

## 1. Sea Gate:

"The arrival of the exiled Bahá'ís in the dirty town of 'Akká occurred in the late afternoon of 31 August 1868. The Greatest Holy Leaf, Bahá'u'lláh's daughter, relates the circumstances of that hard day: ' . . . the heat of the month . . . was overpowering. We were put into a sailing boat. There being no wind, and no shelter from the burning rays of the sun, we spent eight hours of positive misery, and at last we reached 'Akká . . . . All the townspeople had assembled to see the arrival of the prisoners. Having been told that we were infidels, criminals and sowers of sedition, the attitude of the crowd was threatening. Their yelling of curses. . . filled us with fresh misery. We were terrified of the unknown! We knew not what the fate of our party, the friends and ourselves would be.'" (Door of Hope, p. 26) Under the cannons by the sea gate, the prisoners passed through the sea gate itself, a huge wooden door wrapped with wide bands of iron.

## 2. (continued)

Not only were its walls damp but the roof leaked and the floor was covered with dust. He sat and slept on a mat in that room. His bed cover was a sheepskin. The room was infested with fleas and when he slept under the sheepskin, fleas gathered and began biting. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had worked out a tactic of defeating the fleas by turning over His sheepskin at intervals. He would sleep for a while before the fleas found their way again to the inner side. He would then turn the sheepskin over again. Every night He had to resort to this tactic eight to ten times.

"These companions of Bahá'u'lláh had to live in an austerity similar to that when they were in the barracks. Food was scarce and rations far from a equate for each person. Yet they spent their time in the utmost joy."  
(The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, vol. 3, pp. 222-223)

## 4. The Citadel:

Bahá'u'lláh and His followers were first taken to the police station when they arrived in 'Akká. Bahá'u'lláh refused to be placed there, so He was taken to the citadel, a barracks section of the prison. There is a square at the entrance to the Citadel that could be used for exercise within the walls of the prison. The citadel was hot, bleak and forbidding when the exiles arrived, surrounded by guards. "The first night,' Bahá'u'lláh testifies, . . . 'all were deprived of either food or drink . . . they even begged for water, and were refused.' So filthy and brackish was the water in the pool of the courtyard that no one could drink it." (God Passes By, p. 87)

When the Greatest Holy Leaf reached the top of the stairs to the hot, foul-smelling barracks and entered the space where over seventy people would live together in two cells, she fainted.

## 2. The Khán-i-'Avámíd, the Inn of the Pillars:

After Bahá'u'lláh, His family and the friends were released from the jail cells, they were permitted to live in certain buildings in 'Akká under house arrest. One of these buildings was the Khán-i-'Avámíd. "The pilgrims arriving from Persia were first received (here) by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. . . He saw to it that they were ready to attain the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. Not only did the pilgrims learn from Him, through His courtesy and utter selflessness, lessons of humility before Bahá'u'lláh, but also they were helped to improve their outward appearance—for example by putting on new clothes when they were to attain His presence. "The rooms in the Khán-i-'Avámíd were damp and filthy. 'Abdu'l-Bahá. . . began to repair the rooms for the companions of Bahá'u'lláh. He left the repair of his own room to the last. The money ran out and as a result His room remained unrepaired and in very bad condition.

## 3. Mosque of Al-Jazzár:

Soon after Bahá'u'lláh's arrival in 'Akká, the decree of the Sultán which had brought Bahá'u'lláh to exile was read publicly in the mosque. The Muslims grew fearful of the exiles, and hated them after hearing what the Sultán had proclaimed. The prisoners were to be strictly confined. The sentence of life-long imprisonment was pronounced, with the hope that the prisoners would all die in jail. The people of 'Akká were warned not to associate with the prisoners in any way. However, the fears which the decree incited were put to rest over time, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá was given a room in the courtyard of the mosque, showing how much the Muslim clergy had grown to respect and honor Him.

