

THE MAJOR OPUS

A Study of The German Templers

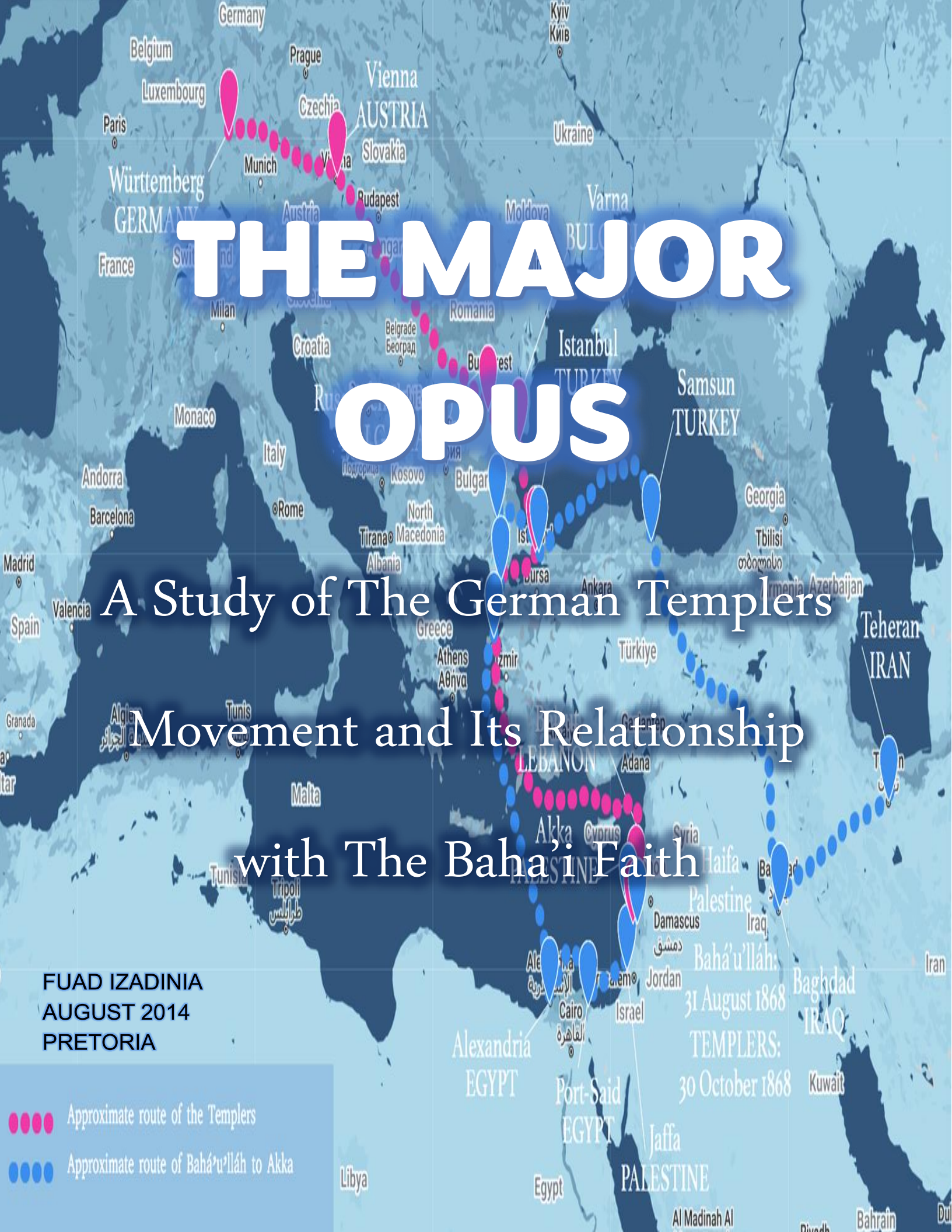
Movement and Its Relationship

with The Baha'i Faith

FUAD IZADINIA
AUGUST 2014
PRETORIA

Bahá'u'lláh:
31 August 1868
TEMPLERS:
30 October 1868

- Approximate route of the Templers
- Approximate route of Bahá'u'lláh to Akka



THE MAJOR OPUS

This is an analysis of the story of the journey of two parallel movements to the holy land in 1868, one Iranian group, the other German. Did they complement each other? One came to search and the other one came to fulfill.

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The mystic and wondrous bride, hidden ere this beneath the veiling of utterance, hath now, by the grace of God and His divine favour, been made manifest even as the resplendent light shed by the beauty of the Beloved. I bear witness, O friends! that the favour is complete, the argument fulfilled, the proof manifest and the evidence established. Let it now be seen what your endeavours in the path of detachment will reveal. In this wise hath the divine favour been fully vouchsafed unto you and unto them that are in heaven and earth. All praise to God, the Lord of all Worlds.¹

1. Baha'u'llah, The Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah, pp. 51,52

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many years ago, Mr. Hartmut Grossmann², gave a talk on the German Templers at the BWC where he showed many pictures of their early life in Haifa. His talk and later on passing to the writer all his studies and slides made me very thankful to him who even furthered my interest in the topic.

I owe my deepest appreciation and heartfelt thanks to my brother Faruq, who all along stood ready for any historical data available on the topic and indeed shared openly his valuable storage of memories and written articles with me. He also provided me with his study on the German Templers³.

Special thanks to Dr. Danny Goldman⁴, who shared generously his library for the study of this work as well as providing copies of every paper he had written or has been written on the topic in his possession. Guiding me throughout my study and even afterwards, to get the most accurate relevant non-Baha'i documents available to him.

My appreciation is extended to Mr. Peter Lange⁵, with whom there was an extensive correspondence for almost six months. Peter very kindly answered all my relevant questions and clarified much of the concepts regarding the Society today.

Monika Strasser⁶ who also facilitated me with some relevant historical books concerning the movement, especially the unpublished manuscript of her mother, Mrs. Martha Strasser, which of course was of much interest to the writer.

My special thanks should go to Mrs. Haide Martha Otto⁷, who during our coinciding period of voluntary service at the Baha'i World Center, showed a special interest in the topic of the German Templers, herself from German background, whatever German would be very close to her heart. Martha helped organizing bits and pieces of this history together. Very patiently she would put hours and hours of her time in this matter, often during her afterhours and weekends. It was she who called the project as "Major Opus". The title of this work is a remembrance of the lunch hour period of those days that were shared within a passion of knowledge of the German Templers and their relationship with the Baha'i Faith. Her constant encouragement from start to the end most appreciatively accompanied this work.

My appreciation also extends to Mr. Andrew Blake⁸, who from the early days of

2. Hartmut Grossmann (1933-2017), ex-member of the Universal House of Justice (2003-2008)

3. Understanding Divine Words, published in Persian, Safineh Erfan, vol. 14, Irfan Colloquium - 2011

4. Danny Goldman, scholar, researcher, and lecturer in Historical Architecture. His PhD thesis: The Architecture of the Templers in their Colonies in Eretz-Israel, and their Settlements in the United States, 1860-1925.

5. Once President of the Templer Societies of Germany as well as Australia

6. Monika Strasser, Australian Templer Society

7. Haide Martha Otto, Baha'i colleague at the Baha'i World Centre

8. Baha'i colleague at the BWC, horticulturist from Australia

our service at the BWC had shown enormous interest in the Baha'i Gardens and compiled the most interesting study of the 'plants life' at the BWC. His way of work has always been quite inspirational during the period of service together. The benefit this study received from him has been priceless.

My thanks also go to the Library of the Baha'i World Center where I could get few rare items related to the German Templers. After the conclusion of this historical research work⁹. My entire collected books, papers, articles, and essays related to the topic were donated at their disposal for future researchers.

My sincere thanks are extended to Joerg Klingbeil of the Office of Templegesellschaft in Deutschland for his help to verify the route the Templers took in 1868 from Germany to the Holy Land and many other details.

Also, my appreciation to Violetta Zein who prepared the map of the travel route of the two groups of Templers and Baha'is in a very artistic way, which became the cover of this study.

Most appreciation goes to my niece, Hedyeh Khoshaeen, for all her dedication to illustrate the manuscript with tens of pictures corresponding to this study.

Some other acknowledgements and appreciations are also being mentioned on the section of Forewords.

Pretoria, April 2023

9. Concluded in May 2012

FOREWORDS

In 2007, while serving at (OSAR)¹⁰, I came to learn that there is doctoral thesis on the German Templers' architecture, by Danny Goldman. After securing a copy, I found it a thorough study of over 700 pages on the architecture of the German Templers in all their seven establishments around the land of Palestine¹¹.

I was interested to know if the Shrine of the Bab built in (1900 – 1908), had received any German influence as per its original design¹², as, it was built during the time of the Germans' architectural peak of glory, where their famous architect, Jacob Schumacher was designing unique buildings with many interesting details common to the building of the nine-room Mausoleum. It could have been that there was some kind of communication between the two movements on technical level or the involvement of German professionals in the design of the Shrine¹³. But there was little if any so far in the Baha'i Writing or in the records, such as Abdu'l-Baha's Tablets or any other believer communications for that matter. But what is certain, is that the Master Abdu'l-Baha sought the intervention of the German and Ottoman engineers' when He decided to build the Shrine¹⁴.

Danny Goldmann also sent me some quite interesting papers he has written on different topics related to this Movement. His works were my prime motivator in my research work and of my intention of finding out about the relationship of the two parallel movements' existence in the Holy Land. If this matter was interesting for Danny Goldmann from architectural, social and physical planning points of view, my interest was around their spiritual quest, their findings and their ultimate fate. Analysis of the reason of this movement by emigrating from Germany and coming to the Holy Land, and after three generations of hard work, only good name remains from them and evidence of their services. They were good and pious Christians.

Peter Lange¹⁵, helped me with a better understanding of the movement's

10. OSAR – Office of Shrine and Archives Restoration -2005 – 2011.

11. German Templers arrived in Haifa, Palestine in late October 1868 and after 80 years, they were deported to partially to Germany and most to Australia. Their colonies were: Haifa, Jerusalem, Jaffa, Sarona, Wilhehma, Bethlehem and Waldheim.

12. The Shrine of the Bab consists of two sections, the building of original 9 rooms and the Superstructure.

13. The written and unpublished brief of the travel of the remains of His Holiness the Bab, by Mirza Asadu'llah Isfahani, p. 31, there is a mention that sometime after the front row of the rooms of the Shrine was completed, Abdu'l-Baha decided to give the rest of the work to contract to a Protestant builder (at the time most probably the Germans were the Protestants builders in Haifa), to pursue the rest of the construction work. Though there is mention of the other Baha'i builders at the time, i.e. Ustad Ali-Ashraf, Ustad Abdu'l-Karim, Ustad Aqa Bala, Husayn Effendi and Ustad Muhammad-Ali. No more references are seen in this regard in any other source.

14. For example, the design of the underground water reservoir located at the northwest of the Shrine, which resulted a twice failure when handled by the local German and Ottoman engineers, and as a result, as is indicated by Abdu'l-Baha in one of His Tablets, He Himself successfully directed this specific work, now on the Terrace 10. It is a huge underground water reservoir, existing to its perfection after well over a century.

15. President and Archivist of the Society in 2001-2007 overseeing activities both in Germany and Australia

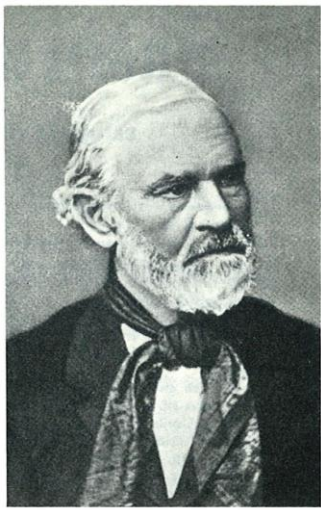
present-day activities, as well as finding important historical data, which were crucial for the study. He had to delve into many archives to find notes to cover the questions.

Monika Strasser on the other hand, helped with some precious books mostly product of Australian's branch and her mother's unpublished memoirs, where she almost brush painted the second generation's decades of Haifa Templers, remembering when she as a child, and together with other children frequently met Abdu'l-Baha in the streets of the Colony in Haifa¹⁶.

Irene Bouzo's doctoral thesis on the Case study of Assimilation and Adaption of the German Templers to the new Australian Society, a study of the Templer group in Australia, where she did an excellent analysis of 'after arrival' to their new Home in Melbourne and their lives today. As for their spiritual activities, they have a free Christian society conducting prayer sessions and reading the Bible, giving talks open to all. There are of course, no formal church activities.



Christopher Hoffmann, the founder of the German Templers Society



George David Hardegg, the founder of the German Colony in Haifa and for whom Baha'u'llah revealed the Tablet of Hirtik (Hardegg)

At this point, it should be mentioned that efforts were done to bring to the attention of the Templers to cast an alternative look at the original philosophy of their founders and assimilate the reason of their Movement from Germany to Palestine and be convinced that the whole movement was not a futile effort, but it had a profound meaning and a fulfillment goal. There were many sacrifices and losses for such a specific aim, and that, there are so much evidence that this movement was divinely oriented and had a function to fulfill, which according to the Baha'is, was the preparation for the accomplishment of the Christ's promise of His return. Their most important accomplishment was the establishment of their colony in Haifa, from the top of Mount Carmel to the sea, facing the city of Akka, on the other side of the bay. Part of their land on Mt.

