

The 'Akká Traditions in the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf

A Research Note

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Towards the end of the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, Bahá'u'lláh quotes a number of Traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad regarding the city of 'Akká. I list and number these below in the order that they appear in the text and giving Shoghi Effendi's translation:

In this connection it hath been deemed necessary to mention such traditions as have been recorded regarding the blessed and honored city of 'Akká, that haply thou mayest, O Hadi, seek a path unto the Truth, and a road leading unto God.

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

The following hath been recorded concerning the merits of 'Akká, and of the sea, and of Aynu'l-Baqar (The Spring of the Cow) which is in 'Akká:

1. 'Abdu'l-'Azíz, son of Abdu'-Salam, hath related unto us that the Prophet—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon him—hath said: "‘Akká is a city in Syria to which God hath shown His special mercy."
2. Ibn-i-Mas'ud—may God be pleased with him—hath stated: "The Prophet—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—hath said: 'Of all shores the best is the shore of Askelon, and 'Akká is, verily, better than Askelon, and the merit of 'Akká above that of Askelon and all other shores is as the merit of Muḥammad above that of all other Prophets. I bring you tidings of a city betwixt two mountains in Syria, in the middle of a meadow, which is called 'Akká. Verily, he that entereth therein, longing for it and eager to visit it, God will forgive his sins, both of the past and of the future. And he that departeth from it, other than as a pilgrim, God will not bless his departure. In it is a spring called the Spring of the Cow. Whoso drinketh a draught therefrom, God will fill his heart with light, and will protect him from the most great terror on the Day of Resurrection.'"
3. Anas, son of Malik—may God be pleased with him—hath said: "The Apostle of God—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—hath said: 'By the shore of the sea is a city, suspended beneath the Throne, and named 'Akká. He that dwelleth therein, firm and expecting a reward from God—exalted be He—God will write down for him, until the Day of Resurrection, the recompense of such as have been patient, and have stood up, and knelt down, and prostrated themselves, before Him.'"
4. And He—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—hath said: "I announce unto you a city, on the shores of the sea, white, whose whiteness is pleasing unto God—exalted be He! It is called 'Akká. He that hath been bitten by one of its fleas is better, in the estimation of God, than he who hath received a grievous

blow in the path of God. And he that raiseth therein the call to prayer, his voice will be lifted up unto Paradise. And he that remaineth therein for seven days in the face of the enemy, God will gather him with Khidr—peace be upon Him—and God will protect him from the most great terror on the Day of Resurrection.”

5. And He—may the blessings of God—exalted be He—and His salutations be upon Him—hath said: “There are kings and princes in 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.”
6. The Apostle of God—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—is reported to have said: “Blessed the man that hath visited ‘Akká, and blessed he that hath visited the visitor of ‘Akká. Blessed the one that hath drunk from the Spring of the Cow and washed in its waters, for the black-eyed damsels quaff the camphor in Paradise, which hath come from the Spring of the Cow, and from the Spring of Salvan (Siloam), and the Well of Zamzam. Well is it with him that hath drunk from these springs, and washed in their waters, for God hath forbidden the fire of hell to touch him and his body on the Day of Resurrection.”
7. The Prophet—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—is stated to have said: “In ‘Akká are works of supererogation and acts which are beneficial, which God vouchsafed specially unto whomsoever He pleaseth. And 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, and will uplift him a thousand grades in Paradise, and will forgive him his transgressions. And whoso saith in ‘Akká: ‘I beg forgiveness of God,’ God will forgive all his trespasses. And he that remembereth God in ‘Akká at morn and at eventide, in the night-season and at dawn, is better in the sight of God than he who beareth swords, spears and arms in the path of God—exalted be He!”
8. The Apostle of God—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—hath also said: “He that looketh upon the sea at eventide, and saith: ‘God is Most Great!’ at sunset, God will forgive his sins, though they be heaped as piles of sand. And he that counteth forty waves, while repeating: ‘God is Most Great!’—exalted be He—God will forgive his sins, both past and future.”
9. The Apostle of God—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—hath said: “He that looketh upon the sea a full night is better than he who passeth two whole months betwixt the Rukn and the Maqam. And he that hath been brought up on the shores of the sea is better than he that hath been brought up elsewhere. And he that lieth on the shore is as he that standeth elsewhere.”

