The Baha'i Faith in Turkey

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Turkey is an Islamic state occupying the Anatolian peninsula and a small area of the southeastern part of the Balkan Peninsula. Modern Turkey is the successor state of the Ottoman Empire, which until the end of World War I also controlled parts of the Arab Near East and the Balkans. The Ottoman Empire played a major role in Bahá'í history, for it was to Ottoman Iraq that Bahaullah went as an exile in 1853. Later he was exiled under Ottoman authority to Istanbul, Edirne, and `Akka. `Abd al-Baha also lived in the Ottoman Empire for most of his life, the greater part of the time as a prisoner.

Bahá'ís have lived in the territory of modern Turkey since the time of Bahaullah's exile to Istanbul. The contemporary Bahá'í community consists of several thousand believers with about a hundred local spiritual assemblies. The National Spiritual Assembly of Turkey was formed in 1959.

In addition to those living in modern Turkey itself, there are large numbers of Turks elsewhere, particularly in northwestern Iran and Soviet Central Asia. There are a considerable number of Turkish-speaking Bahá'ís in Iran and an increasing number of Turkic-speaking Bahá'ís in the new republics of Central Asia.

The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire

The Turks are among the many peoples who have overflowed from the steppes of Central Asia into the settled areas of the Middle East, Europe, and China. First known as the nomadic founders of a sixth-century empire stretching across Central Asia to the Black Sea, by the tenth century C.E. they had drifted into the eastern Islamic lands, at first as mercenaries but soon as rulers. Their descendants today are scattered across Central and Southwest Asia. They are linked by history, language, and a common allegiance to Islam. The Ottoman Empire began in the thirteenth century as one of the petty Turkish principalities in the former Byzantine lands of western Anatolia. In a series of brilliant conquests over the next two centuries, the Ottomans built an empire covering most of Anatolia and the southern Balkans, capped in 1453 with

the capture of Constantinople itself. The Ottomans triumphantly moved the government from their old capital of Edirne (Adrianople) to Constantinople. At its height in the sixteenth century the Ottoman Empire stretched from Iraq to Algeria and from the Crimea to Aden and was one of the most powerful and advanced states in the world.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, it was clear that the Ottomans had failed to keep pace with the technological, economic, and military advances of the European states. Moreover, the administrative structure of the empire had become corrupt and the Sultan's power diluted. A number of provinces had already been lost to European neighbors or insubordinate governors. Many observers expected the empire to collapse. Napoleon, for example, invaded Egypt and Syria as a way of striking at Britain's Eastern interests.

However, the Ottomans proved more resilient than expected. A series of reforming Sultans attempted to reorder the state, army, and economy after European models. Salim (Selim) III (1789–1807) attempted to establish a "New Order" in which the old Janissary Corps would be replaced by a modern army, modern schools established, and the people given a say in local administration. In the end, however, the old army and government establishment united against him, and he was overthrown in a mutiny of the Janissaries.

His cousin, Mahmud II (1808–39), after consolidating his own power, carried on the reforms. In 1826 he tricked the Janissaries into mutinying and massacred them. He also tried to reform education, mostly without success, though he did establish a modern medical school and language academies for training diplomats. The result was a professional diplomatic corps that furnished most of the reforming statesman of the next decades.

`Abd al-Majid I (Abdülmecid, 1839–61), though young and susceptible to influence, was sympathetic to the reforms and issued a series of decrees known as the Tanzimat, which, at least on paper, went far towards making Turkey a modern state. However, by about 1850 the impetus towards reform had largely petered out. It was during `Abd al-Majid's reign that the Crimean War (1853–56) took place, in which the European powers united against Russia in defense of Turkey. Bahaullah alludes to the destruction of a Turkish fleet by the Russians in his Tablet to Napoleon III, an incident that Napoleon had used to justify his entrance into the war.

The Tanzimat reforms had failed to transform the state fundamentally, although many improvements had resulted. Their flaw was that for the sake of reform, power had been concentrated in the hands of the Sultan in order to allow him to make necessary changes. However, once power passed into the hands of an incapable Sultan, there were no institutions capable of restraining him.

Note: For the history of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey, see Stanford J. Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey (2 vol.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976–); Lord Kinross, The Ottoman Centuries; EB "Turkey and Ancient Anatolia." For the religious situation in contemporary Turkey, see World Christian Encyclopedia, s.v. "Turkey."

Ottoman attitudes towards the Babis

In the nineteenth century Ottoman Iraq was the temporary or permanent home to a large number of Iranians—pilgrims, clerics, students, refugees, merchants—most drawn by the Shi`i shrines there. The Babi religion first came to the attention of the Turkish authorities at the end of 1844 when one of the Letters of the Living, Mulla `Ali Bastami, was arrested in Iraq on the charges of circulating a blasphemous imitation of the Qur'an and disturbing the peace. Najib Pasha, the governor of Iraq under whose authority Bastami was tried, seems to have sincerely considered Bastami's Babi views objectionable. Nonetheless, the main concern of the Turkish authorities was apparently to avoid provoking disturbances between the Shi`i and Sunni communities in Iraq and complicating already strained relations with Iran.

Two years later when similar disturbances arose around the person of Tahira, Najib Pasha, having learned from the commotions associated with the Bastami affair, simply took her quietly into custody and held her in the house of a leading Sunni cleric while he waited for instructions from Istanbul. A few months later she was deported to Iran.

By the 1850s there were many Babis among the Iranians in Iraq, most notably Bahaullah. The Turks had traditionally granted asylum to refugees of all sorts, and at that time were freely giving Ottoman nationality to Iranian refugees, much to the irritation of the Iranian government. They protected the Babis as well, giving them citizenship when the Persian authorities tried to have them extradited. Bahaullah kept the Babis under careful control, so the Turks had few reasons to be apprehensive about them.

The Iranian government, seeing the recovery of the Babi community under Bahaullah's guidance, was anxious to have him removed from Baghdad. The Iranian ambassador in Istanbul steadily agitated for this end. Eventually, the Turks gave in and ordered Bahaullah to Istanbul as a guest of the government.

Note: For the trial of Mulla `Ali Bastami, see Amanat 220–38, Momen, "Trial," Momen, Babi 83–90.

Istanbul, the Great City

From 16 August through 1 December 1863 Bahaullah was an exile in Istanbul. In the nineteenth century Istanbul was the chief city of the Islamic world and the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Once it had been Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine empire.

The City's Name

Istanbul was originally named Byzantium, perhaps after the legendary Byzas, supposed to be the leader of the first Greek colonists to settle the site. The emperor Constantine the Great renamed the city "New Rome" and "Constantinpolis" in 330 C.E. In English this became "Constantinople"—"Qustantiyya" in the Islamic languages. This name remained in use until the adoption of the Roman alphabet in Turkey after World War I.

The modern name "Istanbul"—or "Stamboul" or "Astana"—is an Arabic corruption of a Greek phrase meaning "in the City" and was in use as early as the tenth century C.E. A pun attributed to Sultan Muhammad II, the Ottoman conqueror of the city, made this "Islambul"—"where Islam abounds." This became the preferred spelling of educated Ottomans.

Islamic cities, like Islamic people, had titles. Those of Istanbul reflect its importance and prestige: "Seat of the Sultanate," "Home of the Caliphate," "Home of Victories," "Dome of Islam," and the like. Western diplomats referred to Istanbul and the Ottoman government as "the Sublime Porte," a French mistranslation of Bab-i `Ali, "High Gate"—the name of the part of the palace where several ministries were located.

To Bahaullah Istanbul was simply "the City" or "the Great City" (al-madina al-kabira), reflecting its preeminence in the Islamic world.

History and description

Istanbul is strategically situated on the European bank of the waterway separating Europe from Asia, on a triangular peninsula formed by the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara, and a deep inlet called the Golden Horn. By its situation it controls sea traffic between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and land traffic between the Balkans and Asia. Moreover, the Golden Horn is a splendid natural harbor, and the peninsula lent itself to defense. Thus, the history of Byzantium/Constantinople/Istanbul may be read as a twenty-six-century-long struggle between those who would use the city to dominate the lands bordering the Black Sea and eastern Mediterranean and those who found their ambitions limited by the rulers of the city.

According to legend, ancient Byzantium was founded about 657 B.C.E. by colonists from Megara and Argos during the great age of Greek colonization. The early history of the town is a complicated series of struggles as various powers contended for the town with its control of the Black Sea grain trade, punctuated by sacks as irritated neighbors retaliated for the tolls the city placed on shipping. Byzantium eventually joined the Roman Empire as a free confederate city, but soon lost its privileges. It was destroyed in 196 and 268 C.E. during civil wars, but was rebuilt both times. Ancient Byzantium occupied a much smaller area than the modern city, and none of its monuments survive.

In 330 C.E. Constantine I, the Great, the first Christian Roman emperor, moved the capital to Byzantium. Now known as Constantinople, the city almost immediately became the leading city of the Western world and the capital of what was really a new eastern Greek Christian empire. Constantine tripled the size of the city. He and his successors filled the city with wonderful churches, palaces, and monuments, and girdled it with great walls that were to be breached only once in their history. Within a century and a half, the last remnants of the Western Roman Empire had vanished, but the fortunes of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire continued to rise, and by the sixth century it had attained a power and magnificence nearly equal to that of Rome at its height. Constantinople was also the seat of the Patriarch of Constantinople,

among Christian prelates second only to the Pope in Rome. After the split with Rome in the eleventh century, he became the titular head of the whole Orthodox Church, as he remains to this day. Thus, Constantinople became a sort of holy city to the Eastern Christians.

After the sixth century the empire slowly dwindled, but Constantinople remained one of the world's great cities. At its height it had a population of half a million. An Arab traveler of the twelfth century could still remark, "This city is even greater than its repute." By the fifteenth century, however, the Byzantine Empire had been reduced to some small, distant, and impoverished provinces and a few kilometers of land outside the city wall. The city was full of ruins and largely empty of people. The end came in 1453.

Muslims had besieged Constantinople for the first time in 669 C.E. During this campaign the elderly Abu-Ayyub al-Ansari, the standard-bearer of the Prophet Muhammad himself, died and was buried before the walls of Constantinople. The siege failed. Naval raids a few years later also failed. In 716–17 the caliph Sulayman b. `Abd al-Malik, encouraged by a tradition that Constantinople was to be conquered by a caliph bearing the name of a prophet, besieged the city, again without success. Seven centuries would pass before a Muslim army again stood before the Great City.

In 1355 the Ottoman Turks, having taken the last Byzantine territory in Asia Minor, crossed the Dardanelles and established themselves in Europe. For nine more decades the city maintained a fragile independence, protected mostly by the larger dangers and opportunities that preoccupied the Turks. A Turkish siege in 1422 failed to take the city, but in April 1453 a larger army equipped with the finest siege artillery in the world appeared before the walls. The desperate pleas of the last Byzantine emperor for aid from the West brought only two thousand Genoese soldiers.Cheered by the miraculous rediscovery of the tomb of Abu-Ayyub, the Turks stormed the city on 29 May. The last Roman emperor died fighting on the walls.

Sultan Muhammad II—now called "Fatih," the "Conqueror"—made Constantinople his capital. Finding the city in ruins and depopulated, he filled it with people deported from other conquered areas. He ordered his nobles to build the mosques and other public buildings for the various quarters of the city. By the end of his reign the population was perhaps 70,000. Over the next century Istanbul rose steadily in wealth, population, and magnificence as the sultans strove to make their capital the greatest city in the world. In various ways the Sultans attempted to make Istanbul a sacred city of Islam. The Byzantines had left the ancient domed church of Hagia Sophia ("Holy Wisdom"). Taking this as their model, the Ottomans filled the city with great domed mosques. In the sixteenth century the great architect Sinan and his staff built more than three hundred public buildings, most in Istanbul. Though the highpoint of Ottoman architecture was the sixteenth century, the Sultans continued building right up to the end of the nineteenth century.

The Ottoman Empire was cosmopolitan, embracing dozens of nationalities—a

diversity reflected in the capital. From the first the Sultans had brought Christians and Jews to live in Istanbul. Once the city was reestablished, people flocked in of their own accord: Arab, Turkish, and Persian Muslims; Greek and Armenian Christians; representatives of all the conquered Balkan provinces; Spanish Jews, refugees from the Inquisition seeking the relative freedom of Turkish rule; Western European traders, diplomats, and mercenaries. Typically, people of a particular ethnic group would settle in a quarter around a mosque, church, or synagogue. There they would be allowed to govern their own affairs and would be held collectively responsible for the taxes, good order, and public health of their neighborhood.

After the sixteenth century Istanbul began a slow decline, reflecting the decline of Ottoman power. The city had always been troubled by earthquakes, fires, plagues, and civil disorder. With the decline of the central authority, these grew worse. With the central authorities no longer able to strictly enforce building regulations, areas once burned over filled up with ramshackle wooden houses. Houses had long since encroached on the broad avenues of Byzantine Constantinople. The city had become a warren of narrow alleys. The rise of modern industrial Europe slowly ruined Istanbul's traditional industries and trade. The government was no longer as rich or as efficient as it had been. Whereas the charitable endowments of wealthy noblemen had once built hospitals, hospices, public kitchens, and other such institutions requiring large annual expenses, they now built libraries and fountains.

Thus, when Bahaullah came to Istanbul in 1863, he found the Great City at perhaps its lowest point since the mid-fifteenth century, though still the greatest city of the Islamic world. It abounded with magnificent mosques and swarmed with people from many countries. It was the most European of Islamic cities, its harbors choked with shipping from all over the world and offering regular steamship service to Europe, Africa, and Asia. But Istanbul was run-down and ramshackle, like the empire it ruled, and none of the improvements in public services and facilities had yet been made that were later to transform Istanbul into a modern city.