16. She remembered the occasion when He gave her a chocolate and a little gold coin to her sister. She mentions that they loved the old man and always were looking forward to seeing Him again.

Carmel were acquired by the Baha'is and developed to become the icon of the city of Haifa. This mountain was first visited by Baha'u'llah on August 31, 1868, two months before the arrival of the Templers.

As a result of the research, it could be concluded that this movement had three generations' activities in the Holy Land:

It started in Germany by Reverend Christopher Hoffmann¹⁷ as the spiritual leader, who had a vision of building the Temple of God – being physically or spiritually in Jerusalem and probably meeting Christ in His second coming. Rev. Hoffmann needed a prime mover, an administrator of his thoughts, who would materialize the abstracts into reality.

Georg David Hardegg¹⁸, the administrative leader who became attracted into this philosophy of Hoffmann while he was going through his prison sentence back in Germany for his ideas against the political policies at the time, where soon after his release he joined the Templers' movement and organized the exodus of the Templers from Germany to the Holy Land.

Hoffmann and Hardegg as the Templers' leaders, who were already in their mid-fifties, set their goal and embark on their project, though they were already in deep disagreement on the fundamentals of their philosophy and the leadership of the group. It took only seven years since their arrival to the Holy Land for the foundation of the movement to shake to schism. In 1875, Hardegg left the movement and took with him one third of the Templers. The Hardegg's breakaway group lacked a spiritual guide to conduct their daily transactions, i.e., marriages, funerals, etc. therefore, they opted to go to church again, hence the term "Kirchlers"¹⁹. The other two third who remained as Templers, demeaned the breakaway group as Kirchlers or Churchgoers. Since the Templers breakaway from the State Lutheran Church, they did not establish another church as, they were all expecting the coming of Christ Who would lead them to His New Way. Yet, the Kirchlers could not affiliate themselves with any other church, which caused further division.

The schism in the original group also shook their thoughts and philosophy, to the point that Rev. Hoffmann, who set his vision in the coming of Christ that was never materialized to his expectations, and building the Temple in Jerusalem, which could not materialize neither physically nor spiritually, therefore, he had to develop and further his religious philosophy, changing it several times, this, as a result, profoundly affected the second generation of the Templers were left after the death of their leader in bewilderment and lack of one clear spiritual line to

17. Gottlob Christoph Jonathan Hoffmann Dec. 2, 1815 – Dec. 8, 1885

18. Georg David Hardegg co-founder of German Templers April 2, 1812 – July 1, 1879

19. Church goers. In their philosophy church was no more relevant, as they had to adhere to the imminent coming of Christ, therefore, the concept of place of worship was meaningless.

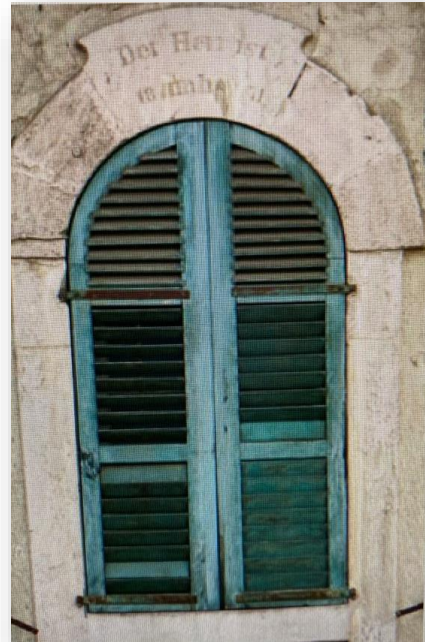
follow, finally made of their organization a socio/religious group in Australia²⁰. Once Rev. Hoffmann passed away in 1885, no one could fill his empty seat. There was not a leader left with spiritual vision. From then on, the movement stood in the hands of the elders of the movement who had to forget the original twin goals of meeting Christ in the Holy Land and rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem, as a result they only satisfied themselves with their daily life of a good Christian.²¹

They questioned: Was the total movement a failure? This un-answered matter remains as a puzzle to them even now.

Probably Rev. Hoffmann missed the movement of the migration of the first Jewish Aliyah²² around the later part of his life in 1880s, where masses of Jews started to return to the land of their ancestor and through purchasing land, claiming their ownership of Palestine and assiduously developing the long neglected land of their ancestors, a clear fulfillment of the biblical prophecy, the gathering of the Jews from all over the world in their own homeland. Yet, it was just the beginning.

FIRST GENERATION²³

The first-generation leaders of the Templers' movement could be historically paralleled with the movement of Baha'i Faith, when Baha'u'llah²⁴, the sole leader of the Baha'i movement, with one set of divinely ordained principles to be disseminated around the world, remaining the basic divine philosophy ever after, was banished together with some 70 of His followers to Palestine.



Der Herr ist nahe "The coming of the Lord is near". The Pfander family built the house around 1869/1871. Their granddaughter Wilhelmine Pfander Deininger b. 1887, claimed she saw Baha'u'llah in her house, when He was seeking medical treatment at their home in 1891, that is when she was four or five years old.

20. Temple Society Australia formed in August 1950 as an autonomous Christian Community

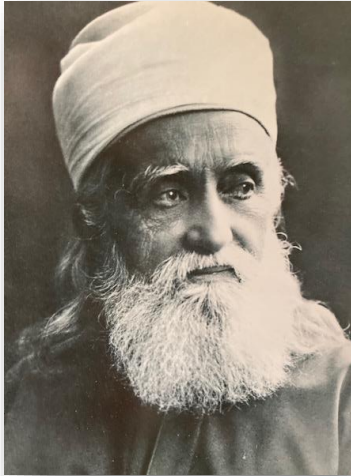
21. There were other leaders after Hoffmann, first it was Christoph Ludwig Paulus, then it was Christoph Hoffmann II, later Christian Rohrer, followed by Phillip Wurst and finally Nikolai Schmidt in 1941.

22. Aliyah means ascending, going further up, Aliyot is the plural. Coming back to the Promised Land was the highest goal and purpose of the Jewish nation. The first Aliyah between 1882-1903, the second Aliyah between 1904-1914, although the migration of the Jews to the Holy Land never stopped. The mass migration happened after the WWII, mostly between 1948-1951 when independence was proclaimed in 1948. The fluctuation varied each year. Many Jewish families arrived Palestine between WWI and WWII.

23. 1868-1885 (17 years)

24. The Baha'i group, led by Baha'u'llah, arrived in Haifa/Akka, Palestine on 31 August 1868, exactly two months before the arrival of the Templer group.

Hoffman died some seven years before Baha'u'llah and Baha'u'llah outlived Hardegg for some thirteen years, who came as the closest Templer to identify Him as the Figure they have been expecting all along, but remained aloof of its Truth, though received a mighty Tablet from Baha'u'llah answering his questions, which will be discussed in future pages.



Abdu'l-Baha Abbas
Son and Centre of the
Covenant of Baha'u'llah
(1844 – 2021)

The passing of Rev. Hoffmann in 1885 and with Hardegg already dead by then, the transition period to the early part of the 1890s, could be considered as the end of the first generation of the Templers' Movement.

In April 1891, when Baha'u'llah visited Haifa for the fourth and last time²⁵, due to His illness, he was attended by a Templer's physician. The story is being recorded by David Ruhe²⁶ in his book, *Door of Hope*²⁷:

"In the house with the prophetic inscription 'Der Herr ist nahe' a little girl was born, probably in 1886/7, her name Wilhelmine Pfander; she married to become Mrs. Deininger. In 1977 the wife of Gerhard Schmelzle, a Templer born in Haifa who had gone to Australia with his parents and had there become a Baha'i in his maturity, sought Mrs. Deninger at her home in South Australia and inquired about her childhood in that house. The aged woman clearly recalled the tent on the open land next door, that Holy Place, which is now marked by a circle of cypresses. While Baha'u'llah and His companions were there, when she was 'four or five', she recounted, He had a brief illness and had been invited into the Pfander home for a time while He was seen by the Templer doctor, possibly Dr. J. Schmidt²⁸. She recalled having seen



Haifa and Haifa Bay in early 1900s
(Courtesy of the Temple Society Australia)

25. Baha'u'llah visited Haifa at His arrival to the Holy Land, and three subsequent times in 1873, 1890 and 1891.

26. David Ruhe (1914-2005), ex-member of the Universal House of Justice (1968-1993)

27. *Door of Hope*, p, 29 George Ronal Publishers, 1983

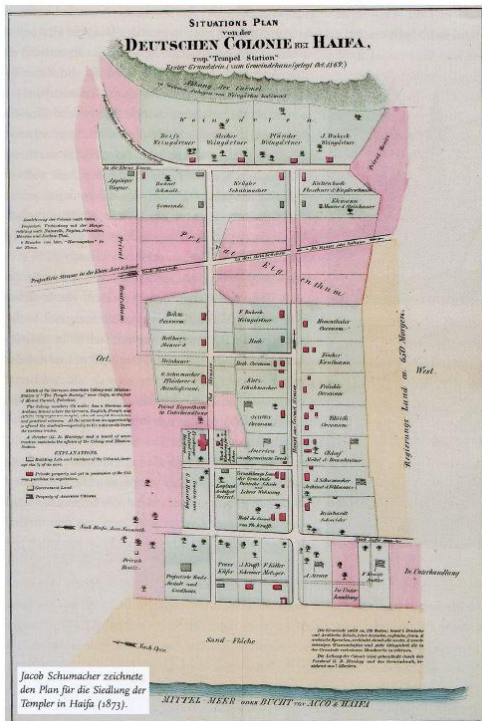
28. "Dr. Schmidt was born 1850 in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna District, Southern Russia. He was of Mennonite faith, converting around 1890 to Templer faith in the German settlement of Olgino, North Caucasus, and migrating to Palestine in 1874, where he opened a medical practice in Haifa Templer Colony. He worked as a merchant there as well. He was very much appreciated by the inhabitants of the settlement. He also was English and Russian Consul." (Peter Lange, Archivist Templers, email May 12, 2020, to the author)

Baha'u'llah in the room at the north-west corner of the ground floor.”

SECOND GENERATION²⁹

The second generation of Templers were led by the elders as mentioned in footnote 20. Hoffmann's and Hardegg's children were intermarried, and grandchildren, became more engaged in the professional life, pursuing all kinds of agro/industry and became fully involved in economic life. One of Rev. Hoffmann's sons, a physician, became Catholic³⁰, due to lack of any clear spiritual guideline.

The Kirchler cousins continued with their involvement in the churches they have chosen and like the Templer counterparts, got involved in professional life as well. The division created became resolved in a later stage when they moved to Australia and changed the character of the movement altogether becoming an independent faith community.



Map of the Templers' Colony. Observe Mt. Carmel at the top and the Haifa Bay at the bottom. This was Mr. Hardegg's design of the German Colony in Haifa.
(Courtesy of the Temple Society Australia)

The second generation of the Templers could also be paralleled to the period when the Abdu'l-Baha³¹ became the leader of the Baha'i Faith immediately after the passing of His Father Baha'u'llah, in 1892. He was the Centre of the Covenant of Baha'u'llah, and as the Leader of the Baha'i Faith for 29 years, pursued the goals set by His Father. Abdu'l-Baha associated closely with the Templers, and later became a resident of their neighborhood. Master, as He was generally called, conducted business with the Templers, buying some lands He needed to build the Shrine of the Bab and some other transactions. He often visited them in their houses, giving them gifts, especially to their children who He liked them very much. There were some interactions between the members of the household of Abdu'l-Baha with Templers' families. In their records there have been some Baha'i children attending German schools, as a multinational educational center. In their multinational school, there

29. 1885-1921 (36 years)

30. See Paul Sauer, *The Holy Land Called*, 1991.

31. Abbas Effendi, (1844-1921) known as Master, titled Himself as Abdu'l-Baha, servant of Baha (Glory), rejecting many other titles given to Him.

might have been some Persian children, where the only Persians at the time, were those of Persian Baha'i families, although not necessarily directly related to the Abdu'l-Baha.

This second generation period of the Templers could be considered in 1890, around the date of the passing of their leader, Rev. Hoffmann, and this could have ended in 1921, (the date when Abdu'l-Baha passed away), which coincides with the period when the Germans who were exiled to Cairo, Egypt in 1918 -for a period of over two years, after their war enemies, the British, had taken over the Holy Land after the WWI. Then the German Templers were partially brought back.

The second Aliyah was around this period where another mass of Jewish adherents returned to Palestine from Europe, although this influx never ceased since it started even up to the present time.

Both Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha had predicted that soon the Jews will be coming back to claim their land and will develop this land will, because it was a biblical promise for which they have been awaiting to return since they were exiled. Abdu'l-Baha had many friends among the Jews too. Israel's Yitzakh Ben Zvi the second President to be, together with his wife, while touring areas of the land of Palestine on bicycle, met Abdu'l-Baha at His gardens in Bahji, the outskirts of Acre. He invited the couple in for tea. Ben Zvi recalled it later when he became more familiar with the Baha'i movement in the land of Palestine, especially remembering of the kindness of the Master.

