1. Introduction

This exile was an act of oppression and injustice and persecution, but Baha’u’llah turned this act of oppression into a journey of humanity toward spirituality and freedom ... This time it becomes the main turning point in the mission of Baha’u’llah and, in a sense, a turning point in the cultural history of humanity. ... Bahá’u’lláh, in His Life, was first exiled from the east to the west, ending up in Adrianople, and again, He went through another major exile from Adrianople in Europe back to the east, this time to the Holy Land, to the city of Akka. Bahá’u’lláh was not only going through Europe but also, He was in Africa (Egypt) and Asia. (Nader Saiedi on the podcast “Out of exile, a light to the world – 150th anniversary of Bahá’u’lláh’s arrival in the Holy Land: Part 1”)

2. Decision to Exile Bahá’u’lláh

Image: Portraits of the Prime Minister, Ali Pasha (left) and the Foreign Minister, Fu'ad Pasha(right). Both images are from Wikipedia.

The authorities in Constantinople were alarmed by the news that several outstanding personalities, including Khurshíd Páshá, the Governor of Adrianople, were among the fervent admirers of Bahá’u’lláh, were frequenting His house and showing Him veneration worthy of a king. They knew that the consuls of foreign governments had also been attracted to Him and often spoke about His greatness. The movement of many pilgrims in and out of Adrianople further aggravated the situation. Fu'ád Páshá, the Turkish Foreign Minister, passed through Adrianople, made a tour of inspection and submitted exaggerated reports about the status and activities of the community. Furthermore, a few among the authorities had come across some of Bahá’u’lláh’s Writings and become aware of His stupendous claims. All these were important factors in deciding the fate of Bahá’u’lláh and His companions. Those mainly responsible for Bahá’u’lláh’s final banishment were the Prime Minister, 'Álí Páshá, the Foreign Minister, Fu'ád Páshá and the Persian Ambassador, Hájí Mírzá Husayn Khán (the Mushíru'd-Dawlih). These three worked together closely until they succeeded in their efforts to banish Bahá’u’lláh to 'Akká and to impose on Him life imprisonment within the walls of that prison city. (The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, A. Taherzadeh, Vol 2, p. 398)
3. Bahá’u’lláh Instructed Some Believers to Leave Adrianople

Image: Photo of Adrianople around 1900.

Mírzá Áqá Ján, Bahá’u’lláh’s amanuensis, has described the events leading to Bahá’u’lláh’s departure from Adrianople. He states that one evening late at night Bahá’u’lláh instructed Jamál-i-Burújirdí and two believers from Persia who had come for the purpose of attaining His presence, to leave the city immediately and return to Persia. No one understood the wisdom of this action at the time, but it became evident on the following morning, when some Government officials called to ask Jamál’s whereabouts, and were told that he had left the city a few hours earlier. (At this juncture it is appropriate to mention that before going to Adrianople Jamál-i-Burújirdí had rendered an important service to the Faith in Persia. ...).

Mírzá Áqá Ján states that the day after Jamál left Adrianople, the members of the community were rounded up early in the morning, and brought to Government headquarters. They were kept in custody while soldiers surrounded the house of Bahá’u’lláh and posted sentinels at its gates. (The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, A. Taherzadeh, Vol 2, p.402)

4. The Exile Begins

Image: This photo from October 1933 shows the ruins of the House of ‘Izzat Aqa in Edirne, Turkey, where Baha’u’llah was living when soldiers surrounded His home and authorities later told Him that He was to leave the city. This picture is from Bahá’í News Service, “Out of exile, a light to the world – 150th anniversary of Bahá’u’lláh’s arrival in the Holy Land: Part 1”)

Suddenly, one morning, the house of Bahá’u’lláh was surrounded by soldiers, sentinels were posted at its gates, His followers were again summoned by the authorities, interrogated, and ordered to make ready for their departure. “The loved ones of God and His kindred,” is Bahá’u’lláh’s testimony in the Súriy-i-Rá’ís, “were left on the first night without food... The people surrounded the house, and Muslims and Christians wept over Us... We perceived that the weeping of the people of the Son (Christians) exceeded the weeping of others—a sign for such as ponder.” “A great tumult seized the people,” writes Áqá Ridá, one of the stoutest supporters of Bahá’u’lláh, exiled with him all the way from Baghdád to ‘Akká, “All were perplexed and full of regret... Some expressed their sympathy, others consoled us, and wept over us... Most of our possessions were auctioned at half their value.” (God Passes By, Shoghi Effendi, p.179)

One day, early in the morning, soldiers surrounded the house of Baha’u’llah, and would let no one enter or depart. Those Baha’is who kept shops or had trading centres were all arrested and removed to the Seraye. Aqa Rida states that before nightfall they were called, one by one, to the presence of the Ottoman officials and were interrogated to make them admit that they were Baha’is. ‘They were told that their goods would be sold or auctioned, which the officials proceeded to do the next day. (Bahá’u’lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p.255 )
5. Three Days
Image: View of Adrianople 1853

