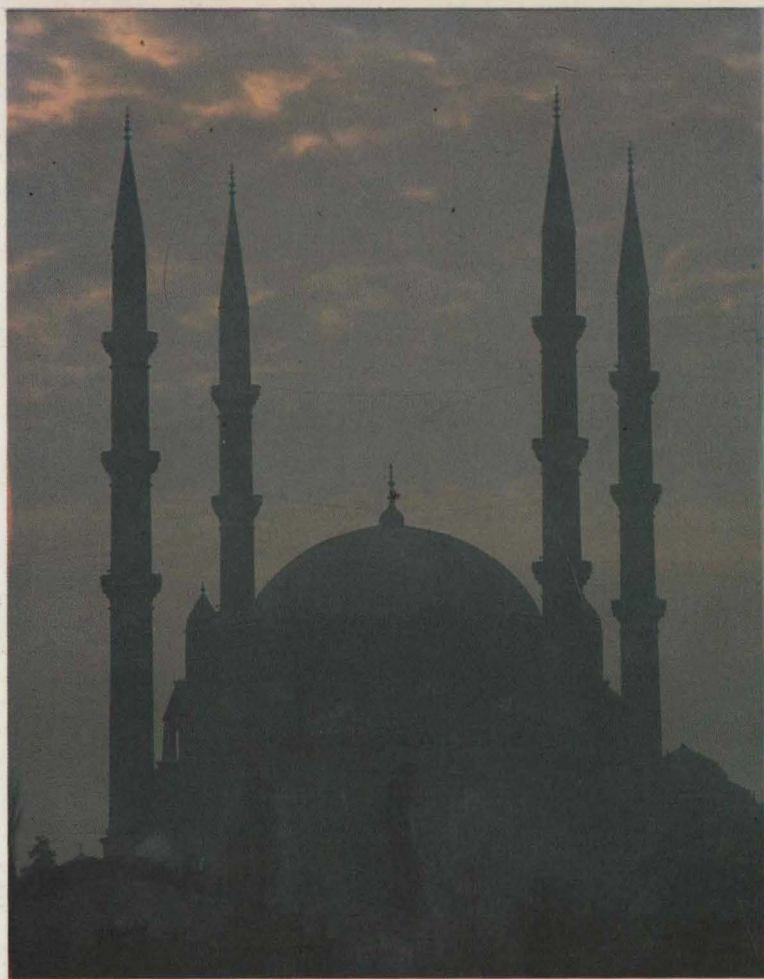


# Adrianople



Land of Mystery

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Compiled  
by  
Anthony Meyer



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According to the Old Testament, the Ark of Noah is supposed to have come to a rest on the slopes of the mountain, after having endured and survived the great deluge visited upon a wayward humanity by a wrathful God nearly 5,000 years ago.

The Prophet Abraham, father of monotheism and revered by Jews, Moslems and Christians came from Ur of the Chaldees upon God's call to go to Canaan and stopped at Harran in Southeastern Turkey around 1800 B.C. He remained there for several years before departing for the land of Canaan.

Jesus Christ, prophet-founder of the Christian Faith, lived and died within the confines of Palestine, yet His faith has reached to the furthest corners of the globe. It can be said that the religion known as Christianity, its credo, doctrine and institutionalization had its crystallization in Asia Minor (Turkey). It was in Antioch (Antakya) where St. Peter preached for the first time to the Gentiles and where, for the first time, the followers of Christ were called Christians. Further along the coast of the Mediterranean is the town of Tarsus, the birthplace of St. Paul. St. Paul carried out numerous missionary journeys in Asia Minor: Ephesus, Cappadocia, Antioch as well as being visited by St. Paul, Turkey is the resting place of another two of the apostles of Christ St. Phillip and St. John. At Hieropolis (Pamukkale), a fifth century martyrdom was built over the tomb of the martyred St. Phillip. In Seljuk, near the ancient city of Ephesus, is the basilica of St. John, where his tomb supposedly lies. Seljuk is also, according to legend, the final resting place of the Virgin Mary.

The First Ecumenical Council was held in Nicaea (Iznik) in 325 by the first Christian Emperor of the Roman Empire, Constantine the Great. At this and subsequent councils, the foundations of the Christian Church were firmly established. Christianity became the official state religion of the Roman Em-

pire and later debate led to the creation of established forms of worship, creed and dates of holy days such as Easter.

In Constantinople (Istanbul) in 381, The Nicene Creed was written, declaring the equality of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

As well as being the center of so much of the early development of Christianity, Turkey has also been the stage upon which significant events and developments in the evolution of Islam have occurred.

After Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, Istanbul may be said to be the fourth most sacred place of pilgrimage in the Islamic world. This is due to the assumption that Eyup, the friend and standard-bearer of the Prophet Muhammed, had been among those who led the first Arab siege of Constantinople from 674 to 678 and was killed and buried somewhere just outside of the city. Later, during the Ottoman period, a mosque was built over the supposed burial site.

In central Turkey, in the city of Konya, lies the tomb of Celaleddin Rumi (1207-1273), the founder of the order of Whirling Dervishes and one of Islam's greatest mystic philosophers. Rumi, known as Mevlana to his followers, created a system of belief based upon the universality of God and the attempt to establish union with God. The order was open to anyone, regardless of religion or sect.

The seat of the Caliphate was transferred to Istanbul in 1517 through the conquests of Sultan Selim I. The Sultans retained the status of the protectors of Islam and its holy places until the Caliphate was abolished under Ataturk in 1924, a period of over 400 years.



In the middle of the 18th century, during the latter days of the Ottoman Empire, Turkish soil was once again to play host to another chapter in the history of world religion.

In May of 1863, a group of exiles from Persia entered what is today Turkish territory near a town on the Syrian/Iraqi border. Among these exiles was a figure destined to join the ranks of those great souls who have contributed so much to the advancement of humanity through their guidance.

This figure was Baha'u'llah, the Prophet-founder of the Baha'i Faith, the latest of the world's major religions.

## The Significance of Baha'u'llah's Sojourn in Constantinople and Adrianople

The five-year period (1863-1868) Baha'u'llah spent in Constantinople (Istanbul) and Adrianople (Edirne) was one of the most significant of His entire ministry.

During that time, the great majority of the followers of the Bab had embraced the Cause of Baha'u'llah. The Faith had been publicly proclaimed to the kings, the rulers, the divines and the masses of humanity. It was also during this time that Mirza Yahya had been cast out of the Baha'i community and was exiled to Cyprus to live out the rest of his life in lone obscurity.

The four month sojourn of Baha'u'llah in Constantinople can best be summarized in the following excerpt from *God Passes By*.

With the arrival of Baha'u'llah at Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire and seat of the Caliphate...the grimmest and most calamitous and yet the most glorious chapter in the history of the first Baha'i century may be said to have opened. A period in which untold privations and unprecedented trials were mingled with the noblest spiritual triumphs was now commencing. The day-star of Baha'u'llah's ministry was about to reach its zenith.

The most momentous years of the Heroic Age of His Dispensation were at hand. The catastrophic process, foreshadowed as far back as the year sixty [AH 1260] by His Forerunner in the Qayyum'l-Asma, was beginning to be set in motion.



"In the midst of the Siyah-Chal of Tihran, nine years later, that Revelation had swiftly and mysteriously been brought to sudden fruition. The process of rapid deterioration in the fortunes of that Faith, which had gradually set in, and was alarmingly accelerated during the years of Baha'u'llah's withdrawal to Kurdistan, had, in a masterly fashion after His return from Sulaymaniyyih, been arrested and reversed. The ethical, the moral and doctrinal foundations of a nascent community had been subsequently, in the course of His sojourn in Baghdad, unassailably established. And finally, in the Garden of Ridvan, on the eve of His banishment to Constantinople, the ten-year delay, ordained by an inscrutable Providence, had been terminated through the Declaration of His Mission and the visible emergence of what was to become the nucleus of a world embracing Fellowship. What now remained to be achieved was the proclamation, in the city of Adrianople, of that same Mission to the world's secular and ecclesiastical leaders, to be followed, in successive decades, by a further unfoldment, in the prison-fortress of Akka, of the principles and precepts constituting the bedrock of that Faith, by the formulation of the laws and ordinances designed to safeguard its integrity, by the establishment, immediately after His ascension, of the Covenant designed to preserve its unity and perpetuate its influence...

"The initial phase of that Proclamation may be said to have opened in Constantinople with the communication addressed by Baha'u'llah to Sultan Abdu'l-Aziz himself, the self-styled vicar of the Prophet of Islam and the absolute ruler of a mighty empire. So potent, so august a personage was the first among the sovereigns of the world to receive the Divine Summons...

"Thus closes the opening scene of one of the most dramatic episodes in the ministry of Baha'u'llah. The curtain now rises on what is admittedly the most turbulent and critical period of the first Baha'i century - a period that was destined to precede the

most glorious phase of that ministry, the proclamation of His Message to the world and its rulers."

The Guardian further describes the fruitful years in Adrianople, in the particular the prodigious outpouring of Divine Revelation during that period:

Though He Himself was bent with sorrow, and still suffered from the effect of the attempt on His life, and though He was well aware a further banishment was probably impending, yet, undaunted by the blow which His Cause had sustained, on the perils with which it was encompassed. Baha'u'llah arose with matchless power, even before the ordeal was overpast, to proclaim the Mission with which He had been entrusted to those who, in East and West, had the reins of supreme temporal authority in their grasp.

"A period of prodigious activity ensued which, in its repercussions, outshone the vernal years of Baha'u'llah's ministry. 'Day and night', an eyewitness has written, 'The Divine verses were raining down in such number that it was impossible to record them. Mirza Aqa Jan wrote them as they were dictated, while the Most Great Branch was continually occupied in transcribing them. There was not a moment to spare...' Baha'u'llah, Himself, referring to the verses revealed by Him, has written: *'Such are the outpourings... from the clouds of Divine Bounty that within the space of an hour the equivalent of a thousand verses hath been revealed. So great is the grace vouchsafed in this day that in a single day and night, were an amanuensis capable of accomplishing it to be found, the equivalent of the Persian Bayan would be sent down from the heaven of Divine holiness. I swear by God!'* He, in another connection has affirmed, *'In those days the equivalent of all that hath been sent down aforetime unto the Prophets hath been revealed. That which hath already been revealed in this land (Adrianople)'*. He furthermore, referring to the copiousness of His writings, has



declared, 'secretaries are incapable of transcribing. It has, therefore, remained for the most part untranscribed.'<sup>(1)</sup>

Among the more weighty of the writings of Baha'u'llah during his sojourn in Adrianople are the Tablet of Ahmad and above all, the letters to the kings and rulers of the world. These included the Ottoman Sultan, the Kings of Europe, Muslim ecclesiastical leaders, the people of Persia, the wise men and inhabitants of Constantinople, the Shah of Persia, and the philosophers of the world.