Note: There is a vast literature on Istanbul, its history, and its monuments—even excluding works in Turkish. Popular works include Bernard Lewis, Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire (Norman, Oklahoma: 1972); Constantinople: City on the Golden Horn (New York: Horizon Caravel Books, 1969); and Istanbul (Time-Life Books). See also EB "Istanbul." Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire contains a classic account of Byzantine Constantinople. EI2 "Istanbul" contains detailed information with full bibliography on the development and workings of Turkish Istanbul. EI2 "Qustantiniyya" discusses the period before the conquest from the Islamic point of view. Guidebooks such as Hilary Sumner-Boyd and John Freely, Strolling through Istanbul (London: KPI, 1987) are a good source of information and monuments and the flavor of the city. Since modern tourism started about the time of Bahaullah, guidebooks exist from his time, such as Handbook for Travellers in Constantinople (London: John Murray, 1845, 1871).

Bahaullah in Istanbul

Bahaullah and his party reached Istanbul on Sunday, 16 August 1863/1 Rabi` I 1280 after a two-and-a-half day journey by steamship from Samsun on the northern coast of Asia Minor. Shamsi Big, an official responsible for guests of the government, met them and had them driven in carriages to a government guest house near the Mosque of Khirqiy-i Sharif. This was in the center of the city, not far from the huge Fatih Mosque built by Muhammad II. Shamsi Big assiduously attended to the needs of the exiles, though the large party—more than fifty people—overcrowded the house. He hired two servants to do errands and cooking. Various of Bahaullah's companions helped as well.

The next day a representative of the Persian embassy called on Bahaullah bearing the compliments of Haji Mirza Husayn Khan Mushir al-Dawla, the Persian ambassador, and an apology for not being able to call in person. It was a courteous and carefully calibrated acknowledgement of Bahaullah's high social rank and his status as a political exile. Many other visitors came as well, including high Turkish officials such as Yusuf Kamal Pasha, a former prime minister with whom Bahaullah discussed the possibility of an international language.

Bahaullah himself refused to return these visits or to make the customary calls on the Shaykh al-Islam, the foreign minister, and the prime minister to arrange an audience with the Sultan. Bahaullah turned aside the advice of friends with the words, "I have no wish to ask favors from them. I have come here at the Sultan's command. Whatsoever additional commands he may issue, I am ready to obey." Years later, the Persian ambassador, who had been shamed by the Persian princelings and schemers who swarmed in Istanbul looking for favors and pensions from the Sultan, confessed that he had felt pride in Bahaullah's "dignified aloofness." So it was left to Bahaullah's brother Mirza Musa to do such visiting as was necessary, accompanied by Aqa `Abd al-Ghaffar Isfahani, the only one of Bahaullah's companions who spoke Turkish well. Bahaullah himself never went anywhere except to his brother's house and to the mosque and public baths. Nonetheless, Bahaullah did not live in seclusion. Visitors crowded into the house, and he regularly received his companions. Other Babis began to appear in Istanbul—though Bahaullah, foreseeing that they would occasion trouble, sent them away as fast as he could.

Bahá'u'lláh composed several major tablets during this period, notably his Mathnavi, a mystical poem in Persian; the Lawh-i Naqus, known as Subhanaka ya Hu, revealed for the holy day of the Declaration of the Bab, which fell during Bahaullah's stay in Istanbul; and the tablet to Sultan `Abd al-`Aziz and his ministers.

It was also at Istanbul that Bahaullah's eighteen-month-old daughter Sadhijiyya died. The child was buried outside the Edirne Gate. She was the daughter of Mahd-i `Ulya, Bahaullah's second wife.

The original house having proved too small, the party moved after about a month to the house of Visi Pasha, a much larger and more comfortable house a short

distance away near the Fatih Mosque.

The Persian ambassador soon realized he had made a major mistake in having Bahaullah brought to Istanbul. Though he was now much farther from Iran, Istanbul was not an isolated provincial town like Baghdad but the chief capital of the Islamic world. The ambassador now urged the Turkish government to transfer Bahaullah to somewhere less conspicuous, either Bursa in Anatolia or Edirne in European Turkey. The Sultan and his ministers, though not personally hostile to Bahaullah, saw that Babi doctrines had the potential to undermine the basis of Ottoman government, as well as to complicate relations with Iran. In any case, it had always been the intention of the Ottoman government to exile Bahaullah and his party to some place away from the capital. (Documents recently discovered by Juan Cole in the Ottoman archives show that this was the case.)

The news was first brought to Bahaullah by Shamsi Big. Bahaullah was furious. He had been brought to Istanbul as a guest and now was being made a prisoner. His first impulse was to refuse to go, sending the women and children to foreign embassies for safety and letting the Turkish government do what it could. At worst, the public martyrdom of the Babis in Istanbul would bring great glory to the Babi cause, but Bahaullah was confident the government would back down. However, Mirza Yahya, who had been living under an assumed name among the exiles, refused to take this risk. Faced with the possibility of a public rift among the Babi exiles, Bahaullah had to comply with the government's instructions. The official order was brought by a brother-in-law of the prime minister. Bahaullah replied with the stinging Lawh-i `Abd al-`Aziz va-Wukala'—the "Tablet to `Abd al-`Aziz and His Ministers."

After less than four months in Istanbul, the exiles were ordered to proceed immediately to Edirne. On 1 December 1863 they set out for their new place of exile.

Note: For Bahaullah's stay in Istanbul, see `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 145, 157–61; Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh, 154–55, ch. 26; Taherzadeh 2: 1–6, 55–61, 317–18, 325–32; Salmani 37–40, Phelps 42–47; `Abd al-Baha, Traveller's 54–55, 65; Momen, Babi 34n, 199–200; `Abd al-Baha, Some 31; Blomfield, Chosen 59–60; Bahaullah, Epistle 68–69; Ishraq-Khavari, Ma'ida 8:27–28; `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 2:177.

A number of sites in Istanbul are associated with Bahaullah. The house of Shamsi Big, the first residence of Bahaullah and the Babi exiles in Istanbul, was evidently a government guest house, not the personal residence of Shamsi Big. It was a two-story house of some size, though too small for the fifty-five exiles. Bahaullah and his family lived in the apartments upstairs, while the other Babis lived in rooms in the lower story. A pleasant reception room on the first floor provided a meeting-place for the Babis. This house was near the Mosque of Khirqiy-i Sharif in the Sultan Muhammad Quarter in the center of Istanbul. The old house no longer exists.

Bahaullah moved to the house of Visi Pasha about a month after his arrival in

Istanbul. This was a fine three-story house with its own bath and cistern, separate private apartments for the family (the famous "Turkish harem"), and a large walled garden in the visitors' section of the house. The house was located in the same quarter as the house of Shamsi Beg near the Mosque of Sultan Muhammad II Fatih that gave the quarter its name. This house also no longer exists. In 1952 Bahá'ís purchased part of the siteand in 1955 built a national hazirat al-quds on the site. Conditions did not allow the building to be used for official Bahá'í purposes so it was used as a residence.

The Fatih Mosque (Fatih Camii), built by Sultan Muhammad II Fatih "the Conqueror" as his contribution to the reconstruction of his new capital, is the largest mosque complex in Istanbul. Completed in 1471, in its original form it occupied a huge square, over 300 m. on a side. About half the area was an open court, in the midst of which sits the large domed structure of the mosque itself. Legend says that the Sultan cut off the architect's hand because the dome was smaller than that of the Church of Hagia Sofia. The cemetery behind the mosque contains the tombs of the Sultan and his queen. Around the courtyard were arranged an elementary school, library, hospital, public bath, dervish monastery, eight seminaries, and a public kitchen that once fed the thousands who lived or worked in the mosque complex, as well as the poor of the neighborhood. It was a particularly magnificent example of the mosques with their complexes of charitable institutions that once were the centers of life in Islamic cities. The mosque and most of the other buildings were destroyed in an earthquake in 1766. They were immediately rebuilt according to a new plan in a style influenced by European baroque architecture. While he was in Istanbul, Bahaullah went to public noon prayers almost every day, usually in this mosque.

The Mosque of Khirqiy-i Sharif (Hirka-i Serif Camii), the mosque of the Holy Mantle, held one of the relics proving the legitimacy of the Ottoman Sultans' claim to the caliphate. This was the possession of the mantle of the Prophet. As it happened, the Ottomans had two mantles, so in 1851 Sultan `Abd al-Majid built this charming mosque for the second, the first being kept in the treasury in the Topkapi Palace. The mosque is in the Neoclassical Empire style of the age of Napoleon I. It was very near the house of Shamsi Big, and Bahaullah came here for noon prayers. Both these mosques exist unchanged from Bahaullah's time.

The Edirne Gate (Edirnekap') was in Bahaullah's time one of the two main gates to the city. The road to Adrianople started from this gate, so it is probably through it that Bahaullah left the city. Muhammad the Conqueror entered the city in triumph through the Edirne Gate. In ancient times there was a cemetery outside the gate. Perhaps it was still there in the nineteenth century, for it was outside this gate that Bahaullah buried his little daughter Sadhijiyya.

There are many references to Istanbul in Bahá'í literature, usually either allusions to the Turkish government or to Bahaullah's exile there. The most important is the apostrophe to the city in the Kitab-i Aqdas. (Bahaullah, Codification 21) Bahaullah addresses the city as the "Spot that art situate on the shores of the two seas" and says that "the throne of tyranny hath, verily,

been established upon thee." There, Bahaullah says, he beheld "the foolish ruling over the wise, and darkness vaunting itself against the light." He prophesies that the "outward splendor" of the city would "soon perish, and thy daughters and thy widows and all the kindreds that dwell within thee shall lament." The Great City thus symbolized the pride and corruption of the Ottoman Empire, and the literal abasement of the city becomes an example of the retribution of God. The Suriy-i Muluk addresses the Persian and French ambassadors in Istanbul and its clergy and wise men, criticizing the latter for their failure to investigate Bahaullah's claim.

Shoghi Effendi in The Promised Day is Come makes the decline of Istanbul a symbol and sign, not just of divine retribution upon the Ottoman Empire, but of the decline in influence of Islam. He cites the fall of the caliphate and the flight of the last Ottoman Sultan, the decision to make Ankara the capital of the new Republic of Turkey, and the secularization of the city and of some of the great mosques.

Note: References to Istanbul and its affairs in Bahá'í writings include Bahaullah, Proclamation 50, 102–4; Bahaullah, Epistle 106; Bahaullah, Athar Muluk (Lawh-i Ra'is) 234; `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 1:381, 2:121–22, 299; Shoghi Effendi, World 173–74, Shoghi Effendi, Promised 38–39, 65–66, 100–1; Shoghi Effendi, Tawqi`at 3:61; Balyuzi, Eminent 3.

Istanbul after Bahaullah

Though the great domed mosques still dominate the skyline of central Istanbul, the city has changed much in the century and a half since Bahaullah. In 1865 the Khwaja Pasha fire—said by Bahaullah in the Lawh-i Ra'is to have been a divine warning—burned a large part of the city. This allowed the building of the first modern wide streets in the old city. Over the next half century modern city services were gradually constructed. In recent decades modern apartment blocks have largely replaced the wooden houses of old Istanbul, though the old city also holds the shanties of poor immigrants from the countryside. Istanbul is now a modern city covering several hundred square kilometers on both sides of the Bosphorus. A suspension bridge now connects Asia and Europe. The population has expanded enormously, particularly since the 1970s and is now more than eleven million.

Politically, the last century has not been kind to the Great City. The Young Turks Revolution of 1908 humbled the Sultan. Five wars filled the city with Muslim refugees from the former Ottoman territories in Europe. After World War I the city was occupied for five years by the Allies. The Turkish Republic, idealizing the Turkish villages of Anatolia, spurned Istanbul and made its capital in Ankara, deep in Asia Minor. The Sultanate and Caliphate were abolished. The last Sultan fled to Europe, and the city lost its position as leading city of the Islamic world.

With the fall of the cosmopolitan Ottoman Empire and the rise of nationalistic Turkey and Greece, the Greek Christians who had lived in Istanbul for five centuries under Turkish rule began to leave. Istanbul has become steadily more

Muslim and Turkish.

The Baha'i community of Istanbul

The first Babi to reach Istanbul was Mulla `Ali Bastami, the Letter of the Living who had gone to the Shi`ite holy cities of Iraq to announce the coming of the Bab. He was arrested, condemned, sent as a prisoner to Istanbul, and set to hard labor in the naval dockyards where apparently he died, for he was never heard from again.

When Bahaullah left for Edirne, he left behind Aqa Muhammad-`Ali Jilawdar (also known as Sabbagh-i Yazdi) as a sort of Babi agent to assist pilgrims passing through the city. About two years later he joined Bahaullah in Edirne. Others—both Bahá'í and Azali—came to the city. Nine were arrested in 1868 at the time of Bahaullah's exile to `Akka, interrogated, and either deported or sent along with the other exiles.

While Bahaullah and `Abd al-Baha were in `Akka, most Bahá'í pilgrims passed through Istanbul, preferring the convenience of Russian railroads and steamships to the arduous overland journey through Iraq and Syria. Some stayed on in Istanbul. The Bahá'í Qajar prince Abu al-Hasan Mirza Shaykh al-Ra'is spent several years there in the 1880s and 1890s, for example. See Juan Cole's articles on this individual. In the early 1880s the Afnan family established a branch of their trading firm in Istanbul under the management of Nabil ibn Nabil, the brother of Samandar. Istanbul at this time was also a center of Azali activity, mainly directed against the Qajar regime but also against Bahaullah. The Azalis made a number of accusations against the honesty of the Afnans. The affair lasted ten years, drove Nabil ibn Nabil to suicide, and forced the Afnans to close their office in Istanbul.

Note: For the complicated affair of Nabil ibn Nabil and the Azalis in Istanbul referred to in Bahaullah, Epistle 33, 108–9, 123–24, see Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh ch.40, Taherzadeh 3:172, 4:391–406; Ishraq-Khavari, Muhadirat 275–77, 417.

The modern Bahá'í community of Istanbul was established around the turn of the century. After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the new government attempted to suppress all the old religious institutions. When Bahá'ís were arrested in Smyrna on suspicion of being a secret religious society, the Istanbul Spiritual Assembly intervened on their behalf and were themselves arrested. However, they were soon cleared, having had the opportunity to explain their beliefs publicly. Shoghi Effendi reported the event as a triumphant vindication of the Faith that resulted in publicity all over the Middle East. Bahá'ís were arrested again on similar charges in 1933 and were held for about two months. In 1951 a Bahá'í delegation attended a United Nations conference for Middle Eastern non-governmental organizations in Istanbul. Shoghi Effendi told the Bahá'í world of his pleasure at the degree of official recognition received by the Faith on this occasion. In 1952 Bahá'ís were able to purchase part of the site of the house of Visi Pasha. Since 1959 Istanbul has been the seat of the National Spiritual Assembly of

Turkey. There is now a Bahá'í center in Istanbul.