We were sitting one day in our house, when we heard discordant music, loud, insistent! We wondered what could be causing this uproar. Looking from the windows we found that we were surrounded by many soldiers. The Governor was reluctant to tell Bahá'u'lláh that the order had come for still another banishment. He explained this to Sarkar-i-Aqa ('Abdu'l-Bahá), and we were told that we had three days to prepare for the journey to Akka. Then we learnt that we were all to be separated. Bahá'u'lláh to one place, the Master to another, and the friends to still another place. ... One of the friends, Karbila'i Ja'far, in despair at the threatened separation, attempted to kill himself; he was saved, but was too ill to travel. Bahá'u'lláh refused to leave him unless the Governor of Adrianople undertook to have him well cared for, and sent after us when he should be recovered. This was done, and forty days after we arrived at Akka, Karbila'i Ja'far joined us. (Lady Blomfield, The Chosen Highway, p. 62)

6. The Two Brothers
Image: Streets of Adrianople end of 19th century

'The two brothers, Haji Ja'far and Haji Taqi, resided in the inn. They were not molested nor imprisoned. It was therefore assumed that they would be left behind. But they were most of the time in the biruni, and they came and went without hindrance. One night after sunset, we were all in the biruni, and Haji Ja'far and his brother were both there. Haji Ja'far got up and went over to the window which overlooked the street. Soon, we heard a hissing noise and, going to investigate, we found that the Haji had cut his throat, and blood was gushing out. We were greatly perplexed. Should he die, we said, how could we prove that he had committed suicide? And so we hurried to convey the news to the Most Great Branch. He came out to the biruni, and since the house of the Cadi (Qadi) was near, He sent for him and also for a surgeon, named Muhammad Effendi, who lived in the neighbourhood. Then a crowd gathered. (Bahá'u'lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 258)

At that moment I [Ashchi] arrived in the outer apartment to count the number of people so that I could bring supper for everybody. The Greatest Holy Leaf was in the kitchen waiting for me to tell her the number. But when I saw Hájí Ja'far in that state staggering all over the place with blood pouring out I was riveted to the scene before me, dazed and in a state of shock. The soldiers were telling Hájí Ja'far that a surgeon would be coming to attend to his wounds, but although he could not speak, he made it clear to them by sign language that even if the surgeon was able to stitch his wounds he would cut his throat again...

As I did not return to the kitchen the Greatest Holy Leaf sent the widow of Mírzá Mustafá to come and fetch me at once. But when she saw Hájí Ja'far in that frightful state she fainted and fell unconscious on the ground. Then from the kitchen they sent another person--a Christian maid--to come and see what was the cause of delay. She also fainted and dropped beside the widow of Mírzá Mustafá! In the meantime 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent me into the inner apartments of the house to bring some of His own clothes so that He could change Hájí Ja'far's
clothes. On my way I found the two women fallen unconscious at the gate; I sprinkled water on their faces and massaged them until they regained consciousness. The three of us entered the kitchen together. When the holy family saw us in such a state, frightened and trembling, they wanted to know what had happened, especially when I asked for the Master’s clothes. I said the Master had perspired a lot in the crowd and wished to change! But the Greatest Holy Leaf did not believe me. She said, 'Tell me the truth, what is the matter? Why are you all so frightened?' I still tried to hide the news from her, but she lovingly urged me to tell the truth pointing out that my hiding it would cause distress to everybody in the household. So I told the story...and suggested that the news be kept from Bahá'u'lláh until after He had had supper. The Greatest Holy Leaf dismissed my idea as a feeble one and admonished me saying that this was not the first time that such a thing had happened; already thousands of lovers had shed their blood in the path of the Blessed Beauty...

As to Hájí Ja'far, 'Abdu'l-Bahá urged him to co-operate with the surgeon when he came and promised him that he would be allowed to join Bahá'u'lláh. (The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, A. Taherzadeh, Vol 2, p. 405)

The surgeon took hold of the Hají's throat, cut as it was. This action revived the Hají, who began to speak. The Cadi asked him, "You did this to yourself?" "I myself", he replied. "But why?" the Cadi asked. "Because", he answered, "I saw that I was about to be deprived of accompanying my Lord, of the bounty of His presence. So I did not wish to live." "With what instrument did you cut your throat?" the Cadi asked. "With a razor, such as is used by barbers, which I bought in the bazar", the Hají replied. They instituted a search, found the razor [in the street] and brought it. The Hají was repeatedly questioned, and he stoutly stood by his answer that he found the thought of life unbearable in separation, and wished to die. ... The surgeon expertly attended to Hají Ja'far's self-inflicted wound and eventually he recovered. (Bahá'u'lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 258)

Aqa Rida comments on the astonishment of the onlookers, who said: 'These people know that banishment entails imprisonment and much hardship, yet they prefer it to being left behind, and choose death rather than separation; what is this evident attraction that has seized them?' Some of them, Aqa Rida says, burst into tears over Hají Ja'far's plight, and some tried to comfort him. Referring to this attempt at suicide by Hají Ja'far-i-Tabrizi, the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith comments that it was 'an act which Bahá'u'lláh, in the Suriy-i-Ra'is, characterizes as "unheard of in bygone centuries," and which "God hath set apart for this Revelation, as an evidence of the power of His Might."' ... Hají Ja'far had to be put to bed in the biruni of the house of Bahá'u'lláh. There Bahá'u'lláh visited him, sat by his bedside, consoled him, and advised him: 'Look up to God and be content with His will.' (Bahá'u’lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 258)