These Tablets, according to Shoghi Effendi, "may be regarded not only as the most outstanding among the innumerable Tablets revealed in Adrianople, but as occupying a foremost position among all the writing of the author of the Baha'i Revelation.

1- For a more detailed listing of the writings of Baha'u'llah during this period, refer to the index or page.

## Overview of Exile

During the forty year period of the Ministry of Baha'u'llah, His exiles had taken Him from Asia to Europe, thus making Baha'u'llah the first Manifestation of God known to have lived on European soil. Abraham, Moses, Christ, Muhammed and Buddha all lived out their lives in Asia.

Considered to be an important follower of the *heretical* Babi Faith, Baha'u'llah and members of his immediate family were exiled by the Persian government to Baghdad. Baha'u'llah departed from Tehran for Iraq on 12 January, 1853.

The exiles suffered extremes hardship from the winter journey through the snow-bound mountains of western Persia. Baha'u'llah spent nearly ten years in Iraq. Two years were spent alone in the wilderness of Kurdistan while the remaining time was spent in Baghdad.

The enemies of Baha'u'llah, among whom were the Persian Consul-General in Baghdad and certain divines, being jealous of His increasing popularity, succeeded in having him banished again. A Sultan's decree was issued as a result of Persian representations to the Ottoman Government and Baha'u'llah was called to Constantinople. Just before departing, in the Garden of Ridvan, on the banks of the Euphrates river, Baha'u'llah declared His station to His companions as "Him Whom God shall make manifest", the One foretold by the Bab and anticipated by His followers.



After He had remained five months in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, His enemies again sought to banish Him. They succeeded, and He was sent to Adrianople, a city called by Him 'the remote Prison.' There the Sun of His Revelation ascended to its zenith and He proclaimed His Message for the whole world. Having endured five years of tribulations in this city, Baha'u'llah was finally exiled to the prison-city of Akka in the Holy Land. He lived there until His ascension in 1892.

## Exile from Baghdad to Constantinople

Baha'u'llah left Baghdad on 22 April 1863 and arrived in Constantinople on 16 August 1863, the journey being completed in almost four months. Both Iraq and Turkey were then part of the Ottoman Empire.

As the subject matter of the book is concerned principally with Baha'u'llah's sojourn in present-day Turkey, we will begin our narrative of the exile in Nusaybin, on the border of Iraq, Syria and Turkey (Map 1).

Fifty-four people, including the members of His family, accompanied Baha'u'llah to Constantinople. Mirza Yahya, the half-brother of Baha'u'llah, joined the party *en route*. Baha'u'llah rode a horse part of the way but travelled mostly in a howdah. The journey itself was both slow and monotonous with no sign of life for miles.

A caravan consisting of fifty mules, a mounted guard of ten soldiers with their officer, and seven pairs of howdahs, each pair surmounted by four parasols, was formed, and wended its way, by easy stages, and in the space of no less than a hundred and ten days, across the uplands, and through the defiles, the woods, valleys and pastures, comprising the picturesque scenery of eastern Anatolia, to the port of Samsun, on the Black Sea. ...He, by virtue of the written order of Namiq Pasha, was accorded, as He travelled northward, in the path of spring, an enthusiastic reception by the mudirs, the shaykhs, the muftis,



the government officials and notables belonging to the districts through which He passed. In villages and hamlets, He would be met by a delegation immediately before His arrival, and would be accompanied, for some distance, by a similar delegation upon His departure. The festivities which, at some stations, were held in His honour, the food the villagers prepared and brought for His acceptance, the eagerness which time and again they exhibited in providing the means for His comfort, recalled the reverence which the people of Baghdad had shown Him on so many occasions.

At Nusaybin the caravan pitched its tents by a stream. From Nusaybin the caravan continued towards Mardin after stopping at Hasan Aqa. After a three day halt at Mardin, Baha'u'llah ordered the resumption of the journey. As the caravan passed through the city of Mardin, Government cavalry, with flags flying and drums beating, and high officials and notables escorted them to the outskirts of the city. It was the first of a number of such kingly welcomes for an unknown prisoner on His way to exile. After three more days of travel, Diyarbakir was reached. The caravan stayed for three days outside the city. It was here that Mirza Yahya made himself known to the believers after having travelled in disguise since Mosul.

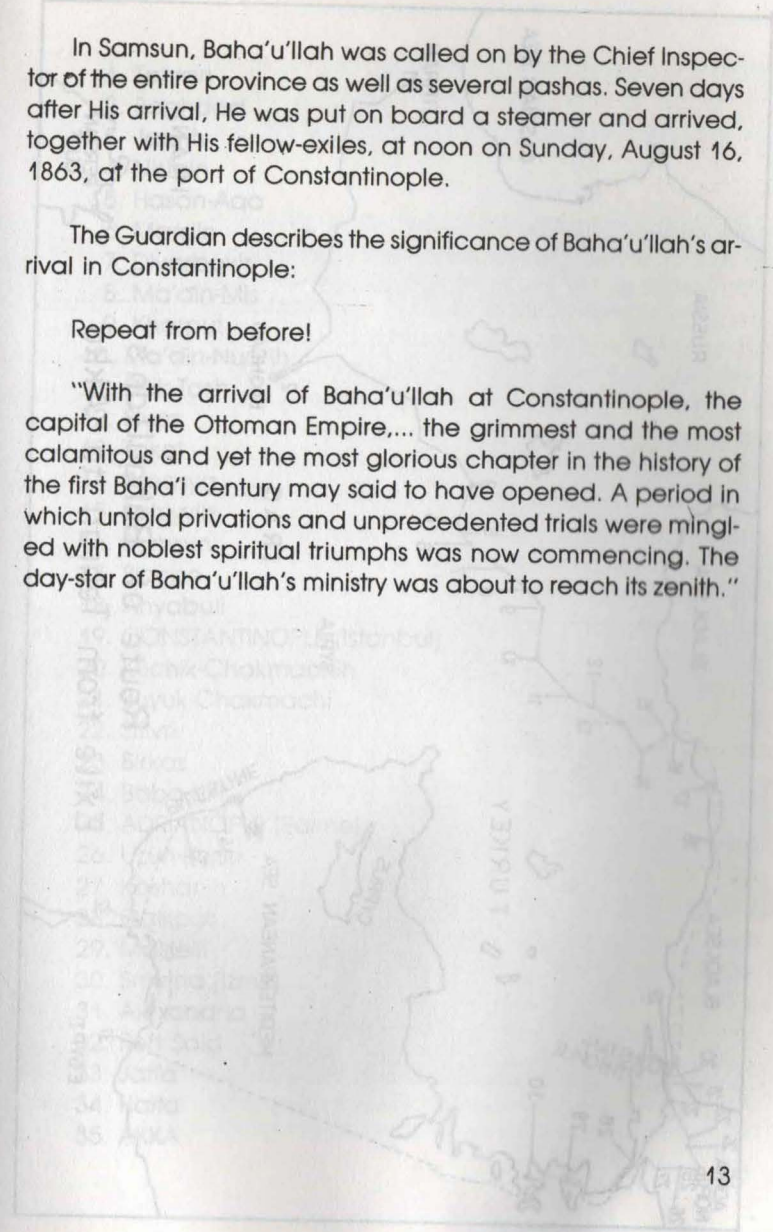
From Diyarbakir the caravan continued on its way to Ma'din-Mis where it halted for the night. The next day it reached the fortified city of Kharput. After a few days the caravan moved on to Ma'dan - nuqrih. From there they set out for Sivas, passing through Dilik-Tash. After camping near the city, the caravan made its way to Tokat and on to Amasya where they stayed for two days outside the town. From Amasya they moved to Illahiyyih. The caravan set out on the last lap of its long overland journey, and moved on towards Samsun, on the shores of the Black Sea.

In Samsun, Baha'u'llah was called on by the Chief Inspector of the entire province as well as several pashas. Seven days after His arrival, He was put on board a steamer and arrived, together with His fellow-exiles, at noon on Sunday, August 16, 1863, at the port of Constantinople.