THIRD GENERATION – Involvement with the Jews

The period of the third generation of the Templers could be considered from 1921-1948 corresponding to the period of post-Abdu'l-Baha, which parallels to the period where His grandson Shoghi Effendi³² was appointed the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith.

The third generation of the Templers battered spiritually but quite well established administratively and highly regarded businessmen and in fact, they became masters of the land, mostly educated and well-off people, with social clubs, football teams, having their own successful Bank established in 1925, various hotels and industries, etc. interacting with Palestinians, especially with the youth of the families, mastering their language too. Their agricultural product's fame already passed the borders of the Holy Land well received the European and American markets.

32. Shoghi Effendi (1897-1957), the grandson of Abdu'l-Baha, the only Guardian of the Baha'i Faith (1921-1957). His prime responsibility was to develop and beautify the gardens surrounding the Baha'i Shrines, expand the horizons of the Faith throughout the world, translate into English the Holy Writings of the Faith, and prepare the administration of the Baha'i World for its future under the guidance of the elected body of the Universal House of Justice (1963).

However, during their time, after the WWI, the politics in new Germany were changing, which directly affected the group of Templers in the Holy Land. After all, they were also German nationals and had allegiance to their motherland. The Nationalist movement of the New Germany had influenced the group to the extent that even before the WWII, there were already many Templer's youth conscribed to the Nationalist movement which resented the governing British in Palestine, who had the mandate by League of Nations to act as the protectors of the land. The British government in the Holy Land was observing some skirmishes between the new Jewish inhabitants and the Templers. The Palestinians also did not like the coming of the Jews to their land claiming it for themselves. This trio dilemma was becoming a real problem for the British to keep the land calm and



Drawing of the Haifa German Templers colony probably early 1800s.
(Courtesy of the Temple Society Australia)

peaceful for all three sides. But as the number of persecution and to the point of extermination of the Jews of Germany and Europe came to its climax by the German National Socialist party, the Jews of the Holy Land also did not tolerate the existence of German Templers, who considered them as their enemies in their in ancestral Jewish land, although there was no problem between the German Templers and the Palestinian inhabitants.

As years rolled on, life became more difficult for the Germans residing in the Holy Land's seven German Templers' Colonies. If they would not leave their adopted land, they would be having a similar fate as the Jews were having in Germany and if they would be leaving, where would they go? The British protection of Germans became itself a dilemma, as the German Nationalist Movement turned against the British too, giving even more reason to exile

Germans either back to Germany in exchange for the Jews, or to another British Colony. Finally, they were gathered and put into a ship and banished first to Cyprus and later to Australia, although the exile process had started gradually from 1939 to 1948.

When the last remnants of the Templers were leaving the Holy Land in 1948 coincided with the decision of Shoghi Effendi for the beautification of the Shrine of the Bab in the same year by building a superstructure over the original building, becoming an icon of the Baha'i Faith on Mount Carmel in Haifa. This work also coincided with the declaration of the independence of Israel as the Jewish State, which surprised the Palestinians.

As much as Shoghi Effendi appreciated and used the professional hands of the German Templers in many of his development enterprises as did his Grandfather, Abdu'l-Baha, such as the restoration of the Mansion of Bahji, as he believed in their precise and thorough work and as cordial as he was, yet he did not associate with the German Templers like his grandfather did, in fact his association with the Palestinian neighborhood has been minimal too, this is due to his high agenda of compressed and complex duties of his 36 years of guardianship. There was no spare time for him to engage himself unless in urgent and necessary matters or official occasions, instead he established an institution called International Baha'i Council³³ to handle all the domestic issues within Israel. He had the work of ever-growing world Faith that had multiplied many folds. Most of his time was spent in the creation and beautification of the gardens, meeting the constant flow of the pilgrims, reading and answering tremendous amount of daily correspondence with the local and national institutions as well as the individuals around the Baha'i World, dealing with internal affairs of the Faith, writing his messages to the Baha'i World, establishing the Faith's administration system and last but not least, translating the tremendous amount of original Writings of the Faith into English making them available to Western believers. Nevertheless, he maintained his good relationship with the head of the State in Israel David Ben Gurion³⁴.

33. The institution of International Baha'i Council was established in 1951 in Haifa, Israel, comprising of nine individuals appointed by Shoghi Effendi. The second IBC was elected by the NSA members around the world in 1960, which became the prelude for the election of the first Universal House of Justice in April 1963.

34. David Ben Gurion, the primary national founder of the State of Israel and its first Prime Minister (1886-1973), became Prime Minister in 1948 to practically 1963. Shoghi Effendi invited him and his wife to visit the Shrine of the Bab on Mt. Carmel and received the couple, together with his wife Mary Maxwell, known by her given Baha'i name as Ruhiyyih Khanum.

INTRODUCTION

Once in Haifa, one cannot miss the great beauty of the German Colony with Swabian³⁵ architecture adapted to the climate of Palestine of the Nineteen Century, extending from the Mediterranean Haifa Bay to the skirts of Mount Carmel. Every discerning eye can see the order and beauty that characterizes the culture behind it. Well-chosen spot of the utmost delightfulness, unsurpassed design of town planning scheme where agriculture covered the mountainous side, industry at the seashore and other business and residential in the middle.

Every curious mind likes to find out more about the history behind this small Colony and the narrative of those who built it. What brought them out of Germany and what made them love a foreign land – often with harsh climate - so far away from their own, to a total assimilation to a new culture, a new language, a new climate, and a new way of life? What did they do while there and what happened to them to make them leave for good?



Map showing the travel route of the two groups, from the east and the west, finding each other in Haifa. (Courtesy of Violette Zein)

The fascinating story behind this Messianic and Millenaristic group of originally some handful families taking an arduous trip, accepting all kinds of hardships just to settle in a foreign land for the sake of the promise of their Lord and their religious freedom, Who would either to appear soon, -or searching for Him if He has already appeared in no other place on earth than Holy Land's Jerusalem-, as they believed. A strange land that everything was foreign to them, language, culture, food, comfort and much more. Yet, what made them determine to stay and never to look back? Such a movement could not have been something purely manmade for sure. It had to be a divine mandate through the group. The new

35. Swabians (German: Schwaben, singular Schwabe are Germanic people who are native to the region of Swabia. - Wikipedia

land did not offer them anything materially, therefore, it could only be a sublime spiritual concept they had, the coming of the Lord Christ in the Glory of the Father, and these pious people got to be there when it would happen.

This group of devout Christians, who were determined to leave their church and all its dogmas, sell, or give away their belongings and embark to venture a new rewarding life in the land of the Prophets, called The Holy Land, as their ultimate destination, Jerusalem, (just as the Adventists did the same type of preparation in 1844 throughout America expecting the return of Christ). It was headed by the reverend Christoph Hoffmann as the spiritual founder of the Templers movement and lead by Georg David Hardegg, the administrator of the movement. The two stalwarts considered the twin leaders, who lead the group to the port of Haifa in Palestine, arriving on the 30th of October 1868.

The geographic roadmap of their travel would have been interesting to have, yet Peter Lange, the Archivist of the organization answered to this question:

“You are asking about the roadmap of the first Templers travelling to Haifa, Palestine, in the end of 1868. I can give you an account of what Christoph Hoffmann has written in his book “Mein Weg nach Jerusalem” (“Jerusalem Journey”), Volume 2, published 1884 in German language. The party comprised several members of the family of Christoph Hoffmann and Georg David Hardegg. Thea started from Wuerttemberg by way of a steamship down the Danube to Vienna, and from there further on the Danube through the Iron Gate to the first Turkish town of Ruschtschuk³⁶. From there they took the railway line to Warna, Bulgaria, and from there the ship across the Black Sea to Istanbul (which was called Konstantinopel at that time). Here they had planned to make further negotiations with Turkish authorities regarding the establishment of settlements in Palestine. The last leg of their tour was by steamship to Beirut, and from there to Haifa (Caifa, as it was called at that time).

This route was not used, of course, by later Templer travellers to Palestine. At first, migraters used to go by train from Wuerttemberg to Triest, Italy and from there by boat to Egypt and Palestine³⁷.

Just two months prior to their arrival, another handful families from the east, were exiled to the desolate and fortress city of Acre in Palestine through the Ottoman government in collusion with the Persian government. They did not come at their own volition, but they were captives in the hands of their oppressors. They were Persians³⁸. Coincidentally both groups were from racially Aryan background!

The Leader of this movement was Husayn-Ali Nuri, titled Baha’u’llah, the Glory

36. Now Bulgarian city

37. Peter Lange email to author May 10, 2020

38. They arrived on 31 August 1868

of God, Who claimed that He has received the latest message of God, a special message for the east and the west; a message of Unity of Mankind, “to bring together all those who were of His fold and all those who were not of His fold”³⁹, but had to be brought together and be united as one Fold and one Shepherd; which was the promise Lord Christ.

As much as the Germans had every material mean to be the masters of the land, establish themselves freely and associate with the people of their new environment, purchase land and build their buildings, do commerce and use all their consolidated abilities for expansion, do agriculture and at the same time build up and prepare themselves for the a much better life; yet, the other group was on the contrary, had no liberty of movement in and out of the ruin fortress and prison city of Acre. They had no means and no material facility to arrange for a better physical life, to make a more comfortable living, although Baha’ullah was son of a Minister of State and had grown in a very comfortable life, as was His wife Asiyeh, daughter of a prominent state minister, but all their properties were confiscated to the point of total poverty when they were banished from Iran. They were prisoners by strict orders of the two monarchs, the Shah of Iran and the Sultan Ottoman Empire⁴⁰!

On that historic day of 31 August 1868, when Baha’u’llah stepped out of the ship⁴¹ to the land of Haifa, there was a turning point for then the small village of Haifa. There was an encounter between Baha’u’llah and the Mount Carmel. There was a conversation between the two, one as the Creator and the other as the creation, the conversation that has been penned down by Baha’u’llah Himself⁴².

The soil of Haifa became blessed by the footsteps. He stayed for only for few hours and history was made. Soon their sailboat arrived and took them from the village of Haifa to the fortress city of Acre across the bay, the most desolate city on earth, reaching there in the evening of the same hot day of 31 August to be led to their filthy and lonely cells of the barracks.

It is an interesting history behind these two movements on this spot. Was there any contact or encounter between the two groups? What made one comfortable group to lose everything they owned and be exiled out of the land they loved and what made the other group as poor as they were, become prominent in this land in a later stage.

39. John 10:14

40. Nasirid’Din Shah of Qajar (1931-1896) and Sultan Abdu’l-Aziz of Ottoman (1830-1876)

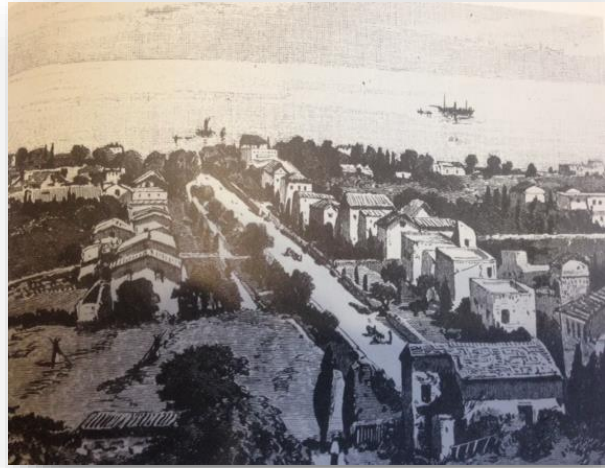
41. The Austrian Lloyd liner

42. See Annex III, Tablet of Carmel

CHAPTER I

Renovation of the Old Garment (Story of the two movements)

It is the philosophy of the Baha'i Faith that civilization neither has start nor end. It is ever advancing phenomenon without its beginning being divulged nor its end. In Baha'u'llah's words referring to the continuous divine revelation: "This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future"⁴³, Just as schooling, with grades pre-starting formal education, with parental training, and continues ever after as long as mankind lives – learning does not stop. Parents are stage teachers, relatives are other stage teachers, and formal teachers are of course other stage teachers, passing mankind from one grade to the next, teachers follow teachers' way beyond maturity and stands to receive mentors to guide throughout the life towards an unfolding destiny in one way or another.



A painting of the Haifa German Templers colony showing the Haifa Bay, circa 1900
(Courtesy of the Temple Society Australia)

Humanity is blessed to have permanent divine Guides. Those souls selected by the Almighty, were given the special task of guiding humanity for a period of time in the history. Once mankind achieves maturity for that period, then the next divine Guide appears for the next stage to continue revealing the precepts of God. This is trend of the Almighty, it has been so in the past and will be so in the future.

When the divine Teacher was physically absent instead, the role was played by those erudite in the faith, and they sheltered all those in need. They were called priests, pastors, mullas, etc., they were the guiding lamp while there was darkness.