7. The Protest of Abdu'l-Bahá

*Image: Picture of Abdul-Baha when He was ca: 24 years old.*

On hearing him, two things amazed us. First, he seemed to be wrought up to the highest pitch of anger and indignation. Never before had we heard him speak an angry word. We had known him sometimes impatient and peremptory, but never angry. And then, his great
excitement had apparently given him command of the Turkish language, which no one had ever heard him speak before. He was, in Turkish, and in the most impassioned and vehement manner, protesting against, and denouncing, the treatment of the officers and demanding the presence of the Governor, who in the meantime had returned to the city. The officers seemed cowed by his vehemence, and the governor was sent for. He came, and seeing the situation said, 'It is impossible, we cannot separate these people'. *(Myron Phelps, The Master in Akka, p. 67)*

8. Readiness to Intervene

*Image: Adrianople ca 1834*

Ashchi continues his account: '...all of a sudden the consuls of the foreign powers became aware of what was happening and together they sought the presence of Baha'u'llah. The soldiers stationed around the house, blocking the way to everyone, could not prevent the consuls from entering. After paying their homage, they said they had come as a body, and any one of them whom Baha'u'llah might command would take up the issue with the Turks and ward off this evil.' Ashchi states 'that Baha'u'llah declined categorically their oft-repeated offer of assistance and intervention, saying: 'You wish me to give you the word to bring Me relief, but My relief lies in the hands of God. My focus is God, and to Him alone do I turn.'

Then Ashchi relates that the consuls continued to call and no one was able to prevent them. He himself took them to the presence of the Most Great Branch. And he adds that some of the high Turkish officials were scandalized and infuriated by the preferential treatment of those foreign representatives. The easy access they had to the person of the eldest Son of Baha'u'llah riled them, particularly as the Ottoman officials were usually put off on some pretext. Aqa Husayn writes that when he heard the Big-Bashi threaten to punish the troops on the morrow, should they again fail to prevent the consuls entering the house, he reported this to Baha'u'llah, Who smiled and, turning to His eldest Son, asked, 'Did you hear what Husayn has said?' Nor did the matter rest there, Ashchi reports, for the following day the consuls came as usual, and the guards did not, could not stop them. The Most Great Branch told them of the Ottoman officer's threats, which highly amused them, and one jestingly suggested that they might ask the British consul to lead the way next time, to receive the beating from the Big-Bashi. As to the officer himself, Aqa Husayn says, his superiors were displeased when they heard of his rash threats and reprimanded him, for they realized their impotence to prevent the visits of the foreign representatives, who continued to come and go whenever they wished. *(Bahá’u’lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 256)*

Some of the consuls of foreign powers called on Bahá'u'lláh, and expressed their readiness to intervene with their respective governments on His behalf—suggestions for which He expressed appreciation, but which He firmly declined. “The consuls of that city (Adrianople) gathered in the presence of this Youth at the hour of His departure,” He Himself has written, “and expressed their desire to aid Him. They, verily, evinced towards Us manifest affection.” *(God Passes By, Shoghi Effendi, p.179)*
Then 'a number of the consuls of foreign powers came,' Aqa Rida writes, 'were admitted to the presence [of Baha'u'llah] and requested that He should bid them render Him the utmost of assistance. "We will then inform our governments and stop such behaviour." 'But Baha'u'llah replied, according to Aqa Rida, 'In such matters We have not turned, We will not turn, to anyone at all.' 'He was gracious to them,' Aqa Rida states, 'and they left.' Aqa Husayn-i-Ashchi, recollecting those events many decades later, says exactly the same, that Baha'u'llah did not accept the offer of assistance and intervention by the consuls of the foreign powers. His account is more detailed since, being cook in the household, he was free to come and go as he liked, and could see at close quarters all that went on around Baha'u'llah. He relates the circumstances of the siege of the house of Baha'u'llah by the troops; the insistence of Khurshid Pasha's deputies that Baha'u'llah leave Adrianople at the earliest moment; and His refusal to do this and embark on yet another exile, because His steward owed a substantial sum of money in the bazars and could not pay these debts until His men in Istanbul were freed to sell their horses. (Bahá'u'lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 255)

9. Leaving Adrianople

The Persian Ambassador promptly informed the Persian consuls in ‘Iráq and Egypt that the Turkish government had withdrawn its protection from the Bábís, and that they were free to treat them as they pleased. ... Two of the companions were forced to divorce their wives, as their relatives refused to allow them to go into exile. Khurshid Páshá, who had already several times categorically denied the written accusations sent him by the authorities in Constantinople, and had interceded vigorously on behalf of Bahá'u'lláh, was so embarrassed by the action of his government that he decided to absent himself when informed of His immediate departure from the city, and instructed the Registrar to convey to Him the purport of the Sultán’s edict. ... “The inhabitants of the quarter in which Bahá'u'lláh had been living, and the neighbors who had gathered to bid Him farewell, came one after the other,” writes an eye-witness, “with the utmost sadness and regret to kiss His hands and the hem of His robe, expressing meanwhile their sorrow at His departure. That day, too, was a strange day. Methinks the city, its walls and its gates bemoaned their imminent separation from Him.” “On that day,” writes another eye-witness, “there was a wonderful concourse of Muslims and Christians at the door of our Master’s house. The hour of departure was a memorable one. Most of those present were weeping and wailing, especially the Christians.” “Say,” Bahá'u’lláh Himself declares in the Súriy-i-Ra’í, “this Youth hath departed out of this country and deposited beneath every tree and every stone a trust, which God will erelong bring forth through the power of truth.” (God Passes By, Shoghi Effendi, page 180)