## 5. Bahá'u'lláh's Cell:

The small room, the floor covered with earth and the plaster falling from the ceiling, was unfit to be lived in. Two small windows faced out toward the Mediterranean Sea. Pilgrims who had walked for months all the way from Irán to visit Him often had to return home after seeing only His hand waving a handkerchief from one of the little windows. All but two of the prisoners in the cell by Bahá'u'lláh fell ill from the unsanitary conditions. The prisoners were so crowded that 'Abdu'l-Bahá slept in the dark, damp morgue to give everyone a little more space.

## 6. House of ‘Udí-Khammár:

After Bahá’u’lláh was able to leave the cell in the barracks, the Holy Family came to live in a house that belonged to ‘Udí-Khammár. Even though it was so small that as many as thirteen people lived in one room, it was a step closer to a life of freedom. “It is a well-known story that one night the person who used to sleep on a shelf in that room fell down on the top of the others while asleep.”

(The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, vol. 3, p. 222)

It was in this house that Bahá’u’lláh’s Book of Laws, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, was written. Here also, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá came to live in an extra room provided by the landlord’s relative next door. This extra room was given to Him so that He could marry.

## 7. The Governorate:

During the days in the House of ‘Udí-Khammár, a terrible thing happened. Seven of Bahá’u’lláh’s followers were terribly distressed with the way the Covenant-breakers were lying about Bahá’u’lláh and causing His reputation to be damaged. Bahá’u’lláh repeatedly told the Bahá’ís to pay no attention to the lies these people were circulating about Him. But these seven men were enraged by the Covenant-breakers and killed three of them. The results of these murders were much worse for Bahá’u’lláh than the schemes of the three men who were killed. Bahá’u’lláh was very sad that His followers should disobey Him and take the lives of human beings, no matter how harmful they had become. Bahá’u’lláh was taken to the governorate for questioning about the murders. When the Commandant of the city asked Him, “Is it proper that some of your followers should act in such a manner?” Bahá’u’lláh replied, “If one of your soldiers were to commit a reprehensible act, would you be held responsible, and be punished in his place?”

## 8. Khán-i-Shávirdí, City Jail:

After Bahá’u’lláh was held for three days in the Khán-i-Shávirdí, He was permitted to return home. The Governor apologized for what had occurred to Bahá’u’lláh. Bahá’u’lláh wrote, “My captivity cannot harm Me. That which can harm Me is the conduct of those who love Me, who claim to be related to Me, and yet perpetrate what causeth My heart and My pen to groan.” (The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, vol. 3, p. 237)

Bahá’u’lláh returned to the House of ‘Udí-Khammár. Go back to number 6.

## 6. House of ‘Udí-Khammár:

It was in this house that Bahá’u’lláh’s Book of Laws the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, was revealed. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá came to live here in an extra room so that He could marry.

## 9. House of ‘Abbud:

The landlord of the house next to the House of ‘Udí-Khammár rented his home to the Bahá’ís. They tore down a wall between the two houses and made it into one big house. Bahá’u’lláh moved into the part which once had been next door and was now connected. The whole bigger house had a new name—the House of ‘Abbud. The increased space allowed the Bahá’ís to be of more service to each other and to the citizens of ‘Akká. Before long, Bahá’u’lláh’s reputation was restored, and the citizens, the rulers and the clergy of ‘Akká grew to love and respect Him, His Family and His followers.

## 10. Lion’s Gate:

Nine years after arriving in ‘Akká to a crowd of fearful citizens, Bahá’u’lláh was free to move outside the city walls, through the Lion’s Gate to a house called Mazra’ih in the green countryside that He loved.

## 11. Tourist Gate:

This is where YOU come in! Enter by this gate when you visit the prison of ‘Akká on Pilgrimage.

## 12. House of ‘Abdu’lláh Páshá:

After the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh in 1892, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá moved into this home in ‘Akká. The Covenant-breakers were living in the Mansion of Bahjí, away from the City of ‘Akká, so ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and His family could not live there. It was in the House of ‘Abdu’lláh Páshá that Shoghi Effendi was born, where he chanted loudly so that his Grandfather could hear him, where he played with his friends and, sometimes, surprised the pilgrims who had come to visit.

Great is thy blessedness, O ‘Akká,  
in that God hath made thee the day-  
spring of His Most Sweet Voice,  
and the dawn of His most mighty signs.  
Happy art thou in that the Throne of  
Justice hath been established upon  
thee, and the Daystar of God’s  
loving-kindness and bounty hath  
shone forth above thy horizon.