As the path to 'knowledge' is only one path, the Teachers, to follow the command of guiding humanity, have always indicated that their way is the only way, i.e., outside of their guiding hand, there is no other true way. One of them said "the heavens and earth will pass by, but My message will not change", another one said, "No one comes to Heaven except through Me", and other similar sayings have been recorded in almost every religious philosophy. The path of learning is the same; it is the continuation of the previous path.

43. Kitab-i-Aqdas

Yet, those who played the self-claimed role of a guide –all kinds of priests- while the Teacher was absent for multiple reasons, such as lust of leadership, institutionalization of their role, prestige acquired among those who have blindly followed them as true leaders, etc. have always prevented the pupils –the general public- from knowing when the next Teacher claiming His station. It is for this reason that sects were created, and schisms took place in every religion, and cults came about. This is a fact well documented in recorded history of many denominations. Controlling the minds of people unfortunately, became their prime interest, fragmenting the religious precepts. (It should be noted that the Baha'i Faith is an exception in falling into schism because priesthood institution has been abolished. Baha'u'llah appointed in writing the Centre of His Covenant with His followers to prevent any schism, the matter that was not happened in the previous religions).

It is known to the followers of diverse religions, that time will come when humanity goes beyond the adolescence and will reaches its age of maturity and all will be gathered under one shelter, the barriers will be eliminated and humanity will be united, i.e., 'one flock, one Shepherd', cults will merge towards one goal.

There was a set time for the 'maturity of humanity'. The mid-nineteenth century of the Christian Era was the commonly expected to be that 'time' when such a process would start. Prophecies regarding the fulfillment of such a philosophy can be found in many well-researched books. Foremost among them, the reader can study the "Book of Certitude"⁴⁴ revealed by Baha'u'llah and "Some Answered Questions"⁴⁵ by Abdu'l-Baha. The Messianic and Millenary groups all awaited the mid-nineteenth century as the appointed time, each one according to the calculations made from their own holy book.

The consensus date was the early years of 1840s and particularly the year of 1844 AD, where in most parts of the world in both east and the west, where there was an anticipation and expectation in one form or another coming of Christ on the clouds, or the appearance of the Promised One, the Lord of the Age, the Mahdi, the Fifth Buddha, the Tenth Avatar, etc.

Brief History of Baha'i Movement

It was the year -1844 - when a young man of 24, by the name of Siyyid Ali-Muhammad from Shiraz, Persia, claimed to be the Lord of Age, the Messiah. His title: the Bab, the Gate. What happened to Him is quite dramatic. Let's have a brief look at the Nineteenth Century: Backward Iran was at the mercy of the Qájár dynasty which, hand in hand with a corrupt clergy, oppressed the population to such a degree that, if the word of freedom from the shackles of superstition and

44. Kitab-i-Iqan or The Book of Certitude, revealed by Baha'u'llah, Baha'i Publishing Trust, UK

45. Some Answered Questions, Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois

ignorance was not pronounced by the Báb loud and clear, the fate of the noble people of Iran would have been taken to a total annihilation. His timely call revolutionized the whole country and the region. People who were begging their Lord to put an end to atrocities of the government, clergy, and their own misery they were enduring, took the call of the Bab as the answer to their prayers. Many thousands wholeheartedly came forward, accepted the new Message, and freed themselves from the yoke of the Shi'ite clergy and corrupt government, and over twenty thousand believers sacrificed their lives in the path of the new message.

Soon the Báb was arrested, imprisoned, and exiled to the remotest corners of Iran. Only six years after proclaiming His message, the Dawn of a New Day, promising soon of the coming of the Father, the promised Lord, He was put to death and severe persecution against His followers intensified; rivers of blood were flowed in almost all the regions of Iran and the challenged clergy struggled not lose its reign of power, called to an uprising against the message of the Bab. But the new Message had already caused a deep chasm among the clergy, which initiated slowly their downfall from which they never recovered their full trust, even by force. Everywhere the people lost their faith in them. Clergy were doomed, never to regain their power in the New World, in the New Civilization, except by force to keep imprisoning the minds of the people. Nevertheless, clergy became thing of the past pertaining to the dark ages.

The Bab and His youthful companion, Anis were put to death by a regiment of 750 soldiers and their mingled bodies were kept hidden for fifty years, changing places many times - from mosques to villages to cemeteries to houses of believers, until they were finally transported with great pain and care to the Holy Land, Haifa, Palestine in 1899. The Persians lost forever the opportunity of hosting the Messenger of God in their own land, a resting place for the Lord of the Age⁴⁶, Whom they had invoked for so long and implored God to send Him soon to lead their way to the freedom they sought.

The persecution of the Bábís after the martyrdom of the young Prophet, the Báb⁴⁷. intensified, repeating the history again, all the disciples and the prominent followers were arrested and put to death. Fear of the New Religion was so intense that even spelling any word relating to it was tantamount to losing one's life, one's family and all his possessions. The clergy and the hostile mob were everywhere backed by the power of the corrupt governors, and anyone known as Bábí, would atrociously put to death. Killing of the Bábís was considered receiving a high reward both in this world and in the next. This order instigated the mob to track innocent people to kill them and plunder their possessions, so they could also claim their reward from the government or the clergy and be assured of a high place in the heaven.

46. Sahibu'zaman, the Lord of the Age, the Twelfth Imam, the Promised One.

47. As it is to some degrees in this present time, under the Islamic Republic of Iran.

After a few Bábís tried to avenge the Báb by attempting to kill the Shah, Nasirid-Din of Qájár – the King of Iran – the real perpetrator, the only remaining prominent Bábí, Mírzá Husayn-Ali, later titled Baha'u'llah, son of a prominent minister at the court of Fath-Ali Shah⁴⁸, was arrested, put in underground filthy dungeon⁴⁹ and after four months together with His family became exiled to Baghdad.

While imprisoned in an atrocious underground dungeon in Tehrán, Baha'u'llah perceived the first Divine intimations. Those Bábís chained next to Him could clearly feel the change in Him while listening to His melodious, divine utterances. Four months later He was freed from the dungeon to be exiled together with His family to Baghdad, Iraq, the neighboring country under the Ottoman rule. In the middle of a severe winter, they left Iran forever - never to see it again. He was 36.



Map of the travel route of Baha'u'llah from Tehran to Akka

The end of His ten years' stay in Baghdad is marked by His open Declaration to His companions that He is the Promised One of all ages, the Universal Manifestation of God, He was the Glory of God⁵⁰, the Shah-Bahram⁵¹, the Fifth

48. Nasirid-Din Shah's father

49. Called Siyah-chal or black pit. July-September 1853

50. Christ in the Glory of the Father, the Promised One for the Christianity

51. The expected Promised One for the Zoroastrian Faith

Buddha⁵², The Lord of the Hosts⁵³, the Tenth Avatar⁵⁴, the Reviving Spiritual Power of the whole of humanity. Soon His fame in Baghdad had reached all the corners of Iraq that alerted the Islamic clergy again both in Iraq and in Persia. Thousands of believers, who had been in hiding after the waves of persecutions, came to see Him to pay their respect and their allegiance to Him.

The annoyed clergy sought advice from the Shah, urging him to either ask the Ottoman Sultan 'Abdu'l-Aziz to send Baha'u'llah back to Iran to put Him to death, or exile Him even farther from the borders of Iran. Complying with the second alternative, Baha'u'llah was banished to the seat of the Court, Constantinople⁵⁵. He arrived there in 16 August 1863 and only after few months, on first of December 1863, He again was exiled, this time to the farthest European section of the territory, the town of Adrianople⁵⁶, in the vicinity of Bulgaria, where Baha'u'llah remained until August 1868 in exile together with His family.

Edirne is the place where Baha'u'llah addressed the kings and prominent rulers of the world of His time, each one addressed with a mighty Tablet (Letter), revealed in their names, inviting them to investigate this New Revelation, to become united for the sake of humanity and to root out their differences once and for; not to waste their most precious possessions, which are their people, but to strive for their advancement and care for their wellbeing. They should leave behind all blind religious, racial and patriotic prejudices, and promote the unity of mankind⁵⁷.

Even this period was not free from severe tests. Baha'u'llah was becoming the point of attraction to all. His dignity, His words and exhortations were having a great influence upon the people of Edirne high and low. The host government decided to exile the Community even farther. Baha'u'llah and His companions were sent to the foul dungeon of Acre⁵⁸. The arrival of Baha'u'llah in the Holy Land occurred on the 31st of August 1868 when He first touched the shores of Haifa.

This is how Baha'u'llah, the Founder of the New Faith, reached to the remote city of 'Akká, fulfilling the ancient prophecies about the importance of this desolate place. He had proclaimed His Message in Baghdad in 1863. He proclaimed again His mission while in Adrianople to the Kings and the Rulers of His time, Kaiser Wilhelm of Prussia, Franz Joseph of Austria, Queen Victoria of

52. The expected Promised One for the Buddhist Faith

53. Messiah or the Lord of the Hosts for the Jewish Faith

54. The Tenth Avatar, as promised by the Hindu Faith

55. Constantinople later was called Islambul – the abode of Islam, and finally to Istanbul.

56. Adrianople, later Edirne

57. See 'The Summons of the Lord of Hosts', Baha'i World Centre, 2002

58. The fortified and ruined city of Acre or Akka, Palestine. Its barracks were used to imprison the most criminal people of the Ottoman Empire.

Great Britain, Tsar Alexander II of Russia, Napoleon III of France, the Pope Pius IX head of the Church of Christianity and other religious leaders, as well as to the Kings and the leaders of America, telling all Who He was. Later, from His prison cell in 'Akká He continued writing tablets to kings and rulers.

CHAPTER II

The Württembergers – The First Generation

Set your mind on God's kingdom and His justice before everything else⁵⁹.

Their aim was to build the Temple of God on earth, not so much a building made of wood and stone, no, they wished to be a holy people, in whom God Himself would dwell according to the words of the Apostle, *don't you know, that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?*

These people were well aware of the promises of the Old Testament, but claimed for themselves, as God's people, some of the things promised to Israel as a nation...⁶⁰

This chapter deals with the Movement of the Templers, who, like many other Messianic groups, were expecting the coming of Messiah in mid-1800.

It is interesting to note that although Christoph Hoffmann, the founder of the mentioned movement, did not set a specific date for the establishment of the Kingdom of God but he did believe that it would be established in 1826. Yet, Georg David Hardegg, the co-founder of the movement, explicitly indicated the date as 1861, that the millennium reign would start in 1869. However, these dates never became a dogma of the movement⁶¹, Only a few years later Hardegg received a Tablet from Baha'u'llah, in answer to his questions he put to Him, as who He claims to be⁶².

Eighty years of laboring in the Holy Land in different capacities by three generations of highly dedicated and determined people, who strove to develop a neglected and abandoned land to a high standard, elicits the admiration to all who appreciated the results of this excellent achievement. The outstanding talents of these industrious people established a solid foundation on which the Jews could build their own country. There was a vision and goal to achieve. In the annals of history, an enviable memory of this hard-working religious group has remained, which is inseparable from what the Country of Israel is standing for today. This is the story of a group of Württembergers from Southern Germany who initiated a movement, which is generally known as The German Templers⁶³.

59. Motto of the Templers, See: Memories of Palestine, p.38

60. Nelly Schumacher, see: When it Rains out of a Blue Sky, p. 8

61. Benjamin Zev Kedar paper "From Religious Messianic to Political Messianic", Chronicle of Utopia, p. 22.

62. See Annex 1

63. German Temple Society - not to be mistaken for the Knights Templar, a Crusader Order of the 11th century who wanted to liberate Jerusalem from the infidels. Templers aimed to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.

Their basic concern was the “return of the people to the code of ethics of the Mosaic law” which would pave the way for the coming of the Messiah. Unless and until the ‘rebirth’ of social life did not happen, going to the Promised Land to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple, was not possible⁶⁴. There was a strong confrontation by the Lutheran State Church, which ultimately expelled the group from church membership. Sauer writes in his monumental book:

“...Hoffmann could not and would not be silent of these ‘life-and-death questions, he would, as he declared in the “Warte”⁶⁵, continue the struggle he had been entrusted with by God’s will, until a fundamental inward transformation of man within the meaning of the Bible had been achieved.”⁶⁶

Hoffmann was convinced that, in Sauer’s words: *“The present Muslim inhabitants, they thought, were incapable of bringing Palestine back on her feet. Islam, so they judged, was to blame for the present disastrous state of the country”⁶⁷.*

The founder of the German Templers, Christoph Hoffmann, records in his book,⁶⁸ “Because the Jews rejected Christ, they are not considered as the Chosen People of God anymore, therefore, they are not to develop Jerusalem and the Holy Land in general”, he felt that: “This important task is now being given to the Templers, believing that the German Templers are the ‘Chosen People’ and the onus is on them to fulfill the prophecy.

Which authority took away the title from the Jews and who gave it to the German Templers? He was determined that God had given this mandate to this pious group and transferred them from Germany to the Holy Land to perform this highly important task.