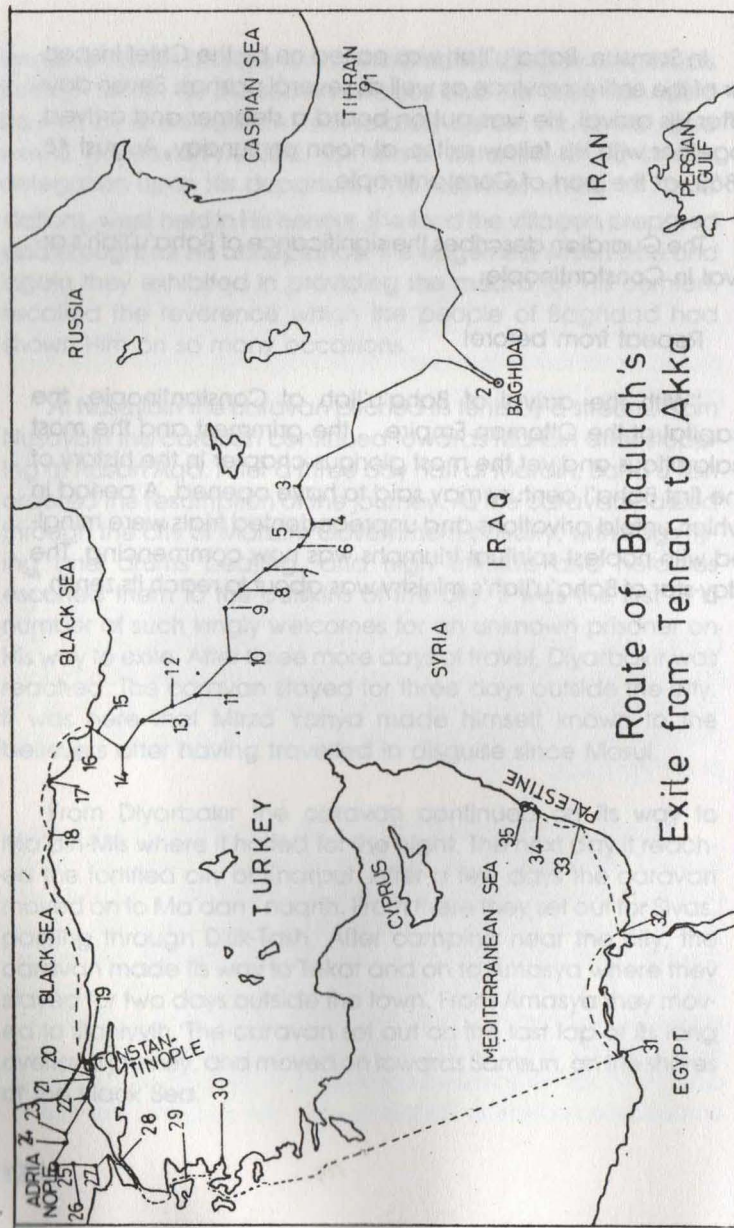
The Guardian describes the significance of Baha'u'llah's arrival in Constantinople:

Repeat from before!

"With the arrival of Baha'u'llah at Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire,... the grimmest and the most calamitous and yet the most glorious chapter in the history of the first Baha'i century may said to have opened. A period in which untold privations and unprecedented trials were mingled with noblest spiritual triumphs was now commencing. The day-star of Baha'u'llah's ministry was about to reach its zenith."







(Map 1)

1. Tehran
2. Baghdad
3. Jazirih
4. Nisibin
5. Hasan-Aqa
6. Mardin
7. Diyarbakir
8. Ma'din-Mis
9. Kharput
10. Ma'din-Nuqrih
11. Dilik-Tash
12. Sivas
13. Tokat
14. Amasya
15. Ilahiyiyih
16. Samsun
17. Sinope
18. Anyabuli
19. CONSTANTINOPLE (Istanbul)
20. Kuchik-Chakmachih
21. Buyuk-Chakmachi
22. Silivri
23. Birkas
24. Baba-Iski
25. ADRIANOPLE (Edirne)
26. Uzun-Kupri
27. Kashanih
28. Gallipoli
29. Madelli
30. Smyrna (Izmir)
31. Alexandria
32. Port Said
33. Jaffa
34. Haifa
35. AKKA



## Constantinople

The arrival of Baha'u'llah in Constantinople (fig 1.) on 16 August 1863 marks a significant milestone in the unfoldment of His Mission. It was during Baha'u'llah's sojourn in Constantinople that the conciliatory attitude of the authorities changed to that of hostility as a direct consequence of the intrigues and misrepresentations of the Persian Ambassador. It was also during that period that the initial phase of the proclamation of the Message of Baha'u'llah to the kings and rulers of the world was ushered in by the revelation of a Tablet addressed to Sultan 'Abdul'-Aziz.

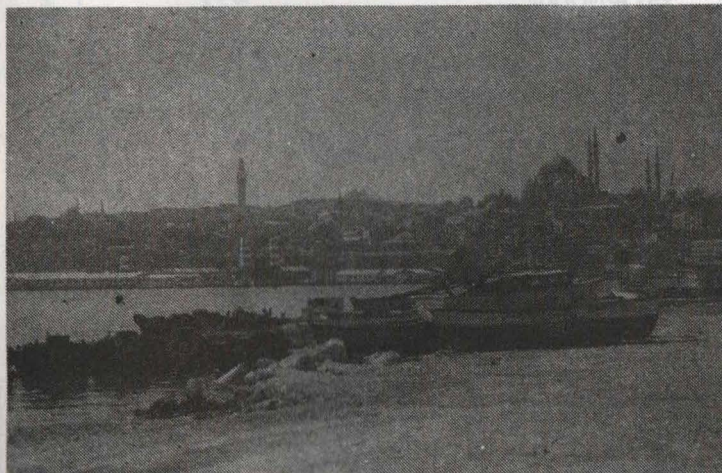


Fig. 1 Constantinople (Istanbul): former capital of the Ottoman Empire.

Baha'u'llah's four-month sojourn in Constantinople has been characterized by the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith as the "opening scene of one of the most dramatic episodes in the ministry of Baha'u'llah."

Baha'u'llah arrived in Constantinople in conspicuous majesty and was received by the authorities with great honour as He disembarked from the ship.(fig.2) He was driven with all the members of His family to the residence of Shamsi Big, an official who was present at the port and appointed by the Government to entertain its guests. His companions were given accommodation elsewhere in the city.

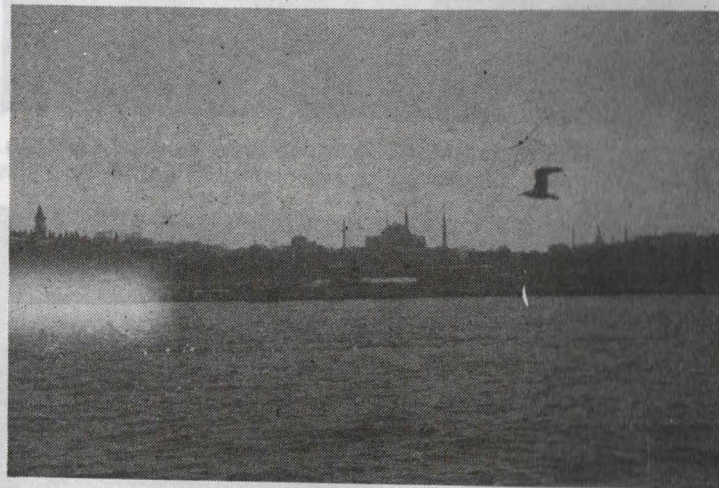


Fig. 2 Harbour at Constantinople where Baha'u'llah disembarked from the steamer that carried Him from Samsun.

The house of Shamsi Big, a two-story building in the vicinity of the Kirqiy-i-Sharif mosque (fig.3), proved to be too small a residence for Baha'u'llah and after a stay of one month in cramped conditions, He was moved to the house of Visi Pasha, (fig.4) a three storey building more commodious than the first



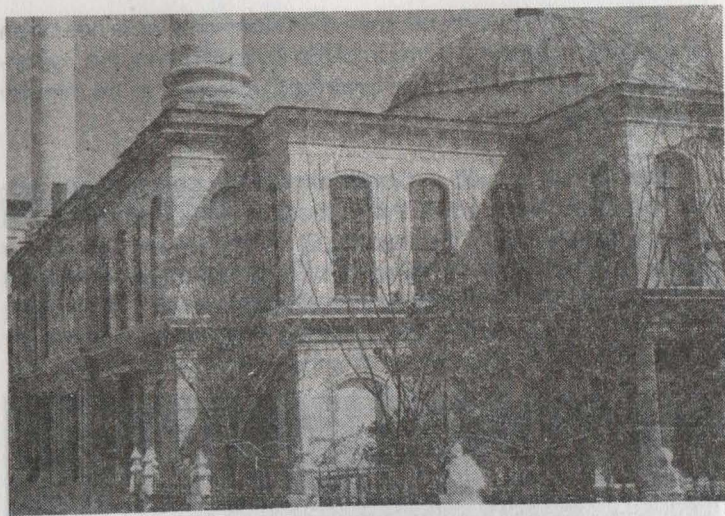
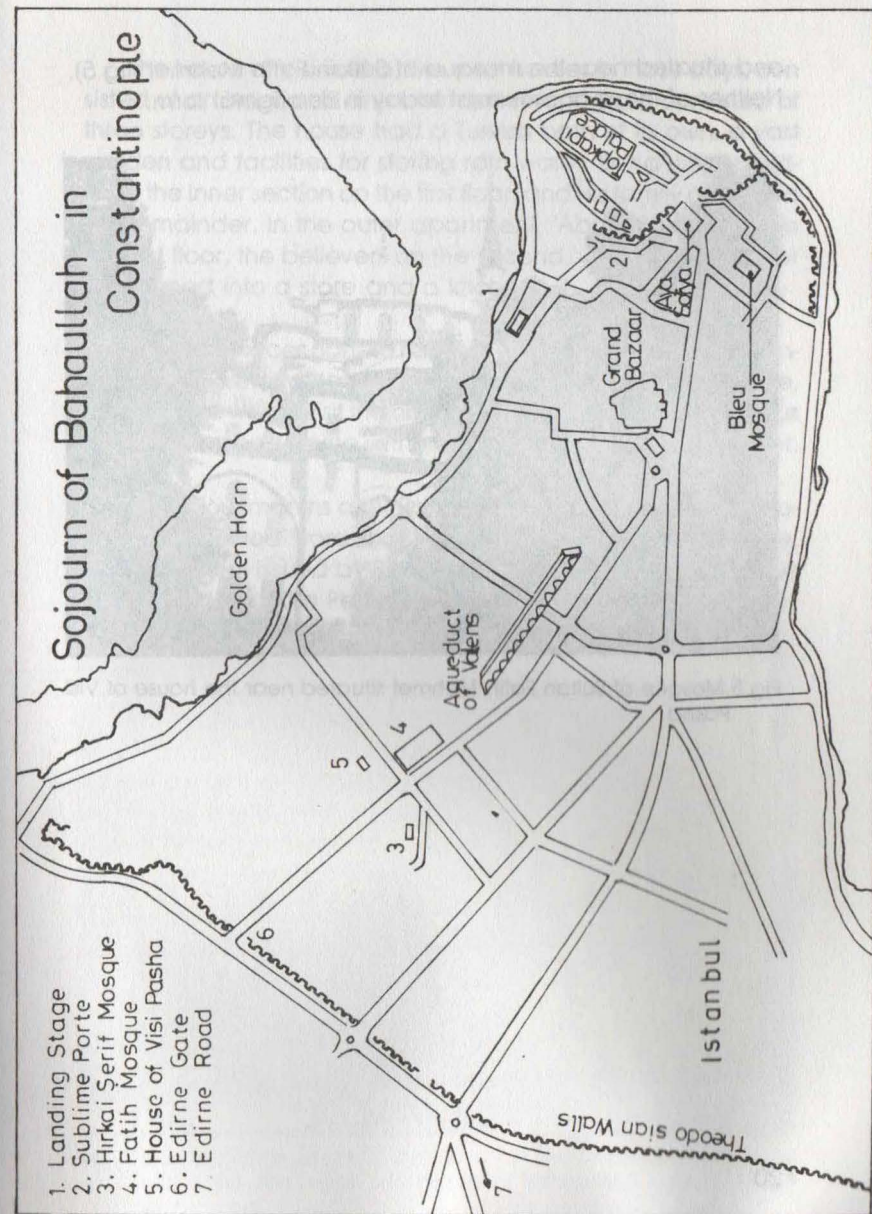


Fig.3 Kirqiy-i-Sharif Mosque in Constantinople: the house of Shamsi Big, where Baha'u'llah resided for one month is in the vicinity of this mosque.