Verily, the Apostle of God—may the blessings of God, exalted be He, and His salutations be upon Him—hath spoken the truth. (Bahá'u'lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pages 177-181)

In my book *Islam and the Bahá'í Faith*, I have quoted a number of these Traditions regarding ‘Akká. While I was writing the book I did a considerable amount of research to try to locate the source of these traditions. There were several factors indicating that the source of these Traditions was a work entitled *Faḍá'il ash-Shám wa Dimashq* by a Syrian scholar Abu'l-Ḥasan ‘Alí ibn Muḥammad ar-Ruba'í al-Málikí, known as Ibn Abi'l-Hawl, who died in

444AH/1052AD. Ar-Ruba’i himself was a well-respected scholar resident in Damascus who had travelled to various parts of the Islamic world including Egypt and Mecca and had collected Traditions in these places. He is relied upon by many later authors including Ibn ‘Asákir in his History of Damascus. The indications for this identification were as follows:

1. The Iraqi Bahá’i scholar Aḥmad Hamdí al-Muḥammad (*Ad-Dalíl wa’l-Irshád*, 3rd printing, Matábi’ al-Bayán, Beirut, 1966, pp. 166-9) quotes several of these Traditions and identifies the source as “Faḍá’il ‘Akká wa Asqalán” from the book “*Faḍá’il ash-Shám wa Dimashq* by Abu’l-Ḥasan ar-Ruba’i” (p. 167).
2. The Iranian Bahá’i scholar Hisam Noghabai (*Bishárát Kutub Ásmání*, 2nd edition, privately printed, pp. 183-6) quotes several of these Traditions and states that they are from “Faḍá’il ‘Akká wa Asqalán of Ibn Abi’l-Hawl” (p. 183).
3. I made enquiries from the Bahá’i World Centre to see if they had a copy of this work by ar-Ruba’i and they sent a copy of a photocopy that they had received from Habibu’llah Derakhshání that has a date on it which may be 127 (i.e. 1970). It appears to be a manuscript or lithograph. On the first page is the title and author *Kitáb Fadá’il ash-Shám wa Dimashq* compiled by Abu’l-Ḥasan ‘Alí ibn Muḥammad ibn Shujá’ ar-Ruba’i al-Málikí, known as Ibn Abi’l-Hawl, from the oral transmission of Abu’l-Ḥasan ‘Alí ibn Aḥmad ibn Zuhayr al-Málikí. On the following sheets all of the Traditions that Bahá’u’lláh quotes appear (except the first) and they appear almost in the same order as in the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf. There are minor textual variations (see analysis of this at the end of this paper). On looking at the photocopies, however, it becomes clear that the compiler of this item had taken the title page and one further page from the work and then gone straight on to the pages relating to ‘Akká which occupy pp. 3-23 and then he has added the final page. He has numbered these consecutively but it is clear they are not consecutive.
4. I discovered that a manuscript of *Faḍá’il ash-Shám wa Dimashq* by ar-Ruba’i existed in the library of Núr Aḥmadiyya Madrassa attached to the al-Jazzár Mosque in ‘Akká—see ‘Abdu’lláh Mukhlis, “Majmú’ Nádír” in *La Revue de l’Academie Arabe*, vol. 10, no. 9-10 (Sept.-Oct. 1930), pp. 577-83. This would give a means for Bahá’u’lláh to have had access to the work.

Of course the final piece of evidence that would be needed would be to locate a copy of ar-Ruba’i’s *Faḍá’il ash-Shám wa Dimashq* in order to confirm that the relevant Traditions are indeed in that book. This proved difficult. The current published version of the book (4th ed., Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islamí, 1405) does not have these Traditions but turns out, on closer examination, to be extracts from the *Faḍá’il ash-Shám wa Dimashq*, an abbreviated version of the book by Shaykh Muḥammad Násir ad-Dín al-Albání. I tried to obtain an older 1950 publication of the book which is mentioned in the introduction to the above edition, but was unable to obtain a copy despite making enquiries from book-dealers in Lebanon and elsewhere.

