

# Haifa



The Bahai Shrine

The city of Haifa is built above the harbor on the slopes of Mount Carmel and its landscape is dominated by the golden dome of the Bahai Temple. Set in the formal Persian gardens is the grave of the Persian-born Bab - the Gate, or the Forerunner - who was executed in 1850 at the age of 31 for his religious teachings. The Bahai faith stresses the Unity of God and the Brotherhood of Mankind.

Haifa is a modern harbor able to accommodate all sorts of luxury liners, tankers, cargo boats and other ships. It is also one of Israel's main centers of high technology, fostered by the Technion and Haifa University which turn out highly-qualified engineers and scholars in every field. Ideally situated between the sea and the forested Mount Carmel, of which Isaiah 35:2 says "*the excellency of Carmel*", the environs of haifa have been a favorite habitation for untold generations. Prehistoric man lived here in the caves of Carmel and, before the coming of the Israelites, there were Phoenicians at Shikmona on the coast who introduced the art of glass-making with the fine silica sand on the shore.

Bird's eye view of Haifa





## Stella Maris

The largest Carmelite Monastery and world center of the Order stands at the top of the promontory with a magnificent view of the city of Haifa. It is built on the site of earlier churches and monasteries of the Byzantine periods. The church was built over a cave associated with the prophets Elijah and Elisha. Nearby is the lighthouse called Stella Maris - Star of the Sea. In the lower garden of the monastery is the Cave of Elijah where, according to Christian tradition, the prophet lived.



*Shrine to Elijah in the Stella Maris Church*



*Interior of the Stella Maris Church*

## Mukhraka

The Canaanite inhabitants of the land worshipped Baal and his consort Ishtar, who were adopted by the Israelites. The prophet Elijah challenged the priests of Baal to prove whose god was more powerful and when he won, the Israelites abandoned the Canaanite deities and the false prophets were slaughtered (I Kings 18). Mukhraka, the traditional site of the contest, is marked by a Carmelite monastery, built in 1886.

*The Mukhraka*



*Statue of Elijah in the courtyard of the Mukhraka Monastery*