

ADRIANOPE

The mid-winter journey from Constantinople to Adrianople (Edirne) lasted only 12 days but it was undertaken during the coldest winter in over 40 years. Bahá'u'lláh, His family and companions were at the mercy of the elements. Bahá'u'lláh declared of this journey, "They expelled us ... with an abasement with which no abasement on earth can compare." "Neither My family, nor those who accompanied Me," He further stated, "had the necessary raiment to protect them from the cold in that freezing weather." And again: "The eyes of Our enemies wept over Us, and beyond them those of every discerning person."



Bahá'u'lláh and his entourage suffered many ill effects from the journey. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'u'lláh's son who was 19 at the time, was to experience pain in his feet for the rest of his life from the frostbite suffered during this trip.

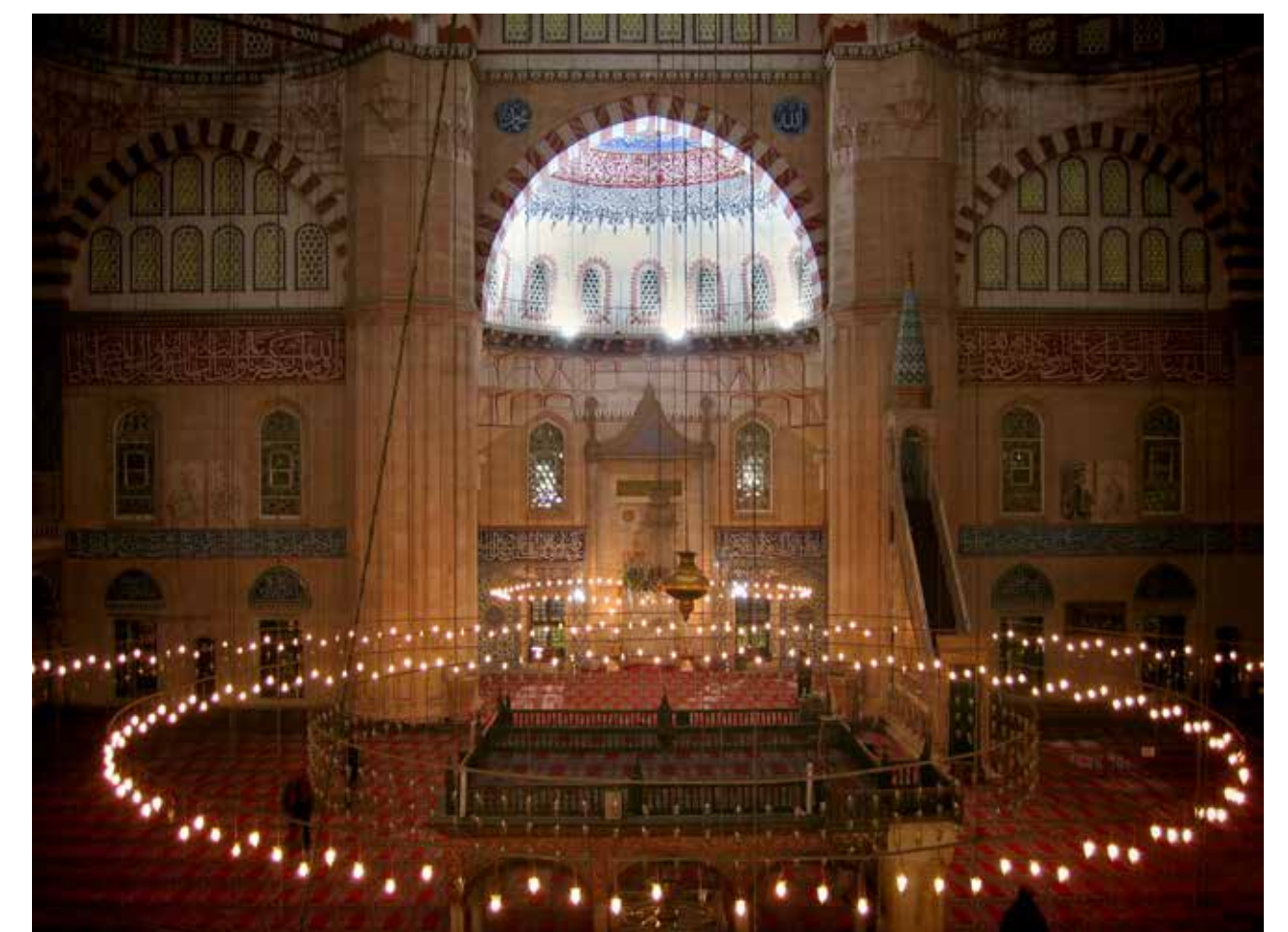
In Adrianople, the exiles found that the accommodation provided did not protect them from the intense cold. Bahá'u'lláh referred to this city as the "remote prison." It was the farthest from Iran that He was destined to travel — over 2,800 kilometers from the place of His birth.

Despite the conditions under which Bahá'u'lláh and the rest of the exiles lived in Adrianople, His teachings continued to spread. A greater flow of writings than ever before came from His pen and they were distributed by His followers to places as far away as Egypt and India. "Day and night," an eyewitness has written, "the Divine verses were raining down in such number that it was impossible to record them." A number of secretaries working day and night were unable to keep up with all that Bahá'u'lláh dictated during this time.

Shortly after the arrival of the exiles in Adrianople, many residents of the city became deeply attracted to Bahá'u'lláh. The governor, high-ranking officials and leaders of thought sought out His company and showed great reverence. On those occasions when Bahá'u'lláh would walk through the streets, people would spontaneously stand and bow before Him.



One of the tragic episodes of Bahá'u'lláh's time in Adrianople concerned the actions of his half-brother Mírzá Yahyá. City officials as well as the Bábís increasingly revered Bahá'u'lláh, and Mírzá Yahyá was so jealous that he had someone poison Him. Bahá'u'lláh became extremely ill, and it took Him months to recuperate. The episode left Him with a tremor that showed in His handwriting to the end of His life.



It was during the time in Adrianople that Bahá'u'lláh wrote one of His best known works — the Tablet of Ahmad. The tablet was addressed to one of His most ardent followers, who had suffered numerous acts of persecution for accepting the teachings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.



Beginning in 1867 in Adrianople and continuing later in 'Akká, Bahá'u'lláh wrote to the kings and rulers of the world, including Emperor Napoleon III, Queen Victoria, Kaiser Wilhelm I, Tsar Alexander II, Emperor Franz Joseph, Pope Pius IX, Sultan Abdul-Aziz, and the Iranian ruler, Nasirí'd-Din Shah.

In these letters, Bahá'u'lláh openly proclaimed His station as a Messenger of God. He urged the leaders to pursue justice and disarmament and exhorted them to band together into a commonwealth of nations, warning them of the dire consequences should they fail to establish peace.

In 1868 the Sultan further banished Bahá'u'lláh, ordering Him to the Ottoman prison city of 'Akká (Acre), a destination so remote that it was thought this was where His religion would surely die out.

The house of Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople was surrounded by guards, and all of His family and followers were taken for interrogation. They were informed that some of them would be sent to 'Akká while others — including Mírzá Yahyá — would go to Cyprus.

Some of the consuls of foreign powers, who had been impressed by Bahá'u'lláh and the stainless character of His son 'Abdu'l-Bahá, offered to intervene on His behalf, "suggestions for which He expressed appreciation, but which He firmly declined.