Fig.4 House of Visi Pasha in Constantinople where Baha'u'llah spent three months. [not the original house]





and situated near the mosque of Sultan Fatih Mehmet (fig.5). Neither of these houses exist today in its original form.



Fig.5 Mosque of Sultan Fatih Mehmet situated near the house of Visi Pasha.

The house of Visi Pasha, like most houses in those days, consisted of an inner and an outer apartment. Each consisted of three storeys. The house had a Turkish bath of its own, a vast garden and facilities for storing rain water. Baha'u'llah resided in the inner section on the first floor, and His family occupied the remainder. In the outer apartment, 'Abdul-Baha lived on the first floor, the believers on the second, while the third floor was turned into a store and a kitchen.

The only places Baha'u'llah is known to have visited in Constantinople were mosques and public baths. From time to time, however, He would visit the house of Mirza Musa to meet various officials who had come with messages from the Government.

Some four months after Baha'u'llah's arrival in Constantinople, He received word that He was to be banished once more, upon an edict issued by Sultan 'Abdul-Aziz', again due to the machinations of the Persian Ambassador to Constantinople.



## Exile to Adrianople

It was now the heart of winter, which can be very severe in those eastern parts of Europe. Although carriages, wagons and pack animals were provided, as well as ox-carts for their belongings, it was a hard journey, taxing the strength of all, and it lasted twelve days. Snow was falling as they left Constantinople (fig.8) and they were not clad for freezing weather. Recalling their sufferings, Baha'u'llah declared, "The eyes of Our enemies wept over Us, and beyond them those of every discerning person. They expelled us ... with such an abasement which no abasement on earth can compare."

In the late afternoon of the first day the travellers reached Kucukcekmece (fig.9), about three hours journey from Istanbul. An official, who accompanied them, found lodgings for Baha'u'llah. The next day, they left at dawn and arrived towards noon at Buyukcekmece (fig. 10), where they were housed in the home of a Christian. It was night-time when they took to the road again, to reach Silivri (fig. 11). Here too they were lodged in the house of a Christian. At midnight, in pouring rain and intense cold, they moved out of Silivri and reached Birkas (fig.12) the next day. The last halting place before arrival at Adrianople was Baba-Eski (fig.13). (See Map 2)

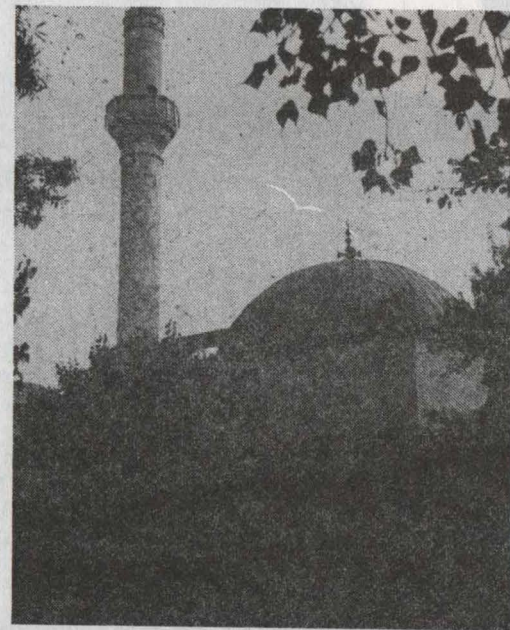


Fig.6 Mosque of Nisanci Pasha situated across from the house of Visi Pasha.

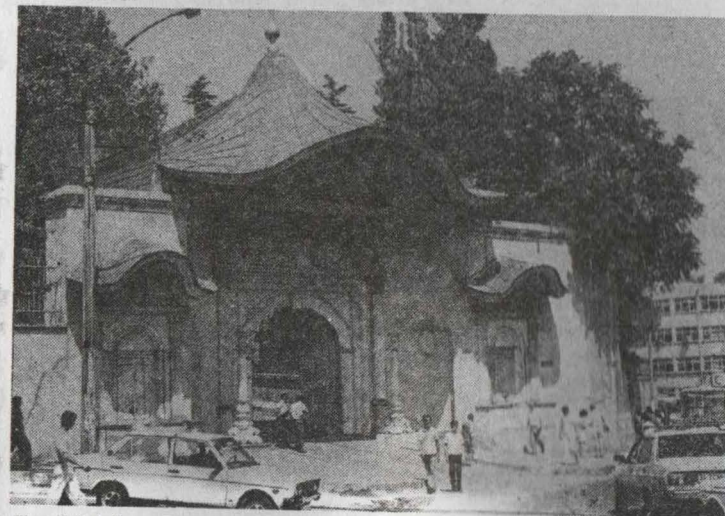


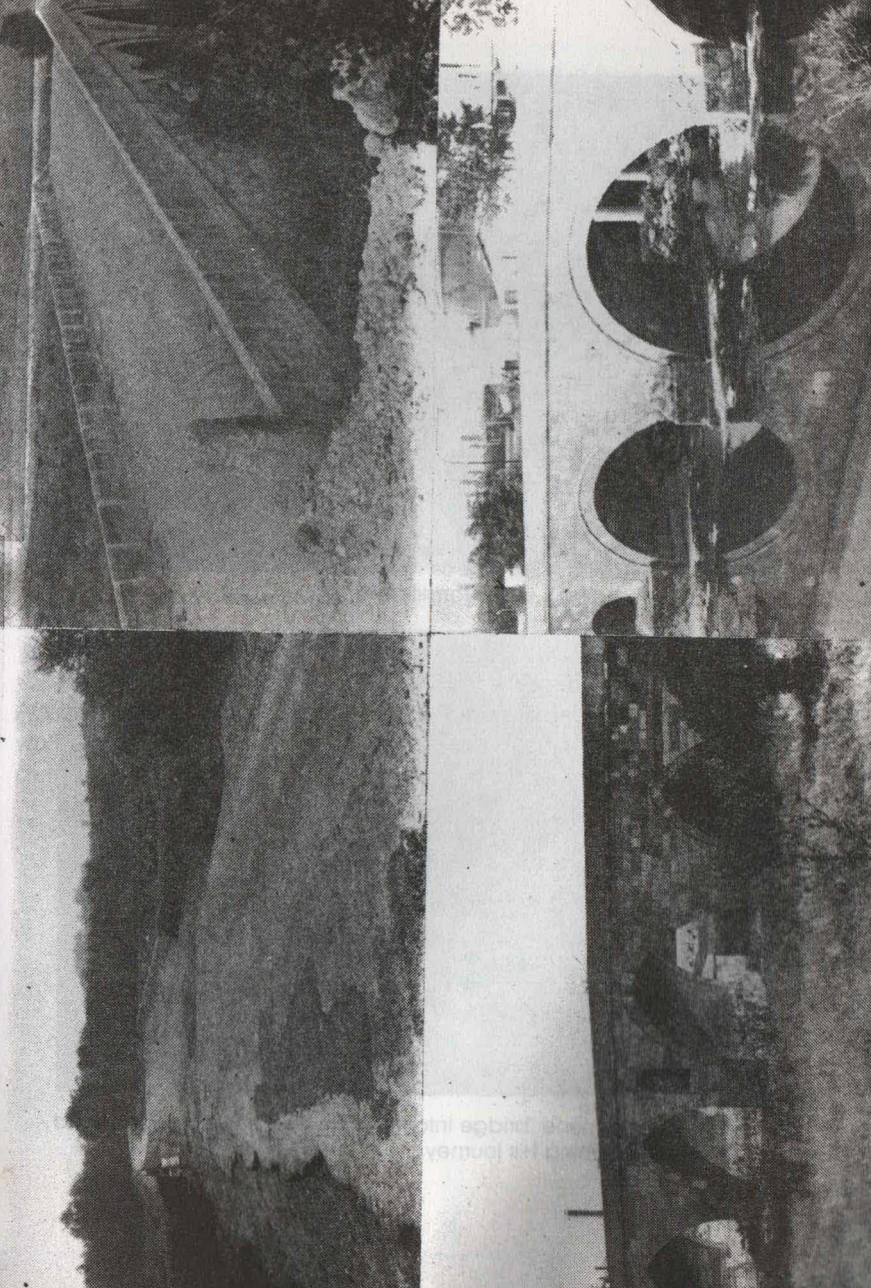
Fig. 7 Sublime Porte: Seat of Government of the Ottoman Empire from which the decree of banishment of Baha'u'llah to Adrianople was issued.





Fig. 8 Edirne Gate: the gate in the land walls of Constantinople through which Baha'u'llah and His entourage passed on their way to Adrianople.