Note: On the Bahá'í community of Istanbul, see Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh 31n; Taherzadeh 1:286–89; `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 303; Bahá'í World 3:222–23, 4:317 (a photo of the community, c. 1930), 8:692, 9:659, 12: 66, 602, 605–7, 14:602; Bahá'í News 28 (Nov. 1928) 2, 72 (Ap. 1933) 4, 245 (July 1951) 7; Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í 152, 167–69; Garis, Root 295, 322–23, 326–27; Balyuzi, Eminent 147–48, 181–85, 259; Balyuzi, `Abdu'l-Bahá 117, 399; Momen, Babi 89–90; Shoghi Effendi, Tawqi`at 3:33; Rabbani, Priceless 316–18.

Edirne, the Land of Mystery

Bahaullah's new place of exile was Edirne, the old capital of the Ottoman Empire, about 225 km. northwest of Istanbul on the main road from Istanbul to Central Europe.

Name, History, and description

Roman Edirne was called Hadrianopolis or Adrianople—the "city of Hadrian." In Turkish this became Adirna—"Edirne" in modern Turkish spelling. Europeans—who learned classical Greek but not Turkish in their schools—continued to call the city "Adrianople" until Turkey adopted the Roman alphabet in the 1920s. Bahá'í writers use "Edirne" in Persian and Arabic and generally use "Adrianople" in English. There are occasional references to "Rumelia," the nineteenth-century name for the area around Edirne. Bahaullah, however, usually referred to Edirne as Ard-i Sirr, "the Land of Mystery"—Sirr, "mystery," and Adirna both having the numerical value of 260 in Abjad reckoning. Bahaullah sometimes associates the epithet "remote" (ba`id) with Edirne, as in the reference to "this remote prison" in the Arabic Tablet of Ahmad. He also calls it "the city We have made Our throne."

Edirne is strategically situated at the junction of several rivers in the gap between the Rhodope and Istranja mountain ranges and thus controls access from Europe to the Thracian plain and Istanbul itself. It is beautifully situated on a hill within a bend of the river Tunja.

The city was evidently founded by the Thracians who called it Uskadama. After its capture by the Macedonians in the fourth century B.C.E., it was renamed Oresteia. The Emperor Hadrian rebuilt the city in the second century C.E. Adrianople was an important Byzantine fortress town for more than a thousand years, guarding Constantinople against threats from the northwest. Major battles were fought there against Goths, Avars, Bulgars, Crusaders, Serbs, and Turks. In July 1362 the troops of the Ottoman Sultan Murad I defeated the last Byzantine governor of Adrianople. The Ottomans made it their capital for the next ninety years and the springboard for their conquests in the Balkans. After the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, Edirne was no longer the capital but remained a favored retreat for the Sultans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The town prospered under the favor of Sultans who built fabulous palaces, mosques, and other buildings in the town.

In the eighteenth century Edirne began to decline with the general loss of Ottoman power in the Balkans. Several mutinies of the garrison, a catastrophic fire, and an earthquake all damaged the city. After an occupation by Russian troops in 1828–29, Muslims began moving from the city to be replaced by Christians coming from nearby villages. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the population of Edirne was very mixed, with Muslim Turks being a minority. The bulk of the population consisted of Christian Greeks and Bulgarians with a large Jewish minority, Gypsies, and the usual scattering of nationalities from all over the Balkans and Near East. The population was about 100,000.

Though many of the Ottoman monuments had already disappeared or were in ruins, a number of important buildings still stood, especially several great mosques. Madrasas, bazaars, and caravansaries served the needs of learning, commerce, and travellers. The city once contained many palaces and mansions, but these had suffered cruelly in the decline of the city.

Note: For the history and description of Edrine, see EI2 and EB, s.v. "Edirne."

Bahaullah in Edirne

Bahaullah's exile to Edirne marks his transformation from a guest of the Ottoman government to a political prisoner. Edirne, wrote Bahaullah, was "the place which none entereth except such as have rebelled against the authority of the sovereign." (`Abd al-Baha, Makatib 161.) The journey there was made in the middle of winter without adequate preparations, and Bahaullah's party suffered severely. On their arrival they were placed in a series of temporary accomodations, vacant summer houses too small and too poorly built to hold a large number of people in winter. Among the documents giving some details of life and events in Edirne is a very early letter of `Abd al-Baha written in 1864 complaining of their living conditions during this first winter. Eventually adequate housing was found, but Bahaullah nonetheless moved several more times during his stay in Edirne. The other Bahá'ís generally rented houses near Bahaullah's. Most of the Bahá'ís not serving in Bahaullah's household found work, usually keeping shops in the bazaar. This helped to ease the financial hardships that had afflicted them during the first months in Edirne.

Two of Bahaullah's children were born in Edirne, Diya'u'llah in 1864 and Badi`u'llah in 1867.

Bahaullah's stay in Edirne marked a crucial stage in the development of the Bahá'í Faith. Most important, it was from Edirne that Bahaullah first made public announcement of his claim to prophethood. Most of the Tablets to the Kings were written in Edirne. Many tablets also announced and defended his claim to the Babi community. Messengers such as the historian Nabil carried the news of this claim to the Babis and won the allegiance of most of the Babi community of Iran and Iraq. A steady flow of pilgrims came to Edirne and carried away the news of Bahaullah's claim.

The second major development of the Edirne period was the open break with Mirza Yahya, the generally-recognized successor of the Bab. Mirza Yahya had grown increasingly jealous of Bahaullah's prestige. However, this had been concealed from the ordinary Babis, and Mirza Yahya had remained part of Bahaullah's household. In Edirne, however, the dispute finally came into the open. After Bahaullah formally confronted Mirza Yahya with his claim to be him whom God shall make manifest, the promised one of the Bab, Mirza Yahya responded with a counterclaim to prophethood. Affairs reached such a state that Mirza Yahya made two attempts to kill Bahaullah, once by poison and once by suborning Bahaullah's bath attendant. On 22 Shavval 1282/10 March 1866 Bahaullah withdrew from the community to allow his followers to decide their allegiances for themselves. Most chose to follow Bahaullah. Bahaullah referred to this period as the Ayyam-i Shidad (the "days of stress") and the "most great separation."

Finally, it was in Edirne that Bahaullah began to establish the laws of his own religion, composing, for example, the tablets containing the rituals to be followed during pilgrimage to the two Holy Houses of Shiraz and Baghdad, the prayers of fasting, and a summary of Bahá'í law, as well as the Tablet of the Branch, which prefigured `Abd al-Baha's later appointment as his successor.

During these years the Bahá'ís maintained excellent relations with the authorities and townspeople. Bahaullah and `Abd al-Baha were on visiting terms with several of the governors, as well as with consuls, missionaries, and the clergy, all of whom thought well of the character and piety of the Bahá'ís. Later some of these people came to visit in `Akka. It was also in Edirne that Bahaullah had his most extensive contact with Europeans.

In 1863–68 there were four governors of Edirne, at least three of whom are known to have been on good terms with the Bahá'ís: Muhammad-Amin Pasha Qibrisi, 1861–Apr. 1864, a former prime minister; Sulayman Pasha, Apr. 1864–Dec. 1864; `Arif Pasha, Dec. 1864–Mar. 1866; Muhammad-Khurshid Pasha, Mar. 1866– , whose deputy was `Aziz Pasha, later the governor of Beirut in 1889–92. When accusations were first made against Bahaullah, Khurshid Pasha defended his innocence. Later, when the orders came to exile Bahaullah, the Pasha left the city in protest, leaving his deputy `Aziz Pasha to carry out the explusion. `Aziz Pasha was a friend of `Abd al-Baha and later visited Bahaullah and `Abd al-Baha in `Akka.

Eventually, the dispute between the Bahá'ís and the Azalis came to the attention of the authorities. The decision was made to exile both parties to less sensitive areas. One morning in early August 1868, troops surrounded the house of Bahaullah. Despite the protests of the foreign consuls and the governor on their behalf, the Bahá'ís and Azalis were ordered to leave the city immediately. Bahaullah refused to leave until his steward could settle his debts. The property of the Bahá'ís was sold at auction at very low prices. Bahaullah and his companions left the city on 12 August 1868/22 Rabi` II 1285.

During their stay in Edirne, the Bahá'í exiles rented a considerable number of houses and gardens. In addition, several other sites are also associated

with Bahaullah's stay.

The Khan-i `Arab was the two-story caravansary where Bahaullah was lodged during his first three nights in Edirne. It seems to have been located near the house of `Izzat Pasha, evidently in the southeastern part of the city near the Istanbul road. The accomodations there were poor. Others in the party stayed there somewhat longer. The Khan-i `Arab no longer exists.

Bahaullah and his family moved to a house near the Takyiy-i Mawlavi in the Muradiyya Quarter from the caravansary. It was too small for his family so they moved again after a week. Others of the party moved in from the caravansary after his departure. Bahaullah then moved to a larger house in the same area. His brothers, Yahya and Musa, lived with their families in a second house next door. These early residences in Edirne were all poorly built, draughty, and verminous. Since the winter was extremely cold and Bahaullah's family had spent the previous winter in sweltering Baghdad, they were unprepared for the cold and suffered severely, especially the children, who were frequently sick. The sites of these first two houses were identified by Martha Root during her visit in 1933.

After six months or so, Bahaullah was able to rent the house of Amru'llah, a very large house across the street from the north entrance to the Salimiyya Mosque in the center of the city. This was a splendid three-story house covering a city block. The andaruni (inner family quarters) had thirty rooms. Bahaullah and his family occupied the top floor, Mirza Muhammad-Quli and his family the middle, and servants the bottom. The biruni (outer house) had four or five reception rooms on the top floor, as well as a kitchen. Other Bahá'ís occupied the middle floor. The house had a bath, cistern, and running water in the kitchen. Mirza Musa and Mirza Yahya occupied two other houses in the same quarter. Food for all three houses was prepared in the house of Amru'llah and was distributed to the poor as well. Meetings for prayer and to hear Bahaullah were regularly held in the reception rooms. Bahaullah lived in this house from 1864 until March 1866 and again later for a few months, probably during the first half of 1867. When the house was sold he moved to his final residence, the house of `Izzat Pasha. The house was apparently named for its owner, one Amru'll'ah Big, but coincidentally its name means "Cause" or "command of God."

A the time of the open split with Mirza Yahya, Bahaullah moved to the house of Rida Big, where he lived with his family for a little less than a year, the first few months in total seclusion. It is now in Bahá'í hands and has been rebuilt. Mirza Musa also had a house in the neighborhood, as did a number of Bahaullah's companions. Down the street is an orchard rented by Bahaullah, now also in Bahá'í hands. The house of Rida Big had an andaruni and a small biruni, but the latter had a very large walled garden.

After the sale of the house of Amru'llah, Bahaullah rented the house of `Izzat Aqa in the southeastern part of the city, not far from the Khan-i `Arab. This was another large house with a fine view of the river and countryside. There were two large courtyards with flowers and trees. Bahaullah lived here for

about eleven months. his companions had another house in the same area. Mishkin-Qalam, the calligrapher, and Mirza Musa also had houses in the area which Bahaullah visited on occasion.

Also associated with Bahaullah is the Muradiyya mosque and Takyiy-i Mawlavi, which together form a fine fifteenth century mosque complex. Originally it was built for the Mawlavi dervishes, the mystical order founded by the poet Rumi and much patronized by the Ottoman Sultans. When the building became a mosque, a takya—dervish monastery—was built next door. Subsidiary charitable foundations were added to the complex: baths, a hospital, a seminary, a bakery, and an almshouse. Several of the Bahá'í houses were close to this mosque, and Bahaullah is known to have visited it. It still stands.

The Salimiyya Mosque is the great domed royal mosque of Edirne. Built for the cultured and dissolute Sultan Salim II, "the Sot," this wonderful building was the masterwork of Sinan, the greatest architect of the Ottomans. Its dome and minarets dominate the city, as they have since 1575. It was in this mosque that Mirza Yahya challenged Bahaullah to meet him to publicly dispute their claims. Bahaullah came to the mosque at the appointed time, but Mirza Yahya failed to appear.

Note: For accounts of Bahaullah's time in Edirne, see `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 161–180, Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh 217–59, 460–62, Taherzadeh 2, Momen, Babi 185–200, 205–7, 234–35, 487, Balyuzi, `Abdu'l-Bahá 19–26, `Abd al-Baha, Traveller's 55–59, Phelps, Life 47–69, Blomfield, Chosen 60–64, Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í 189.

Edirne after Bahaullah

Edirne is mentioned often in the later writings of Bahaullah, usually as the "Land of Mystery." It is often associated with the open proclamation of his prophetic mission. The most important direct references to Edirne in Bahaullah's writings are the prophecies found in the Suriy-i Ra'is and some other tablets of great destruction and political turmoil in the Edirne area and of Sultan `Abd al-`Aziz's impending loss of these territories. The fulfilment of these prophecies ten years later greatly raised Bahaullah's prestige and was a proof often cited by Bahá'í teachers over then next several decades. Another passage in the Suriy-i Ra'is states that "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."

Note: `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 181. Persian sources on the Edirne period, mainly important for Bahaullah's prophecies concerning Edrine, are Ishraq-Khavari, Ma'ida 8:27–28, Mazandarani, Amr 2:284–92, 4:453–58, Ishraq-Khavari, Rahiq 1:55–56, 67–72, Qamus-i Tawqi` 1:100–104, Ishraq-Khavari, Da'irat 2:282, 283, 7:915. Other references to these prophecies and related subjects include `Abd al-Baha, Promulgation 398, Shoghi Effendi, World 178, Shoghi Effendi, Promised 62, 65, Iqt. 74, `Abd al-Baha, Tablets 213, Ishraq-Khavari, Ma'ida 4:277, 7:194–95, Bahaullah, Epistle 132, Bahaullah, Athar 4:336, `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 2:213, Zarqani, Badayi` 1:357, 2:194.