Hájí Ja'far and his brother were able to proceed to 'Akká soon after Bahá'u'lláh's departure to that city.
10. Photographs Taken Before Departure from Adrianople

*Image:* The cabinet containing the photograph of Bahá'u'lláh is to the left in the set. The other cabinets contain paintings of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. They are located in the Bahá'í International Archives. The Picture is from Bahaullah.org

In one of His epistles, Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of Bahá'u'lláh, wrote that two photographs of Bahá'u'lláh were taken, both in Adrianople, Turkey, each in a different pose. There are copies of both pictures at the Bahá'í World Centre and one of these is displayed in the International Archives where it is viewed by Bahá'í pilgrims. (*Letter from the Office of Public Information from 1999*)

11. Towards Gallipoli

*Image:* Gallipoli. The picture is from Bahá'u'lláh.org

Aqa Rida writes: 'Then, all made ready for emigration. Firstly, they brought several carts for the transportation of the luggage, and a number of the companions went with them. On the same day, Mirza Yahya and his family, together with Siyyid Muhammad, were sent ahead. After a week, arrangements were completed for the journey of the Blessed Perfection. 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 the Blessed Perfection came out. Firstly, He showered His bounties on the Haji and his brother, and recommended them to the care of the landlord and Muhammad Effendi, the surgeon. Next, He turned to the neighbours and the people of the quarter, who had gathered to bid Him farewell. They came, one by one, sorrow-stricken, to kiss His hands and the hem of His garment, to express their grief at His departure and this deprivation. Indeed that day was a strange day. Methinks the city, its very walls and gates bemoaned their separation from Him. Close to noontide we were on our way. When night approached, we set up tents within three hours of Adrianople. We covered the distance between Adrianople and Gallipoli in five stages. The second stage was a place called Uzun-Kupri, and the next was Kashanih.' (*Bahá'u'lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi*, p. 260)

12. Súriy-i-Ra'ís

*Image:* The Súriy-i Ra'ís, written in Arabic, was revealed in honour of Muhammad Isma'il Kashani, a faithful believer of Bahá'u'lláh. In the tablet, Bahá'u'lláh writes about Âli Pasha's claimed abuse of civil power. *Picture is from Wikipedia.*

The revelation of the Súriy-i-Ra'ís began soon after Bahá'u'lláh left Adrianople in the village of Kásháñih and was completed at Gyáwu-Kuy on His way to Gallipoli. (*The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, A. Taherzadeh, Vol 2, p. 413*)

The first part of this Súrih is addressed to 'Álí Páshá, whom Bahá'u'lláh calls Ra'ís (Chief). This is one of the most challenging Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, in which the Prime Minister is reprimanded by the Tongue of power and might. In its opening passage Bahá'u'lláh bids 'Álí
Páshá hearken to the voice of God, calling throughout earth and heaven and summoning mankind to Himself. He states that no power on earth can frustrate Him from proclaiming His Message, and in strong language He unequivocally declares that neither 'Álí Páshá's opposition nor that of his associates can hinder Him from carrying out His purpose. He rebukes 'Álí Páshá for having united with the Persian ambassador in committing that which had caused Muhammad, the Prophet of God, to lament in the most exalted paradise. He proclaims the greatness of His Revelation and the exalted station of its Author, affirms that should He unveil His glory which is kept hidden because of the weakness of man, the whole of creation would sacrifice itself in His path. (The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, A. Taherzadeh, Vol 2, p. 413)

13. In Gallipoli

*Image: Harbour of Gallipoli*

On the twenty-second of the month of Rabí’u’th-Thání 1285 A.H. (August 12, 1868) Bahá'u'lláh and His family, escorted by a Turkish captain, Hasan Effendi by name, and other soldiers appointed by the local government, set out on their four-day journey to Gallipoli, riding in carriages and stopping on their way at Üzün-Küprü and Kásháni, ... (God Passes By, Shoghi Effendi, page 180)

On the fifth day, Gallipoli was reached. A house had been appointed for their reception. Baha'u'llah and His family and the womenfolk took residence on the upper floor. Some of the companions were lodged on the floor below. Others were taken to a khan. Mirza 'Aliy-i-Sayyah, Mishkin-Qalam, and other Baha'is brought from Istanbul, who had arrived the previous day, had been placed in the same inn. But Mirza Yahya and his dependents, as well as Siyyid Muhammad and Aqa Jan-i-Kaj-Kulah, had been housed in another khan. Ustad Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Salmani and Aqa Jamshid-i-Gurji had been singled out by the authorities to be expelled to Iran. They were taken to the frontier and handed to the Kurds, who promptly set them free. Eventually, by different routes, they made their way to 'Akka. (Bahá'u'lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 260)

Even in Gallipoli, where three nights were spent, no one knew what Bahá'u'lláh’s destination would be. Some believed that He and His brothers would be banished to one place, and the remainder dispersed, and sent into exile. Others thought that His companions would be sent back to Persia, while still others expected their immediate extermination. The government’s original order was to banish Bahá'u'lláh, Áqáy-i-Kalím and Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí, with a servant to ‘Akká, while the rest were to proceed to Constantinople. This order, which provoked scenes of indescribable distress, was, however, at the insistence of Bahá'u'lláh, and by the instrumentality of Umar Effendi, a major appointed to accompany the exiles, revoked. It was eventually decided that all the exiles, numbering about seventy, should be banished to ‘Akká. Instructions were, moreover, issued that a certain number of the adherents of Mírzá Yahyá, among whom were Siyyid Muhammad and Áqá Ján, should accompany these exiles, whilst four of the companions of Bahá'u’lláh were ordered to depart with the Azalís for Cyprus. (God Passes By, Shoghi Effendi, page 181)
14. Threat of Being Separated Again