Route of Exile of Baha'u'llah from Constantinople to Adrianople (December 4-12, 1863)





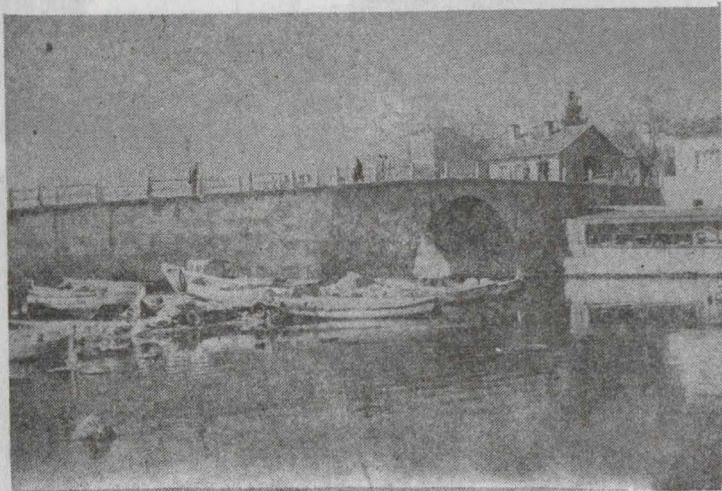


Fig. 9. Kucukcekmece: first stop on the road to Adrianople (three hour journey, by foot, from Constantinople)

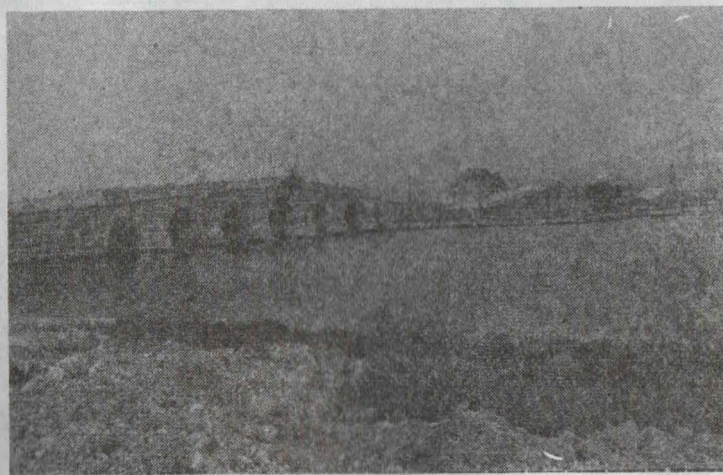
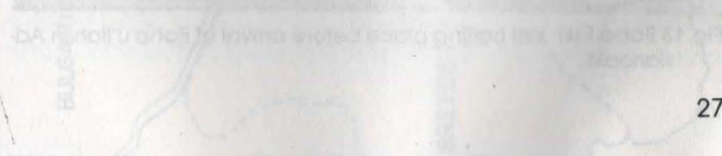


Fig. 10 Buyukcekmece: bridge into the town where Baha'u'llah rested before resuming His journey.



Fig. 11 Silivri: town where Baha'u'llah rested for one day.

It was Saturday, 12 December 1863, when they arrived at Adrianople, a city characterized by Baha'u'llah as "the place which none entereth except such as have rebelled against the authority of a sovereign."





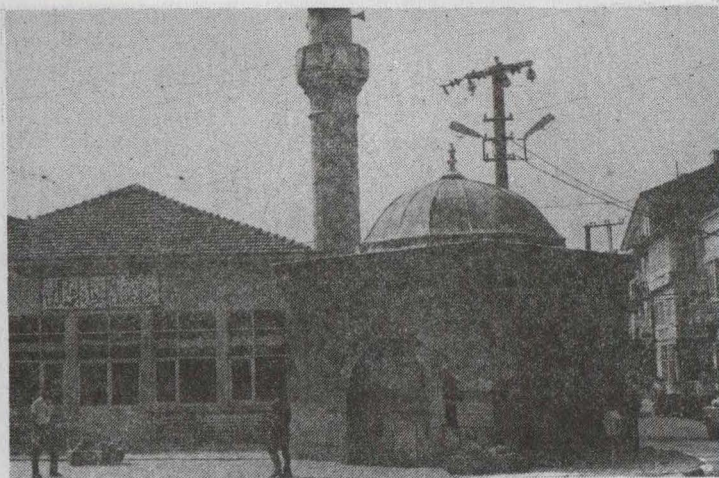
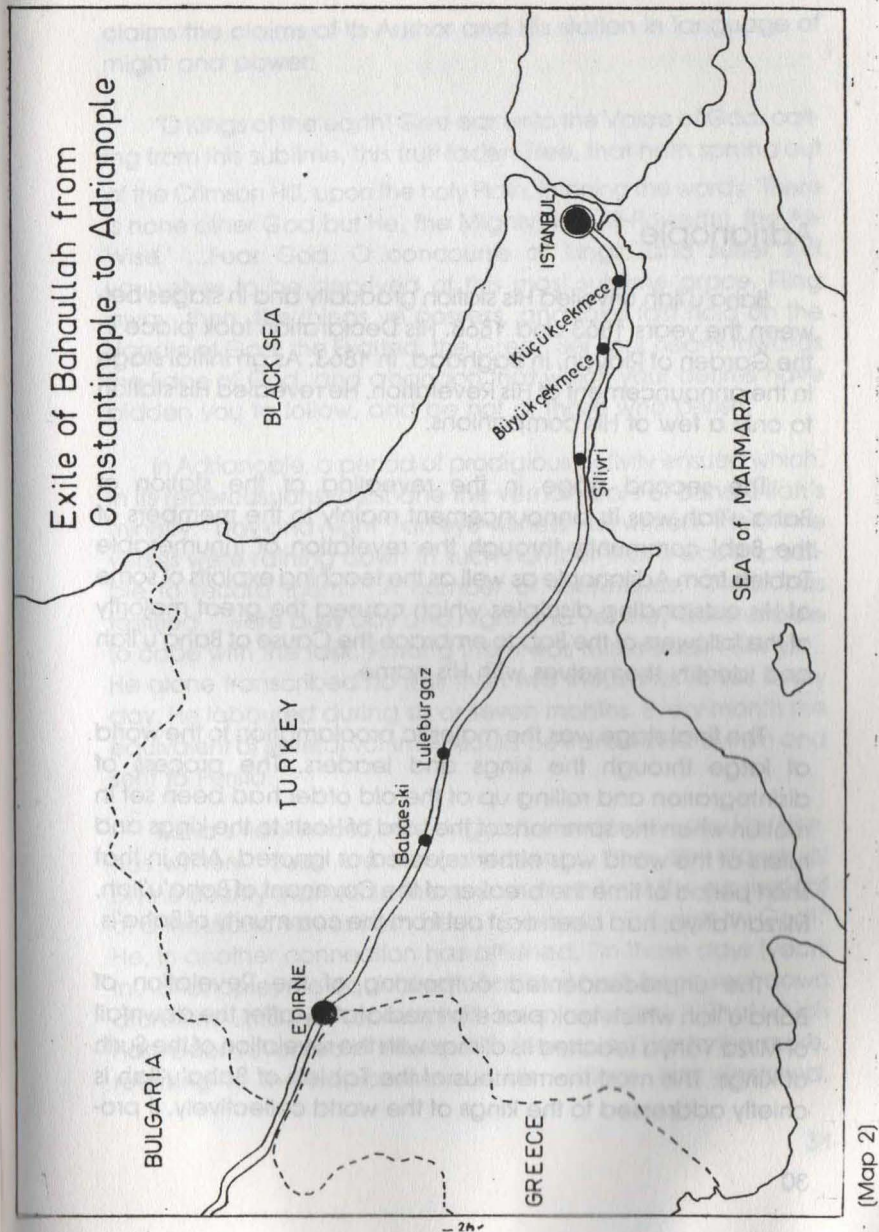


Fig. 12 Birkas: fourth town on the route to Adrianople.



Fig. 13 Baba-Eski: last halting place before arrival of Baha'u'llah in Adrianople.





## Adrianople

Baha'u'llah unveiled His station gradually and in stages between the years 1863 and 1868. His Declaration took place in the Garden of Ridvan, in Baghdad, in 1863. As an initial stage in the announcement of His Revelation, He revealed His station to only a few of His companions.

The second stage in the revealing of the station of Baha'u'llah was its announcement mainly to the members of the Babi community through the revelation of innumerable Tablets from Adrianople as well as the teaching exploits of some of His outstanding disciples which caused the great majority of the followers of the Bab to embrace the Cause of Baha'u'llah and identify themselves with His name.

The final stage was the majestic proclamation to the world at large through the kings and leaders. The process of disintegration and rolling up of the old order had been set in motion when the summons of the Lord of Hosts to the kings and rulers of the world was either rejected or ignored. Also in that short period of time the breaker of the Covenant of Baha'u'llah, Mirza Yahya, had been cast out from the community of Baha'is.

The unprecedented outpouring of the Revelation of Baha'u'llah which took place immediately after the downfall of Mirza Yahya reached its climax with the revelation of the Surih of Kings. This most momentous of the Tablets of Baha'u'llah is chiefly addressed to the kings of the world collectively. It pro-

claims the claims of its Author and His station in language of might and power:

"O Kings of the earth! Give ear unto the Voice of God, calling from this sublime, this fruit-laden Tree, that hath sprung out of the Crimson Hill, upon the holy Plain, intoning the words: 'There is none other God but He, the Mighty, the All-Powerful, the All-Wise.' ...Fear God, O concourse of kings, and suffer not yourselves to be deprived of this most sublime grace. Fling away, then, the things ye possess, and take fast hold on the Handle of God, the Exalted, the Great. Set your hearts towards the Face of God, and abandon that which your derires have bidden you to follow, and be not of those who perish."

In Adrianople, a period of prodigious activity ensued which, in its repercussions, outshone the vernal years of Baha'u'llah's ministry. "Day and night", an eye-witness has written, 'the Divine verses were raining down in such number that it was impossible to record them.' "A number of secretaries," Nabil has testified, "were busy day and night and yet they were unable to cope with the task. Among them was Mirza Baqir-i-Shirazi... He alone transcribed no less than two thousand verses every day. He laboured during six or seven months. Every month the equivalent of several volumes would be transcribed by him and sent to Persia."

Baha'u'llah Himself, referring to the verses revealed by Him, has written: "Such are the out-pourings...from the clouds of Divine Bounty that within the space of an hour the equivalent of a thousand verses hath been revealed." "I swear by God!" He, in another connection has affirmed, "In those days (years in Adrianople) the equivalent of all that hath been sent down aforetime unto the Prophets hath been revealed." "That which hath been revealed in this land (Adrianople)," He furthermore, referring to the copiousness of His writings, has declared,



"secretaries are incapable of transcribing. It has, therefore, remained for the most part untranscribed."