Manuscripts of this work appeared to be equally difficult to locate. Various manuscripts that exist are of other abbreviated versions of this work. Three manuscripts in Germany are of Burhán ad-Dín Ibrahim ibn Taj ad-Dín ‘Abd ar-Raḥmán al-Fazárí’s abridgement of this work (Brockelmann, *Geschichte*, p. 331—copies in Berlin, no. 6074, Gotha, no. 54/21, Tubingen Wetzst, no. 26/2; see also W. Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniss der Arabischen Handschriften der Koniglichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, Berlin: A. Asher & Co, 1893, vol. 15, p. 391, no. 6074). The only definite manuscripts of the work that I was able to locate were described in the following two publications:

1. The manuscript in the Núr Aḥmadiyya Madrassa attached to the al-Jazzár Mosque in ‘Akká—see above
2. A copy in the library of the Aya Sophia mosque in Istanbul, mss no. 3340/1—described in Felix Tauer, “Geographisches aus den Stambuler Bibliotheken (Arabische Handschriften)”, *Archiv Orientalni*, vol. 6 (1934), pp. 95-6.

Unfortunately, access to neither of these manuscripts was available immediately. It was at this point that I needed to come to a decision about the source of these Traditions for publication in my book, *Islam and the Bahá’í Faith*. I decided to identify the source of the Traditions as *Faḍá’il ash-Shám wa Dimashq* by ar-Ruba’í. Since the Haifa photocopies were very clearly written and there was an elaborate title page, I identified this as pages from a “an old lithographed edition of this work that does not show a date of publication and has no page numbers.” This proved an unfortunate decision as even before the book was published, but too late to make any alteration in the text, I discovered that my conclusions were erroneous. A closer reading of some of the material that I had as well as some new material revealed several pieces of information that contradicted my conclusions:

1. I found that the photocopy document sent to Haifa by Mr. Derakhshani contained two dates when the author had heard these Traditions. The writer states that he heard these Traditions from Bahá ad-Dín Abu Muḥammad al-Qásim ibn Abu’l-Qásim ‘Alí ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Hibatulláh ibn ‘Abdu’lláh ash-Shafi’í in Damascus in 581 and 585. Since these dates were more than a century after the death of ar-Ruba’í in 444AH/1052AD, it would appear to rule out the latter as the author.
2. I was informed by Necati Alkan that a copy of a printed version of ar-Ruba’í’s book was in the SOAS library. I went there and found that this was the older 1951 edition (ed. S. Munajjid, *Matbú’át al-Jámi’ al-‘Ilmí al-‘Arabí bi Dimashq*, Damascus) and appeared to be the complete text and did not contain a section with these ‘Akká Traditions in it. This book gave a third location for a manuscript of this work—the Dár al-Kutub az-Záhiriyya in Damascus.
3. A closer reading of the above article by Felix Tauer on the Istanbul manuscript revealed that this manuscript was in a compilation manuscript with several other works. Ar-Ruba’í’s *Faḍá’il ash-Sham wa Dimashq* was the first item (fol. 1-83) and the seventh work in the compilation was named as *Faḍá’il ‘Akká wa ‘Asqalán* (fol. 215-225). The opening and closing words of the volume as given by Tauer correspond exactly with the Derakhshani photocopy. Tauer gives no indication of the author of the piece about ‘Akká and Askelon and since the other items in the compilation are by various authors or anonymous, there is no contextual evidence in the compilation for authorship. The whole compilation was written out in Dhu’l Qa’da 921 AH by a certain ‘Abd al-Rahmán aṣ-Ṣáliḥí ibn Muḥammad in the Umayyad Mosque [in Damascus].

This seemed sufficient evidence to be now certain that the *Faḍá’il ‘Akká wa ‘Asqalán* was a separate work composed about 140 years after ar-Ruba’í’s *Faḍá’il ash-Sham wa Dimashq* and therefore certainly not by ar-Ruba’í himself. A further reading of the Derakhshani photocopies revealed that they were most likely actual photographic copies of the Aya Sophia manuscript described by Tauer. This for the following reasons:

1. On the front page of the Derakhshani photocopies, there was some writing in the top left hand corner. It looks somewhat like two capital “F”s followed by the Arabic numeral 40. I now realised that this was probably the number 3340, which of course

is the number of the Aya Sophia manuscript described by Tauer.