Image: Lighthouse of Gallipoli (modern times)

On our arrival at this town [Gallipoli] we were met with the information that the governor had a telegraphic order from the sultan’s government directing our separation; that my father with one servant was to go to one place, my brother with one servant to another, the family to Constantinople, the other followers to various places. This sudden and unexplained withdrawal of the hard-won concession we had so recently obtained exhausted our patience. We unhesitatingly declared that we would not be separated, and a repetition, in substance, of the events of the last days in Adrianople followed. My brother went to the governor and told him that we would not submit to separation. ‘Do this’, said he, ‘take us out on a steamer and drown us in the ocean. You can thus end at once our suffering and your perplexities. But we refuse to be separated.’ We remained in Gallipoli for a week, in the same terrible suspense which we had experienced at Adrianople. Finally my brother, by his eloquence in argument and power of will, succeeded in gaining for a second time from the Constantinople government the concession that we should remain together. (Bahíyyih Khanum quoted in Myron Phelps, The Master in Akka, p. 69)

15. Warning to the Sultan

Image: Aerial View of Gallipoli Old Town

Aqa Rida writes of Gallipoli: ‘...The captain who had accompanied us from Adrianople came one night to take his leave. And as he stood humbly, expressing his regrets, the Blessed Perfection addressed him: “Tell the king that this territory will pass out of his hands, and his affairs will be thrown into confusion. Not I speak these words, but God speaketh them.” In those moments He was uttering verses which we, who were downstairs, could overhear. They were spoken with such vehemence and power that, methinks, the foundations of the house itself trembled. That man stood silent and submissive. Then the Blessed Perfection said to him: "It would have been meet for His Majesty the Sultan to have gathered an assembly and called Us to be present, that he should have investigated the matter, and had he then found any portent of sedition, any sign of anything contrary to the Will of God, to have meted out this treatment to which he hath now resorted. He should have asked Us to present him proofs of what We profess. Should he have found Us wanting, then he could have subjected Us to whatever he wished. He should not have allowed such wrong-doing, such enmity, such injuries, without reason, solely by following the behest of authors of mischief." The captain, listening intently, promised to report what he had heard.’ (Bahá’u’lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 261)

16. Leaving Gallipoli

Image: Port of Gallipoli, image from Wikipedia
After three harrowing days in Gallipoli, when all was uncertain, 'Umar Effendi, the Big-Bashi who had been sent from Constantinople to accompany the exiles, announced that they would be kept together and not dispersed, that they would all be sent to the same destination. However, he stated, only those whose names were on the register qualified for the sea journey at the government's expense; others would be voluntary exiles and would have to pay their own fares. To the amazement of 'Umar Effendi and other officials, Haji 'Ali-Askar, a veteran of the days of the Bab, and a few others who were not included in the list, joyfully bought their tickets for the steamship, an Austrian-Lloyd liner. What kind of people were these, the officials wondered, who would buy their own passages to be transported to an unknown prison in an unknown land? (Bahá’u’lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 263)

At last the steamer arrived and dropped anchor. Aqa Rida writes: 'On an evening our luggage was taken to the ship, and the next morning boats took us aboard. The sea was very rough. In the same boat where the Blessed Perfection was to sit, I and another one of the companions had the bounty of being in His presence. ... Verse flowed from His lips, ... and He spoke to us words of consolation. He then said jestingly, "Would it not be a treat if the liner should sink?" but added with utmost power and authority, "But it will not sink, even if it is battered by all the waves." Thus He spoke to us until we reached the steamer, which was very crowded. ... He [Blessed Beauty] went to the upper deck, which was cloistered and very spacious. It was the second day of Jamadiyu'l-Avval AH 1285 – 21 August 1868. (Bahá’u’lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 264)

So grievous were the dangers and trials confronting Baha'u'llah at the hour of His departure from Gallipoli that He warned His companions that 'this journey will be unlike any of the previous journeys,' and that whoever did not feel himself 'man enough to face the future' had best 'depart to whatever place he pleaseth, and be preserved from tests, for hereafter he will find himself unable to leave' – a warning which His companions unanimously chose to disregard. (God Passes By, Shoghi Effendi, page 182)

17. Mírzá Áqáy-i-Káshání

Image: Port of Smyrna (Izmir) from 1883. Picture from Wikipedia

A notable disciple who travelled with Bahá'u'lláh was Mírzá Áqáy-i-Káshání, whom He surnamed Ismu'lláhu'l-Muníb. .... On learning that his son had embraced the Cause of the Báb, he decided to kill him. One day he took him to a lonely desert near the town and was about to carry out his sinister design when his son convinced him that the Bábis of Káshán would not stand idly by, if his father killed him, but would take action to punish him for his crime. So his father released him on condition that he leave home for good.