Bahaullah's prophecies concerning Edirne were realized when war broke out with Russia and several Balkan Christian states soon after the fall of `Abd al-`Aziz in 1876. The war of 1877–78 with Russia began with an initial success as the Turks heroically defended Plevna in Bulgaria against a Russian siege. However, when the Turks attempted to break out, they were defeated. The Russians poured south and the Muslim population of Bulgaria and Rumelia fled before them, dying in thousands from cold, hunger, disease, and Russian shells in that horrible winter. All the chief towns of European Turkey fell, Edirne included. The city and its population, particularly the Muslims, suffered greatly from that occupation. Most of the Turkish territory north of Edirne was lost to the new Christian state of Bulgaria.

After the Russians withdrew, the town recovered for a time, and in 1890 its population was still about 87,000. However, it was once more devastated in the Balkan Wars of 1912–13. The Turkish defeats in October 1912 left Edirne besieged by the Bulgarians. The Turks held out there until March 1913. When the Bulgarians began fighting with their former allies over the spoils of the war, the Turks were able to reoccupy Edirne. After the establishment of modern Turkey in 1923, the Greek population abandoned the town as part of the population exchanges between the two countries. The population—65,000 in 1911—had dropped to 34,500 in 1927.

Today Edirne is a border town with a population of 72,000 (1980), the first stop for travellers entering Turkey by train from Western Europe. It is the capital of the province of the same name. The area grows various grains and fruits.

The modern Baha'i community

After Bahaullah's departure in 1868, no Bahá'ís lived in or visited Edirne for many decades. The first recorded Bahá'í visit to the city was that of Martha Root and Marion Jack, 17 October–6 November 1933. Shoghi Effendi had supplied them with a list of the houses and sites associated with Bahaullah. In the course of their visit they were able to identify four houses—all then in ruins after five wars—in which Bahaullah had lived, as well as several other sites. Though sixty-five years had passed since Bahaullah's departure, they were able to find two old men who remembered "Bahá'í Big" and "`Abbas Big" and who were able to supply them with information about the Bahá'í households.

By 1963 a local spiritual assembly had been established in Edirne with the aid of pioneers from Iran, and two sites associated with Bahaullah—the house of Rida Big and a nearby orchard—were in Bahá'í hands. This house has been rebuilt though not fully restored and furnished. Pilgrims occasionally visit. Two major anniversaries of events in Bahaullah's life were observed in Edirne. On 11–12 December 1963 some seventy Turkish Bahá'ís visited the city to observe the centenary of Bahaullah's arrival there. In 1967 five Hands of the Cause came to commemorate the centenary of the revelation of the Suriy-i Muluk.

Note: For Martha Root's account of her visit to Edirne, see Bahá'í World

5:581–93, reprinted in Garis, Root 179–96. This article contains photographs of most of the important Bahá'í sites. See also Garis, Root 393–97. On the modern Bahá'í community of Edirne and the house of Rida Big, see Bahá'í World 14:3, Bahá'í News 328 (6/1958) 14, 397 (4/1964) 3–4, 434 (5/1967) 2.

Sultan `Abd al-`Aziz and his Ministers

The period from Bahaullah's arrival in Istanbul in 1863 to his de facto release from confinement in `Akka in 1877 coincided with the important political developments that took place in the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Sultan `Abd al-`Aziz. He and his ministers `Ali Pasha and Fu'ad Pasha were the Ottoman officials responsible for Bahaullah's successive exiles, and each was the recipient of important tablets from Bahaullah. Ottoman officials were apparently impressed with Bahaullah personally, and `Ali Pasha praised his character and beliefs to foreign diplomats. However, the Ottomans were mainly interested in the Babis as a pawn in Turkish-Iranian relations. By favoring or suppressing the Babis, they could exercise some influence on the Persian government. Bahaullah, however, held himself aloof from such machinations, refusing even to return the visits of Turkish officials. This evidently irritated the Sultan, and the Ottoman government yielded to the Iranian entreaties to send Bahaullah away from Istanbul. They were also apparently becoming concerned about the possibility of Babi views on theocratic government spreading and undermining Ottoman authority.

The reasons for Bahaullah's final exile, to `Akka, are not absolutely clear. Evidently, the agitation of the Azalis in Istanbul aroused the implausible fear that Bahaullah was conspiring with the Bulgarians. (Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh 254.) Foreign diplomats were told that the Bahá'ís threatened to cause unrest by their efforts to convert Muslims. Although there do not seem to have been converts in Edirne, a number of Bahá'ís had drifted into the city. There also had been trouble in Baghdad occasioned by the conversion of an Ottoman officer of Sunni clerical background. Bahaullah Himself believed that the Persian government was at least partly responsible. In any case, the Bahá'ís were treated with noticeable harshness in their expulsion from Edirne and in their initial conditions of imprisonment in `Akka.

In the late 1860s a further concern began to trouble the Ottoman government. A group of young intellectuals, the Young Ottomans, had started agitating for constitutional reform. Bahaullah's letters to the kings, written mostly during the Edirne period, also advocated constitutional monarchy. A number of the Young Ottomans were in touch with Bahaullah and `Abd al-Baha, both because Bahaullah and `Abd al-Baha were perceived as belonging to corresponding social and intellectual circles in Iran and because some of the Young Ottomans were imprisoned in `Akka at the same time as Bahaullah. See Necati Alkan's articles in the bibliography on these links. Thus during the last decades of Bahaullah's life, he was imprisoned not just because of old fears of Babi revolution but also because of the threat of liberal reform.

Bahaullah addressed the Ottoman government in a number of his works, especially during the period 1863–73. A number of tablets, notably the Suriy-i Muluk and the lost Lawh-i `Abd al-`Aziz va-Wukala, addressed the Sultan directly, sternly criticizing the quality of his government. Bahaullah also complained of the unjust treatment he had endured at the hands of the Ottoman government, especially after his exile to `Akka. The Persian Lawh-i Ra'is, for example, catalogs the sufferings endured by the Bahá'í exiles during the early months in the Barracks of `Akka. The Kitab-i Aqdas, completed in 1873, also denounces the tyranny of the regime of `Abd al-`Aziz.

Note: For Bahaullah's relations with the Ottomans, see `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 146–47, 172–75, 179, 181, 225; Momen, Babi 182–200; as well as the sources cited in elsewhere in this chapter.

Sultan `Abd al-`Aziz

Sultan `Abd al-`Aziz ("Abdülaziz." b. 9 Feb. 1830. d. June 1876) was the thirty-second Ottoman Sultan. Bahaullah's exiles to Istanbul, Edirne, and `Akka all took place during his reign, and it was only after his overthrow and death the Bahaullah regained relative freedom.

The third son of the reforming Sultan Mahmud II, `Abd al-`Aziz came to the throne after the early death of his brother `Abd al-Majid I on 25 June 1861. In the early years of his reign he was under the influence of his two great ministers `Ali and Fu'ad Pasha, who were thus able to continue the Tanzimat reforms. European-style reforms were made in such areas as provincial administration, education, civil law, and the treatment of minorities and foreigners. He himself toured Western Europe, the first Ottoman sultan to do so. On the other hand, unrest continued in the Balkans, much encouraged by Russia. There were revolts in Montenegro, Serbia, Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and Crete, eventually leading to the loss of much territory in Europe.

After the deaths of Fu'ad and `Ali Pasha in 1869 and 1871, `Abd al-`Aziz became increasingly autocratic and reactionary. Though he aligned the Ottoman Empire with Russia, a traditional enemy, unrest continued in the Balkans, culminating in a bloody uprising in Bulgaria in 1875–76. Beginning in 1873 famine struck Anatolia. In one particularly severe winter wolves killed animals and people in the suburbs of Istanbul. The "Young Ottomans," a loose network of constitutionalist reformers, agitated against the regime. Finally, the government was forced in 1875 to default on the huge public debt accumulated through years of deficits, triggering a major financial crisis and panic.

Midhat Pasha, the president of the Council of State and a sympathizer with the Young Ottomans, obtained a fatva from the Mufti of Istanbul accusing the Sultan of madness, incompetence, and corruption, and with the support of other ministers, moved to depose him. Before dawn on 30 May 1876 warships and troops surrounded the palace. Another ship threatened the Russian embassy to prevent intervention from that quarter. At dawn a salute of 101 guns from the warships announced the fall of `Abd al-`Aziz. A few days later he was dead, though whether by suicide or murder is unclear.

There is not much evidence of `Abd al-`Aziz's own attitude towards Bahaullah. Most likely he shared the fears of his chief ministers about possible Babi political ambitions. He did personally endorse Bahaullah's final exile to `Akka and most probably the two earlier exiles.

On his part Bahaullah bitterly resented his treatment at the hands of `Abd al-`Aziz. He had done nothing against the Ottoman government: there was no justification for the harsh manner in which he and his followers had been treated. Thus, he denounces `Abd al-`Aziz in a number of tablets. The injustice of `Abd al-`Aziz, he more than once told visiting pilgrims, was greater than that of Nasir al-Din Shah, for the latter had actually been the object of an attempted assassination by Babis, whereas `Abd al-`Aziz had no just cause for complaint against Bahaullah or the Babis.

Soon after the death of Fu'ad Pasha in 1869, Bahaullah prophesied the deaths of `Ali Pasha and of `Abd al-`Aziz in Suriy-i Fu'ad and Lawh-i Ra'is. This prediction was well known. Thus the dramatic fall of `Abd al-`Aziz greatly raised Bahaullah's prestige and was a factor in the conversions of at least two eminent Bahá'ís: `Azizu'llah Jadhdhab and Mirza Abu al-Fadl Gulpaygani. Since it was in 1877 that Bahaullah was finally able to leave `Akka and move the Mazra`a, it seems probable that his relative freedom was a byproduct of the brief period of constitutional government under Midhat Pasha and the Young Ottomans.

`Abd al-`Aziz is addressed directly at least twice in the writings of Bahaullah. In addition, he is mentioned in several other tablets, as well as in the writings of Shoghi Effendi.

The Lawh `Abd al-`Aziz va-Wukala', "Tablet to `Abd al-`Aziz and his Ministers," was the first of Bahaullah's letters to kings and his reply to the Sultan's order exiling him to Edirne. The order had been brought by the brother-in-law of the prime minister. Bahaullah refused to see this man, who was received instead by `Abd al-Baha and Mirza Musa, Bahaullah's brother. Bahaullah promised to send a reply within three days. The next day Shamsi Big, Bahaullah's host, took this tablet in a sealed envelope to the prime minister. Shamsi Big told the Bahá'ís that the prime minister turned pale on reading it and said, "It is as if the King of Kings were issuing his behest to his humblest vassal king and regulating his conduct." On seeing this reaction, Shamsi Big discreetly left.

The text of this tablet is lost, but Nabil reports that it was long, began with an address to the Sultan, and included passages addressed to the ministers condemning their conduct and character. It would thus seem to have been similar in content to the passages addressed to the Sultan and his ministers in the slightly later Surat al-Muluk. There is doubt as to the identity of the recipient. Shoghi Effendi identifies him as `Ali Pasha, the prime minister. However, `Ali Pasha was foreign minister at this time and Fu'ad Pasha prime minister.

The most important surviving passage addressed to Sultan `Abd al-`Aziz is

contained in the Surat al-Muluk, which also addresses the kings of the earth as a group. Bahaullah tells the Sultan that the selflessness of his advice is shown by the fact that he did not ask the Sultan for anything. He warns him against corrupt ministers. He should surround himself with just ministers with whom he consults about the good of the people. He should not rely on those who do not believe in God or who disobey divine law, for such people are not trustworthy. He should not allow others to act for him but should personally attend to matters of state. He should act with justice, trust in God, and observe moderation. He should pay special attention to the needs of the poor and prevent his ministers from enriching themselves at the expense of the people, for in Istanbul Bahaullah saw that worthless people ruled over honorable people. (This is repeated in the apostrophe to Constantinople in the Kitab-i Aqdas: "We behold in thee the foolish ruling over the wise, and darkness vaunting itself against the light.") The king is the shadow of God on earth and should behave accordingly. The passage ends with Bahaullah complaining of the unjust suffering he has had to endure but reaffirming his loyalty and praying for the well-being of the Sultan.

In Shoghi Effendi's work on the letters to the kings, The Promised Day Is Come, Shoghi Effendi quotes the passages of the Surat al-Muluk addressed to Sultan `Abd al-`Aziz, as well as the apostrophe to Constantinople from the Kitab-i Aqdas. A major theme of this work is the destruction of the individuals, states, and religious institutions hostile to Bahaullah and his Faith. Shoghi Effendi pairs `Abd al-`Aziz with Nasir al-Din Shah but identifies him as more powerful than the Shah and more responsible for the sufferings of Bahaullah. He quotes the prophecies of the Lawh-i Ra'is of the destruction and loss of the lands around Edirne and of the Lawh-i Fu'ad of the death of `Ali Pasha and the Sultan himself.

Shoghi Effendi then traces the swift decline of Ottoman Turkey: the loss of European and African territory during the reign of `Abd al-Hamid II, the loss of the remaining Near Eastern and Balkan territories during and after World War I, along with the death of a large fraction of the empire's population due to war, disease, starvation, and massacre. Finally came the extinction of the six-hundred year old dynasty along with the title of caliph supposedly inherited from Muhammad Himself. Turkey was made a secular state and the capital was moved to Ankara. This, Shoghi Effendi states, was the retributive justice of God on `Abd al-`Aziz and his successors. Similar passages occur elsewhere in Shoghi Effendi's writings, notably in Shoghi Effendi, World 174–76.

Note: On `Abd al-`Aziz and the tablets addressed to him see EI2 "`Abd al-`Aziz"; `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 146, 158–60, 172–73, 179, 181, 195, 208, 225; Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh 154, 199, 206–7, 260–62, 307, 359–61, 379, 411–13, 476; Momen, Babi 199, 311n., 485; Balyuzi, Eminent 183; Mu'ayyad, Khatirat 217, 234; Sulaymani, Masabih 4:227–28, 7:461. Shoghi Effendi, Promised 19, 61–66, 71; Shoghi Effendi, World 174–79. For his portraits see Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh 209, 263. The text of the relevant parts of Surat

al-Muluk is found in Bahaullah, Alvah...bi-Muluk 35–49. The English translation is in Bahaullah, Gleanings cxiv, Shoghi Effendi, Promised 37–40, Bahaullah, Proclamation 47–54. A facsimile of the Farman banishing Bahaullah to `Akka is found in Bahá'í World 15:50 and Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh 284.

