MANSION OF MAZRA‘IHL

Background

‘Abdu’l-Bahá recounts the following:

Baha'u'llah loved the beauty and verdure of the country. One day He passed the remark: "I have not gazed on verdure for nine years. The country is the world of the soul, the city is the world of bodies." When I heard indirectly of this saying I realized that He was longing for the country, and I was sure that whatever I could do towards the carrying out of His wish would be successful.

There was in Akka at that time a man called Muhammad Pasha Safwat, who was very much opposed to us. He had a palace called Mazra'ih, about four miles north of the city, a lovely place, surrounded by gardens and with a stream of running water. I went and called on this Pasha at his home. I said: "Pasha, you have left the palace empty, and are living in Akka." He replied: "I am an invalid and cannot leave the city. If I go there it is lonely and I am cut off from my friends." I said: "While you are not living there and the place is empty, let it to us." He was amazed at the proposal, but soon consented. I got the house at a very low rent, about five pounds per annum, paid him for five years and made a contract. I sent laborers to repair the place and put the garden in order and had a bath built. I also had a carriage prepared for the use of the Blessed Beauty.

One day I determined to go and see the place for myself. Notwithstanding the repeated injunctions given in successive firmans that we were on no account to pass the limits of the city walls, I walked out through the City Gate. Gendarmes were on guard, but they made no objection, so I proceeded straight to the palace. The next day I again went out, with some friends and officials, unmolested and unopposed, although the guards and sentinels stood on both sides of the city gates. Another day I arranged a banquet, spread a table under the pine trees of Bahjí, and gathered round it the notables and officials of the town. In the evening we all returned to the town together. [Esslemont, Baha'u'llah and the New Era, page 48]

In order to appreciate the significance of Baha'u'llah's move to Mazra'ih, and why it opened up a new chapter in the annals of the Faith, we may recall the tumultuous years of His Ministry preceding this historic step. As we survey Bahá'u'lláh's eventful life at this juncture, we note that for over a quarter of a century He was the main target of attack by a relentless enemy. Prior to the birth of His own Revelation, He suffered greatly through persecutions directed at the Báb community. The appalling bastinado, which was inflicted upon Him in public in His native province of Mazindaran, is one example. The humiliating circumstances in which He was conducted on foot and in chains with bare feet and bared head in the heat of the summer to the Siyah-Chal of Tihran, His
imprisonment in that darksome underground dungeon; the chain of Qara-Guhar which was placed on His neck and which cut through His flesh and left its marks on Him all His life; the hardships He endured during His first exile from His native country to Iraq; the deprivations and sufferings during His solitary retirement in the snow-bound mountains of Kurdistan; His further exile to the capital city of the Ottoman Empire, a city described by Him as the 'seat of tyranny'; His humiliating banishment to Adrianople, the 'remote Prison', travelling in horse-driven carts in sub-zero temperatures; the sufferings He endured in that 'Land of Mystery'; the hardships He was exposed to and the restrictions He underwent on His exile to the desolate city of Akka; the unbearable conditions of His solitary cell in the barracks of that city, designated by Him as the 'Most Great Prison'; and His confinement for almost seven years within the walls of a small house devoid of any greenery to please the eye -- all these tribulations which He, the Wronged One of the world, had endured with such resignation and forbearance, were at long last coming to an end. His departure from the prison-city signalized the opening of a new era of relative peace and tranquility in His life. It was not only the fresh air of the countryside at Mazra‘ih and the open fields around it which enhanced the circumstances in which He lived. The major factor which brought about a new phase in His ministry was the unveiling of His greatness, His power and His authority to friends and foe alike. This was made manifest when the highest religious leader in the land knelt before Him in a state of humble adoration and begged Him to leave the prison-city, a move which the Governor of Akka, notwithstanding the strict edict of the Sultan, had approved. [Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha‘u’llah, Vol. 4 page 6]

Early picture of the Mansion of Mazra‘ih. From the way the bricks are laid on the lower left side of the Mansion, there might have been a gate for carriage. But it seems it was covered before Baha‘u’llah moved to the Mansion.
Departure from the Prison City of Akka

`Abdu'l-Bahá recounts:

One day I went to the Holy Presence of the Blessed Beauty and said: "the palace at Mazra’ih is ready for You, and a carriage to drive You there." (At that time there were no carriages in Akka or Haifa.) He refused to go, saying: "I am a prisoner." Later I requested Him again, but got the same answer. I went so far as to ask Him a third time, but He still said "No!" and I did not dare to insist further. There was, however, in Akka a certain Muhammadian Shaykh, a well-known man with considerable influence, who loved Bahá’u’lláh and was greatly favored by Him. I called this Shaykh and explained the position to him. I said, "You are daring. Go tonight to His Holy Presence, fall on your knees before Him, take hold of His hands and do not let go until He promises to leave the city!" He was an Arab. ... He went directly to Baha’u’llah and sat down close to His knees. He took hold of the hands of the Blessed Beauty and kissed them and asked: "Why do you not leave the city?" He said: "I am a prisoner." The Shaykh replied: "God forbid! Who has the power to make you a prisoner? You have kept yourself in prison. It was your own will to be imprisoned, and now I beg you to come out and go to the palace. It is beautiful and verdant. The trees are lovely, and the oranges like balls of fire!" As often as the Blessed Beauty said: "I am a prisoner, it cannot be," the Shaykh took His hands and kissed them. For a whole hour he kept on pleading. At last Bahá’u’lláh said, "Khayli khub (very good)" and the Shaykh's patience and persistence were rewarded. He came to me with great joy to give the glad news of His Holiness's consent. In spite of the strict firman of Abdu'l-'Aziz which prohibited my meeting or having any intercourse with the Blessed Perfection, I took the carriage the next day and drove with Him to the palace. No one made any objection. I left Him there and returned myself to the city. For two years He remained in that charming and lovely spot. [Esslemont, Baha’u’llah and the New Era page 48-50]

Nabil records that Bahá’u’lláh's liberation occurred in the early days of June 1877 (some time between 3 and 10 June 1877). His departure from the prison city marks the termination of His confinement and the opening of a brief but rewarding two years of His life. [Ruhe, Door of Hope page 84]

Mansion of Mazra’ih

The summer mansion of Abdullah Pasha at Mazra’ih (built ... in pre-ottoman times, had been constructed before AD 1800) to which He [Baha’u’llah] now repaired was of a simple design. The rectangular stone building was set in gardens, its finest view eastward to the Galilee hills across a terrace, the
aqueduct, a pool, and wide fields, but also it faced northward into a large walled garden with bath and service building, southward into open gardens, and westward to the sea a half-mile distant. A square tower with archways formed an entrance on the north-west corner; once this may have been the formal entry way for carriages. One arch opened to an outside stairway raising a small landing with balcony on the upper floor and roof. On the ground floor were two large rooms, the eastern one of which Baha’u’llah used as His audience chamber and as His favored place for dictation of Tablets. On the upper level the tower room was His, a place of light and air and of views to the sea and the hills. Mazra’ih was in short, a place of beauty, the place where the Spirit of Baha’u’llah returned to the countryside He had cherished from His days in the mountains of Mazandaran. [Ruhe, Door of Hope page 84-85]

Bahá’u’lláh loved the beauty of nature and was fond of the outdoor life. Living in the Mansion of Mazra’ih enabled Him to enjoy the scenery after nine years of confinement within the walls of a depressing prison-city. In His Tablets revealed in this period Bahá’u’lláh refers to the beauty of the countryside. In a Tablet to the illustrious Afnan, Aqa Mirza Aqa, entitled Nuru’ddin, He writes about the delightful scenery at Mazra’ih. He describes in cheerful language the view of the sea on the one side and the hills on the other, and speaks of the charm of the trees laden with oranges which He likens to balls of fire! [Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha’u’llah, Vol. 4 page 7]

Because of the limited space in the house, the Blessed Beauty went to Mazra’ih with members of His family, and accompanied by Mirza Aqa Jan… His amanuensis. A frequent visitor was the Master, and the Greatest Holy Leaf, His esteemed daughter, also often came. Muhammad Khan, a Baluchi was Bahá’u’lláh’s faithful doorkeeper. At intervals He returned to Akka for visits. [Ruhe, Door of Hope page 85]
The Doorkeeper