After this tragic incident, Jináb-i-Muníb travelled to Baghdád where he attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh and was permitted to remain there for some time. ... His heart was so filled with the love of Bahá'u'lláh that all his thoughts and actions were wholly dedicated to Him. He used to live alone in a humble house with very little to eat, spending his time in transcribing
the Writings. His own writings are lucid, inspiring and full of spirit, and his teaching exploits were truly remarkable. ...

When he was honoured to accompany Bahá'u'lláh to Constantinople, he decided to walk all the way instead of riding with his Lord. 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes how, many nights, He and Jináb-i-Muníb walked one on either side of the howdah of Bahá'u'lláh. Another task on which he prided himself was to carry a lantern in front of Bahá'u'lláh's howdah.

Jináb-i-Muníb was among the companions of Bahá'u'lláh in Constantinople until His departure for Adrianople, when He summoned him to His presence and instructed him to go to Persia, where he could teach and spread the glad-tidings of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh to the Bábís. In fact, it took some time for the news of Bahá'u'lláh's Declaration to reach the believers in Persia. ... After this, he journeyed to Adrianople, attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh again, and was in that city when Bahá'u'lláh was exiled to 'Akká. About that time, however, he was taken ill and badly needed treatment. In spite of this, he begged Bahá'u'lláh to permit him to join in His exile as he longed to be with his Lord.

Eventually, his request was granted and he managed to reach Gallipoli with the others, but he was so weak that three men had to carry him aboard the steamer which was to take the exiles to 'Akká. (The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, A. Taherzadeh, Vol 1, p. 283-287)

We journeyed along till we reached the sea. He was now so feeble that it took three men to lift him and carry him onto the ship. Once he was on board, his condition grew so much worse that the captain insisted we put him off the ship, but because of our repeated pleas he waited till we reached Smyrna. In Smyrna, the captain addressed Colonel 'Umar Bayk, the government agent who accompanied us, and told him: “If you don’t put him ashore, I will do it by force, because the ship will not accept passengers in this condition.”

We were compelled, then, to take Jináb-i-Munib to the hospital at Smyrna. Weak as he was, unable to utter a word, he dragged himself to Bahá'u'lláh, lay down at His feet, and wept. On the countenance of Bahá'u'lláh as well, there was intense pain.

We carried Jináb-i-Munib to the hospital, but the functionaries allowed us not more than one hour’s time. We laid him down on the bed; we laid his fair head on the pillow; we held him and kissed him many times. Then they forced us away. It is clear how we felt. Whenever I think of that moment, the tears come; my heart is heavy and I summon up the remembrance of what he was. A great man; infinitely wise, he was, steadfast, modest and grave; and there was no one like him for faith and certitude. In him the inner and outer perfections, the spiritual and physical, were joined together. That is why he could receive endless bounty and grace. (Memorials of the Faithful, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, no. 56)

Bahá'u'lláh, in a Tablet describing these events, says that when Jináb-i-Muníb's spirit ascended to his abode in the eternal worlds of God, all the angelic souls and the Concourse on high rushed forward to receive him with eagerness and love. (The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, A. Taherzadeh, Vol 1, p. 287)
18. Arriving to Alexandria

Image: Port of Alexandria

Towards sunset of the first day of the journey, the liner appeared before Madelli, where she stopped for a few hours, and the same night proceeded to Smyrna, which she reached soon after sunrise. She remained anchored at Smyrna for two days. ... Here the grave illness of Mirza Aqay-i-Kashani (Jinab-i-Munir), whom Baha'u'llah had honoured with the surname Ismu'llahu'l-Munib (the Name of God, the Overlord), necessitated his removal to the local hospital, to his and everyone's distress. The Most Great Branch took him ashore, and stayed with him as long as was possible. He passed away very soon and lies buried in Izmir. Jinab-i-Munir it was who walked with a lantern, in front of Baha'u'llah's kajavih or steed, all the way from Baghdad to the Black Sea. He was a comely youth, exceedingly handsome, with a sweet, enchanting voice. And he sang and chanted as he walked. When he became a Babi, his fanatical father took him out into the fields, threw him down and sat on his chest, prepared to cut his throat. But his life was saved to attain the presence of Baha'u'llah and serve Him with utter devotion. (Bahá'u'lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 264)

On the second night, the liner cast off anchor to continue the journey to Alexandria, which she gained on a morning two days later. Here the exiles changed ship. This liner, set for Haifa, was also an Austrian-Lloyd. A number of Persians came aboard at Alexandria to pay their respects to Baha'u'llah. (Bahá'u'lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 265)

19. The First Christian to Become Bahá'í

Image: Bazaar of Alexandria

Towards the end of His stay in Adrianople, Bahá'u'lláh sent Nabíl-i-A'zam to Egypt on a mission. (The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, A. Taherzadeh, Vol 2, p.4)

He had been sent to Egypt by Baha'u'llah to appeal to the Khedive on behalf of Mirza Haydar-'Ali and six other believers. (Bahá'u'lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 265)

The Iranian Consul-General in Cairo, Mírzá Hasan Khán-i- Khá'í, was an inveterate enemy of the Faith. As soon as he learnt of Nabil's visit, he approached the Egyptian authorities, brought false accusations against him and urged his arrest. Consequently, Nabil was sent to a prison in Cairo and later transferred to one in Alexandria. Completely unaware of the fate of Bahá'u'lláh and his imminent exile to 'Akká, Nabil spent his days in Alexandria prison, which was located close to the sea where ships used to anchor. (The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, A. Taherzadeh, Vol 2, p.4)