`Ali Pasha

Muhammad Amin `Ali Pasha (Mehmed Emin Ali Paça; d. Bebek near Istanbul 7 Sept. 1871.) was the Ottoman statesman and diplomat who was foreign minister at the time of Bahaullah's exiles to Istanbul and Edirne and prime minister when he was exiled to `Akka. He was the "chief" addressed in the two tablets known as Lawh-i Ra'is.

The son of an Istanbul shopkeeper, he was born in Istanbul in February 1815 and entered government service at the age of fourteen in the secretariat of the court. His nickname `Ali ("lofty") referred either to his abilities or to his short stature. Since he knew some French, he was appointed to the Translation Bureau in 1833. The Translation Bureau was one of the reforms of Mahmud II and served as a school of foreign languages and training institute for diplomats. As one of the few modern educational institutions in the country, it produced many of the reforming statemen of the middle of the century.

He rose rapidly in the diplomatic service and was sent to Vienna in 1836, St. Petersburg in 1837, and London in 1838 where he was the counsellor. In 1840 he was a deputy to the counsellor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and became ambassador to Great Britain the following year. In 1845 he was counsellor to the Foreign Ministry and became foreign minister for the first time the following year when his mentor Rashid Pasha was promoted to prime minister. He was dismissed for a few months in 1848 but soon restored. He continued in this post until 1852 when he became prime minister (Grand Vazir, Sadr-i A`zam) for two months after the dismissal of Rashid Pasha. In the next two years he briefly held two minor governorships before returning to the Foreign Ministry. Thereafter he remained in high office most of the rest of his life, alternating as foreign minister and prime minister with his friend and fellow-reformer Fu'ad Pasha. He was foreign minister 1854–55, 1857–58, July 1861, Nov. 1861–67, and 1869–71. He was prime minister (Grand Vizier) five times: 1852, 1855–56, 1858–59, 1861, and 1867–71.

`Ali Pasha was greatly repected by European statesmen for his integrity, personal charm, diplomatic skill, and mastery of French. This served to protect him, since Sultan `Abd al-`Aziz would have been happy to be rid of him. As a diplomat he worked tirelessly to placate the European powers who threatened to dismember the empire. He was also able to settle peacefully the rebellion in Crete.

At home he was less popular. The sultan disliked him for his attempts to restrain the arbitrary exercise of royal power, to protect the prerogatives of ministers, and to strengthen the rule of law. The younger reformers, the so-called "Young Ottomans"—attacked him because he did not support the movement for a constitution. Nonetheless, under his ministry a number of

important reforms of the government structure were carried out, railroads begun, and improvements made in education, the army, and the navy.

William Howard Russell, the British war correspondent, said of him in 1869,

Aali Pasha is a very small, slight, sallow-faced man, with two very penetrating honest-looking eyes. He has a delicate air, and looks timorous and nervous; and his standing attitude is one of rather imbecile deference to everybody, but in the presence of the Sultan this becomes almost prostration. Yet, he is courageous, bold, enlightened, honest, and just; full of zeal for the interests of his country, and unceasing in his efforts for its improvement.

When Bahaullah came to Istanbul, `Ali Pasha was serving his fourth term as foreign minister and his ally Fu'ad Pasha was prime minister. He initially summoned Bahaullah to Istanbul at the urging of the Persian ambassador, who was anxious to have him removed from the vicinity of the Persian border and the Shi`i shrines. He seems to have been favorably impressed by Bahaullah. In 1866 the Austrian ambassador, Prokesch von Osten, reported:

`Ali Pasha has spoken to me with great veneration of the Bab, interned at Adrianople, who he says is a man of great distinction, exemplary conduct, great moderation, and a most dignified figure. He has spoken to me of Babism as a doctrine which is worthy of high esteem, and which destroys certain anomalies that Islam has taken from Jewish and Christian doctrines, for example this conflict between a God who is omnipotent and yet powerless against the principle of evil; eternal punishments, etc. etc. But politically he considers Babism unacceptable as much in Persia as in Turkey, because it only allows legal sovereignty in the Imamate, while the Osmalis for example, he claims, separate temporal from spiritual power. The Bab, at Adrianople, is defrayed all expenses by the order of and to the charge of the Persian government.

Note: For general accounts of his life see EI2, s.v. "`Ali Pasha Muhammad Amin," as well as EB "Ali Pasa, Mehmed Emin," Momen, Babi 491, Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh 469. For information on his attitudes towards the Bahá'ís, see Momen, Babi 187, 191, 311n. Bahaullah's statements about him are summarized in `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 174, 208, 231–32.

Two years later, the dispute between the Azalis and the Bahá'ís led him to believe that Bahaullah and his followers had political ambitions and were attempting to spread their religion in Turkish territory, and that they were likely to cause disturbances. Thus Bahaullah was to be exiled to a less sensitive area. Bahaullah viewed this as a clear injustice, motivated by nothing more than political expediency, particularly in view of the harsh conditions of his imprisonment in `Akka. He prophesied the downfall of both Fu'ad and `Ali Pasha.

Lawh-i Ra'is, "Tablet of the Chief," is the title of two tablets addressed to `Ali Pasha. The Arabic Lawh-i Ra'is, also known as Lawh-i Ra'is I or Surat al-Ra'is (or "Suriy-i Ra'is") was composed during the journey from Edirne to Gallipoli. It was begun at Kesan (Kashana), where the exiles spent the night of

14-15 August 1868, and was finished at Gyawur-Kyuy soon after. It is written in an elevated Arabic style and is some twenty pages in length. The opening pages are addressed to `Ali Pasha. Most of the tablet, however, is addressed to Haji Muhammad-Isma`il Kashani, known as Dhabih—"sacrifice"—or Anis—"companion"—by which he is called in this tablet. Dhabih and some others had arrived in Edirne, only to find Bahaullah's house guarded by troops. Unable to meet Bahaullah, he had gone to Gallipoli. The portions of the Surat al-Ra'is addressed to him are intended to console him for his failure to meet Bahaullah. Bahaullah also answers a question about the nature of the soul that Dhabih had asked in a letter. Dhabih was able to meet Bahaullah in a public bath in Gallipoli a few days after the completion of this tablet. Dhabih died in Tabriz about 1880.

The opening pages of the Surat al-Ra'is are a stern denunciation of `Ali Pasha for his persecution of Bahaullah. Addressing him bluntly as "O chief," Bahaullah tells him that he has no power to hinder the Cause of God by his "grunting" or the "barking" of those around him. His deeds have caused Muhammad to mourn. He has allied himself with the "chief of Iran"—meaning either the Shah or the Persian ambassador in Turkey—to harm Bahaullah. (`Ali and Fu'ad Pasha both denied to foreign diplomats that the urgings of the Persian government had anything to do with Bahaullah's exile.) Bahaullah compares him to the rulers who had opposed Muhammad, Moses, and Abraham. The Shah of Iran had killed the Bab, but Bahaullah had nonetheless arisen to revive his religion. He prophesies that there will be great afflictions and turmoil in the region of Edirne and that it will pass out from under the authority of the Turkish Sultan. Finally, Bahaullah states that his only purpose is "to quicken the world and unite all its peoples."

Bahaullah then addresses Dhabih. He tells of how he and his family and followers awoke to find the house surrounded by soldiers barring all from coming or going, even keeping them from obtaining food the first night. The people of the town, hearing that they were to be sent away, gathered around the house weeping—but the grief of the Christians was greater than that of the Muslims. One of the Bahá'ís, Haji Ja`far Tabrizi, thinking that he was to be separated from Bahaullah, cut his own throat. Another of Bahaullah's followers had done this in Baghdad. Though this was contrary to divine law, it showed the depth of their love. Such a thing had not been seen in past religions. Bahaullah praises Dhabih and seeks to console him. This is a day the prophets of the past all longed to attain. His followers should thus not let afflictions discourage them. He prophesies that God will raise up a king to protect his followers. He prays for Dhabih's success in spreading his faith during his travels and compares Dhabih's happy state with that of those people who have rejected Bahaullah.

Bahaullah also replies to Dhabih's question about the soul, regretting that he could not have heard the answer from Bahaullah's own lips. Saying that he does not wish to dwell on what people have said in the past, he gives a brief account of the soul, explaining that "soul," "spirit," "mind," "vision," and

the like all represent the same entity, differentiated by the circumstances under which they are exercised. He refers Dhabih to another tablet where the matter is explained fully.

Bahaullah also mentions one "`Ali" who had been in Baghdad with Bahaullah and who had come to Edirne, only to find him a prisoner. The tablet closes with a prayer that Dhabih will not be hindered from meeting Bahaullah in Gallipoli.

Note: On the Arabic Surat al-Ra'is, see Taherzadeh 2:411–21; Ishraq-Khavari, Muhadirat 602–6, 687, 964; Ishraq-Khavari, Ganj 109–11; `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 172, 174, 179–80; Shoghi Effendi, Promised 48; Ishraq-Khavari, Da'irat 13:2058. The Arabic text is found in Bahaullah, Athar Muluk 203–25, Bahaullah, Majmu`ah 87–102, Surat al-Haykal 129–43. Translated excerpts are found in `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 174, 179–80, Shoghi Effendi, World 178, Taherzadeh 2:414–16.

The Persian Lawh-i Ra'is, also known as Lawh-i Ra'is II and occasionally Suriy-i Ra'is, is a letter to `Ali Pasha written not long after Bahaullah's arrival in `Akka, probably before the end of 1868. It is a strong protest at the injustice of the imprisonment of Bahaullah, his companions, and their dependents. The title is by analogy to the earlier tablet to `Ali Pasha, for the prime minister is not addressed as "Ra'is" in this tablet. It is in Persian and is about twenty pages long.

Bahaullah begins by criticizing `Ali Pasha's presumption of lofty rank. The heading of the tablet—"He is the Master by right"—reminds him that God is the true ruler. Bahaullah then addresses him as "thou who reckons thyself the highest of men"—a pun on his name `Ali, "lofty." He reminds him that all the Prophets of God, though they came to reform the world, were, like Bahaullah, branded as trouble-makers by the rulers of their time. However, even if this accusation were true, the women and children who were imprisoned with Bahaullah had done nothing wrong.

Bahaullah then describes some episodes of his exile from Edirne to `Akka: how some companions who were not included in the order paid their own way to `Akka, the sufferings of the children forced to change from ship to ship, how two of his companions tried to kill themselves when faced with separation, how they were denied food and water during the first night in `Akka, the three loaves of inedible bread that was the daily food ration, and the death and disrespectful burial of two of the exiles. Such treatment was manifest injustice, since the people of Edirne could testify to the piety and detachment of Bahaullah and his companions. Bahaullah prophesies that as a result, the wrath of God would seize `Ali Pasha and his government. Warnings had come before—for example, when a large part of Istanbul burned—but they had not heeded. Now it is too late: the wrath of God is so

great to allow him to repent.

Bahaullah reminds him that neither pomp nor abasement lasts forever. To illustrate this, Bahaullah tells of an incident from his youth. his older brother was getting married, and Bahaullah's father had arranged a puppet show as part of the festivities. Bahaullah watched in fascination as the puppet-king and the members of his court come on stage and take their places. A thief is executed and blood spurts from the severed neck. The king dispatches soldiers to fight a rebel, and from behind the curtain the sounds of cannon are heard. After the show, Bahaullah saw a man come out with a box under his arm. Bahaullah asked him where the king was and all the members of his court. The man said they were all in the box. From that day on, says Bahaullah, all the glory of the world has been like that puppet show in his eyes and of no value. Any perceptive person, he says, knows that worldly glory will soon be placed in the box of the grave. Even if a man is not given to know God, he ought at least to pass his life with prudence and justice. Nevertheless, most people are asleep and infatuated with worldly things. They are like the drunken man who fell in love with a dog, only realizing what his lover was when morning came. `Ali Pasha himself is subject to the vilest ruler: his own self and passion. If he examined his own soul, he would realize his own abasement.

Bahaullah tells how, when he reached Gallipoli on his way to `Akka, he had asked a Turkish officer named `Umar escorting him to arrange a ten-minute interview with the Sultan at which the Sultan might ask him for whatever miracle or proof he thought sufficient to prove the truth of Bahaullah's revelation. If Bahaullah was able to produce it, he and his companions should be freed and left to their own devices. But no word came from the Sultan or from the officer. Though it was not fitting for the Manifestation of God to go before another, Bahaullah made this offer out of consideration for the children and women who shared his imprisonment and exile. The tablet closes with Bahaullah's advice to `Ali Pasha to ask God to let him see the good and evil of his own actions.

Note: On the Persian Lawh-i Ra'is, see Taherzadeh 3:33–37, Ishraq-Khavari, Ganj 121–23, Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh

173, Ishraq-Khavari, Da'irat
13:2058. The text is found in
Bahaullah, Athar: Muluk 227–47,
Majmu`a (Eg.) 102–16. Translations of excerpts are found in `Abd al-Baha,
Makatib 187, Shoghi Effendi, Promised 46, 62.

These two tablets and the
related Lawh-i Fu'ad, with their grim prophesies of affliction for the Ottoman Empire and its leaders were soon widely circulated among the Bahá'ís and were recognized as being of special importance. Bahaullah himself in a later tablet said that "from the moment the
Suriy-i Ra'is was revealed until the present day, neither hath the world been tranquilized, nor have the hearts of its peoples been at rest." (Bahaullah, Gleanings, sect. 16.3.) They were in circulation by the mid-1870s
and were included in early published collections of the works of
Bahaullah. Their importance for early
Bahá'í teachings lies in the fact that their prophecies were well known
before
the dramatic fall of Sultan `Abd al-`Aziz in 1876.