In the Arabic Tablet of Ahmad, Baha'u'llah refers to Adrianople as the "remote prison." This historic city, in a far corner of the European continent, was the furthest place from His native land that Baha'u'llah was ever to reach in the course of His ministry.

Adrianople, now known as Edirne, strategically, situated on the main route between Asia minor and the Balkans, has been an important city from ancient times. The city was captured from the Thracian tribes by the Macedonians, who named it Orestias. It was rebuilt by the Emperor Hadrian in the second century AD and named after him Hadrianopolis or Adrianople. It thereafter had a turbulent history, being the scene of many battles between the Byzantines and other nations until its capture by Ottoman Turks in 1362. From 1413 to 1458, Adrianople was the capital of the rapidly expanding Ottoman Empire. Even after the capital had been transferred to Istanbul, it continued to be an important administrative center. At the time of Baha'u'llah's sojourn there, Adrianople's population was 100,000, greater than its present population of 87,000.

On their arrival, Baha'u'llah, His family and companions, were all huddled together in a caravanserai called Khan-i-Arab, (fig. 14) where accommodation was poor and restricted. All that can be said about its location is that it was near the house of Izzat Aqa. Baha'u'llah stayed there for three nights. Then a house in the Muradiyyih quarter, in the north-eastern part of the city, (fig. 15) was procured for Him and His family, on high ground and with a good view of the whole of Adrianople. (fig. 16) This quarter centered on the Muradiyyih mosque, which was built by Sultan Murad II. (fig. 17) After a stay of one week in that house, which was too small, another house in the same quarter

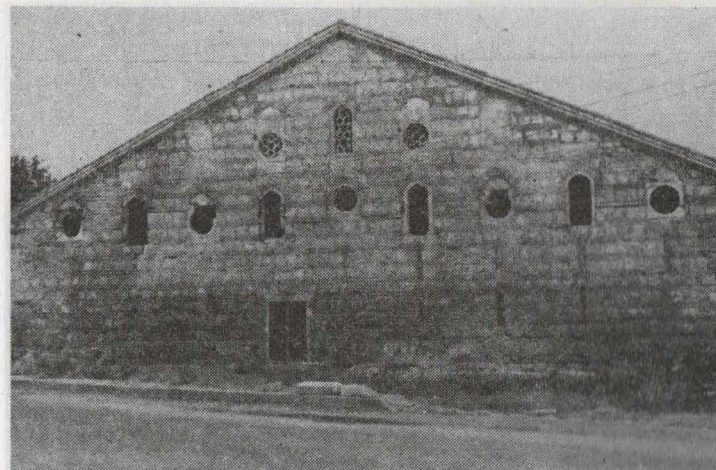


Fig. 14 Ottoman-style caravanserai: Baha'u'llah spent the first three nights in Adrianople at an inn of this type.



Fig. 15 & 16 Muradiyyih quarter of Adrianople: site of two of Baha'u'llah's residences.





Fig.15 & 16 Muradiyyih quarter of Adrianople: site of two of Baha'u'llah's residences.



Fig.17 Muradiyyih Mosque and site of Takyih (meeting place) of Mawlawis (mystic Sufi order)

but more spacious, was obtained for Baha'u'llah. This house was close to the Takyih or meeting place of the Mawlawis, a mystic order going back to the great Sufi poet Rumi. It was adjacent to the Muradiyyih mosque. The house was demolished in the Russian war in the last century but it has been described as having been very large, with eighteen rooms and a Turkish bath as well as stables and a large, long garden which extended down to the river.

All these houses were old, draughty and badly constructed and keeping out the cold was a constant problem. In addition, the first winter spent in Adrianople was extremely severe with frequent snowfalls and sub-zero temperatures.

Baha'u'llah stayed about ten months in that second house in the Muradiyyah quarter. But since its accommodation was inadequate, and its situation made it lonely and difficult of access, He wished to obtain another residence, more commodious and easier to reach.

A new house was found, right in the heart of the city, just outside of the north gate of the Mosque of Sultan Selim. (fig. 18) This mosque, the glory of Adrianople, was built in the sixteenth century by the architect Sinan, with a great dome higher than that of Saint Sophia in Istanbul. As to the house, it was a spacious and magnificent mansion called the house of Amru'llah which means 'the cause of God.' Its inner quarter of three storeys had thirty rooms. It had a Turkish bath of its own, with running water in the kitchen and also a place for the storage on an upper floor for reception, as well as accommodation for preparing and serving refreshments. (fig. 19)





Fig. 18 Mosque of Sultan Selim



Fig. 19 Site of the House of Amr'u'llah

It was during the period of Baha'u'llah's residence in the house of Amr'u'llah that Mirza Yahya, at the instigation of Siyyid Muhammad-i-Isfahani, began openly to show his true intention of wresting the control of leadership of the Faith from Baha'u'llah. It was at this time and perhaps even in the house itself that Mirza Yahya attempted to take the life of Baha'u'llah through the use of poison and on another occasion poisoned the well from which the family and companions of Baha'u'llah drew their water.

Further attempts by Mirza Yahya to create a permanent rift in the community of believers led Baha'u'llah, in March of 1866, to withdraw, with His family, to the house of Rida Big. Baha'u'llah resided there for one year. For the first two months, He refused to associate with either friend or stranger, including His own companions. The reason for Baha'u'llah's self-imposed exile was



to avoid controversy and hostility in order to help preserve unity among the believers.

The house of Rida Big (fig.20) had both an outer and inner quarter. The outer quarter had a vast courtyard with a variety of trees and bushes and flowers, and Baha'u'llah would occasionally come to the outer quarter, usually late in the afternoon, to pace up and down this garden and speak to the companions. While Baha'u'llah was still living in the house of Rida Big, and would, at times, come to spend an hour or two in the orchard and meadow near the Muradiyyih quarter. Then the house of Amru'llah fell vacant again and Baha'u'llah moved to it once more. But His second stay in that house was of short duration, for within six months the owner of the house sold it, and Baha'u'llah then rented the house of Izzat Aqa in another quarter of the city- the last of His residences in Adrianople.



Fig.20 House of Rida Big

The house of Izzat Aqa (fig.21) was newly-built and possessed a fine view of the river and the southern orchards of the city.



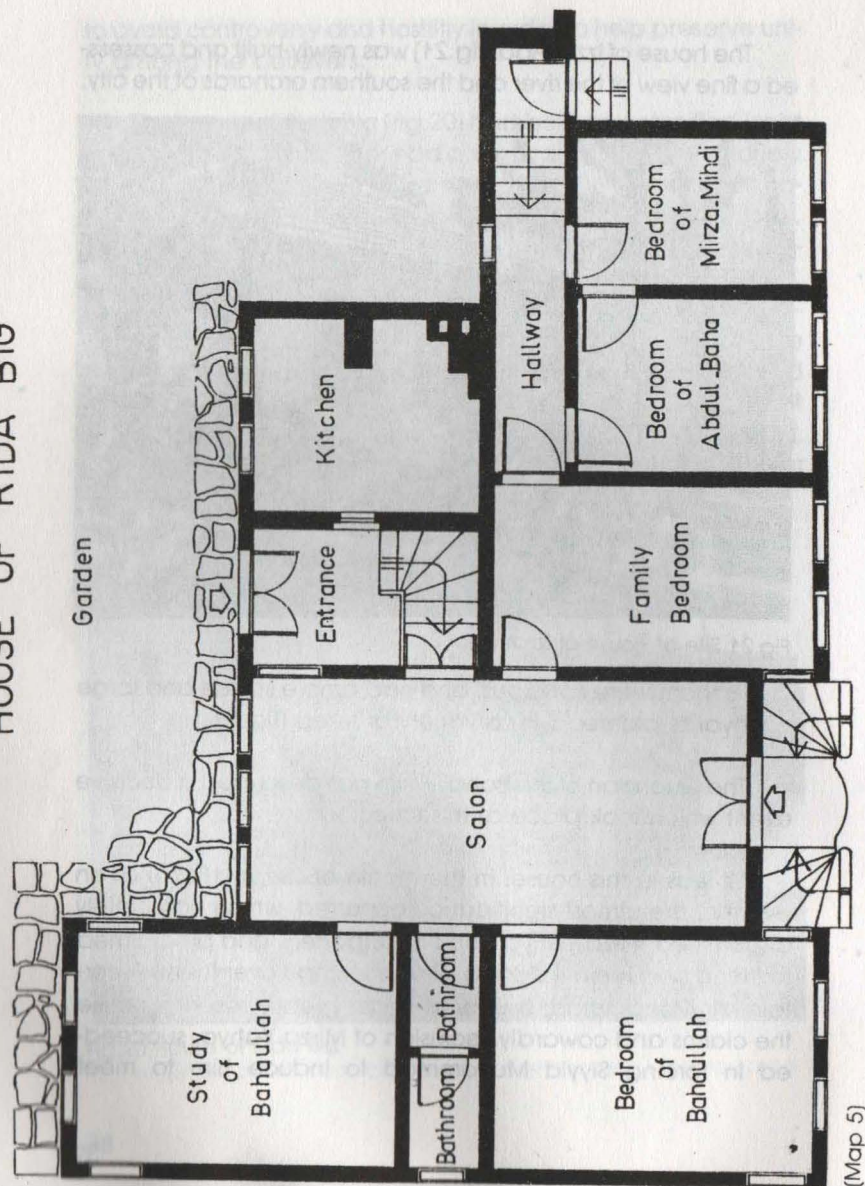
Fig.21 Site of House of Izzat Aqa

Its rooms were spacious, and had ample space and large courtyards planted with a variety of trees. (fig.22).