2. Tauer describes what is written on the title page of the manuscript and it accords exactly with the Derakhshani photocopies.
3. Tauer describes what is written at the end of the compilation—i.e. that it was written in Dhu'l Qa'da 921 AH by a certain 'Abd al-Rahmán aṣ-Ṣálihí ibn Muḥammad in the Umayyad Mosque [in Damascus]—and this corresponds exactly to the last page of the Derakhshani photocopies.

Thus we may be reasonably certain that the Derakhshani photocopies are copied from the Aya Sophia mss. no. 3340.

It was obviously now necessary to try to ascertain the authorship of the *Faḍá'il 'Akká wa 'Asqalán*. The opening words of the work state that these Traditions were heard from al-Háfiz Bahá ad-Dín Abú Muḥammad al-Qásim ibn Abu'l-Qásim 'Ali ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Hibatullah ibn 'Abdullah ash-Shafi'i in 581 and 585 in Damascus and that he heard them from Abu al-Barakát al-Khiḍr ibn Shibl al-faqíh.

Bahá ad-Dín Abú Muḥammad al-Qásim ibn Abu'l-Qásim 'Ali ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Hibatullah ibn 'Abdullah ash-Shafi'i can be identified as the son of the much more famous Ibn 'Asákir, who is described as the leading compiler of Traditions of his age (*"imám ahl al-ḥadith fi zamanihí"*, 'Abd al-Qádir an-Na'ímí, *ad-Dárus fí Taríkh al-Madaris*, Matbú'át al-Jámi' al-'Ilmí al-'Arabí bi Dimashq, vol. 1, 1367/1948, p. 100). He was the author of the very well known, *Taríkh Dimashq* (History of Damascus), the first part of which contains a compilation of prophetic Traditions relating to Syria in general and Damascus in particular (much of which comes from ar-Ruba'í's *Faḍá'il ash-Sham wa Dimashq* as noted above). Bahá ad-Dín al-Qásim ibn 'Asákir himself was born in 527. He was a prominent scholar of his generation and known as being reliable as a compiler of Traditions. He succeeded his father as the head of the college, Dár al-Ḥadith an-Núriyya on the latter's death in 571. He gave lectures on his father's History of Damascus and himself compiled a book of Traditions relating to Jerusalem and the Masjid al-Aqṣá called *al-Muqtaá fi Fadá'il al-Masjid al-Aqṣá*. He died in 600 AH. (Biographical information from 'Abd al-Qádir an-Na'ímí, *ad-Dárus fí Taríkh al-Madaris*, Matbú'át al-Jámi' al-'Ilmí al-'Arabí bi Dimashq, vol. 1, 1367/1948, p. 100-3).

It would appear that the compiler of the *Faḍá'il 'Akká wa 'Asqalán* was a student of Bahá ad-Dín al-Qásim ibn 'Asákir who heard these particular Traditions from him during the years 581 and 585 in Damascus. Interestingly, we know that Bahá ad-Dín al-Qásim visited 'Akká and taught some classes there in 586. This is because there is a record of one of his students Badhal ibn Abi al-Mu'ámmar at-Tabrízí taking notes of his teaching his father's book in 'Akká that year (*Taríkh Madína Dimashq*, ed. Ṣalah ad-Dín al-Munjid, Matbú'át al-Jámi' al-'Ilmí al-'Arabí bi Dimashq, Damascus, 1371/1951, vol. 1, p. 629).