Fu'ad Pasha

`Ali Pasha's friend and ally, Keçeci-Zada
Muhammad Fu'ad Pasha, was born in Istanbul in 1815. His father, `Izzat Mulla, was a religious judge and poet of some
importance who lived an adventurous life in and out of royal favor. In 1829 `Izzat Mulla was exiled to Sivas,
and Fu'ad left the theological seminary to study at the new modern medical school in Istanbul. He spent three
years as an army doctor in Tripoli, Libya. Having learned French in medical school, he was able in 1837 to obtain
an appointment to the Translation Bureau, which also served as a training school for the modern diplomatic corps. Over the next fifteen years he rose rapidly as a diplomat and protege of
the reformer Rashid Pasha, serving in London (where he was translator and later first secretary when `Ali Pasha was ambassador), Spain, Rumania, and Russia, as well as holding various high offices and commissions in Istanbul.

In 1852 he was appointed foreign minister
for the first time under his friend `Ali Pasha and dealt with crises over Montenegro and the Christian holy places in Jerusalem. He was again foreign minister in 1855–56,
1858–60, 1861, and 1867. He was also
prime minister in 1861–63 and 1863–66, during which time `Ali Pasha served
as
foreign minister. During 1863–67 he was
also minister of war. He held several
other senior posts at various times and was sent on a number of special missions, notably the suppression of the Greek revolt in Thessaly and Epirus in

1854–55 and the Lebanese civil war in 1860–61.

Fu'ad Pasha was one of the principal figures of the Tanzimat reforms of the middle of the nineteenth century. He was determined to reshape the Ottoman Empire in a more European mold. Nonethless, his efforts were necessarily less devoted to positive reforms than to fending off external threats to the empire and internal threats to the reforms by conservatives, notably from the Sultan himself. He was criticized by the younger reformers because of his lack of interest in representative government. He was also interested in linguistic reform and in 1850 wrote the first modern Ottoman Turkish grammar with Ahmad Jawdat, a liberal cleric who was another of Rashid Pasha's reformist proteges. He accompanied the Sultan to Europe in 1867. Exhausted by overwork, he went to France to rest in 1868–69. He died of a heart attack in Nice 12 February 1869. (For his life and career, see EI2 "Fu'ad Pasha," Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh 471–72, Momen, Babi 501.)

Fu'ad Pasha was prime minister at the time of Bahaullah's arrival in Istanbul and foreign minister at the time of his exile to `Akka. As such he answered the inquiries of foreign diplomats made on Bahaullah's behalf. His policy is succinctly stated in his reply to the inquiries of the Austrian ambassador:

On representing to Fuad Pasha the intolerant acts of the Ottoman Government towards the Babee Sect, he was informed by His Highness that the Porte had ordered Mirza Hussein Ali and his adherents to be deported to Tripoli in Africa on account of their having tried to propagate religious dissensions in the Mahomedan Element in Roumelia; that the Porte was entirely responsible for this measure, the Persian Legation having taken to part in it; and that the subvention of 5000 piasters per month which was allowed to the Mirza by the Authorities at Adrianople would not be discontinued at Tripoli. (Momen, Babi 192.)

The idea of exiling Bahaullah to Tripoli in Libya perhaps reflects Fu'ad Pasha's memory of three years as a young army officer in that desolate spot.

Note: For his relations with Bahá'ís see Momen, Babi 187, 191, 311n; Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh 154, 199, 206 (with photo); `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 146, 174, 208, 231–32.

Bahaullah had prophesied his fall in the

Surat al-Ra'is, and comments on his death in the Suriy-i or Lawh-i Fu'ad, an Arabic tablet written to
Shaykh Kazim Samandar, probably soon after Fu'ad Pasha's death in 1869. The Suriy-i Fu'ad is written in the style of
the passages about Hell in the Qur'an and contains many allusions to the Qur'anic narratives of the punishment of the ancient nations that persecuted the prophets. It was aptly described by
Baron Rosen as "a sort of hymn of triumph on the occasion of the death of the most implacable enemies of the new religion." Because of its accurate prophecies of the fall of `Ali Pasha and Sultan
`Abd al-`Aziz, it was widely circulated during the time of Bahaullah and was included in one of the collections of Bahá'í scripture published in India during his lifetime. This tablet is
also known as "Lawh-i Kaf-Za, "Tablet of K. Z." The tablet begins with these letters, which are an abbreviation
of Kazim, the name of the recipient.

After counselling Samandar to be steadfast,
Bahaullah announces the death of Fu'ad Pasha: "God has taken the greatest of those who issued the decree against us." Using the narrative style of the Qur'an, he describes how Fu'ad Pasha
fled to France, seeking the help of physicians against the wrath of God. A dialogue then takes place in which Fu'ad
Pasha pleads with the avenging angel for his life, citing his wealth and high position as reason to be spared. But
there is no escape for him: the angels of hell summon him to the punishment prepared for him, reminding him of the great injustice he committed in making prisoners of the Holy Family. Bahaullah
then prophesies the downfall of `Ali Pasha, the other minister involved in his exiles, and of Sultan `Abd al-`Aziz himself — "their Chief who ruleth the land."

Bahaullah once again exhorts Samandar to
remain steadfast against the lies of the Azalis, for God has also taken Mirza Mahdi Gilani, the Azali in Istanbul. This man had written a treatise against Bahaullah, to which Bahaullah's
Kitab-i Badi` was a reply. A second
narrative depicts Mirza Mahdi's pleadings with the angel of death. These stories, Bahaullah says, are told to
console Samandar.

Note: The text of Lawh-i
Fu'ad is published in Bahaullah, Mubin
210–14 and Rosen, Collections 6:231–33. A sentence is translated in Shoghi Effendi, Promised 63. For further information on the tablet see Taherzadeh 3:87,
Ishraq-Khavari, Ganj 192–93,
Ishraq-Khavari, Da'irat 13:1961,

2071, 2073–74.

The Last Years of the Ottoman Empire

In 1876 the loose group of reformist exiled intellectuals and politicians known as the Young Ottomans had succeeded in deposing `Abd al-`Aziz on grounds of misgovernment and madness. The result was a brief period of constitutional government—and, in distant `Akka, the release of Bahaullah from strict confinement within the city. `Abd al-`Aziz was succeeded by his nephew, the young Murad V, who was himself deposed three months later when he proved to be a drunkard and mentally incapable. The reformers turned to his younger brother `Abd al-Hamid (Abdülhamid), who thus became the thirty-sixth Ottoman Sultan.

Born 21 Sept. 1842 in Istanbul, `Abd al-Hamid was the fifth of thirty children of Sultan `Abd al-Majid and seems to have had an unhappy childhood after his mother died when he was seven. Midhat Pasha, the reformer who had led the plot that overthrew `Abd al-`Aziz, offered him the throne on condition that he accept a constitution and constituent assembly and that he rule through the reformist ministers. Before the reformers could accomplish much, the disastrous war broke out that led to the Russian occupation of Edirne In the end the Russians were stopped when the British navy moved to support Istanbul. Nonetheless, the Turks lost most of their remaining territory in Europe. The border of the newly-independent Bulgaria was only a few miles from Edirne. The finances of the Empire were placed under European control. The failure of the Western European powers to support Turkey against Russia confirmed `Abd al-Hamid's suspicions of the Europeans. Thereafter, he pursued a passive policy of delay in foreign relations. Though his extreme suspicion of the European powers sometimes lost opportunities for Turkey—as when his failure to cooperate with England lost him the chance to reassert Turkish sovereignty in Egypt—it kept Turkey at peace for a generation and prevented further major losses of territory.

It quickly became clear that `Abd al-Hamid was an autocrat of the most absolute sort and did not share the liberal views of the reformers who had brought him to power. Once the war with Russia was over, he suspended the constitution and dissolved the irritating new Constituent Assembly. The reformers were soon silenced, exiled, or killed. An attempted countercoup further fueled his fears. Unlike earlier sultans who had left much of the ordinary business of government to their ministers, `Abd

al-Hamid created a centralized despotism of a quite modern sort. He was himself shrewd and energetic, and he created a palace bureaucracy that allowed him to control directly all the details of government. A horde of police, spies, and informers pervaded the empire. The building of railroads and a telegraph network allowed him to control the empire far more tightly than any of his predecessors could have dreamed possible. Freedom of speech was suspended. Censorship was all-pervading and thorough. The palace was a virtual fortress, guarded by Albanian guards loyal only to the Sultan.

Apart from absolutism the distinguishing policy of his reign was Pan-Islamism. The Ottoman sultans had always claimed the title Caliph, supposedly bequeathed to them by the last `Abbasid caliph when the Ottomans conquered Egypt. Now, with many of the Christian provinces lost to the Empire, `Abd al-Hamid stressed his role as supreme Islamic leader: head of the leading Muslim state, protector of the Holy Cities, and successor to the Prophet Himself. This won him support from the Muslim masses in the Empire and prestige for him and the Ottoman Empire in other Muslim countries, especially those controlled by Europeans, where he was able to make trouble for the European powers. The greatest achievement of this policy was the building of the Hijaz Railway to carry pilgrims from Damascus to Mecca and Medina. It was paid for by contributions from the entire Muslim world and was completed as far as Medina, before being destroyed in World War I. (It has never been rebuilt.)

The other side of this policy was the persecution of the non-Muslim minorities, especially the Christians. This culminated in civil disorders in Macedonia and great massacres of Armenians in 1894–96 (repeated on a much larger scale during World War I), carried out at the instigation of the authorities. Nonetheless his partiality to his Muslim subjects did not in the end win their permanent loyalty, for his administration was sufficiently corrupt to alienate Muslims as well. In some ways `Abd al-Hamid is to be seen as the full expression of the darker side of the Tanzimat reforms earlier in the nineteenth century. Like many of his reforming predecessors, he believed that reform could only be imposed from above, and in fact he carried out important reforms in education, communication, and law. However, absolute power was in the hands of a man gripped by exaggerated fears and for the most part blind to the actual needs of the people. Moreover, his insistence on dealing with everything himself greatly limited the effectiveness of government.

The Europeans were appalled by the oppressiveness and incompetence of his government, by the all-pervasive censorship, and especially by the brutal treatment of minorities. This won him the nicknames "Red Sultan" and "Abdul the Damned."

In the end the new educational institutions he had founded produced the reformers who overthrew him. A loose network of reform-minded exiles called the Young Turks formed the Committee of Union and Progress. The commanders of the Turkish army in Macedonia mutinied in support of the Committee, marched on Istanbul, forced `Abd al-Hamid in July 1908 to reintroduce the constitution, and placed the leaders of the Committee in charge of the government. The following April a countercoup by the Istanbul garrison, probably instigated by `Abd al-Hamid, briefly overthrew the new government. The Macedonian troops returned, this time to depose `Abd al-Hamid. His brother, Muhammad V (r. 1909–18), became Sultan. `Abd al-Hamid lived out his life under house arrest, first in Salonika and then in Istanbul. He died in Istanbul on 10 Feb. 1918.

`Abd al-Hamid was in some respects an attractive figure—approachable, simple in dress, hard-working, and intelligent. Unlike some of his predecessors, he was not ruined by the temptations of the harem. But he was lonely, fearful, and unhappy, and these qualities expressed themselves in the paranoia, treachery, and absolutism of his government. Muslims, Christians, and Jews celebrated together in the streets when he was overthrown.

Note: On `Abd al-Hamid see EI2, s.v. "`Abd al-Hamid II." and the standard histories of the late Ottoman Empire.

Bahaullah was the prisoner of `Abd al-Hamid from 1876 until his death in 1892, but there is no evidence that the Sultan was particularly concerned with the Bahá'ís in those years. Bahaullah was able to move out of the city of `Akka without interference the year after `Abd al-Hamid's accession. When Bahaullah died in 1892, `Abd al-Baha sent a cable to the Sultan, who gave permission for Bahaullah to be buried at Bahji—an interesting example of `Abd al-Hamid's concern for the minutiae of administration. This tolerance of the Bahá'ís lasted until the turn of the century.

After 1892 `Abd al-Baha remained a prisoner as his Father had been, theoretically in custody but in practice under few

restrictions. It was the opposition of Mirza Muhammad-`Ali, the second surviving son of Bahaullah, to `Abd al-Baha that finally attracted Sultan `Abd al-Hamid's personal attention to the Bahá'ís. Mirza Muhammad-`Ali and his followers had approached the governor of Damascus, accusing `Abd al-Baha of plotting against the government. Several factors seem to have led the Sultan to give credence to these accusations. First was the increasing threat of nationalist movements in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Second was the arrival of Western pilgrims. The Sultan was well aware that various European powers had colonial ambitions in Ottoman territory, and he seems to have feared that the Americans visiting `Abd al-Baha were part of a plot to foment revolt. Finally, `Abd al-Baha had many friends—and possibly even followers—among reform-minded Turks. In August 1901 `Abd al-Hamid ordered that `Abd al-Baha, his brothers, and his cousin Majd al-Din once again be strictly confined within the wall of `Akka. Around 1905, Mirza Muhammad-`Ali and his supporters, aware of `Abd al-Hamid's alarm at the Constitutional Revolution in Iran, approached the authorities with fresh accusations. This time the Sultan responded with a Commission of Inquiry that spent some weeks investigating `Abd al-Baha and the Bahá'ís. However, when the Commission returned to Istanbul, they found the Sultan preoccupied with finding those responsible for his attempted assassination, and `Abd al-Hamid did not take up the matter for some time. A tablet from `Abd al-Baha of about this time tactfully praises `Abd al-Hamid for ignoring the slanderous accusations against him and instructs the Bahá'ís to pray for the Sultan. (`Abd al-Baha, Tablets 3:494–96.) In about 1908 there was fear that the Commission's recommendations would finally be acted on and `Abd al-Baha would be exiled to Fezzan in the interior of Libya. However, the Young Turks' revolution in the summer of 1908 resulted in the release of all political prisoners, `Abd al-Baha included.

Note: Accounts of the reincarceration of `Abd al-Baha, the Commission of Inquiry, and the release of `Abd al-Baha are found in `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 263-72, Balyuzi, `Abdu'l-Bahá 94-95, 111-24, and Momen, Babi 320–23. These are largely based on information from Afrukhtah, Khatirat, and Mu'ayyad, Khatirat. See also Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh

420, 425–27; Balyuzi, `Abdu'l-Bahá 47, 128–29, 374, 395; Balyuzi, Eminent 148, 259; Shoghi Effendi, Promised 13, 61, 64–65; Shoghi Effendi, World 174–75; `Abd al-Baha, Promulgation 36, 203, 225.