During his exploratory visit to Jerusalem, via Jaffa in February 1858, Hoffmann together with Hardegg and Bubeck, observed the physical and spiritual condition of the Holy City of Jerusalem, found it deplorable and in urgent need of attention. This could only be achieved by a group of dedicated Christians, who would care to value the importance of the ‘Capital of the World’. The trip to the Holy Land determined that he and his followers should prepare themselves spiritually for the trip, as they were heading for a desolate land in which they would need to work hard to materialize the will of God. For this reason, on his return, he urged the farmers, and craftsmen to play a leading role, to till the land and produce food, to build roads and houses and later settlers with other professions would follow.

64. Baha’u’llah clearly mentions in the Tablet of Hirtik, addressing the questions of Mr. Hardegg that in fact it is He Who will rebuild the Temple. Annex II

65. Timeline of the Temple Society – Tempelgesellschaft in Germany

66. The Holy Land Called, p.31

67. Ibid. p. 33

68. “Orient and Occident” in 1870

Yehiel Mikhel Pines writes: "...among them are architects, some of whom are artists; craftsmen working in stone, wood and iron, some of whom established steam mills, others who earn their living as tutors..."⁶⁹

If this vision and the love for development of the Holy Land, the land of Jesus and the Holy City had not been in their hearts, what other prime motive could have been so strong as to initiate an exodus of hundreds of already established people and move to a desolate land?

In the 19th century many Messianic groups around the world were expecting the Second Coming of Christ to happen soon. In this prediction the place where it would happen was not clear, to some, expected be in Jerusalem, the City of God, the Holy City, the Quds.

Johann Albrecht Bengel⁷⁰, predicted the date of 1836 A.D. for the coming of the Messiah.

Yaron Perry wrote in his paper entitled "The Templar Settlement in the HolyLand 1868 – 1948"⁷¹ ... many, including Hoffmann, being himself a Württembergian Pietist, continued to uphold the idea of 'gathering the people of God in Jerusalem' in the fervent belief that the Christian Messiah would come to life in the Holy Land and the new millennium was approaching"⁷².

The predicted year came and passed and there was no sign of the 'Coming of the Son of Man on the Clouds', nothing was seen or heard. Yet, Hoffmann was convinced that this would happen sooner or later, therefore, people should be ready, world should be ready. As the Second Coming of Christ could happen anywhere in the world, and anytime, there was no reason why it would not be the Quds, Jerusalem, the heart of the Holy Land, the land of the Prophets. He proposed a spiritual preparation, or in his words, 'Building the Temple' in Jerusalem. To receive Christ, both the human Temple as well as God's Temple should be ready. Then, the goal was set, it was Jerusalem, the Holy City mentioned in the Bible many times.

"The basic religious outlook of the followers of the Templers' movement was to gather together a new Christian community – God's People – in the Holy Land that would live by original Christian ethics and create a reformed society... The 'Temple' in the Society's name did not refer to the worldly Temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem, but to every person who was seen as a temple inhabited by the Spirit of God... the vision was based on the verse: "Know ye not that ye are a temple of

69. Chronicle of a Utopia, p.7

70. Lutheran pietist from Württemberg, Germany 1687 – 1752

71. Chronicle of Utopia, p.26

72. Ibid, p.33

God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"^{73,74}.

The third important co-founder of the Temple Society was Christopher Paulus, who was a brother-in-law of Hoffmann. In Paulus's publication "Insight into the Prophecies of St. John's Revelation", Sauer expands:

"Paulus made calculations predicting the appearance of the Antichrist and the Second Coming of Christ. Although Hardegg considered the exact timing of the apocalyptic events inessential, he arrived at similar conclusions as far as the analysis of the spiritual, political, social, and economic conditions of Europe was concerned. Hoffmann concerned himself much less with such speculations. The recognition that the present time was one of regeneration, which prepared the coming of the Antichrist, sufficed him and, therefore, made the bringing together of God's people an urgent necessity."⁷⁵

Professor Yossi Ben-Artzi of the University of Haifa, who wrote many research papers on the Templers wrote:

"...Hoffman and his followers sought to right the social and spiritual ills that corrupted society and the established Church in Germany. They hoped to accomplish this by returning to the simplicity of the faith of the Original Christianity, believing that the Millennium was at hand and that fulfillment of the biblical prophecy of the Messiah's coming was imminent. Hoffman's group made the prophets' vision of rebuilding Jerusalem a cornerstone of its doctrine... The rebuilding of "Jerusalem" was the article of faith underlying the Templers' ambition to come together in the City of God. Therefore, the Friends of Jerusalem, as they were called, set up a program, according to which 'God's People'⁷⁶ would gather in Palestine where, through the purity and perfection of their actions – conducted in the spirit of the First Christians – they would serve as an example to the world and raise up the people of the Land from corruption to prepare for the Second Coming and to build the Temple in Jerusalem. (It is from the desire to fulfill this last aspiration that the group later took the name of Templers, by which they are now generally known)."⁷⁷

Benjamin Zev Kedar on the same topic wrote:

"The idea of convening the people of God receives another boost from the growing interest in Palestine, following the events in Bethlehem that served as

73. Sara Turel: Chronicle of a Utopia, p. 7

74. Corinthians 3:16

75. Ibid, p.34

76. 'das Volk Gottes'

77. "The Case of The German Templers in Eretz-Israel, from Ideology and Landscape in Historical Perspective

[Note: The Friends of Jerusalem officially called themselves Templers from 1861 onwards; they *never* meant "the temple in Jerusalem" to be anything but a spiritual Temple. See 1Cor3:16; Eph2:19-22; 1 Peter2:5].

the pretext for the Crimean War. Up until now, Hoffmann has argued that the people of God must convene “somewhere on Earth”; the events in the East proved him with a sign...that the people of God must gather in Palestine, in Jerusalem. The same conclusion, after all, is suggested by the literal understanding of the prophecy that Hoffmann now embraces. Both introspection and external events now point in the same direction, towards Jerusalem; and this conjunction of inner and outer occurrences will fill Hoffmann with absolute faith that he has chosen rightly”.⁷⁸

And again:

“The people of God, however, does not yet exist; it must be convened, and soon. The gathering must be territorial in nature, for a person cannot be cleansed and purified while living under the influence of a sinful society, and the territory must be Palestine, because the Scriptures have determined so, and also because the people of God can only emerge on the land of its ancestors, surrounded by material evidence of the divine acts. Palestine is the eternal province of God’s people, but the people has yet to gather, and its rightful terrain is not yet available”.⁷⁹

In his analysis Kedar continues:

“...Hoffmann differs from Bengel in two important ways, First, unlike Bengel, he does not fix a date for the arrival of the Kingdom of Heaven, although he believes that the world is indeed facing pre-messianic tribulations. Second, Hoffmann believes that gathering God’s people and establishing the Kingdom of Heaven on earth is within man’s reach...”⁸⁰

TEMPLERS ARRIVAL TO HAIFA

Gottlieb Samuel Ruff, one of the old Templers in his memoirs writes about how the group came to Haifa:

“In Galilee, on the southern reaches of the Plain of Akko (Zebulon) at the foot of Mt. Carmel lay a small, walled-in Oriental town named Hephah (Caifa), later Haifa, which led a wretched existence in the shadow of the ancient fortress of Akko (Acre), a garrison city and a Pasha’s seat of government across the bay.

“East of the town of Haifa, the two founders of the Temple Society, Georg David Hardegg and Christoph Hoffman with their families -ten adults and three children- set foot on the soil of the Holy Land – Palestine – in the evening of 30 October 1868. They had to spend the night on the open beach with their luggage because the city gates had already been closed. The next day they found shelter in the Russian Hospice (hostel). They were welcomed by Mr. J.C. Breisch, who had

78. Chronicle of a Utopia, pp 17-18, quoted From: Religious Messianism to Political Messianism – paper.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid, p. 19

travelled ahead of them, and by the surviving settlers Bez, Heuschele and Hessenauer⁸¹. Led by Ludwig Hipp and the four mission cadets Eppinger, Heuschele, Hochstetter and Sonderecker, they had tried in 1865 to establish an agricultural settlement in two dilapidated former native villages near Nazareth... Due to the unaccustomed climate and primitive living conditions, thirteen of the nineteen adults had died in quick succession within three years, which forced them to abandon their settlement project.

“Despite this failed first attempt at settlement that claimed such a heavy toll of life and property, the two Templar leaders decided to proceed with the work they had begun. In the middle of the narrow coastal plain, vacant and untilled, of 1km width but rapidly widening between the town of Haifa and the north-western corner of Mt. Carmel and extending to the west for about 5km, a piece of land - 15 Morgen⁸² was acquired and subdivided according to a plan by Hardegg into 12 lots of 1-1/4 Wurttemberg Morgen each⁸³. Since real estate could not be registered in the names of foreign nationals under Turkish law, the name of a friendly native was put forward as the owner of the land.

“On 23 September 1869, a year after the two leaders arrived, the foundation stone for the first building of the first Templars settlement was laid near Caifa with appropriate religious solemnity and in the presence of the members of the Temple Society, the Prussian Vice-Consul Ziphos⁸⁴ from Acre, several officials and some Arab friends...

“The successive groups of Templars left Wurttemberg through Trieste and navigated towards Egypt through Mediterranean Sea towards Haifa.

“Also in 1869, four more groups of Templer emigrants left for Palestine. The first of sixteen persons, was under the leadership of Mr. Breisch, who had made the trip once before...

“The second group, under the leadership of Mr. Stecher, an Elder, also consisted of 16 persons, who departed on 6 September.

“The third group, coming from America, included the engineer Jakob Schumacher, the builders Carl Ohldorf and O. Gemmer, they were joined in Stuttgart by several Wurttemberg tradesmen including Wilhelm Gohl, winegrower, and road maker -cobblestone layer- and others. They left Stuttgart on 11 October.

81. Of the failed settlement of Samuniyeh and Chnefiss

82. German land measurement unit between 2 to 10 metric dunums

83. One morgen approximately 3000m²

84. A Greek national

“The fourth and last group of that year left Stuttgart on 22 November 1869...

“Two decades had passed since the two leaders Hardegg and Hoffmann had set foot on the soil of Palestine. The once deserted coastal plain from settlement to its limits at the northwest edge of the mountain had been transformed into a cultivated grain growing area. The slopes of Mt. Carmel as well as the plain on its summit had been transformed from scrubby forest into one large vineyard.

“Of the six larger and five smaller Templers settlements⁸⁵, Haifa was the first and the largest, and also the best placed from a developmental (economic), as well as from a health (climatic) point of view...”⁸⁶

Return of the Jews to the Holy Land

“...Israel, scattered all over the world, was not reassembled in the Holy Land in the Christian Cycle; but in the beginning of the cycle of Baha'u'llah this divine promise, as is clearly stated in all the books of The Prophets, has begun to become manifest. You can see that from all parts of the world tribes of Jews are coming to the Holy Land; they live in villages and lands which they make their own, and day by day they are increasing to such an extent that all Palestine become their home”⁸⁷.

At the same time when the movement of the Templers was shaping up, a parallel Jewish movement was also taking place in Europe to bring the Jews back to their ancestral and Promised land, and that would have happened when the Messiah was already in the Holy Land. After all, they believed it had been their land, and they were the ‘chosen people of God’ promised in the Bible. Prior to the coming of the Jews to the Holy Land, both Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Bahá, had predicted the coming of the Jews, as referred prophecies of the Bible: *“For you [Israel] a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession”⁸⁸.*

Could the Jews have come the Holy Land prior to the German Templers? Not according to the divine decree. It required a hardworking, mono-cultured people with exceeding love for a promised land to come and help to develop it, cultivate it, make it productive and build on it. Later on Jews would come, as they did, came to learn and to continue. But now, not a mono-cultured people came, but people from every nationality and background, i.e., multi-cultured with zeal and enthusiasm, considering it as their holy land, believing that they are those who

85. The latter refer to what could be termed footholds in towns such as Nazareth and Tiberius

86. Recollection of an old Templer, The Ruffs in Haifa – by: Gottlieb Samuel Ruff – Templer Record Supplement No.4, June 2009, TSA, Heritage Group, pp. 1- 2

87. Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, p. 75

88. Deuteronomy 7:6

are been promised by the Bible. Therefore, the role of the German Templers was to show them how and what to do anywhere in the Holy Land throughout. The German Templers employed many Jews in their farms, in all their seven establishments⁸⁹. And the Jews, who were acquiring land in different parts of Holy Land, knew well, that sooner or later the onus of developing their land would be on them. They were yearning to touch the Land they were forced out over two millennium. All along “Next Year in Jerusalem” was their farewell and motif.

The second generation of the German Templers was observing how fast the Jews were arriving in the Holy Land, but this did not alarm them. They continued their development work, as they had a duty to fulfill. They trained both Jews and local inhabitants. Jews had a divine mission - that is why they had to learn fast and work hard to develop the land which was holy to them.

The Land and Conflicts

The Holy Land has played an interesting role throughout history. It had been conquered by many nations: Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Turks, and others. When the first generation of Templers arrived, it was in the hand of the Turks, whose Sultan had banished Baha'u'llah to 'Akká.

Turks were not interested in this specific land per se. Strategically it was a buffer zone; it was important to maintain it because of the Mediterranean Commerce, as well as keeping the Egyptians at bay. Skirmishes always happened between the two nations.