The period of time in which *Faḍá'il 'Akká wa 'Asqalán* was written was a time in which there was a great deal of activity in the compiling of traditions about particular cities and regions. These compilations of prophetic Traditions were often compiled under the name "Faḍá'il . . .", which can be translated as "The Excellences of . . ." These volumes would consist of Traditions of the prophet Muhammad regarding that city and sometimes also material relating to shrines and sacred sites there, companions of the Prophet who are buried there and famous 'ulamá who have lived there. Bahá ad-Dín al-Qásim ibn 'Asákir himself, as we have noted, compiled such a work on Jerusalem—*al-Muqtaá fi Fadá'il al-Masjid al-Aqṣá*. His father included such material in the first part of his History of Damascus. Several of Bahá ad-Dín al-Qásim ibn 'Asákir's students also compiled such works and any of these could also have been the compiler of

Faḍá'il 'Akká wa 'Asqalán (these students are based on the list given in an-Na'imí, *ad-Dárus fí Taríkh al-Madaris*, vol. 1, p. 103):

Ḍiyá ad-Dín Muḥammad ibn 'Abdu'l-Wáḥid al-Maqdisí (d. 643) wrote *Faḍá'il ash-Shám* on Damascus (Khayr ad-Dín Ziriklí, *al-A'lám*, 2nd ed., Cairo, 1954-9, 10 vols, vol. 7, p. 134; Brockelmann, *Supplement*, vol. 1, p.690)

Abu al-Muwahhib al-Ḥasan ibn Hibatulláh Ṣaṣrí ar-Rubá'í wrote *Faḍá'il Bayt al-Muqaddas* about Jerusalem (Ziriklí, *al-A'lám*, vol. 2, p. 304)

'Abd al-Qádir ibn 'Abdulláh ar-Ruháwí (d. 612) wrote a compilation of forty traditions (Ziriklí, *al-A'lám*, vol. 4, p. 165)

Among others who are known to have been students of Bahá ad-Dín al-Qásim ibn 'Asákir and therefore possible compilers of *Faḍá'il 'Akká wa 'Asqalán* are:

Zayn al-'Umaná Abu al-Barakát al-Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn 'Asákir (d. 627), a cousin of Bahá ad-Dín al-Qásim and his successor as head of the Dár al-Ḥadíth an-Núriyya (an-Na'imí, *ad-Dárus fí Taríkh al-Madaris*, vol. 1, pp. 104-5).

Táj ad-Dín 'Abd al-Wahháb ibn Zayn al-Umaná (d. 660), son of the previous scholar and his successor as head of the Dár al-Ḥadíth an-Núriyya. (an-Na'imí, *ad-Dárus fí Taríkh al-Madaris*, vol. 1, pp. 106-6. His brother 'Abdu'llah Niẓám ad-Dín, who probably also studied under Bahá ad-Dín al-Qásim wrote *Faḍá'il al-Quds* on Jerusalem, Brockelmann *Supplement* vol. 1, p. 568)

Yusuf ibn Khalíl ibn Qarájá (d. 648, Ziriklí, *al-A'lám*, vol. 7, p. 253-4)

Indeed a listing of more than fifty names of students of Bahá ad-Dín al-Qásim could be compiled from the lists of those attending his lectures (see lists in Ibn 'Asákir *Taríkh Madína Dimashq*, see for example vol. 1, pp. 627-717)

In considering the identity of this work, *Faḍá'il 'Akká wa 'Asqalán*, as a source for the Traditions quoted by Bahá'u'lláh, it is useful to compare the text and the order of these traditions as given in the manuscript of *Faḍá'il 'Akká wa 'Asqalán* and by Bahá'u'lláh in Epistle to the Son of the Wolf. The following is a comparison between the Traditions given in Epistle to the Son of the Wolf (illuminated ed. Hofheim-Langenhain, 1982) and the Traditions given in the Ayá Sophia manuscript:

‘Akká Traditions in the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf

Translation of the Tradition	Epistle to the Son of the Wolf	Faḍa’il ‘Akká wa ‘Asqalán
A lengthy tradition with a lengthy chain of transmission beginning: “They will meet in the depth (‘amq) of ‘Akká, and they fight one another and they will be in fear of one another . . .”	Not present	Present, p. 3-5
A lengthy tradition with a lengthy chain of transmission beginning: “God will have a banquet of the flesh of the Byzantines on the plains of ‘Akká . . .”	Not present	Present, p. 5-6
1. ‘Abdu’l-‘Aziz, son of Abdu’-Salam, hath related unto us that the Prophet—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon him—hath said: “‘Akká is a city in Syria to which God hath shown His special mercy.”	Present, p. 115	Not present
2a. Ibn-i-Mas’ud—may God be pleased with him—hath stated: “The Prophet—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—hath said: ‘Of all shores the best is the shore of Askelon, and ‘Akká is, verily, better than Askelon, and the merit of ‘Akká above that of Askelon and all other shores is as the merit of Muḥammad above that of all other Prophets.	Present, p. 115	Present, pp. 6-7, but without “Ibn-i-Mas’ud—may God be pleased with him—hath stated” and with the following changes: begins: “The Messenger of God . . .” and ends: “. . . and ‘Akká is, verily, better than it, and the merit of ‘Akká above that of other shores is as my merit above that of the Prophets.”
2b. I bring you tidings of a city betwixt two mountains in Syria, in the middle of a meadow, which is called ‘Akká. Verily, he that entereth therein, longing for it and eager to visit it, God will forgive his sins, both of the past and of the future. And he that departeth from it, other than as a pilgrim, God will not bless his departure. In it is a spring called the Spring of the Cow. Whoso drinketh a draught therefrom, God will fill his heart with light, and will protect him from the most great terror on the Day of Resurrection.	Present, p. 115 <i>rāghiban</i> (Longing for it) <i>ghayr zá’ir</i> <i>lam yabáarak Allah lahu</i> <i>Inna fihá ‘aynan yuqál lahu</i> <i>qalbahu</i>	Present, pp. 7-8 with long isnád ending: “Anas, son of Malik—may God be pleased with him—hath said: ‘The Apostle of God—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—hath said: “a city betwixt two mountains, upon the sea, which is called . . .” <i>raghbatan</i> <i>and omits wa fi ziyáratihá</i> (and eager to visit it). <i>raghbatan ‘an-há.</i> Has <i>lam yubáarak lahu</i> <i>Wa bihá ‘aynun tusammí</i> ends: will fill his heart (<i>batnahu</i>) with light and he who pours forth its waters upon himself, will remain pure until the Day of Resurrection.

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<p>3. Anas, son of Malik—may God be pleased with him—hath said: “The Apostle of God—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—hath said: ‘By the shore of the sea is a city, suspended beneath the Throne, and named ‘Akká. He that dwelleth therein, firm and expecting a reward from God—exalted be He—God will write down for him, until the Day of Resurrection, the recompense of such as have been patient, and have stood up, and knelt down, and prostrated themselves, before Him.’”</p>	<p><i>tahta sáq al-‘Arsh</i> <i>iḥtasában</i> <i>thawab</i> <i>al-qá’imín wa’l-ráki‘ín wa’l-sájidín</i></p>	<p>Omits isnád but has this at beginning of previous Tradition. Omits “By the shore of the sea” <i>tahta ‘arsh alláh ‘azza wa jalla</i> <i>muḥtasaban</i> <i>ajr</i> <i>al-qá’imín ar-rukka‘ as-sujúd</i></p>
<p>4. And He—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—hath said: “I announce unto you a city, on the shores of the sea, white, whose whiteness is pleasing unto God—exalted be He! It is called ‘Akká. He that hath been bitten by one of its fleas is better, in the estimation of God, than he who hath received a grievous blow in the path of God. And he that raiseth therein the call to prayer, his voice will be lifted up unto Paradise. And he that remaineth therein for seven days in the face of the enemy, God will gather him with Khidr—peace be upon Him—and God will protect him from the most great terror on the Day of Resurrection.”</p>	<p>Present, p. 116 <i>hasan bayḍihá ‘ind Alláh</i> <i>wa inna man qaraṣahu barqúthun min baráqithihi</i> <i>adhhdhana</i></p>	<p>Present, p. 9-10. Begins: “The Messenger of God . . . hath said: ‘A city, on the’” <i>hasanan ‘ind Alláh</i> <i>qaraṣat al-barquth fihá</i> is equivalent to a spear wound (<i>ṭa’na as-sinán</i>) in the path of God Almighty. He who glorifies God (<i>kabbara</i>) there, God will grant him to reinforce his voice. And he who takes up a sword, aiming it at the vainglory of the enemy, God Almighty will gather him up with my brother my brother Khidr—peace be upon him—and God will protect him from the most great terror</p>
<p>God will build a house of light for the one who has seen the site of the martyrs of ‘Akká. And it was said: where is the site. He said: Between two mountains in the midst of a plain—that is to say between Mount Carmel and Mount Jubayl</p>	<p>Not present</p>	<p>Present, p. 10</p>
<p>5. And He—may the blessings of God,—exalted be He—and His salutations be upon Him—hath said: “There are kings and princes in 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.”</p>	<p>Present, p. 116, but much abbreviated</p>	<p>Present, p. 11-12. ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭáb addressed Ka’b al-Aḥbar, saying to him: I bring you good news, O Abú Isháq! When you enter Syria and meet the people of ‘Akká, help them for they are the ones who will be looked to on the Day of Resurrection. O Abú Isháq! I heard the Messenger of Allah (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say that there will be kings and princes at the Last Days, and the poor of ‘Akká and Askalon will be the kings and princes of the Last Days.</p>

