and American Express, are accepted by most restaurants, hotels, and businesses.

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### Bringing Items into Israel

Israeli Customs allows tourists to bring in clothing, footwear, personal toiletries, as well as other personal items, i.e., jewellery, cameras, musical instruments, etc., in acceptable quantities for personal use without having to pay duties.

Customs will also allow up to US\$200 worth of gifts and items not mentioned above without charging duties, and you are not required to declare such items. However, Customs requests that any other items are declared when entering the country. You will either be required to pay duties on these items at the time of entry or leave a deposit for the full amount of the duties owed. The deposit can be left either in cash or through a major credit card. It will then be fully refunded when you demonstrate to Customs that you are taking the item with you at the time of your departure from the country.

All parcels for the Bahá'í World Centre Archives and Library should be accompanied by a letter which includes explanations of the source and history of the item(s), and the name and address of the person or institution sending the item(s).

You are reminded that it is not legally permissible to bring into Israel any items to be sold in Israel. For security reasons, if you are bringing a gift please make sure the packaging is not sealed.

### Arrival, Important Information

When you arrive at Ben Gurion airport you will be greeted by Bahá'í World Centre staff. Look for the sign marked "Bahá'í" as you enter the baggage claim area. Once you have claimed your luggage, you will be taken by bus to your hotel. This service is provided to those who have made arrangements for transportation through Palex Tours. If you have not made such arrangements, you will be assisted to secure alternative transportation to your hotel.

When you reach your hotel you will be given a registration package. Please read the information provided carefully; it should answer many of the questions you may have. A Bahá'í host will remain with your hotel group for the duration of your stay in the Holy Land, and it is important that you follow his or her directions at all times.

In your arrival registration package you will find a name badge. It is extremely important that you wear this badge at all times in order to gain entry to events, Bahá'í Holy Places, and Bahá'í buses. If you do not have your badge, you will not be allowed entry. There will be no exceptions.

### Registration and Accommodation Form and Flight and Ground Transportation Form

Remember that all participants MUST send in a registration form, even if they are not securing accommodations through Palex Tours. This information is being used to assist your entry into Israel. Even if you are not arranging accommodations through Palex Tours, please make sure you forward the information about your accommodations by filling out the Flight and Ground Transportation Form, which was sent to you, and forwarding it to Palex Tours. The form and final payments are due no later than 1 April 2001.

### Passports and Visas

You are reminded to read carefully the section of the “Travel and Accommodation Information” brochure regarding passports and visas. Those who are required to obtain visas should make sure that the visa is valid at least until the date of your arrival in the Holy Land. Also, your passport must be valid for at least six months after your departure date from the Holy Land. Otherwise, you may not be allowed to enter Israel.

### Weather Conditions and Health

May in Haifa can be hot during the day and cool at night. Further, Haifa is built on a mountain. As you will be walking on loose stone paths and climbing many stairs, bring comfortable (non-slip) walking shoes and clothing you can layer. A hat, sunglasses, and sun protection are recommended. Be sure to carry with you plenty of any prescribed medication you may need.

### Travel Insurance

Make sure that you obtain travel insurance that will provide emergency medical and accident benefits.

### Average Costs

In order to give you an idea of costs in Haifa, here are some average prices. For a “felafel” or a “shawarma”, food that can be purchased from street vendors, the average cost is from US\$2 to \$4. A meal in a restaurant, often big enough to be shared between two people, averages \$12 to \$15. A taxi ride from the bottom of the Terraces to the Convention Centre averages \$8.

### Additional Services

Most public telephones operate using a prepaid phone card. Phone cards can be obtained at the airport, at post offices or at your hotel.

Palex Tours will be represented at the airport, hotels, and the Convention Centre. Any travel or accommodation related questions or concerns should be conveyed to them, and not to your bus host.

An early baggage check-in service will be available at the Convention Centre. You may check your bags and clear customs in Haifa 24 hours before your flight. A Palex Tours representative can provide more information about this service upon your arrival in Haifa.

We are eagerly looking forward to welcoming you on this historic occasion.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Inaugural Events Office