Another of those who left their homes and came to settle in the neighborhood of Bahá’u’lláh was Haji Muhammad Khan. This distinguished man, a native of Sistan, was a Baluch. When he was very young, he caught fire and became a mystic -- an arif, or adept. As a wandering dervish, completely selfless, he went out from his home and, following the dervish rule, traveled about in search of his murshid, his perfect leader. For he yearned, as the Qalandar dervishes would say, to discover that "priest of the Magi," or spiritual guide. Far and wide, he carried on his search. He would speak to everyone he met. But what he longed for was the sweet scent of the love of God, and this he was unable to detect in anyone, whether Gnostic or philosopher, or member of the Shaykhi sect. All he could see in the dervishes was their tufted beards, and their palms-up religion of beggary. They were "dervish" -- poor in all save God -- in name only; all they cared about, it seemed to him, was whatever came to hand. Nor did he find illumination among the Illuminati; he heard nothing from them but idle argument. He observed that their grandiloquence was not eloquence and that their subtleties were but windy figures of speech. Truth was not there; the core of inner meaning was absent. For true philosophy is that which produces rewards of excellence, and among these learned men there was no such fruit to be found; at the peak of their accomplishment, they became the slaves of vice, led an unconcerned life and were given over to personal characteristics that were deserving of blame. To him, of all that constitutes the high, distinguishing quality of humankind, they were devoid. As for the Shaykhi group, their essence was gone, only the dregs remained; the kernel of them had vanished, leaving the shell behind; most of their dialectics was lumber and superfluities by now. Thus at the very moment when he heard the call from the Kingdom of God, he shouted, "Yea, verily!" and he was off like the desert wind. He traveled over vast distances, arrived at the Most Great Prison and attained the presence of Bahá’u’lláh. When his eyes fell upon that bright Countenance he was instantly enslaved. He returned to Persia so that he could meet with those people who professed to be following the Path, those friends of other days who were seeking out the Truth, and deal with them as his loyalty and duty required. Both going and returning, the Haji betook himself to each one of his friends, foregathered with them, and let each one hear the new song from Heaven. He reached his homeland and set his family's affairs in order, providing for all, seeing to the security, happiness and comfort of each one. After that he bade them all goodbye. To his relatives, his wife, children, kin, he said: "Do not look for me again; do not wait for my return." He took up a staff and wandered away; over the mountains he went, across the plains, seeking and finding the mystics, his friends. On his first journey, he went to the late Mirza Yusuf Khan (Mustawfiy’u’l-Mamalik), in Tihran. When he had said his say, Yusuf Khan expressed a wish, and declared that should it be fulfilled, he would believe; the wish was to be given a son. Should such a bounty become his, Yusuf Khan would be won over. The Haji reported this to Bahá’u’lláh, and received a
firm promise in reply. Accordingly, when the Haji met with Yusuf Khan on his second journey, he found him with a child in his arms. "Mirza," the Haji cried, "praise be to God! Your test has demonstrated the Truth. You snared your bird of joy." "Yes," answered Yusuf Khan, "the proof is clear. I am convinced. This year, when you go to Bahá'u'lláh, say that I implore His grace and favor for this child, so that it may be kept safe in the sheltering care of God." Haji Muhammad then went to the blissful future martyr, the King of Martyrs, and asked him to intercede, so that he, the Haji, might be allowed to keep watch at the doorway of Bahá'u'lláh. The King of Martyrs sent in this request by letter, after which Haji Khan duly arrived at the Most Great Prison and made his home in the neighborhood of his loving Friend. He enjoyed this honor for a long time, and later, in the Mazra'ih garden as well, he was very frequently in Bahá'u'lláh's presence. After the Beloved had ascended, Haji Khan remained faithful to the Covenant and Testament, shunning the hypocrites. At last, when this servant was absent on the journeys to Europe and America, the Haji made his way to the travelers' hospice at the Haziratu'l-Quds; and here, beside the Shrine of the Báb, he took his flight to the world above. May God refresh his spirit with the musk-scented air of the Abha Paradise, and the sweet savors of holiness that blow from the highest Heaven. Unto him be greetings and praise. His bright tomb is in Haifa. (Abdu'l-Bahá, Memorials of the Faithful, p. 92)

Jug of Water

Tahir-i-Malmiri recounts the following:

When Bahá'u'lláh was staying in the Mansion of Mazra'ih, it was customary every night for Mirza Ja'far, one of the servants of the household, to leave a jug of water outside the bedroom of the Ancient Beauty on the upper floor of the Mansion. This was done in case He needed water during the night. In front of the Mansion there was a large balcony and the Ancient Beauty often used to pace up and down it. One night, approximately four hours after sunset, Mirza Ja'far as usual was carrying the jug of water up the stairs. That night was very dark and, through an error of judgement, he fell with the jug from the edge of the roof down into the garden below. This part of the garden was not in use and usually no one went there.