Unbeknown to the exiles, Nabil-i-A'zam was in the prison-house of Alexandria. ... The fact of his detention in Egypt was known, but not the location of his imprisonment. (Bahá'u'lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 265)
[A] certain Christian physician, a Syrian by the name of Fáris, who had been put in the same prison for financial reasons, became attracted to Nabíl. At first the former tried to convert the latter to Christianity. But instead Nabíl gave his companion the tidings of the coming of the Father and the advent of the Day of God. He disclosed to his eyes the light of the new-born Faith and imparted to him the knowledge of His revelation. Soon, as a result of Nabil's teaching work inspired by his spirit of detachment from this world, and aided by his profound and intimate knowledge of the message of Bahá'u'lláh, Fáris became assured of the truth of the Cause. The fire of faith began to burn fiercely in his heart, and the love of Bahá'u'lláh possessed his whole being. He was filled with joy and ecstasy, the gloom of the prison life vanished and he found himself for the first time in the midst of paradise.

While Nabíl was in Cairo prison, one night Bahá'u'lláh appeared to him in a dream and assured him that after eighty-one days the hardships of prison life would come to an end. That day fell on Thursday, 27 August 1868, and it was on that day that the significance of Nabíl's dream came to light. [According to the shipping records the Austrian Lloyd steamer was due to leave Gallipoli on 21 August 1868 and was due in Alexandria on Wednesday 26 August early in the morning. Bahá'u'lláh and His companions transshipped to another steamer of the same company in Alexandria bound for Cyprus via Haifa, which sailed on Friday 28 August]. (The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, A. Taherzadeh, Vol 2, p.4)

20. The Exiles Arrive to the Port of Alexandria

Image: Port Said end of 19th Century

On the eighty-first day of my dream, from the roof-top of the prison-house, I caught sight of Aqa Muhammad-Ibrahim-i-Nazir, passing through the street. I called out to him and he came up. I asked him what he was doing there, and he told me that the Blessed Perfection and the companions were being taken to 'Akka ... and that he had come ashore in the company of a policeman to make some purchases. The policeman, he said, 'will not allow me to stop here much longer. I will go and report your presence here to the Aqa [the Most Great Branch]. Should the ship stay here longer, I shall perhaps come and see you again.' He set my being on fire and went away. The physician was not there at the time. When he came, he found me shedding tears, and reciting these lines: 'The Beloved is by my side and I am far away from Him; I am on the shore of the waters of proximity and yet deprived I am. O Friend! Lift me, lift me to a seat on the ship of nearness; I am helpless, I am vanquished, a prisoner am I.' It was in the evening that Faris ... came, and saw my distress. He said, 'You were telling me that on the eighty-first day of your dream, you must receive some cause of rejoicing, and that today was that eighty-first day. Now, on the contrary, I find you greatly disturbed.' I replied, 'Truly that cause for rejoicing has come, but alas! "The date is on the palm-tree and our hands cannot reach it"'. He said, 'Tell me what has happened, perhaps I could do something about it.' And so I told him that the Blessed Perfection was on that boat. (Bahá'u'lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 267)

That night neither of the two could sleep. Both decided to write a letter to Bahá'u'lláh and the next morning Fáris Effendi made arrangements with a certain Christian youth,
Constantine, who was a watch-maker in the city, to deliver their letters to Bahá'u'lláh on board the ship. They both stood on the roof of the prison to watch the ship, turned their hearts to Bahá'u'lláh and communed with His spirit with much devotion and love. (The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, A. Taherzadeh, Vol 2, p.5)

We were looking from the roof-top. We first heard the signal, and then the noise of the movement of the ship, and were perplexed, lest he had not made it. Then the ship stopped, and started again after a quarter of an hour. We were on tenterhooks, when suddenly Constantine arrived. He handed me an envelope and a package in a handkerchief, and exclaimed, 'By God! I saw the Father of Christ.' Faris, the physician, kissed his eyes and said, 'Our lot was the fire of separation, yours was the bounty of gazing upon the Beloved of the World.' In answer to our petitions, there was a Tablet, in the script (Mirza Aqa Jan's quick script to take down verses as Baha'u'llah spoke them) of Revelation, a Letter from the Most Great Branch, and a paper filled by almond nuql (a sweet) sent by the Purest Branch. In the Tablet, Faris, the physician, had been particularly honoured. One of the attendants had written: 'Several times I have witnessed evidences of power which I can never forget. And so it was today. The ship was on the move, when we saw a boat far away. The captain stopped the ship, and this young watch-maker reached us, and called aloud my name. We went to him and he gave us your envelope. All eyes were on us and we are exiles. Yet no one questioned the action of the captain.' (Bahá’u’lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 268)

The Tablet of Bahá’u'lláh was in the handwriting of His amanuensis Mirzá Áqá Ján in the form of 'Revelation Writing'. It imparted a new spirit of love and dedication to Fáris; it fanned into flame the fire of faith which had been ignited in his heart by Nabíl in that gloomy prison. As promised by Bahá’u’lláh, Fáris was released from prison three days later. After his release he arose in the propagation of the Faith among his people. Nabil was also freed soon after, but being ordered to leave Egypt he proceeded to the Holy Land in pursuit of his Lord. (The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, A. Taherzadeh, Vol 2, p.5)