Naturally enough, `Abd al-Hamid's dramatic

fall and imprisonment and the simultaneous liberation of `Abd al-Baha impressed the Bahá'ís as an example of the hand of God at work. `Abd al-Baha, for example, sometimes remarked on it in his talks:
"God removed the chains from my neck and placed them around the neck of `Abd al-Hamid. It was done suddenly—not a
long time, in a moment, as it were." (`Abd al-Baha, Promulgation 225.) For Shoghi Effendi, `Abd al-Hamid was (quoting an unnamed historian) "the most mean, cunning, untrustworthy and cruel intriguer of the long dynasty of `Uthman." His fall was "the beginning
of a new era," one of "the awful evidences of that retributive justice," and was one part of the collapse of Islamic institutions as a result of their
failure
to accept the Bab and Bahaullah. (Shoghi Effendi, Promised 65, 66)

Jamal Pasha and World War I

After the revolution of 1908, the Committee
of Union and Progress ruled in the name of the Sultan. New administrative, social, and economic
reforms were imposed, including areas neglected by earlier reformers such as women's rights and industrial development. `Abd al-Baha took advantage of the new freedom to travel to Egypt,
Europe, and America. `Abd al-Baha publicly
stated his gratitude for the fall of the Sultan, but by the time of his return to Haifa in 1913, the Committee of Union and Progress had become a dictatorship, ruling in an authoritarian style reminiscent of `Abd
al-Hamid's. Once again `Abd al-Baha
feared for the Bahá'í position in the Holy Land. Internal reforms were, however, overshadowed by military
disasters. In 1911 Italy seized Libya,
the last Ottoman province in Africa. The First and Second Balkan Wars of 1912–13 resulted in the lost of
almost all the remaining Ottoman territory in Europe to an alliance of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro.

The Ottoman Empire rashly entered World War
I as an ally of Germany and Austria. Though Ottoman forces performed fairly well—inflicting a humiliating
defeat on the British in the Dardanelles campaign of 1915, for example—the Ottoman
economy eventually collapsed under the strain of modern war. Troops deserted in large numbers. The Arab provinces of the Near East fell to
Allied troops. On 30 October 1918
Turkey signed an armistice. Battle,
famine, and disease had devastated the population.

For Bahá'í history, the most important
Ottoman official during World War I was Ahmad Jamal Pasha (Cemal Pa¶a), the Turkish commander-in-chief in Syria, who threatened to execute `Abd

al-Baha. Born in Istanbul in 1872, Jamal Pasha graduated from the Ottoman military college in 1895 and was commissioned a captain in the general staff. Stationed in Salonika, he joined the subversive Committee of Union and Progress, the "Young Turks." When the Committee seized power in 1908, he became a member of its executive committee. In the following years he was military governor of Üsküdar and civil governor of Adana and Baghdad. He commanded a division in the First Balkan War (1912). After the Committee of Union and Progress seized total power in January 1913, he became successively military governor of Istanbul (promoted to lieutenant-general), minister of public works, and minister of the navy. During this period he was one of the three Young Turk leaders who ruled as a dictatorial triumvirate.

Soon after war broke out, he was made commander of the Fourth Army in Damascus and military governor of the Syrian provinces—the area covering modern Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, and northwestern Saudi Arabia. His efforts in 1915 and 1916 to invade British-occupied Egypt were repulsed. Despite progressive tendencies—notably an interest in public works and archaeology—Jamal Pasha ruthlessly suppressed the Arab nationalists, hanging thirty-two prominent Arab leaders in 1915 and 1916. He also persecuted the Jewish settlers in Palestine. In December 1915 Jamal Pasha contacted the Allies, offering to revolt against the Ottoman Government, stop the massacres of Armenians, and cede European Turkey to the Russians. In return he would become Sultan of the Ottoman provinces in Asia. The British rebuffed him. Since the Turkish government did not find out about these negotiations, he remained in command of the Syrian army. In June 1916 the Sharif of Mecca—the hereditary ruler of the Hijaz—revolted against the Turks and began harrying their lines of communication. The British invaded Sinai in 1916 and Palestine in 1917, driving back Jamal Pasha's army. At the end of the year, he was relieved of his command, having lost Palestine as far north as Jaffa and Jerusalem.

After the outbreak of World War I, `Abd al-Baha came under renewed suspicion, probably for his Western connections. When Jamal Pasha first came to `Akka, probably about the beginning of 1915, he summoned `Abd al-Baha to his camp and told him bluntly that he had received reports that `Abd al-Baha was a religious mischief-maker. `Abd al-Baha saw that the Pasha was drunk and knew his reputation for hanging

enemies real and imagined, so he turned the matter to a joke by comparing his own reputation to that of Jamal Pasha, who had been in the eyes of the Sultan a political mischief-maker. The two men parted on good terms.

Mirza Muhammad-`Ali and his followers began reporting to Jamal Pasha that `Abd al-Baha's religious activities and relations with people in other countries were of a political nature and that he was opposed to the Committee of Union and Progress. It was not long after that the German consul in Haifa brought `Abd al-Baha the news that Jamal Pasha had told a gathering of Muslim clergy in Jerusalem that he intended to crucify him after he returned from conquering Egypt and that he would destroy the Shrines of Bahaullah and the Bab. `Abd al-Baha reassured the distraught consul that none of these events were likely to happen.

After the failure of the first Turkish attack on the Suez Canal on 2–3 February 1915, Jamal Pasha and his German advisers began elaborate preparations for a larger attack. Jamal Pasha himself roamed Syria and Palestine trying and hanging Arab nationalists. "Gallows" occurs frequently in `Abd al-Baha's description's of the Pasha's character. `Abd al-Baha was sufficiently concerned that one day early in 1916 he went to Nazareth to meet Jamal Pasha. When a letter arrived asking about `Abd al-Baha's whereabouts, he replied, "Tell him, `In front of a cannon.'"

Jamal Pasha's attacks on the canal in April and July also failed. Thereafter, he was preoccupied with the British advance through Sinai and southern Palestine that began in August and lasted until December 1917. Before he could carry out his threats to `Abd al-Baha, he was recalled. Nonetheless, in December 1917 rumors of danger to `Abd al-Baha reached Major Tudor-Pole, a friend of `Abd al-Baha who was at that time an intelligence officer with the British army in Palestine. He alerted influential friends and followers of `Abd al-Baha, who persuaded the military authorities to pass word through the lines that `Abd al-Baha was not to be harmed. Haifa and `Akka fell to British and Indian cavalry on 23 September 1918. The British authorities immediately announced that `Abd al-Baha and his family were safe.

Note: The main source for Jamal Pasha's relations with `Abd al-Baha is Mu'ayyad, Khatirat, pp. 184–86, 290, 332–33, 443–47, from which are derived other accounts such as Balyuzi, `Abdu'l-Bahá 409–14, `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 317, Rabbani, Priceless

26, Mazandarani, Asrar 3:42–45,
Ishraq-Khavari, Rahiq 1:370. See also Blomfield, Chosen 202–5. Note that the order of events given in the body of the present article is an educated guess. On the capture of Haifa, see
Balyuzi, `Abdu'l-Bahá 425–30, Blomfield, Chosen 219–27, Momen, Babi

332–38.

Jamal Pasha appears several times in `Abd al-Baha's talks to local Bahá'ís. (Most of what we know about his dealings with the Pasha come from these talks.) Though he joked about the real danger that Jamal Pasha posed, he described him as "a mountain of arrogance" and said that he was bloodthirsty, rapacious, and drunken. For Shoghi Effendi, Jamal Pasha was one of a series of threats to the Bahá'í World Center—Sultan `Abd al-Hamid, Hitler, and the 1947–48 war—averted by the providence of God. Shoghi Effendi described his character as "bloodthirsty" and "suspicious and merciless" and referred to his "ruthless military dictatorship" and to his being "an inveterate enemy of the Faith."

Note: For Shoghi Effendi on Jamal Pasha, see Rabbani, Priceless

189, Shoghi Effendi, Promised 13, 65, Shoghi Effendi, Citadel 54, 72, `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 317.

When the Young Turk government fell at the end of 1918, Jamal Pasha fled to Europe. He was tried in absentia and sentenced to death. Accepting an appointment in the Afghan army, he traveled to Russia, where he helped negotiate an agreement between the Bolsheviks and Atatürk's nationalists in Turkey. In Tiflis, Armenia, on 21 July 1922, while returning from another diplomatic mission to Moscow, he was assassinated by Armenians, the third victim of a campaign to avenge the Armenian massacres of World War I.

Note: For the life of Jamal Pasha, see EI2, s.v. "Djemal Pasha" and his own Memories of Turkish Statesman (London, n.d.), also available in Ottoman, modern Turkish, and German.

Atatürk and Modern Turkey

Peace, however, was not to come to Turkey for four more years after the end of World War I, for the Allies planned the dismemberment of Turkey. The British, French, and Italians occupied Istanbul, the Straits, Cilicia, and the old Arab provinces. The Armenians had been promised

a state including most of eastern Anatolia, and the Italians had been allotted southwestern Anatolia. The Greeks had invaded western Anatolia, pushing eastwards from the ancient Greek territories of the Aegean coast, burning and killing as they went. The Sultan, a bitter enemy of the Young Turks, was in the hands of the Allies and was abetting their plans.

In the face of this disastrous situation, the Turks of Anatolia rallied to resist the various invaders. Mustafa Kemal, later known as Atatürk, the most successful of the wartime generals, organized a popular government in Ankara. The new regime defeated the Armenian Republic in 1921, regaining some territory lost to Russia forty years earlier and ending Armenian hopes for regaining their old lands in eastern Anatolia. In 1922 the Turks drove the Greeks back into the sea at Smyrna. The Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 confirmed the existence of the new Turkey. Huge population exchanges—Muslim Turks from Greece and Greek Christians from Turkey—and the loss of the non-Turkish Muslim provinces resulted in a new Turkish republic that was overwhelmingly Muslim and ethnically Turkish. The Sultanate was abolished and with it the Ottoman Empire. The last Sultan lingered a few months longer as caliph—now only a religious leader—but even this title was abolished in 1924.

Atatürk made himself a virtual dictator and set about reorganizing Turkey on the model of modern European nation-states, providing in the process a model for Reza Shah Pahlavi in Iran. The Ottoman Empire had been a multi-ethnic empire ruled by a Turkish dynasty; the Republic of Turkey became a Turkish national state. Islam was deinstitutionalized. Though mosques remained open, all the theological seminaries and monasteries of the mystical orders were closed. Almost all religious institutions were disbanded. A new civil law based on the Swiss code replaced Islamic law. Traditional headgear was prohibited, and men were required to wear Western hats. Under state sponsorship there was rapid economic development. Atatürk turned Turkey's back on the Islamic world and attempted to make Turkey Western and European.

Atatürk was not entirely successful in eliminating Islam as a social and political force, particularly in the countryside. His attempts to abolish Arabic as a liturgical language were eventually abandoned. Even Atatürk's harsh anti-clerical measures could be seen by many pious Muslims as salutary reforms of corrupt religious institutions. Typical, perhaps, is the fact that Turks never ceased referring to Atatürk himself as "Ghazi"—"victor

in
the holy war."

Politically, Turkey has become generally
democratic. After Atatürk's death in
1938 Turkey enjoyed considerable periods of democratic rule, broken by military intervention in times of instability. Generally, Turkey has remained true to Atatürk's vision of a secular
modern state—in recent years, for example, attempting to join the European Community. However, Islamic nationalism
is also increasingly influential.

Shoghi Effendi on the fall of the Ottomans and the rise of modern
Turkey

Five years after the end of World War I the
Ottoman Empire was gone, replaced by Atatürk's secular Republic of Turkey. In several of his works, especially The Promised Day is Come, Shoghi Effendi points to this extraordinary transformation as evidence of the hand of God at work, sweeping away the obsolete forms of Islam and preparing the way for the eventual triumph of the Bahá'í Faith, "a slow yet steady and relentless retribution." (Shoghi Effendi, Promised 61.) He links it to the fall of
the Qajar monarchy in Iran. For Shoghi
Effendi the decline of Istanbul—no longer the capital even of the shrunken Turkish Republic—particularly symbolized this. For Shoghi Effendi the Ottoman Empire also represented Sunni Islam's
encounter with the revelation of Bahaullah, just as Iran and the Qajar regime represented Shi`ism.

Shoghi Effendi considered the Ottoman
regime more culpable than the Iranian government in its treatment of the Bahá'ís. While in Iran the Babis had
attempted to assassinate the Shah, the Ottomans had no just cause for complaint against the Bahaullah.

Note: For Bahá'í writings
on the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, see Mazandarani, Amr 4:453–58; Bahaullah, Proclamation
102–4; Bahaullah, Tablets, 213;
Shoghi Effendi, Promised 19, 38–39,
61–66, 100–1; Shoghi Effendi, World

173–74; Taherzadeh 2:312–23, as well as the bibliography on tablets mentioned
above.

The Bahá'í Community of
Turkey

The modern Republic of
Turkey now has the second largest Bahá'í community in the Middle East. The

modern Bahá'í community of Turkey was established by Iranian Bahá'í traders, pilgrims, and refugees seeking the opportunities and relative freedom of cosmopolitan Istanbul. A local spiritual assembly was established there, and Bahá'í communities eventually grew up in other towns in the area. A second area of Bahá'í settlement was in the south, in partly Arab areas like Adana, Iskenderun (Alexandretta, held by France until 1937), and neighboring towns. The Bahá'ís here seem to have been Arabic-speaking descendants of early Bahá'ís in Iraq and the Holy Land. Bahá'í communities also eventually grew up in other important towns such as Smyrna and Ankara.