Early every morning, Mirza Ja'far would first milk the cows and then attend to other housework. But that morning there was no sign of him and the friends looked everywhere but could not find him. Eventually they had to milk the cows, bring the milk to the household and attend to the other duties of Mirza Ja'far. That day about three hours after sunrise the Blessed Beauty came upon the balcony to walk. He went straight to the very spot from which Mirza Ja'far had fallen and called his name. Mirza Ja'far immediately arose, picked up the empty jug and came out of the garden in perfect health. Whenever the friends
asked Mirza Ja'far to recount the incident, he would say, 'I lost consciousness as soon as I fell from the roof with the jug in my hand. It was not until the Ancient Beauty called my name that I regained consciousness.' [Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha’u'llah, Vol. 1, page 291]

This is the same servant who, during the incarceration in the Barracks, was healed by the reading of the Long Healing Prayer.

The hall from which the stairs lead to the upper floor.

**Doors of the Prison are opened**

The establishment of Bahá'u'lláh's residence in the summer mansion of Mazra'ih also created much excitement and joy in the hearts of His companions. The prophecy uttered by Him on His arrival at Akka, that the doors of the prison would be opened, had already been fulfilled when He left the barracks. Now that His confinement within the walls of the city had come to an end the prophecy was fully realized.

The believers who came on pilgrimage at this time were also rejoicing in Bahá'u'lláh's freedom. There were many who attained His presence in this Mansion, in an atmosphere far different from that of former times in Adrianople or Akka. There was an air of freedom, of victory and ascendancy of the Cause which exhilarated every believing heart. It had been the custom from
the days of Baghdad for some of the believers to hold a feast and beg Bahá'u'lláh to honour them with His presence. This practice, however, depended upon His permission and sometimes He obliged the believers by accepting their invitation. Even when He was in the barracks, some of the believers used to save the very meagre rations they received so that they could hold a feast on a special occasion for Bahá'u'lláh to attend.

It is also apparent from some of His Tablets that certain friends in Persia would send funds to Mirza Aqa Jan, Bahá'u'lláh's amanuensis, and ask him to seek permission to hold a feast in their name for Bahá'u'lláh to attend. When Bahá'u'lláh moved out of the city, this practice became easier. After seeking His permission, the friends held feasts in the countryside in various outdoor locations. The bounty of God to those disciples who had the unique privilege of being in the presence of their Lord is immeasurable. It is not possible for us who live a hundred years later to fully appreciate, or even to imagine, the oceans of love, of ecstasy, of devotion and of thanksgiving which must have surged in the hearts of these God-intoxicated people who sat with the Supreme Manifestation of God in places of beauty, or stood as He mingled among them, speaking to them individually or collectively and even joining them in partaking of the food. To what heights of spirituality these souls were uplifted as a result of such gatherings we shall never know. [Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha'u'llah Vol. 4, page 7]

_Stairs leading to the second floor where the room of the Blessed Beauty is situated._
Celebrating Ayyam-i-Ha

Tahir-i-Malmiri recounts the following:

In the spring season Bahá'u'lláh used to stay at Mazra'i for some time. To attain His presence I used to go to Mazra'i in the daytime and at night I stayed at the Pilgrim House. On the first day of the Ayyam-i-Ha [Intercalary days] one of the pilgrims had invited Bahá'u'lláh and all the believers in Akka to lunch. I too went to Mazra'i. Early in the morning a large tent was pitched in front of the entrance to the garden on a delightful open space. That morning all the believers, numbering almost two hundred, consisting of those who were living in the Holy Land and the pilgrims, came to Mazra'i.