21. Arrival to Haifa

Image: This drawing shows the government building in Haifa and the Russian pier, which was built in 1854. Igal Graiver, of the Haifa Historical Society, explains that Baha’u'llah likely walked on that pier to the government building when he stopped in Haifa for a few hours on 31 August 1868. Picture from Bahá’í News Service, “Out of exile, a light to the world – 150th anniversary of Bahá’u’lláh’s arrival in the Holy Land: Part 1”

The next port of call was Port Sa'id, which was reached the following morning [29th of August]. The liner anchored there the rest of the day, and at nightfall journeyed on. The next day, at sunset, she stood before Jaffa, and at midnight left for her destination - Haifa. (Bahá’u’lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 269)

At length we arrived at Haifa, where we had to be carried ashore in chains. Here we remained for a few hours. (The Chosen Highway, Lady Blomfield, p. 66)
This drawing shows the government building in Haifa and the Russian pier, which was built in 1854. Igal Graiver, of the Haifa Historical Society, explains that Baha'u'llah likely walked on that pier to the government building when he stopped in Haifa for a few hours on 31 August 1868. (Bahá'í News Service, Out of Exile, a Light to the World – 150th Anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh’s arrival in the Holy Land: Part 1, Caption text for Image no 6)

22. Refusal to be Separated from his Beloved

*Image: Picture of Aqa Abdul Ghaffar*

When the Austrian-Lloyd liner stood before Haifa, the authorities set about preparing for the journey of Mirza Yahya and his dependents to Cyprus. This move entailed the separation of the four Baha'is, whom they had decreed should accompany Mirza Yahya to his place of exile, from the compact body of the companions of Baha'u'llah. These four, all arrested at Constantinople, as we have seen, were Mishkin-Qalam, the noted calligraphist, Mirza 'Aliy-i-Sayyah (of Maraghih in Adharbayjan), Aqa Muhammad-Baqir-i-Qahvii-chi and Aqa 'Abdu'l-Ghaffar. Naturally, they and all the companions were greatly distressed when the hour of separation came. (Bahá’u’lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 269)

It was at the moment when Baha'u'llah had stepped into the boat which was to carry Him to the landing-stage in Haifa that 'Abdu'l-Ghaffar, ... whose 'detachment, love and trust in God' Baha'u'llah had greatly praised, cast himself, in his despair, into the sea, shouting 'Ya Baha'u'l-Abha', and was subsequently rescued and resuscitated with the greatest difficulty, only to be forced by adamant officials to continue his voyage, with Mirza's Yahya's party, to the destination originally appointed for him. (God Passes By, Shoghi Effendi, p. 182)

Aqa 'Abdu'l-Ghaffar was saved from death, as Haji Ja'far-i-Tabrizi had been at Adrianople, and in the end they both attained their desideratum - nearness to Baha'u'llah. ... Aqa 'Abdu'l-Ghaffar managed to escape from Cyprus and reached Syria. He changed his name, and as Aqa 'Abdu'llah remained secure. (Bahá’u’lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 269)

23. Arrival to Akka

*Image: This drawing from a book published in the 1880s depicts Akka from a beach to the city's west The sea gate is near the left edge of the sea wall (Source W.M. Thompson, The Land and the Book). Picture from Bahá'í News Service, “Out of exile, a light to the world – 150th anniversary of Bahá’u’lláh’s arrival in the Holy Land: Part 1”)*

Now we embarked again for the last bit of our sea journey. The heat of that month of July was overpowering. We were put into a sailing boat. There being no wind, and no shelter from the burning rays of the sun, we spent eight hours of positive misery, and at last we had reached ʿAkka, the end of our journey. (The Chosen Highway, Lady Blomfield, p. 66)

“Acre became for the Ottomans a place where, first of all, they had a prison for criminals, and then, a place for exile of all kinds of people who they thought should be watched over. The Baha’is were of that category,” (Professor David Kushner, a historian who specializes in the
A sailing-boat took the exiles from Haifa, across the bay to 'Akka. Wild rumours had preceded them, and the inhabitants of the town were puzzled, curious, and certainly prejudiced, hostile and even contemptuous. Some of them were at the quayside to gape at 'The God of the Persians', and to jeer. It was the afternoon of 31 August 1868, ..., that Baha'u'llah, with His family and companions, entered the 'Most Great Prison' and were incarcerated in the strongly-fortified citadel. (Bahá'u'lláh, The King of Glory, H.M. Balyuzi, p. 269)

As there were no landing facilities at 'Akká, the men had to wade ashore from the boat and it was ordered that the women were to be carried on the backs of men. But at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's insistence the women were carried ashore one by one sitting in a chair which He Himself procured. (The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, A. Taherzadeh, Vol 3, p.11)

"Know thou," Bahá'u'lláh, wishing to emphasize the criticalness of the first nine years of His banishment to that prison-city, has written, “that upon Our arrival at this Spot, We chose to designate it as the ‘Most Great Prison.’ Though previously subjected in another land (Tihrán) to chains and fetters, We yet refused to call it by that name. Say: Ponder thereon, O ye endued with understanding!” ... Having, after a miserable voyage, disembarked at ‘Akká, all the exiles, men, women and children, were, under the eyes of a curious and callous population that had assembled at the port to behold the “God of the Persians,” conducted to the army barracks, where they were locked in, and sentinels detailed to guard them. (God Passes By, Shoghi Effendi, p. 185 & 187)