The Guardian of the Baha'i Faith has described a decisive event which took place at this time:

"It was in this house, in the month of...Sept. 1867 that an event of the utmost significance occurred, which completely discomfited Mirza Yahya and his supporters, and proclaimed to friend and foe alike Baha'u'llah's triumph over them. A certain Mir Muhammad, a Babi of Shiraz greatly resenting alike the claims and cowardly seclusion of Mirza Yahya, succeeded in forcing Siyyid Muhammad to induce him to meet





(Map 5)



Fig.22 Gardens of the House of Izzat Aqa

Baha'u'llah face to face, so that a discrimination might be publicly effected between the true and the false. Foolishly assuming that his illustrious Brother would never countenance such a proposition, Mirza Yahya appointed the mosque of Sultan Selim (fig. 18) as the place for their encounter. No sooner had Baha'u'llah been informed of this arrangement than He set forth, on foot, in the heat of midday,.... for the aforementioned mosque,....reciting, as He walked, through the streets and markets, verses, in a voice and in a manner that greatly astonished those who saw and heard Him."

The news and date of the confrontation became known among the peoples of Muslim, Christian and Jewish religions in the city. Therefore, from the morning of Friday until before noon, a large multitude drawn from the followers of these three religions had thronged the area between the house of Amru'llah and the entrance to the mosque. The crowd was so large that it was difficult to move about. The meeting was to



be on Friday at the time of the congregational prayer when the Muslims gather inside in great numbers.

As Baha'u'llah passed through the crowd, people showed such reverence as is difficult to describe. They greeted Him with salutations, bowed and opened the way for Him to pass. Many of them prostrated themselves at His feet and kissed them. Baha'u'llah in acknowledgement greeted the crowd and expressed his good wishes. This continued all the way to the mosque. As soon as He entered the mosque, the preacher, who was delivering his discourse, became speechless or perhaps forgot his words.

Those members of the public who were in the mosque were amazed by what they saw. So powerful were the words of Baha'u'llah that a Persian man who heard them was awestruck; he was trembling all over and tears flowed from his eyes. Baha'u'llah at one point ordered Mir Muhammad to go and call Mirza Yahya to come with all his sins and transgressions and face his Lord. Baha'u'llah remained in the mosque till near sunset, while Mirza Yahya and Siyyid Muhammad stayed at home and gave some excuses to Mir Muhammad for not attending.

The remaining months in the house of Izzat Aqa constituted the most fecund period in the whole course of the ministry of Baha'u'llah. Tablets and verses flowed continuously from His pen and His tongue.

The revelation of so many important Tablets, and the proclamation of Baha'u'llah's Message to the kings and rulers of the world, had endowed the Faith with such ascendancy that by the summer of 1868 the authorities in Constantinople had become apprehensive of its rising prestige and power. Ali

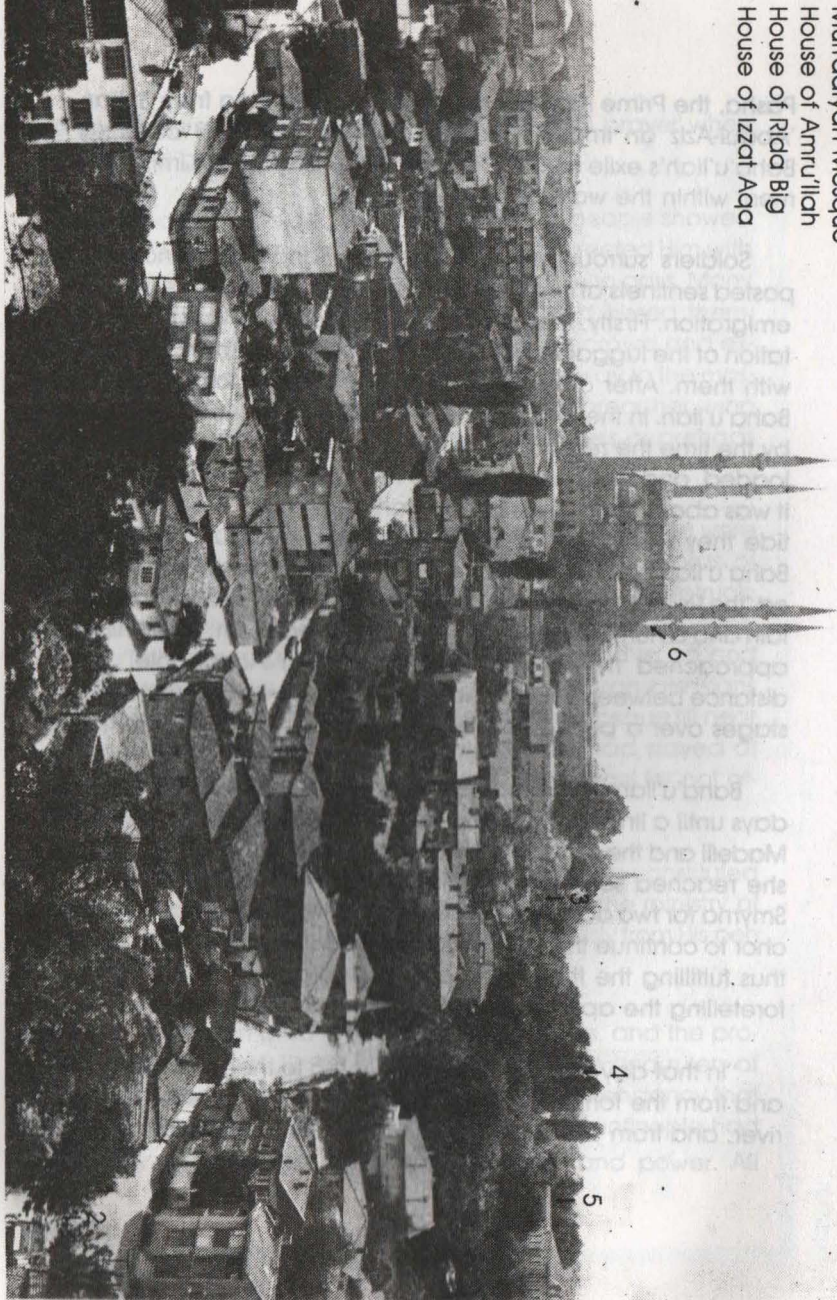
Pasha, the Prime minister, succeeded in securing from Sultan 'Abdul-Aziz an imperial edict dated 26 July 1868 ordering Baha'u'llah's exile to the Fortress of Akka and His life imprisonment within the walls of that prison-city.

Soldiers surrounded the house of Baha'u'llah and and posted sentinels at its gates. Eventually all was made ready for emigration. Firstly, they brought several carts for the transportation of the luggage, and a number of the companions went with them. After a week, arrangements were completed for Baha'u'llah. In the morning, horse-drawn wagons drew up, and by the time the remainder of the luggage was gathered and loaded, and the members of the family had taken their seats, it was about noon. Then Baha'u'llah came out. Close to noon-tide they were on their way. It was on 12 August 1868 that Baha'u'llah and His companions left the city which He had called 'the Remote Prison' and 'the Land of Mystery'. A Turkish captain and a number of soldiers accompanied them. When night approached they were three hours from Adrianople. The distance between Adrianople and Gallipoli was covered in five stages over a period of five days.

Baha'u'llah and His companions rested in Gallipoli for a few days until a liner arrived. The liner stopped for a few hours, at Madelli and the same night proceeded to Smyrna (Izmir), which she reached soon after sunrise. She remained anchored at Smyrna for two days. On the second night, the liner cast off anchor to continue the journey to Alexandria and finally to Akka thus fulfilling the three thousand year old prophecy of Mica foretelling the appearance of the Lord in these words:

"In that day also he shall come even to thee from Assyria, and from the fortified cities, and from the fortress even to the river, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain."

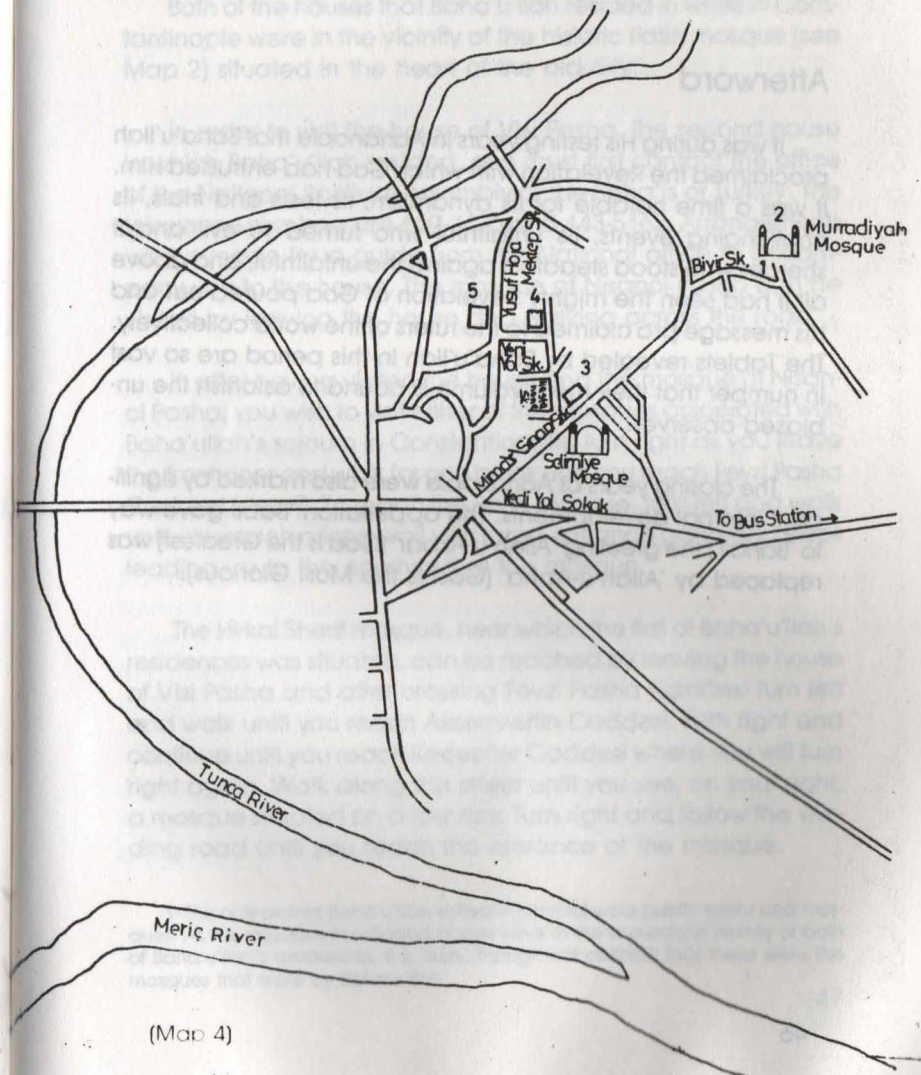




Murradiyah House  
Murradiyah Mosque  
House of Amrullah  
House of Rida Big  
House of Izzat Aqa

# Sojourn of Baháullah in Adrianople 1863 - 68

1. Murradiyah House
2. Murradiyah Mosque
3. House of Rida Big
4. House of Rida Big
5. House of Izzat Aqa



(Map 4)



## Afterword

It was during His testing years in Adrianople that Baha'u'llah proclaimed the Revelation with which God had entrusted Him. It was a time notable for its dynamism, its tests and trials, its challenging events, its unfaithful who turned to evil and its heroes who stood steadfast against the unfaithful; and above all it had seen the mighty Revelation of God poured out and His message proclaimed to the rulers of the world collectively. The Tablets revealed by Baha'u'llah in this period are so vast in number that their mere volume is bound to astonish the unbiased observer.