Around the time of noon, the Blessed Beauty came down from the Mansion and majestically entered the tent. All the believers were standing in front of the tent. Then Mirza Aqa Jan, standing in the presence of Bahá'u'lláh chanted a dawn prayer for fasting which had been revealed on that day. When the prayer was finished the Blessed Beauty instructed all to be seated. Every person sat down in the place where he was standing. His blessed Person spoke to us and after His utterances were ended He asked, 'What happened to the Feast, is it really going to happen? Thereupon a few friends hurried away and soon lunch was brought in. They placed a low table in the middle of the tent. His blessed person and all the Aghsan sat around the table and since there was more room, He called some by name to join Him. Among these my name was called; He said, 'Aqa Tahir, come and sit.' So I went in and sat at the table in His presence. At some point Bahá'u'lláh said, 'We have become tired of eating. Those who have had enough may leave.' I immediately arose and His blessed Person left. At first the food which was left over on His plate was divided among the friends, and then group after group entered the tent and had their meal. Everyone at this feast partook of both physical and spiritual food. I got the prayer of fasting from Mirza Aqa Jan and copied it for myself. Then in the evening all the friends returned to Akka. But the Master was not present that day. [Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha'u'llah Vol. 4 page 9]
A Pilgrims Aspiration Unfulfilled

While Bahá’u’lláh resided in the Mansion of Mazra’ih, many Bahá’ís came on pilgrimage and attained His presence. Notable among them was Haji Mulla Mihdiy-i-’Atri, a native of Yazd, accompanied by two of his sons -- the eldest, Mirza Husayn, and the youngest, ‘Ali-Muhammad, later surnamed Varqa by Bahá’u’lláh. ... Haji Muhammad-Tahir-i-Malmiri gives the following account:

Haji Mulla Mihdi used to produce quantities of rose water and attar of rose each year in Yazd, hence he was known as 'Atri (distiller of attar) ... One day he held a large meeting in his house in Yazd and invited the Bahá’ís, including the members of the Afnan family, to attend. About two hundred believers attended this meeting. Among them was a certain Dervish Mihdi, who was a Bahá’í and had a melodious voice. He chanted Bahá’í’s songs in a very loud voice and a few others chanted Tablets. No such meeting had ever been held in Yazd since the Cause began in that city.

The next morning Shaykh Muhammad-Hasan-i-Sabzivari [a leading mujtahid of Yazd and an inveterate enemy of the Cause] summoned Haji Mulla Mihdi to his office and there ordered his men to flog him brutally in his presence. Then he issued orders for his exile from Yazd. Mirza Husayn and Mirza ‘Ali-Muhammad [Varqa], his sons, went into hiding at the time of their father’s attest. The other
son, Mirza Hasan, fled to a neighbouring town. Haji Mulla Mihdi, accompanied by his two sons Mirza Husayn and Mirza 'Ali-Muhammad-i-Varqa, left Yazd on foot and eventually travelled to the Holy Land via Baghdad Because of old age and fatigue, Haji became ill on the way. They arrived at Mazra’ih by way of Beirut and Sidon. But Haji died on arrival [some time between 15 and 26 December 1878] and was buried alongside the toad to Akka. Whenever the Blessed Beauty passed by his grave on His way to Akka or Mazra’ih, He would pause there, put His blessed foot on the grave and stop beside it for a few moments. Although Haji did not attain the presence of Bahá’u’lláh this time, he had, on a previous occasion, visited Baghdad with his eldest son Mirza Husayn where he met His Lord face to face. Bahá’u’lláh had revealed Tablets for him for many years, all indicative of his deep love and devotion to the Cause. The outpouring of Bahá’u’lláh’s blessings upon him were indeed boundless. In a Tablet addressed to Varqa, Bahá’u’lláh, in the words of His amanuensis,[1] describes the way in which He and some of His companions once on their way to Mazra’ih stopped at the grave of his father and revealed such exalted verses in his honour that no pen could describe the glory with which his soul was invested. Bahá’u’lláh has revealed for him a Tablet of Visitation which clearly indicates how exalted was his rank among the Concourse on High.‘Abdu’l-Bahá has affirmed that He built his grave with His own hands. [Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha’u’llah Vol. 4. page 64]