‘Akká Traditions in the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf

<p>‘Uthmán ibn ‘Afán (may God be pleased with him) said: To keep watch for one night in ‘Akká is better than one thousand nights of waking and days of fasting (elsewhere).</p>	<p>Not present</p>	<p>Present, pp. 12-13, with a long isnád</p>
<p>‘Áishah, the mother of the believers (may God be pleased with her) said that the Messenger of God had said: He who keeps watch for three nights in ‘Akká has the reward of keeping watch for one year</p>	<p>Not present</p>	<p>Present, p.13, with a long isnád</p>
<p>6a. The Apostle of God—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—is reported to have said: “Blessed the man that hath visited ‘Akká, and blessed he that hath visited the visitor of ‘Akká.</p> <p>6b. Blessed the one that hath drunk from the Spring of the Cow and washed in its waters, for the black-eyed damsels quaff the camphor in Paradise, which hath come from the Spring of the Cow, and from the Spring of Salvan (Siloam), and the Well of Zamzam. Well is it with him that hath drunk from these springs, and washed in their waters, for God hath forbidden the fire of hell to touch him and his body on the Day of Resurrection.”</p>	<p>Present, p. 116</p> <p>same Tradition</p>	<p>Present but much later in the order, pp. 21-22. Verb used throughout is <i>ray</i>’ (see) rather than <i>zár</i> (visit)</p> <p>separate Tradition: I heard the Messenger of God saying that he who drinks from the Spring of the Cow and he who washes (in water) from it and from the Spring of Salwán which is in Jerusalem and from the Spring of Zamzam which is in Mecca, God will protect his body from (Hell-)fire.</p> <p>A separate statement within a lengthy Tradition preceding this on p. 21 states: “black-eyed damsels quaff the camphor of Paradise, which is in a spring named the Spring of the Cow which is in ‘Akká”</p>
<p>7a. The Prophet—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—is stated to have said: “In ‘Akká are works of supererogation and acts which are beneficial, which God vouchsafed specially unto whomsoever He pleaseth.</p> <p>7b. And 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, and will uplift him a thousand grades in Paradise, and will forgive him his transgressions. And whoso saith in ‘Akká: ‘I beg forgiveness of God,’ God will forgive all his trespasses.</p>	<p>Present, p. 116</p> <p>Present</p>	<p>First part not present</p> <p>Present, p. 13 Has only “Glorified be God, and praise be unto God”, not “and most great is God, and there is no power nor strength except in God, the Exalted, the Mighty”. In each case has <i>alf alf</i>—thousand thousand—i.e. a million.</p> <p>Has: “. . . will uplift him a thousand thousand grades. He who magnifies (God), God will magnify him, and he who seek forgiveness, God will forgive him.</p>