The closing years at Adrianople were also marked by significant internal developments. The appellation 'Babi' gave way to 'Baha'i'; the greeting 'Allah-u-Akbar' (God is the Greatest) was replaced by 'Allah-u-Abha' (God is the Most Glorious).

## Guide to Sites Istanbul

Both of the houses that Baha'u'llah resided in while in Constantinople were in the vicinity of the historic Fatih mosque (see Map 2) situated in the heart of the old city.

In order to visit the house of Visi Pasha, the second house in which Baha'u'llah resided, one must first contact the office of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Turkey. The telephone numbers are 149-7426 and 143-5162. Arrangements will be made for a guide from the National office to accompany you to the house. The mosque of Nisanci Pasha can be visited by leaving the house and walking across the road.

If, after having visited the house and the mosque of Nisanci Pasha, you wish to visit either of the mosques associated with Baha'ullah's sojourn in Constantinople, turn right as you leave the front door and walk for one block until you reach Fevzi Pasha Caddesi (street). To reach the Fatih Mosque, turn left and walk until you reach a long wall with large entrance gates and steps leading up to the courtyard of the mosque.

The Hirkai Sherif mosque, near which the first of Baha'u'llah's residences was situated, can be reached by leaving the house of Visi Pasha and after crossing Fevzi Pasha Caddesi turn left and walk until you reach Aksemsettin Caddesi. Turn right and continue until you reach Kececiler Caddesi where you will turn right again. Walk along this street until you see, on your right, a mosque situated on a low rise. Turn right and follow the winding road until you reach the entrance of the mosque.

1- The only places Baha'u'llah visited in Istanbul were public baths and mosques. As the mosques mentioned above were in the immediate vicinity of both of Baha'u'llah's residences, it is likely, though not definite, that these were the mosques that were by Baha'u'llah.



## Istanbul to Edirne

1.Car: If you are travelling by car, follow Millet Caddesi, one of Istanbul's principal thoroughfares, and leave the old city through the Topkapi Gate. This road then merges into the E-5 highway, the main expressway to Europe. This road was formerly the Londra Asfalti and follows, to a large extent, the same route taken by Baha'u'llah on the exile to Adrianople. The journey takes approximately three hours.

2.Bus: If you are travelling by bus go to the Topkapi bus Terminal, the main terminal for all of Istanbul. Go the to Trakya Garaji and simply say to anyone, 'Edirne', and you will be directed to the appropriate ticket office. The journey takes approximately four hours by bus.

## Edirne

Upon arrival in Edirne by car, following the map, go to 9 Yusuf Hoja Mektep Sokak, the site of the house of Izzat Aqa and the residence of the caretaker of the Baha'i Holy Places. If you arrive by bus, take a taxi to the same address. (See Map 4)

The present house is not the original but the gardens are part of the property of the house of Izzat Aqa. After having walked about the gardens, the caretakers will escort you to the house of Rida Big which has been restored to its original condition at the time of Baha'u'llah's sojourn there. (see map 5) After you have finished your visit here, the caretaker will return to the house of Izzat Aqa and you will continue your visits on your own.

Turn left as you exit the gate of the house of Rida Big and, using the minarets of the Selimiye mosque as a guide, walk until you reach Mimar Sinan Sokak. Turn left and just in front of the North gate of Selimiye mosque you will see a vacant lot in front of an old Ottoman timber house. This is the site on which stood the mansion of Amru'llah. Nothing remains of the dwelling today.

Enter the gate of the courtyard of the mosque and enter it through one of the many entrances. It was in this mosque that Baha'u'llah came in order to confront Mirza Yahya over the leadership of the Faith.

After visiting the mosque, exit the same gate you entered by and turn right. Continue along Mimar Sinan Sokak until you



reach Biyir Sokak. Turn right and walk up the hill and you will see the Murradiyah Mosque on your left. The two houses in which Baha'u'llah resided no longer exist but they are known to have been in the immediate vicinity of the mosque, one beside the main gate and another behind the mosque, at the bottom of the steps leading up to it. The meeting place of the Mawlavis was somewhere adjacent to the mosque.

## The Tablet of Ahmad

He is the King, the All-Knowing, the Wise!

Lo, the Nightingale of Paradise singeth upon the twigs of the Tree of Eternity, with holy and sweet melodies, proclaiming to the sincere ones the glad tidings of the nearness of God, calling the believers in the Divine Unity to the court of the Presence of the Generous One, informing the severed ones of the message which hath been revealed by God, the King, the Glorious, the Peerless, guiding the lovers to the seat of sanctity and to this resplendent Beauty.

Verily this is that Most great Beauty, foretold in the Books of the Messengers, through Whom truth shall be distinguished from error and the wisdom of every command shall be tested. Verily He is the Tree of Life that bringeth forth the fruits of God, the Exalted, the Powerful, the Great.

O Ahmad! Bear thou witness that verily He is God and there is no God but Him, the King, the Protector, the Incomparable, the Omnipotent. And that the One Whom He hath sent forth by the name of 'Ali (i.e. His Holiness the Bab) was the true One from God, to Whose commands we are all conforming.

Say: O people be obedient to the ordinances of God, which have been enjoined in the Bayan by the Glorious, the Wise One. Verily He is the King of the Messengers and His Book is the Mother Book did ye but know.



Thus doth the Nightingale utter His call unto you from this prison. He hath but to deliver this clear message. Whosoever desireth, let him turn aside from this counsel and whosoever desireth let him choose the path to his Lord.

O people, if ye deny these verses, by what proof have ye believed in God? Produce it, o assemblage of false ones.

Nay, by the One in Whose hand is my soul, they are not, and never shall be able to do this, even should they combine to assist one another.

O Ahmad! Forget not my bounties while I am absent. Remember My days during thy days, and My distress and banishment in this remote prison. And be thou so steadfast in My love that thy heart shall not waver, even if the swords of the enemies rain blows upon thee and all the heavens and the earth arise against thee.

Be thou as a flame of fire to My enemies and a river of life eternal to My loved ones, and be not of those who doubt.

And if thou art overtaken by affliction in My path or degradation for My sake, be not thou troubled thereby.

Rely upon God, thy God and the Lord of thy fathers. For the people are wandering in the paths of delusion, bereft of discernment to see God with their own eyes, or hear His Melody with their own ears. Thus have we found them, as thou also dost witness.

Thus have their superstitions become veils between them and their own hearts and kept them from the path of God, the Exalted, the Great.

Be thou assured in thyself that verily, he who turns away from this Beauty hath also turned away from the Messengers of the past and showeth pride towards God from all eternity to all eternity.

Learn well this Tablet, O Ahmad. Chant it during thy days and withhold not thyself therefrom. For verily, God hath ordained for the one who chants it, the reward of a hundred martyrs and a service in both worlds These favors have We bestowed upon thee as a bounty on Our part and a mercy from Our presence, that thou mayest be of those who are grateful.

By God! Should one who is in affliction or grief read this Tablet with absolute sincerity, God will dispel his sadness, solve his difficulties and remove his afflictions.

Verily, He is the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds.

-Baha'u'llah

1- 'This remote prison' refers to the city of Adrianople where Baha'u'llah revealed this Tablet.



## Writings of Baha'u'llah revealed in Constantinople and Adrianople

MATHNAVI, I-MUBARAK  
 TABLET OF HAWDAJ  
 TABLET OF AHMAD (ARABIC)  
 TABLET OF AHMAD (PERSIAN)  
 TABLET OF BAHA  
 TABLET OF RU  
 SURIY-I- DAMM  
 SURIHS OF HAJJ  
 LAWH-I-SULTAN (Tablet to 'Abdu'l-Aziz)  
 SURIY-I-ASHAB  
 KITAB-I-BADI  
 SURIY-I-MULUK (Tablet of the Kings)  
 PRAYERS FOR FASTING  
 LAWH-I- NAPULYUN I (First Tablet to Napoleon III)  
 LAWH-I-NUQTIH  
 SUBHANIKI-YA-HU  
 SURIH-I-GHUSN  
 SURIH-I-RA'IS  
 LAWH-I-SALMAN  
 LAWH-I-NASIR  
 LAWH-I-KHALIL  
 LAWH-I-KHALIL  
 LAWH-I-SIRAJ  
 LAWH-I-ASHRAF  
 LAWH-I-LAYLATU'L-QUDS

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Note: This compilation is only a brief survey of the period of Baha'u'llah's life in Constantinople and Adrianople. The information in this guide has been gleaned primarily from the sources mentioned below. For a more detailed account of the life of Baha'u'llah and the development of the Baha'i Faith, these books are recommended.

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**Adrianople: Land of Mystery** is a brief history of the period of Baha'u'llah's sojourn in Istanbul and Edirne between 1863 and 1868, a span in His Ministry considered to be the most prodigious in terms of revealed scripture and the most significant in the embryonic stage of the development of the Baha'i Faith. Maps and illustrations are provided to guide the reader to the principal sites associated with Baha'u'llah.