Like the Tanzimat and Young Turk reformers before him, Atatürk attempted to modernize Turkish society by authoritarian rule rather than by liberalization. He ruthlessly suppressed competing influences: most Islamic institutions, particularly the mystical orders, Freemasons, labor groups, Communists, and the like. In 1928 a number of Bahá'ís in Smyrna were arrested on the grounds that they were—as the Times of London correspondent put it—"a group of Turks, Americans, and Persians who had formed a secret society with the object of continuing the religious practices in vogue in the days of the Sultans." They were further suspected of having political contacts with royalist emigres. When the Istanbul spiritual assembly intervened, its members were also arrested. The Istanbul Bahá'ís used the trial as an opportunity to expound publicly the history and teachings of the Bahá'í Faith, gaining considerable publicity in the Middle Eastern press. In the end they were cleared of the charge of being a subversive organization and convicted only of the minor charge of having failed to register as an association. In 1932–33 many Bahá'ís were arrested in Istanbul and Adana on similar charges, although in Adana the prejudices of Muslims seem to have been a factor also. By March 1933 the Istanbul Bahá'ís had been acquitted, but fifty-three Bahá'ís remained in prison in Adana, prompting Shoghi Effendi to ask the American and Iranian Bahá'ís to appeal to the Turkish authorities in their behalf. All the Bahá'ís were released by the beginning of April.

In later decades Bahá'ís continued to face intermittent harassment from Turkish authorities concerned that they represented a foreign political or cultural influence, thus forcing the Turkish Bahá'ís to remain somewhat cautious in their public activities. As late as

the 1960s a Bahá'í election meeting was raided by police and those present briefly jailed.

The constitution of the Republic of Turkey guarantees freedom of worship and conscience but prohibits religious interference in politics. The criminal code prohibits proselytism. The establishment of the republic resulted in the deinstitutionalization of Islam but also the departure of almost all non-Muslims from the country. Islamic institutions now are entirely controlled by the state. Other religious communities are free of direct state control but must operate within narrow legal limits. The development of the modern Turkish Bahá'í community has been shaped by these paradoxical circumstances. Though in most ways freer than other Middle Eastern Bahá'í communities, it has always had to exercise its freedom with caution for fear of triggering old religious or newer political prejudices. The Turkish Bahá'í community, like Turkey itself, exists in a cultural borderland between Europe and the Middle East.

Martha Root visited Turkey in 1927, 1929, and 1932. Systematic development of the Bahá'í community began with the Ten Year Crusade (1953–63). With the aid of pioneers from Iraq and Iran, the community grew to twelve assemblies in 26 localities. A national spiritual assembly was formed in 1959. The community built a national hazirat al-quds in Istanbul and bought a temple site and three holy places. There were organized youth activities.

During the Nine Year Plan (1964–73) the community grew to 22 assemblies in 57 localities, including groups on three islands near the Dardanelles: Imroz, Bozca Ada, and Marmara. There were also systematic efforts to establish communities in the towns and villages visited by Bahaullah and along the Black Sea coast. The number of assemblies and localities grew to 33 and 102 in 1979 but dropped to 29 and 98 by 1983. In 1986 there were 50 assemblies and 157 localities. Statistics on assembly activities such as feasts, assembly meetings, and children's classes show that the Turkish assemblies are relatively strong and active. Fairly large scale enrollments have occured in southwestern Turkey. The Turkish Bahá'ís have undertaken various efforts associated with Bahaullah's stay in Turkey. These include establishing communities in the areas visited by him, acquiring and restoring holy places,

and commemorating events of his life in Turkey.

The peculiar political conditions of Turkey made goals involving official recognition difficult to attain. The first national spiritual assembly had to be elected by mail. Though the national spiritual assembly was not been able to achieve incorporation, by 1980 it had some exemption from taxation. Since 1966 authorities have also permitted believers to list their religion as "Bahá'í" on their identity cards.

The most significant accomplishment of the Turkish Bahá'í community is the degree to which it has become assimilated into its country, an achievement only equalled in the Middle East by the Bahá'í communities of Iran, Iraq, Egypt, and Morocco. The earliest Bahá'ís in Turkey were Iranians. Some of their families have remained and have assimilated thoroughly into Turkish life, a process encouraged by strong Turkish nationalist pressures. Though Turkey still receives pioneers, it sends almost as many pioneers out to other countries. Over the years Bahá'í teaching has brought many ethnic Turks into the community, especially since the 1970s. During the Nine Year Plan the Turkish community was successful in teaching in the `Alavi, or `Ashiq, community, a dissident Shi`i minority in Anatolia. By the 1970s the Turkish Bahá'í community was culturally Turkish, rather than being an expatriate Iranian community as is the case in many other Middle Eastern countries.

Since the Iranian Revolution of 1979, many Bahá'í refugees have crossed into Turkey, some of whom have had to stay for long periods while awaiting resettlement.

Note: For the history of the modern Turkish Bahá'í community, see Balyuzi, `Abdu'l-Bahá 399; Momen, Babi 474–75; Ishraq-Khavari, Da'irat 7:972–74; Garis, Root 294–95, 322–27, Bahá'í World 1:101, 103; 2:183; 3:43, 45, 218, 222–23; 4:97, 274, 430–31; 5:432; 6:511; 7:560; 8:692; 9:658–59; 10:559; 11:524–25; 13:297–98, 356, 759, 951, 1035; 14:86, 161, 418; 15:173–74, 251; 16:267; 17:96, 185–86; Bahá'í News 28 (Nov. 1928) 2; 72 (Ap. 1933) 4; 397 (Ap. 1964) 3–4; 434 (May 1967) 2; Rabbani, Priceless 316–18; `Abd al-Baha, Makatib 303. See also the statistical and teaching plan summaries released by the Bahá'í World Center: 1963: 26, 31, 36, 44, 119; 1964: 12–14, 35; 1968: 2, 27, 50, 67, 79, 94, 101–2; 1975: 11, 44, 67, 71, 76, 95; 1983: 98; 1986: 39, 45, 50–51, 56, 66, 72–74, 79, 88, 90–91, 152–53. Some photographs of

Turkish Bahá'ís are found in Bahá'í World 3:321, 4:317, 319; 13:297, 525; 14:264; 15:251, 576; 16: 266.

Growth of the Bahá'í community (including Alexandretta/Hatay)

Note:
This table was lacking formatting in its HTML version at www.h-net.org/~bahai/bhpapers/vol6/waless/chap4.htm. I tried to put it back into table format by consulting www.h-net.org/~bahai/bhpapers/vol6/waless.pdf, but my columns might not be accurate. [-J.W., 2011]

Year	Baha'is	LSAs	Groups	Isol.	Local.	Inc. LSAs
1900	100?					
1921	1					
1930	2	8	10			
1937	6?					
1944	6?					
1953						
1963	12	9	5	26		
1973	22	35	57			
1979	33	69	102			
1986	44	58	55	157		

Other Turkish Bahá'í Communities.

Though the largest modern Turkish community is in Turkey, large numbers of Turks live in Iran, the Soviet Union, and China, as well as elsewhere in the Middle East, Europe, and now even America and Australia. All speak Turkic dialects that are somewhat mutually intelligible.

Turks and Turkic peoples have lived in Iran for more than a thousand years, largely sharing the culture of the Persian-speaking majority. More often than not, Iran has been ruled by Turkish dynasties such as the Safavids (1499–1722) and the Qajars (1779–1924). Most Turks in Iran are in Aharbayjan, now divided between Iran and the Soviet Union. These are the Azeri (Ahari) Turks, closely related by language and culture to the Turks of Turkey but thoroughly assimilated into Iranian life and sharing a common Shi`i faith. The Babi and Bahá'í religions spread among the Turks of Aharbayjan as it did among the Persians elsewhere in Iran. Most of the Babis at the battle of Zanjan, for example, must have been Turks. A number of the nomadic tribes of Iran are also Turkic, but there have never been many Bahá'ís among them, though systematic efforts have been made to teach them.

Six of the new republics of the former Soviet Union are ethnically Turkic: Azerbaijan, Kirghizistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan, although the last is now only 40% Turkic due to immigration from other parts of the former Soviet Union. The area north of Iran and Afghanistan and east of the Caspian was formerly known as Russian Turkistan. There are also other Turkic groups elsewhere in the Soviet Union. Bahá'í refugees from Iran established communities in Russian Turkistan and the Caucusus around the turn of the century. Until the early 1930s there were national spiritual assemblies in the Caucasus, which included Soviet Azerbaijan, and Turkistan. Some of these communities still exist after half a century of isolation from the rest of the Bahá'í world. Few if any of the local Turkic peoples ever became Bahá'ís.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, there has been rapid growth in the Bahá'í communities in the new republics, including the Turkish areas. New converts seem to include a significant number of Turks, but the sitatuation is changing rapidly.

Other Turkic communities exist in western China, Bulgaria, Syria, and Iraq. There are few if any Bahá'ís among these groups.

In the last three decades poverty has driven many Turks to emigrate to Western Europe, America, and Australia. The Five Year Plan called for collaboration among the national spiritual assemblies of Turkey, Germany, and Australia in teaching these emigrants.

Bahá'í literature in Turkish

The Turkic languages belong to the Altaic family and are thus related to other Central Asian languages such as Mongolian. All the Turkic languages are characterized by vowel harmony, agglutinative morphology, and verb-final word order. They are thus very different in sound and structure from other Islamic languages such as Persian and Arabic. Almost all modern Turkic languages once used the Arabic alphabet, though it was not very suitable for their sounds. Early Turkic languages also used the ancient Uighur script, and modern Republican Turkish uses the Roman alphabet. Since about 1939 Soviet Turkic languages have used the Cyrillic script, but since the independence of the Turkish republics of the former Soviet Union there have been plans for adopting the Latin alphabet of modern Republican Turkish.

The Turkic language used in the nineteenth

century Near East was Ottoman (Osmanli), a southwestern Turkic dialect heavily infused with Persian and Arabic words. It was the language of government and the ruling elite throughout the Ottoman Empire, though educated Ottomans usually knew Persian and Arabic as well. It was closely related to Azeri, the Turkic dialect of northwestern Iran. In 1928 as part of his modernization program, Atatürk decreed that Turkish should be written in the Roman alphabet. In addition he tried to purify the language from Persian and Arabic loan words. The Arabic script was no longer to be taught. This had the effect of cutting modern Turks off from their old literary heritage; not only could they not read the old alphabet, they no longer knew many of the Arabic and Persian words and phrases that filled Ottoman Turkish. Modern Turkish is thus quite different now from other Turkic languages and from the Ottoman Turkish of a century ago.

It should be noted that Republican Turkish spelling of Arabic and Persian words and names is based on Turkish pronunciation and thus differs substantially from the common transliterations directly from Persian and Arabic. "Muhammad," for example, is "Mehmet" in modern Turkish.

Note: For information on Turkish, see EB (1985) "Turkic Languages;" Bernard Comrie, The World's Major Languages (New York: Oxford, 1987) pp. 619–44.

`Abd al-Baha lived almost his entire life in the Ottoman Empire and spoke Ottoman Turkish well. He wrote a number of prayers in Turkish. These are heavily infused with Persian words and phrases, in accordance with the literary tastes of the time. They have been published. Though a few items evidently were published in Ottoman Turkish, Bahá'í publishing in Turkey did not begin in earnest until after the change to the Roman alphabet. In addition to expository works originally written in Turkish, many of the best known Bahá'í books in Persian were translated, particularly works by Bahaullah, `Abd al-Baha, and Mirza Abu al-Fadl Gulpaygani. The early translators, such as Majdi Ènan, were educated before the reform and thus knew Persian and Arabic. These translations, though written in the Roman alphabet, were thoroughly Ottoman in style and became increasingly difficult for younger Turks educated in the new system. There have thus been attempts to rewrite the older translations in modern Republican Turkish to make them

more accessible. Translation remains a problem since there are now few Turkish Bahá'ís who are fluent in Arabic and Persian. The enrichment of Turkish Bahá'í literature has been a goal of teaching plans since 1964.

Though there are large Turkish-speaking Bahá'í communities in Iran, the Iranian government prohibited the publication of literature in Turkish throughout most of this century. As a result there has been little Turkish Bahá'í literature published in Iran, the Turkish prayers of `Abd al-Baha being a notable exception. A translation of the short obligatory prayer into Azeri is found in Bahá'í World 16:601 and 17:520.

Sixty percent of the speakers of Turkic languages live outside Turkey, many of them in the former Soviet Union: about one out of eight citizens of these republics speaks a Turkic language as his mother tongue. Most of the earliest published Bahá'í literature in Turkish was printed by the large Bahá'í communities in Baku in Russian Azerbaijan and Ashkhabad in Russian Turkistan. Beginning with the Nine Year Plan, the translation of Bahá'í literature into the various dialects of Soviet Central Asia has been a goal, including Turkmen, Kazakh, Kirghiz, and Uzbek. Translations were made into at least the first two of these prior to the fall of the Soviet Union. It seems likely that with the independence of these states there will be a large increase in Bahá'í literature in the languages of the Turkish republics.

Note: The most recent bibliographies of Bahá'í literature in Turkish are Bahá'í World 13:1108; 18:889. For other Turkic languages see Bahá'í World 14:569; 15:714; 16:601, 612; 18:843, 857–58.

Excursus

`Abdu'llah Pasha

This Turkish official was the governor of `Akka from 1819 to 1832 and was the owner of a number of buildings important in Bahá'í history. He was the governor of `Akka after his father-in-law Sulayman Pasha. He sided with the Turkish Sultan against Muhammad-`Ali Pasha of Egypt when the latter sent his son Ibrahim Pasha to invade Turkish Syria in the summer of 1831. The Egyptian army besieged `Akka for six months. Eventually, he was forced to surrender the

city after a bombardment that damaged almost every building in the city. He was exiled to Egypt but later returned to
reclaim his properties in the `Akka area. He then moved to Istanbul and finally to Medina where he died and is
buried.

Among the extensive
properties he amassed were the mansion of Mazra`a on land formerly owned by his father `Ali Pasha and in which Bahaullah later lived; the Governorate of `Akka, now known as the House of `Abdu'llah Pasha, where `Abd al-Baha lived from 1896 to 1910; and mansions adjacent to the Mansion of Bahji and on the promontory of Mt. Carmel. He also completed the
Citadel of `Akka in which Bahaullah was imprisoned.(Ruhe, Door 205-6.)

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