Just prior to Baha'u'llah's exile to 'Akká, Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt conquered 'Akká, the gateway to Palestine, and exiled 'Abdu'lláh Pasha, the Ottoman Governor of Palestine to Egypt. That was in 1831 A.D. After only nine years, the combined forces of Austria and France came by sea to the rescue of the Turks and overthrew their Egyptian governor Ibrahim Pasha. But this time, although 'Akká and consequently Palestine was again in the hands of the Turks, the fortified city remained severely destroyed and abandoned, in such a way that 'Akká became in the words of Baha'u'llah, 'the most desolate land'. The war had destroyed it. The war had decimated its population. That seat of governors was converted into a hip of rubbles. The Turkish government lost all interest in developing it again. Instead, it was used to keep their most dangerous prisoners within its fortified walls, the Al-Jazzar and Abdu'llah Pasha's palace walls surrounded by a deep moat now used as a dungeon to house Baha'u'llah for over two years in its barracks, and remained as such even during the British control until after the WWII when the Jews of the land, slowly started to bring it out of its ashes again.

89. Haifa & Jaffa (both in 1869), Saroná (1871), in Rephaim, outskirts of Jerusalem (1873), in Wilhelma (1902), in Bethlehem of Galilee (1906) and in Waldheim (1907)

The Württembergers, prior to their arrival to Holy Land, stopped over in Istanbul to negotiate some land to be acquired for their settlements with the Ottoman government. Their six months' waiting, however, did not bring much result and they were told to negotiate the land with the inhabitants of the towns where they would be settling. James Huber⁹⁰, who knew the Württembergers back from Germany, was familiar with the group. Although he himself was residing in Nazareth, he wrote to Hoffmann that their best chance of getting land would be in Haifa and urged them to come to the Holy Land through the town of 'Akká to Haifa and not via Jaffa⁹¹. Although Jaffa had a port with a wharf for small vessels to dock and was the gateway to the Holy City of Jerusalem, but the sea was often very rough. The German Templers accepted Huber's suggestion and docked in Haifa via Akka.

Could the coming of the German Templers to Haifa have happened prior to the coming of Baha'u'llah to Haifa? It is a matter of belief of course to answer to this valid question, which only the history can respond, and that, only after the fulfillment of the fact. Therefore, the suggested answer is no, it could not have happened, thus, as there needed to be a Divine reason for the fulfillment of a prophecy, a divine promise. The mere stopover of the German Templers in Istanbul to negotiate for a piece of land, had changed their original plan of coming to the Holy Land through the sea gate of Jaffa and establish themselves there and their way to Jerusalem would have been easier. Then, what about Mount Carmel and its meeting with its Lord? What about the establishment of the future Throne of the Lord over it? What about the Sea-Land-Mountain Highway from the Haifa Bay to Mount Carmel? And the establishment of the Seat of the Divine World Order, how would these happen? The chain links are all divinely put together and each one is connected to the next without any alteration, people only become instruments for the fulfillment of the prophecy. The German Templers had a divine mission to fulfill even though they were not aware of it. It was the reason of their movement and had to be fulfilled thus.

Of course, at the time no one could have imagined for what purpose each group was forming itself, yet, after a while it all become quite clear. The Turks were confident of their possession of Palestine, yet they lost it to the British. Was there any divine reason for it? Of course, otherwise the prophecies would not have happened. Once the German Templers had fulfilled their mission, they had to evacuate the land, although they had never thought of leaving Palestine voluntarily. They loved the Land; they had worked hard to developed it; they accepted it was their own dear home.

Yet, obviously, the group had to side with the politics of the day in Germany

90. A Christian missionary from the Church Missionary Society of Germany

91. Jaffa's port was not a deep-water port, the ships had to anchor outside of the port and the passengers and lading had to be brought over by small boats.

who were at war with the British and were exterminating the Jews all over in Europe. The Jews were already shaping their land and could not tolerate those who were persecuting them in the land spared for them. They forced the Germans out with the determination of never having them back again in their adoptive land and took over their settlements⁹². By that time, the German Templers had already fulfilled their divinely ordained mission, i.e., responding to the Divine Call, building the Kings' Highway⁹³, -the Carmel Avenue⁹⁴- where it would lead to the spot where the Temple of God was being built, but not by them. They were initiating the foundations for the development of the Holy Land.

The second generation were not at all like those first-generation Templers who had come to build the 'Temple' and seek for Christ in person, instead, they became industrialists and landowners, contractors both with the British, now governors of Palestine and with the French in neighboring countries, as well as engaging in other enterprises. They declared that the original goal of the Founder of the Mission, Hoffmann, was not achievable, therefore, building the 'Temple' was no longer a priority. The younger generation was not at all interested in the original religious ideology, which had been the prime mover of their forefathers. Hofmann/Hardegg were divinely guided to settle in the Holy Land - could their arrival to Haifa have been for any other purpose than was becoming evident? By then, the land for the Temple of God was already visited by Baha'u'llah Himself and identified by Him and Abdu'l-Baha, His Centre of Covenant, Who was already building the foundations of that Holy Temple, where the Most Holy Remains of the Prophet of God, the Bab⁹⁵, martyred in Iran in 1850, was on its way to be settled in the heart of Mount Carmel, above the colony of the Germans, overlooking the city of Haifa.

The German Templers were systematically evicted from the Holy Land in different stages between the years 1930 to 1948 due to the reason mentioned earlier, when the embryonic State of Israel was being formed and eventually created in 1948. The British gave the Templers the choice of going back to Germany, although some were exchanged for the imprisoned Jews, or exiled to, Australia. The majority preferred to be resettled in a new country rather than going back to Germany, which the gap of separation of generations was already wide, and they were going to be alien in the Country of their ancestors and also Germany, was totally devastated after WWII and there was no prospect for them anymore anyway.

92. In a later stage the government of Israel paid USD 13 million to the TSA as the price of their settlements.

93. It is an allusion to the saying of Abdu'l-Baha that in future Kings will dock their ship at the Haifa Bay and walk through to the foot of the Mt. Carmel, there taking their crown down and climb the steps to the Temple of the Lord, the Shrine of the Bab.

94. Today, Ben Gurion Ave.

95. Prophet martyr, the forerunner of Baha'u'llah, who was shot by the government of Iran in July 1850 in Tabriz, Iran. His remains were transported with difficulty to Haifa in 1899.

Once in Australia, they were not allowed to build settlements for themselves anymore as they had done in Palestine. The period of building settlements was over, and there was no purpose or goal to pursue such an idea in a foreign land. They had to integrate in the Australian society and soon become citizens of the host country. Today, the new generation identifies itself more as Australians than Germans, and most of them have forgotten their forefathers' faith's philosophy altogether and not even practicing the language of their forefathers. Yes, they are Templers, they are faithful citizens, quite pious Christians, but there is no goal for them to fulfill anymore. They have become part of the Free Christian Society with no special goal or aim to achieve, except being good Christians, which they already are.

The below statement was worded by Peter Lange, once president of the Society:

*"...we are not content with our spiritual life which has lost so much of its intensity compared with the Templers founding generation. The secular life which most of us are living must have more spiritual value in the future. This is a common goal with many Christians of other denominations. In the days of our Palestine settlements, our Templers' schools had been responsible for exercising this spiritual life among young Templers. In our days we are aiming to achieve this goal by divine services, seminar work, confirmation classes in our communities in Germany and in Australia. We experience that many young people are looking for circles in which they can find this spirituality."*⁹⁶

Defeated?

Here are the sighs of a second-generation Templer who loved the land of the of the forefathers' choice, i.e., the Holy Land, but were deprived of having it. The glow of the spirit, once vibrant had dimmed their common desire:

*"Palestine, the land of my choice, and the newly formed State of Israel had ruthlessly and mercilessly thrown us out, along with all other German residents...Now I stand at the threshold of my life, cheerfully ready to step on to the bridge that leads from time to eternity, and ready to leave the world with its "bliss and grief". I am ready to return that which is immortal within me, my Divine heritage, the talent that had been entrusted to me, to the One from Who it came and Who owned it during my time on earth and Who will own it in eternity. I am ready to give my body over to decay in God's acre, in the plot of peace where parents and siblings have found their last resting place before me, my body, which was only the shell and mortal frame for the real, true, immortal and Divine Self within me"*⁹⁷.

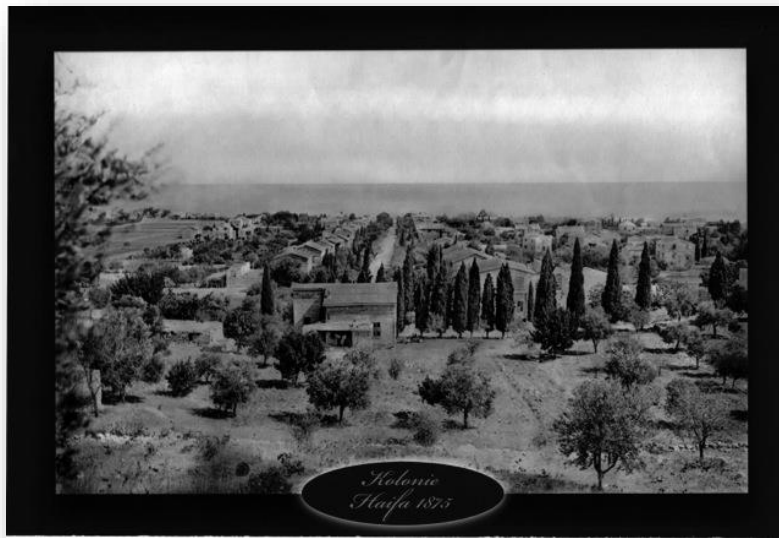
The Jews, on the other hand, as promised in the Bible, the 'Chosen People',

96. Peter Lange to the writer, dated June 2011

97. Gotthilf Hornung, Memories of Palestine, - An old Templer reminisces, p. 36.

claimed their land and are fully in charge of developing it. It was a Divine promise that had to be fulfilled. Every stumbling block would be smoothed before the Divine decree⁹⁸.

Of the seven German Templers settlements, only one prominent name has survived. The German Colony in Haifa, which as some believe is one of the most beautiful spots on earth. The industrious Germans were led by Georg David Hardegg, co-Founder of the movement, who was the first leader of the Templers in Haifa had personally surveyed the acquired land in 1869, walked over Mount Carmel for days, praying for divine guidance, an inspiration.



German Colony in Haifa 1975 (Courtesy of the Temple Society Australia)

Coincidentally he was facing 'Akká, where Baha'u'llah was already in prison, when he conceived the idea of connecting the main road from the Mountain to the Sea, where he would have the vineyard at the heart of the Mountain, the factories next to the Sea, and the land in between to be developed for residential, commercial, and educational purposes. He was building the Kings' Highway, where in future, as Abdu'l-Baha worded, the Kings would dock at the shore, walk along the Highway towards the Mountain, put their crowns to one side and climb the steps of the Terraces towards the Shrine of the Bab, the Temple of the Lord, the Shkinah, as it had been prophesied. Here the luminous remains of the Bab are deposited in the heart of Carmel, as the Shkinah in the Sarcophagus of the Covenant. Some divine prophecies have been fulfilled, while other prophecies still to be fulfilled.

For each step to be fulfilled and achieve the goal, an intervention of a person or a group is required, nothing else remains after its accomplishment, only good

98. Bible prophecy. Footnote 87

memoirs, as what would remain from a tree seed in the soil after it is planted, is the roots, holding the divine Lot Tree of the Divine Covenant. it will grow roots and stems and continue to develop to its natural form!

Encounter of the two groups

Hardegg had heard of Baha'u'llah and His claim through the Persian Baha'is who came to visit their Lord in 'Akká prison and settled in Haifa for a period, serving the Cause in any capacity they could. Hardegg became interested in meeting Baha'u'llah and wrote a letter asking Him about His claim. He received a mighty Tablet from Baha'u'llah that was loud and clear in answer to his questions saying Who He was. Baha'u'llah exhorted him to study the Message thoroughly, and not to miss the opportunity of knowing his Lord as it had happened to the Jews in the time of Jesus. Though of his high regards, unfortunately he could not understand the true meaning of the wordings of Tablet, written in Arabic, which he received in a poor translation by the already mentioned Christian priest Huber.

In another Tablet to Vargha⁹⁹, Baha'u'llah wrote an important statement about the Templers:

“The Community of Prussians (Templers), although declaring that we have come to this Land to get into His presence, “as it has been recorded in our Scriptures that the coming of the Lord is near or has already passed”, nevertheless, they are not aware.

The world is in a stupor... Today sun testifies, sea cries loud, land informs all. Intoxicating effects of the world has influenced them to an extent that they are lost in themselves, how much less their awareness of this Lofty Station, and the knowledge of a station which is the ultimate goal and desire of those who are close to the Lord...”¹⁰⁰

The reader is referred to read the Tablet to Hardegg –Tablet of Hirtik- as the annexure to this study to see how clearly Baha'u'llah answered his questions, but of course, one needed to be proficient in intrinsic Arabic language to understand that mighty Tablet.