Yet another who left his homeland was Mulla Mihdi of Yazd. Although to all appearances this excellent man was not of the learned class, he was an expert in the field of Muslim sacred traditions and an eloquent interpreter of orally transmitted texts. Persevering in his devotions, known for holy practices and nightly communings and vigils, his heart was illumined, and he was spiritual of mind and soul. He spent most of his time repeating communes, performing the obligatory prayers, confessing his failings and supplicating the Lord. He was one of those who penetrate mysteries, and was a confidant of the righteous. As a teacher of the Faith he was never at a loss for words, forgetting, as he taught, all restraint, pouring forth one upon another sacred traditions and texts. When news of him spread around the town and he was everywhere charged, by prince and pauper alike, with bearing this new name, he freely declared his adherence and on this account was publicly disgraced. Then the evil ulamas of Yazd rose up, issuing a decree that he must die. Since the mujtahid, Mulla Baqir of Ardikan, refused to confirm the sentence of those dark divines, Mulla Mihdi lived on, but was forced to leave his native home. With his two sons, one the great martyr-to-be, Jinab-i-Varqa, and the other Jinab-i-Husayn, he set out for the country of his Well-Beloved. In every town and village along the way, he ably spread the Faith, adducing clear arguments and proofs, quoting from and interpreting the sacred traditions and evident signs.[1] He did not rest for a moment; everywhere he shed abroad the altar of the love of God, and diffused
the sweet breathings of holiness. And he inspired the friends, making them eager to teach others in their turn, and to excel in knowledge. [1 Quran 3:91.] He was an eminent soul, with his heart fixed on the beauty of God. From the day he was first created and came into this world, he single-mindedly devoted all his efforts to acquiring grace for the day he should be born into the next. His heart was illumined, his mind spiritual, his soul aspiring, his destination Heaven. He was imprisoned along his way; and as he crossed the deserts and climbed and descended the mountain slopes he endured terrible, uncounted hardships. But the light of faith shone from his brow and in his breast the longing was aflame, and thus he joyously, gladly passed over the frontiers until at last he came to Beirut. In that city, ill, restive, his patience gone, he spent some days. His yearning grew, and his agitation was such that weak and sick as he was, he could wait no more. He set out on foot for the house of Bahá'u'lláh. Because he lacked proper shoes for the journey, his feet were bruised and torn; his sickness worsened; he could hardly move, but still he went on; somehow he reached the village of Mazra'ih and here, close by the Mansion, he died. His heart found his Well-Beloved One, when he could bear the separation no more. Let lovers be warned by his story; let them know how he gambled away his life in his yearning after the Light of the World. May God give him to drink of a brimming cup in the everlasting gardens; in the Supreme Assemblage, may God shed upon his face rays of light. Upon him be the glory of the Lord. His sanctified tomb is in Mazra'ih, beside Akka. [Abdu'l-Baha, Memorials of the Faithful, p. 84]

**Tablet of the Proof (Lawh-i-Burhan)**

In Isfahan in February and March of 1879 there had occurred the violent martyrdoms of Mulla Kazim and of the “two famous brothers” Mirza Muhammad-Hasan and Mirza Muhammad-Husayn, the “twin shining lights,” respectively surnamed “Sultanu'sh-Shuhada” (King of Martyrs) and “Mahbubu'sh-Shuhada” (Beloved of Martyrs), who were celebrated for their generosity, trustworthiness, kindliness and revealed the Lawh-i-Burhan, the Tablet of the Proof, in which ‘the acts perpetrated by Shaykh Muhammad-Baqir, surnamed Dhib (Wolf) and Mir Muhammad-Husayn, the Imam Jumih of Isfahan, surnamed Raqsha (She-Serpent), are severely condemned [Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, page 200 and 209]

In a Tablet to one of the Afnans, Bahá'u'lláh, in the words of Mirza Aqa Jan His amanuensis, makes a statement that can be described only as astounding. He states that the martyrdom of these brothers made a greater impression, exerted more influence and was more heart-breaking than the Martyrdom of their Lord, the Báb, whom they served and worshipped. [Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha'u'llah Vol. 4, page 72]
The reception room at the lower floor of the Mansion of Mazra'ih. This is also the room where Bahaullah would reveal Tablets.