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<p>7c. And he that remembereth God in 'Akká at morn and at eventide, in the night-season and at dawn, is better in the sight of God than he who beareth swords, spears and arms in the path of God—exalted be He!”</p>	<p>Present</p>	<p>Not present</p>
<p>8a. The Apostle of God—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—hath also said: “He that looketh upon the sea at eventide, and saith: ‘God is Most Great!’ at sunset, God will forgive his sins, though they be heaped as piles of sand.</p> <p>8b. And he that counteth forty waves, while repeating: ‘God is Most Great!’—exalted be He—God will forgive his sins, both past and future.”</p>	<p>Present, pp. 116-7 <i>'inda az-zawál</i></p> <p><i>mithl raml</i></p> <p>same Tradition adds: <i>Allah after yukabbara má taqadama min dhunúbihi wa má ta 'Akhira</i></p>	<p>Present, pp. 14-5, <i>hína tagharabat (?) ash-shams fatakabbara 'inda ghurúbihá</i></p> <p><i>akthar min ar-raml</i></p> <p>separate Tradition adds: <i>fi'l-bahr</i></p> <p><i>dhunúbihi má taqadama min min há wa má ta 'Akhira</i></p> <p>Adds at the end: <i>wa inna al-amwáj latahta adh-dhunúb hattan</i></p>
<p>9a. The Apostle of God—may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him—hath said: “He that looketh upon the sea a full night is better than he who passeth two whole months betwixt the Rukn and the Maqam.</p> <p>9b. And he that hath been brought up on the shores of the sea is better than he that hath been brought up elsewhere. And he that lieth on the shore is as he that standeth elsewhere.”</p>	<p>Present, p. 117</p> <p><i>man nazara fi'l-bahr laylatan kámilatan kána afḍal min shahrayn kámilatayn</i></p> <p>Present</p>	<p>Present, p. 15-16</p> <p><i>man ṭala 'a fi'l-bahr laylatan támatan kána afḍal min 'ibáda shahrayn</i></p> <p>Not present</p>
<p>Traditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stating that keeping watch by the shore is better than a month of fasting. - stating that saying “God is most great” once or twice while looking to the sea is better than a spear wound received in the path of God - he who says “God is most great” while looking to the sea is better than one who travels from east to west upon horseback in the path of God - no rising by night or fasting by day is equivalent to the guard who says “God is most great” once or twice while looking to the sea - long Tradition which begins by recounting the station of 'Áishah and goes say that when 'Áishah learned that a man was from 'Akká, she raised her veil and said: “Praise be to God that I have seen one of the people of Paradise.” She then asks whether he has drunk from the Spring of the Cow and there then occurs the statement and the Traditions relating to the Spring of the Cow noted above (in a different order in Epistle to the Son of the Wolf). She then says that the Messenger of God said that walking upon the paths of 'Akká is better than saying prayers in any other mosque and that keeping watch in 'Akká is as if one received a spear wound in the path of God. 	<p>Not present (except as noted)</p>	<p>Present, p. 16-23</p>

The above comparison seems to me to indicate that Bahá’u’lláh was indeed quoting from this work but from another manuscript that had differences due to transcription variations. Not only the close resemblance of the text of the Traditions indicates this but also, perhaps more significantly, the fact that the Traditions are in almost exactly the same order in both texts.

It is surprising that Bahá’u’lláh does not cite the much more well-known Tradition “Well is it with him who hath seen ‘Akká” which is recorded in many books including the celebrated geography of Yáqút ibn ‘Abdulláh in his entry on ‘Akká (*Mu‘jam al-Buldán*, Maṭba‘a as-Sa‘áda, Cairo, 1324/1906, vol. 6, p. 206) and in many dictionaries such as the *Mukhtár aṣ-Ṣiḥāḥ* of Muhammad ibn Abú Bakr ar-Rázi in the entry under “*ayn káf káf*” (ed. Maḥmúd Kháṭir, Cairo: al-Hay‘Ah al-Misriyyah al-‘Ámmah li’l-Kitáb, 1976, p. 449) and the *Lisán al-‘Arab* of Ibn Manzúr, also under “*ayn káf káf*” (Beirut: Dár Ṣádir, 1956, vol. 10, p. 470).

In conclusion then, the ‘Akká traditions quoted by Bahá’u’lláh at the end of Epistle to the Son of the Wolf probably came from a work named *Faḍá’il ‘Akká wa ‘Asqalán*. This work was compiled in the late 6th century C.E. based on Traditions transmitted by Bahá ad-Dín Abú Muḥammad al-Qásim, the son of the famous historian Ibn ‘Asákir, in lectures that he gave in Damascus in 581 and 585 C.E. The compiler was one of the students of Bahá ad-Dín al-Qásim.