Momen¹⁰¹ writes an interesting finding of Professor Alex Carmel, where the latter finds number of articles, which were appeared *Suddeutsche Warte*¹⁰²:

“I can give notice of yet another spiritual phenomenon which can strengthen

99. Ali-Muhammad Varqa was one of His disciples, who together with his 12-year-old son Ruhullah were killed by a governor in Iran.

100. Tablet to Varqa – Pazhuheshnameh, vol.2, no 1, Autumn 1997, p. 122, provisional translation

101. Moojan Momen, *The Babi and Baha'i Religions, 1844-1944*, p. 236, GR Publishers, 1981

102. in the German Templer's Journal that was the first mention in Schumacher's letter (q.v.) and was published in the issue of 29 June 1871 (p. 101)

our belief. This concerns 70 Persians, who have been banished to 'Akka on account of their beliefs. Mr. Hardegg has already spent considerable time and effort trying to discover the actual basis of their belief and had dealings with them through an interpreter just yesterday. He has found that these people base themselves on the Holy Scriptures and, like us, are waiting the hour of Redemption in God's Kingdom. The home of this movement is the Persian border-country near Baghdad. The greater part of these Persian friends of the Bible is still to be found in their homeland. Since the Shah was unable to suppress the movement, he has taken captive the leaders and sent them into exile ever further from their homeland until they finally arrived in 'Akka, where they now live imprisoned. These people have endured the ordeals and agonies of the first Christians, have no connections with any European missionary society and have their simple Bible beliefs untouched by European influence... Could the signs of the times be clearer? What could more happen to show us what times we are living in? Let us on the other hand consider recent events in Paris and then no one will fail to realize that God's plan is rapidly nearing its completion."

'Abbás Effendi, titled Abdu'l-Bahá –the Servant of Baha-, the Son of Baha'u'llah and Cente of His Covenant, met Hardegg in person in Acre, perhaps more than once. Hardegg was quite impressed by this young man, then 27 or 28 years of age, of His vast knowledge and His depth in interpreting the Holy Writings. That is why perhaps Hardegg wrote an article about this movement, which appeared on the *Suddeutsche Warte*¹⁰³. Hardegg's article was as follows:

"In the town of Haifa by Carmel live a few Persians, who earn their living as metal and woodworkers. They stand out on account of their sensible and friendly faces and their Persian dress. They are members of Persian sect, the leader, and members of which, together with wives, children and servants, to the number of about 80 souls, are confined by the Ottoman Government to 'Akka, three hours from here. An acquaintance sprang up between myself and these Persians in Haifa and, in the course of our exchanges, I received the impression that these people, despite all the obscurity of their knowledge, were seeking the truth.

"In order to be more accurately informed, I sought an interview with the leader, Baha'u'llah, which may be translated as; the Light or the Illuminator of God'¹⁰⁴; his family name is Nuri, formerly large landowners in Persia. The interview took place on 2 June in 'Akka with the son of Baha'u'llah, 'Abbas Effendi, a man of twenty-seven years, one of the educated inhabitants of 'Akka acting as interpreter.

"I opened by saying to 'Abbas Effendi that if my communication with him would bring about difficulties with the authorities, I would leave it to his discretion to discontinue. To this he replied: in Persian there is a saying: beyond black, there

103. Momen, 'The Babi and Baha'i Religions, 1844 – 1944 (pp. 236-238, quoting: (pp. 113-14) on 20 July 1871 "It shows that Hardegg had met 'Abdu'l-Baha long before the interview at which Huber was present...

104. Baha'u'llah means 'The Glory of God'

is no other color, i.e. after so much suffering it could hardly become worse.

This then is his story:

“About 23 years ago there appeared in Persia a simple merchant Hadratu’l-Bab¹⁰⁵ who through the reading of the Holy Scripture of the New and Old Testament had suddenly shown forth higher enlightenment and gifts, in a most noticeable way, and was waiting for the coming of the Messiah. He acquired followers.

The King of Persia, to whose notice this came, summoned him. He answered him: the King should organize a debate between his wise men and Hadrat. This took place and the wise men could not refute him. Meanwhile the king had to go to war and gave the order that Hadrat should be locked in prison.

After the war the king came home and died, his son ascended the throne.

Meanwhile the sect in Persia had grown stronger and the new king, in order to stop it spreading, had Hadrat put to death. It is said that he prophesied his fate three days before his death in the presence of some of his disciples. One of these desired to die with him. Yet in spite of this the sect continued to spread. The king then ordered a general persecution and extermination in which, in the course of time 18,000 persons were killed, amongst whom some were tortured to death, for example, the skin was dissolved from their heads, on which inflammable material was poured and ignited, or a hole was bored in their chest with a bayonet, into which a candle was thrust and set light to. Yet all this did nothing to quench the movement.

Hadratu’l-Bab had designated Baha’u’llah to continue his work.

It happened then that someone attempted to kill the king with a pistol shot. Since the pistols were loaded only with light shot, the king was not harmed, but he succeeded in convincing himself that Baha had hired the murderer. When summoned he explained to the king that this was not the case and that if he or his people had wished to kill the king, they would have found a better way than birdshot. The European ambassadors, namely the Russian, intervened in the case too; Baha was released, but the ambassadors advised him to make his way under the protection of the Sublime Porte to Baghdad.

This he did; but now the new light began to spread through Baghdad too. That day Pilate and Herod became friends; the Persian and Turkish Governments began to co-operate in persecuting the sect. Baha’s possessions in Baghdad were confiscated too, and he was sent to Constantinople, together with his followers; there it was thought best to confine him to Adrianople, since Rumelia or the European part of Turkey offered more certainty against the spreading of the contagion. But because of their conduct they found friends there too. Now it was decided to send Baha and his followers to ‘Akka. The European Consuls in Adrianople offered to prevent this, but Baha explained to them that if they thought it good to take steps on his behalf, they should do this without his petition and independently from him, but that he was decided to follow the decree of God. Thus, he came to ‘Akka.

105. The Bab, Mirza Ali-Muhammad, the forerunner of Baha’u’llah. Hadrat means His holiness.

In Persia the sect is at present left in peace. When I came to Haifa in Nov. 1868, I found the Persians here already.

I hope and expect that the German Kaiser as the successor of Charnelange and Frederik the Great of Prussia will cause his influence in the East to spread and make itself felt in favor of justice and freedom of conscience; the Sublime Porte will, I think, come to realize, if it is of such persuasion, that the new Empire and its subjects are not hostile to it.”

The above statement shows that the interpreter was not of the caliber to translate Abdu'l-Baha's descriptions correctly. But regardless of the translation, Hardegg found certain truth in the Baha'i message and tried his best to help it.

Schism in Templers Order (Templers and Kirchlers – church goers)

Soon after, in 1874, Hardegg left the Templers Movement, disillusioned with Hoffmann's way of thinking. One third of the Templers sided with him while the other two third remained with Hoffmann, who (1875) took away all the offices from Hardegg. The basic problem between the two leaders of the Templers was based on a difference of opinions and more clearly, on the leadership. Although Hardegg has been a faithful follower of Hoffmann's movement - at one time he had even taken the reign of the Movement into his hands – yet the rift was getting deeper as time passed. According to Kedar:

“...the crux of Hardegg's belief was the idea that man had both the ability and the duty to strive for the acquisition of “spiritual gifts”, i.e., of charismata in the original sense, which refers to supernatural abilities such as prophesying, performing miracles and exorcising demons”¹⁰⁶.

It is not known at all if Hardegg tried to persuade Hoffmann on the newfound Faith to be explored, as in that time the relationship between the two leaders was getting to the lowest point. It is not known either if Hoffmann ever had a chance to explore the Baha'i doctrine or even to try to get to know his Persian neighbors, though in his writings there are quite a few statements on peace, love and unity, resembling Baha'u'llah's teachings.

Yet, there have been profound disagreement between the two leaders. This matter had been discussed in length by the Templers themselves, for example Gottlob David Sandel in an article on Georg David Hardegg¹⁰⁷, Revolutionary and Co-founder of the “German Temple Society” indicates:

“Without doubt a certain obscured rivalry of the leadership of the “Temple” also played a part here. Hardegg did not afford enough consideration to Hoffmann's

106. Chronicle of a Utopia

107. Recollection of a Templer

entitlement to authority and priority. The latter made the proposal, which might well not have been made in full sincerity, that Hardegg should not only carry out the founding of the settlement in Palestine alone, but also become the spiritual leader of it, a position for which Hoffmann had been chosen...Hoffmann hints in his memoirs that Hardegg did not trust him..."

Gottlieb Samuel Ruff also mentions¹⁰⁸:

"Hardegg's exit from the Temple Society also entailed a split in the Haifa community. According to my research, while 48 recognized Christoph Hoffmann as president, 12 of almost 60 families sided with Hardegg. After his death in 1879, theirs became a lost Cause. Lutheran missionaries looked after them now and then, until the Prussian Jerusalemverein began to care for them and provided a Pastor and teacher. Before that, they were forced to continue sending their children to our Templar school."

"From 1868 on, Hardegg's relation with the council of the Templers Society, and especially with Hoffmann, had increasingly deteriorated. Also, within the Templers Community of Haifa there was no lack of tensions. The Haifa Community, without doubt, owed its rapid growth largely to the initiative and determination of its Head. However, his stubbornness and authoritarian style of leadership offended many a settler. The council of the Temple Society in Germany suspected, not without reason that Hardegg endeavored to procure the top position for his community and to take over the leadership of the Temple movement. Therefore, when assigning funds, they deliberately placed Haifa at a disadvantage. The result was a permanent deficit in the finances of the Community. Another concern was that Haifa was experiencing a separate development in spiritual-religious aspects. It became imperative that an agreement between the two Heads of the Temple movement should be reached. When negotiations were initiated between Hoffmann and representatives of the Haifa Community, it became apparent that the envisaged joint leadership of the Temple Communities in Palestine. This was not possible as long as Hardegg and Hoffmann disagreed on fundamental religious questions. As Hardegg refused to submit to Hoffmann's spiritual authority, he had no other alternative but to tender his resignation as head of the Templers Community of Haifa. On 31st March 1874, he acted accordingly. At the same time, he resigned his membership of the Temple Society. A third of the members of the Haifa Community followed his example.

"Hardegg's withdrawal from the Temple Society, in which he had been active for 20 years, was a hard blow to the small Community. However, as Hoffmann succeeded in establishing his position as spiritual leader unchallenged, the Community survived the crisis in spite of the grievous loss of so many members. In the first place, Hoffmann too, had seriously considered resigning from his

108. Recollection of an old Templer, p. 9

offices as Head of the Community and the missionary institutions of Jaffa, since the establishment of the Palestinian Templer Communities meant that the task he had taken on the Kirschenhardthof had been accomplished. An overwhelming vote in his favor, however, had changed his mind. For the time being, the leadership of the reduced Haifa Templer Community was assumed by Jacob Schumacher, who had emigrated to Palestine from America. After his death in 1891, Friedrich Lange, who came from Southern Russia, took over. It is essentially due to the efforts of these two men that conditions in Haifa gradually improved and the Community received a fresh impetus.”¹⁰⁹

The following additional information on the subject is also confirming:¹¹⁰

“...However, in June 1874 the Temple denomination underwent a schism. Temple leader Hardegg and about a third of the Templers seceded from the Temple Society, after personal and substantial quarrels with the other leader Christoph Hoffmann.

“The schismatics around Hardegg searched to join another Christian denomination. To this end they addressed the Lutheran Church of Sweden (1874) and the Anglican Church Missionary Society (1879), but both refused to take care of the schismatists. In 1878 Hardegg and most of the schismatists founded the Temple Association (Tempelverein), but after Hardegg’s death in the following year the cohesion of its adherents faded.”

Miller, et.al¹¹¹, published in 1963 has researched the revolutionary character of Hardegg (1812 -1879). It is indicated that even back in Württemberg, as early as 1867, the two leaders had deep differences, and quotes Hoffmann who admitted a year later, that Hardegg had broken away from Hoffmann. Nevertheless, he accompanied him to the Holy Land and became the sole leader of the movement putting aside Hoffmann as only the spiritual leader of the group. This is why, as soon as the opportunity arose in 1869, Hoffmann moved to Jaffa to start a new settlement, far away from Hardegg in Haifa. Hardegg would undermine Hoffmann and would not recognize him as a leader. The rivalry between the two for leadership added the last straw to the already deep rift and made the separation inevitable. Hardegg always adhered to his way of thinking, and nothing would shake his ideology of ‘gifts of the spirit’, which to him was the essence of the ‘Temple’. It would descend on them, once the group was gathered in the Holy Land where it would be the commencement of the Kingdom of God on earth. Whereas Hoffmann’s idea was to build the Temple, to create the Kingdom of God on Earth. Kedar explains the concept of ‘Temple’ thus:

“What is this Temple from which Hoffmann’s movement will derive its name? It is not a material edifice, but the condition of God dwelling among his people, a holy people of priests. This people will experience the Kingdom of Heaven on

109. Templer Record Supplement #4, Recollections of an old Templer, TSA Heritage Group, June 2009

110. Wikipedia, Immanuel Church (Tel Aviv-Yafo) , p.2

111. Biographies from Swabia and Franconia, vol. 9,

earth: "We hope," Hoffmann writes, "for the happiness of a life in paradise, which will give us the privilege of being forever in God's immediate presence, while enjoying the full force of life and all the purity, greatness and glory of which humans are capable, without ever suffering from any harm."¹¹²

But Hoffmann kept changing his mind from one concept to the next and never had a clear-cut guiding idea for his group.