— Bahá’u’lláh  
*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 79

### The Prison City of ‘Akká

1. Sea Gate – the little hole in the wall near the water
2. Khán-i-Avámíd
3. Mosque of Al-Jazzár – in background
4. Citadel – in foreground, where prisoners walked around
- 5A. Citadel – looking up at Bahá’u’lláh’s Cell from outside
- 5B. Bahá’u’lláh’s Cell – inside the Citadel
- 6A. House of Udí-Khammár – looking at the side door
7. Governate
8. Khán-i-Shávirdí, City Jail – no photo
- 6B. House of Udí-Khammár, adjoining the House  
of Abbúd – outside of house, in the back of the photo
9. House of Abbúd – the inside hall
10. Lion’s Gate – no photo
11. Tourist’s Gate – See the pilgrims with their umbrellas!
12. House of Abdu’lláh Páshá – from the courtyard

Meditate on the world and the state  
of its people. He, for Whose sake  
the world was called into being, hath  
been imprisoned in the most desolate  
of cities [‘Akká], by reason of that  
which the hands of the wayward have  
wrought. From the horizon of His  
prison-city He summoneth mankind  
unto the Dayspring of God, the  
Exalted, the Great.

— Bahá’u’lláh,  
*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 56

He that saith in ‘Akká: ‘Glorified be  
God, and praise be unto God, and  
there is none other God but God, and  
most great is God, and there is no  
power nor strength except in God,  
the Exalted, the Mighty,’ God will  
write down for him a thousand good  
deeds, and blot out from him a  
thousand evil deeds.

— Bahá’u’lláh,  
*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 180

Blessed the man...that hath visited  
‘Akká. and blessed he that hath visited  
the visitor of ‘Akká...He that raiseth  
therein the call to prayer, his voice will  
be lifted up unto Paradise...The poor of  
‘Akká are the kings of Paradise and the  
princes thereof. A month in ‘Akká is  
better than a thousand years elsewhere.

—Sayings of Muhammad,  
cited in *God Passes By*

Know thou that upon Our arrival at  
this Spot, We chose to designate it  
as the ‘Most Great Prison’. Though  
previously subjected in another land  
to chains and fetters, We yet refused  
to call it by that name. Say: Ponder  
thereon, O ye endued with  
understanding.

—Bahá’u’lláh,  
cited in *God Passes By*

Crimson Spot ...is a reference to the prison-city of 'Akká. In the Bahá'í writings the word 'crimson' is used in several allegorical and symbolic senses.

—Bahá'u'lláh,  
*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 220

Upon our arrival, We were welcomed with banners of light, where upon the Voice of the Spirit cried out saying: "Soon will all that dwell on earth be enlisted under these banners."

—Bahá'u'lláh,  
*God Passes By*, p. 184

As a prison city, or penal colony of the Turkish Empire, it was a place so foul that it was said a bird flying over 'Akká would drop dead from the stench.

—*A Basic Bahá'í Dictionary*

Whilst in the Prison of 'Akká, We revealed in the Crimson Book that which is conducive to the advancement of mankind and to the reconstruction of the world.

—Bahá'u'lláh,  
*Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 89

...it is the most desolate of the cities of the world, the most unsightly of them in appearance, the most detestable in climate, and the foulest in water. It is as though it were the metropolis of the owl.

—Bahá'u'lláh,  
*God Passes By*, p. 186

None knoweth what befell us, except God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing... From the foundation of the world until the present day a cruelty such as this hath neither been seen nor heard of.

—Bahá'u'lláh,  
*God Passes By*, p. 187

**THE PRISON-CITY  
OF 'AKKÁ**

**THE PRISONER  
OF 'AKKÁ**

**THIS BOOK SET WAS  
MADE BY AND BELONGS TO:**

**CITY  
OF  
'AKKÁ**

**THE  
CRIMSON  
SPOT**

**THIS BOOK WAS  
MADE BY:**

**MAZE-MAP OF 'AKKÁ**