Near the small pool

Mirza 'Ali-Akbar-i-Kashani recounts the following:

While I was living in Mosul (in Iraq) I had been afflicted with indigestion and vowed at that time that I would never touch watermelon again unless Bahá’u’lláh Himself told me to. One afternoon I was in Mazra’ih. The Blessed Beauty, seated near the small pool, had just mentioned that Muhammad Shah issued Our death warrant, but instead his own life came to an end'. Then, turning towards me, He said: 'Go; have some watermelon.' [Furutan, Stories of Baha’u’llah]
Leaving Mazra’ih

In the summer of 1879, there occurred one of those natural disasters for which Akka was the frequent host, an epidemic of plague erupted. As was their wont, those who could do so wisely fled from the centre of the epidemic, included among those who abandoned the city and its environs were Udi Khammar and his family. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá relates its consequences for Baha’u’llah:

It so happened that an epidemic disease had broken out at Bahjí, and the proprietor of the house fled away in distress, with all his family, ready to offer the house free of charge to any applicant. We took the house at a very low rent, and there the doors of majesty and true sovereignty were flung wide open [Esslemont, Baha’u’llah and the New Era page 50]

After leaving Mazra’ih

The Blessed Beauty used to spend much of His time in the countryside . . . From the mansion of Bahjí He often went to the Mansion of Mazra’ih, to the garden of Junaynih and the Garden of Ridvan. [Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha’u’llah Vol 4. page 244]

Nuru’d-Din-i-Zayn, the son of one of the Apostles of Bahá’u’lláh, Zaynu’l-Muqarrribin, has left to posterity the following account of Bahá’u’lláh’s movements in Akka and its surrounding areas. Normally, during the spring, summer and part of the autumn season, the Blessed Perfection resided in the Mansion of Bahjí and the remainder of the year in the city of Akka. He used to ride a white donkey. It was called Barq [lightning] because of its ability to move fast. Any time He went from the Mansion to the Garden of Ridvan, to Mazra’ih, to the Garden of Junaynih, or to Akka, He rode on that donkey, and returned in the same way to the Mansion. On these trips a servant always accompanied Him. Later when Barq died they brought another donkey from Persia . . . it was called Ra’d [thunder]. [Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha’u’llah Vol 4. page 105]

Open for pilgrimage

Opening Door to Pilgrimage  Announce to friends the delivery after more than fifty years of key to Qasr Mazra’ih by Israel authorities. Historic dwelling place of Bahá’u’lláh after leaving Prison City of Akka now being furnished in anticipation opening door to pilgrimage. -- Shoghi [Cablegram, December 16, 1950 in Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Baha’i World - 1950-1957, page 7]
Decorations of Mazra’ih

But what people do not perhaps realize is that the appearance of the Shrine interiors, the Mansion of Bahá’u’lláh, the House of ’Abbud, the Mansion at Mazra’ih, was not created by anyone, however slight the detail, except the Guardian himself. He not only steadily added to the ornaments, photographs, lamps and furnishings that make these places so beautiful, but everything was placed where it was under his supervision. Not a picture hung on the walls that was not placed exactly where it was, to within a centimetre, by him. He not only created the effect of beauty that meets the eye as one enters those places, but he produced it all at a minimum cost, buying things not so much because of their style and period but because they were inexpensive and could achieve an effect regardless of their intrinsic worth. [Ruhiyyih Khanum, The Guardian of the Baha’i Faith, page 62]
Picture of the Tent

On one wall there are two delicate watercolour paintings of the Shrine of the Báb and Akka; these are placed near two outstanding and very elegant pieces of calligraphy of the name of Bahá'u'lláh, Husayn 'Ali. Opposite these is a photograph of Bahá'u'lláh's tent, which He had pitched in the shade of the trees close to this mansion. [Baha'i Pilgrimage -- Allen and Taherzadeh, page 28]

The Shoes of the Blessed Beauty

For his own personal use Bahá'u'lláh never ordered anything extravagant. The life of luxury to which He was accustomed in His youth had been denied Him since His imprisonment in the Siyah-Chal of Tihran when all His possessions had been confiscated. But He lived a life of austerity in a majesty such that in the words of Edward (Granville Browne of Cambridge University, He was 'the object of a devotion that kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain'. His personal needs were simple and inexpensive. For instance, on one occasion when one of His companions, Haji 'Aliy-i-Yazdi, was going to Istanbul on business, Bahá'u'lláh asked him to purchase a pair of shoes for Him. He gave him an old pair of His slippers for size. Haji 'Ali later presented the slippers to the International Archives and they are now kept in the room of Bahá'u'lláh in the Mansion of Mazra'ih. [Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha'u'llah Vol. 4, page 248]