At the end, the exhausted active Hardegg was excluded from office, but he never complained, he busied himself with other things, and watching how his dreams were only illusions and they never became reality. As a result of a heart attack on the 9th of July 1879, Hardegg's earthly life came to an end. He was 67 years old. His followers interred him in the Templers' Cemetery in Haifa with a simple marble cross on which it says: "Fear God and give glory to Him".

Gertrude Wassermann-Deiningner, a Kirchler – follower of Hardegg - at the time, mentions that two evangelist missionaries, Blaich and Seitz together with Hardegg, after severing their ties with the Templers, initiated the founding of the Reichsbruderbund¹¹³

Gottlob David Sandel in his article on the life of Georg David Hardegg, mentions Hardegg's involvement in this Evangelical organization¹¹⁴:

"Some friends, especially the former German Consul Friedrich Keller, surrounded him and formed a group that joined the "Evangelical National Brotherhood", which had been founded in the meantime by the Templer "evangelists" Blaich and Seitz, an organization which aspired to similar aims as the Temple Society and, especially in Germany, admitted ex-members disaffected with Hoffmann's leadership."¹¹⁵

Max Miller, et.al, mention that Hardegg was busy writing and publishing many essays on religious studies, such as the Wahabites¹¹⁶ and "an essay was dedicated to the Persian sect of the Baha'is¹¹⁷". *In the late sixties on Mount Carmel, Hardegg maintained friendly neighborly relations with their leader.* However, Master Abdu'l-Bahá, whom he met in the late sixties, was in 'Akká and not on Mount Carmel. Abdu'l-Bahá could not leave the perimeter of 'Akká before 1875, only to go to the Ridvan Garden at about two kilometers away from Akka and later to Mazra'ih, at about eight kilometers –both within the greater Akka environs- where he secured a more pleasant environment for His beloved Father.

112. Kedar, Chronicle of a Utopia, p 18

113. German Brotherhood.

114. Recollection of an old Templer,

115. Revolutionary and Co-founder of the German Temple Society 1812 – 1879

116. A Sunni sect of the Saudis.

117. The Persian Sect of the Baha'is and their Refuge in Akko and on Mount Carmel

It is not known if He ever left 'Akká before this period and went to Haifa. There should have been more than one meeting between the Master and Hardegg in 'Akká, otherwise how could they be friends only by one meeting, and how he could have been the link between Him and the Germans, as Abdu'-Baha indicates. The article he wrote and published in the Templers' organ, "Die Warte", concerning the Baha'i Faith, was published as early as 29 June 1871, maybe the very first article that had ever been written in a Western magazine by a non-Baha'i¹¹⁸.

While Abdu'l-Baha was in Stuttgart back in 1912, in a meeting with the Baha'is of the city he mentioned the following:

"Among the people who emigrated to Haifa there were many from Stuttgart and the region around Stuttgart. The leader or chairman of this colony, Mr. Hardegg, is a friend of mine. When I was a prisoner, he visited me. At that time I was not allowed to leave 'Akká. Mr. Hardegg always showed me a great deal of love and was the link between the Germans and me. The German colonists did not have contacts with the local inhabitants; they only associated with Abdul-Bahá and the Baha'is. They had a German coachman in charge of transportation between 'Akká and Haifa. On each trip he came to see me. But restrictions for the prisoners were so severe he was not allowed to speak with me. His superiors did not permit him to visit me. So, he would stand in the street opposite the house in which I lived, looking for me; and when he saw me he smiled and I nodded back with a smile; this was the extent of our communication. This story shows you that I am an old friend of the Stuttgarters. Actually, we are related. And now I have come to return your visit. In fact, we are the members of one family. The love of Baha'u'llah has united us all"¹¹⁹.

From then on Hardegg's followers were called 'Kirchlers' or Church goers as, they started to go back to their original Lutheran Church, from which all had separated almost two decades earlier. Although the Kirchlers remained in the Holy Land, their associations with the cousin Templers were strained. The rift between the two groups was deep and it remained thus until they left the Holy Land altogether. Hoffmann remained as the Head of the Community until he passed away in 1885 in Jerusalem where his remains were buried in the Templer Cemetery. Both leaders passed away before Baha'u'llah.

For the 'Friends of Jerusalem' the concept of 'Temple' was confusing. Some believed what Hardegg had intended, namely 'the spiritual gifts', while others looked toward Hoffmann's idea of 'Kingdom of Heaven'. Hoffmann, as the leader of the movement, did not see the 'spiritual gifts' in himself. It was this sole idea of lacking such powers that encouraged Hardegg to demote Hoffmann from his

118. Momen, Babi and Baha'i Religions, vol.1, p. 236

119. Quotation: - Mein Herz ist bei euch, Abdul Baha in Deutschland -by Werner Gollmer, Bahá'í Verlag 1988, pp44-45, translated by Martha Otto.

leadership of the movement, thus bringing the long-standing tensions between the two leaders to an end.

Yaron Perry, in his paper makes an interesting observation:

“How then did it happen that the “gathering of the people of God” – the grandiose plan that was to bring salvation to the whole world – was reduced in the end to only seven colonies in the Holy Land? The causes for their failure are to be found with the Templers themselves. The most decisive factor in the conversion of the “grand plan” to a limited colonization endeavor stems from the gradual weakening of religious fervor exhibited in the second and third generation. The vision of the founding fathers to bring about a “spiritual temple” in the Holy Land slowly diminished. Equal weight can be given to the failure of the Society to bring a “million settlers” to the Holy Land, a goal they set for themselves already at the end of the fifth decade of the 19th century.

“This was confirmed by Alex Carmel at the conclusion of his pioneering research on the Temple Society when he quotes the Swiss poet, Hans Brugger, who spent some years of his youth in the Holy Land. Brugger wrote how he loved to observe the old Templar leader Hardegg, who towards the end of his life sat on the balcony of his home gazing at the bay of Haifa: “Hardegg looked towards the west as if he were seeking to welcome the multitudes of his grazing flock that were to follow in his path to the Holy Land and it didn’t happen...”¹²⁰

There are some points in the above quotation worth analyzing about Templers’ expectations in general and Hardegg’s expectations in particular. It is ironic that Hardegg was looking to the ‘west’, he in fact, might have been looking towards Acre, where the Lord was in the barracks, where he had already gone to meet with Him unsuccessfully. Perhaps Hardegg’s expectation was on the defeat he had experienced, hence Hardegg’s disappointment in his last days.

Danny Goldman, a scholar, and a researcher on the matter of the Templers, wrote the following on this topic:

“Here is what I think of the question you have presented. It depends on what basis you evaluate the whole German enterprise in the Holy Land. If you judge it by the bottom line only, the outcome was that they have disappeared from the Eretz-Israel arena. This is true. But there are other criteria, by which their enterprise can be considered a success.

For example: The last settlement attempts by westerners in the Holy Land before the Templers were the crusaders. This was 700 years before the Templers, with a lot of backups from their countries and a lot of resources. They too found themselves being pushed out by the Moslems, in the 13th century. The town where you live, Acre, was their last foothold, before they disappeared from

120. Chronicle of a Utopia, ‘The Templar Settlement in the Land of Israel’ Yaron Perry

the region to Cyprus and back to Europe. Now consider the Templers, that had no state support and did it only on their own and succeeded in establishing civil settlements that prospered. They found themselves being kicked out of the region because of major forces that were beyond their control.

Also consider the immense contribution that their enterprise has made for the development of the county: they developed farming, tourism, industry, architecture and new settlements, something, which was unheard of in Ottoman Palestine.

So, there you have it, in my assessment we cannot say that the Templer settlement was a failure, it was indeed tragically ended, by others, and by historic processes, but the mark that they have left here was profound and is now being appreciated by most scholars”¹²¹.

Writer’s Point of view

From the point of view of a Baha’i, the Templers movement, as a messianic group, maintains its high position among all other messianic groups, who took the trouble and leaving everything behind and make an arduous attempt to travel to the Holy Land. Both leaders, and of course more Hardegg than Hoffmann who, did not seem to have had any contact or interest in other neighbouring groups, i.e., the Baha’is, while in Haifa and later on in Jerusalem, to start a serious contact. However, Hoffmann in his writings, one can see his open-mindedness and mention of similar trends as in the Baha’i Writings, for example, when Hoffmann was asked who the People of God were in his estimation, were they his movement? He answered:

“What we have to consider and discuss is not whether, and how, we might make a move to the Promised Land but whether, and how, we are able to become a People of God. For let us not deceive ourselves: “We are not this People yet. This requires a complete change of our total lives and a rebirth of all that is, through the power of God’s Word.”¹²²

But it is Hardegg who wrote to Baha’u’llah. He met with the Master Abdu’l-Bahá; he is the one who envisioned and brought about the Templers Colony in Haifa where later on Baha’u’llah Himself chose the spot exactly above and in continuation of the main road of their settlement in 1891 where Hardegg had traced his main road from the Mountain to the Sea.

On this matter Abdu’l-Bahá in a Tablet to Áqá Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Husayn Afnán¹²³ writes:

“...The Blessed Beauty¹²⁴ was in Haifa on many occasions and ordered the

121. Email to the writer, July 2010

122. Orient and Occident, vol. 1

123. One of the early believers and one of the relatives of the Bab, the Prophet fore-runner of Baha’u’llah

124. One of the titles of Baha’u’llah

friends to acquire a piece of land on the slopes of Mt. Carmel of great beauty and fairness, and He used to express His happiness in that area which is of utmost beauty and liveliness as one of the best places in this region. Truly a similar place could not be found in the whole world..."¹²⁵

Abdu'l-Bahá started moving permanently to Haifa in 1907, although He has been on and off living in Haifa before the end of the 19th Century in the three rented houses that He had acquired for His visitors and pilgrims and Himself to oversee the commencement of the most important undertaking namely, the building the Shrine of the Bab as envisioned by His Father. Throughout His remaining life, until 1921, he had very cordial relations with the Templers, visiting their homes quite frequently and associating with them. Sometimes he had refreshments with them, sitting and conversing in their homes. This is also attested in the memoirs of the Templers who have mentioned this relationship. The Master did buy some land on Mount of Carmel from them. Eventually, the Templers had a high regard for the Baha'i Leader. Once the news of the passing of Abdu'l-Bahá reached them, the entire students of the Templer school rose to their feet, while the funeral procession was passing by, which had never been done for any other religious leader by the Templers attested by them.

Despite the philosophical character of the Templers, and although they were neighbours, they never came to investigate the Baha'is and their claims nor the Baha'is attempted to teach them. The faith of the first generation was shattered after the mentioned split and remained so, for the rest of the Templers' lives. They were more interested in redeeming their faith, in either of the two groups - the Templers and the Kirchlers - and adhered to the dictates of their leaders. The closest they ever came to the Baha'i Faith was Hardegg's interaction with the Master and his subsequent letter to Baha'u'llah, the answer he received, but did not understand much of its contents, as recorded by Baha'u'llah Himself.

125. Rahiq-i-Makhtum, Vol. II, pp. 100/101. Provisional translation

CHAPTER III The Second-Generation Templers

“You could never have wished for a better childhood than we had in Haifa, feeling protected within a very close-knit and caring community, whom you could depend upon in times of need. It was a very sheltered, almost isolated life, but we were introduced to German customs and traditions at a very early age, and it was instilled in us that being German meant you had to behave perfectly at all times, because if you did something wrong or behaved badly, people wouldn’t say that a certain person had done this or that, but they would put the blame on a German person...”¹²⁶

The relationship of the Templers with the Baha’is has always been of friendship and respect. There is a letter from R. Loytved-Hardegg to a certain Nicola, written from 90491 Nurnberg, Oedenberger Strasse 41, dated 28 February 1996, which reads:

Dear Nicola,

Omi and I were happy about your and Frederik’s letter, also about the interesting overview of your professional responsibility and that of those entering a profession. I am returning the information brochure as well as some photographs, which a lady sent.

Your request to report what we heard about the Bahais during my youth in Haifa, especially about their leader (son of the founder) whom we children called “God of the Persian” and in the Turkish-Arab area he had the name Abbas Effendi; Effendi in Turkish means ‘Mister’. Whatever “Abbas” means and in which language I have forgotten, the same with the original Persian names. The father of our Persian God had developed a new creed in Persia, very close to the Christian religion, with a strong emphasis on charity and truthfulness, if I remember correctly. I give you more details if I knew where my notes are hidden. If I should find them again occasionally you shall learn about the exact story of the founder.

Here is now everything I remember precisely: the father of our Persian God, after proclaiming his creed in his sermons and printing a kind of bible (my father owned one of them as well as the translation into German) was threatened with capital punishment in Persia. The Turkish Sultan, as the head of the Mohammedans, granted him asylum restricted to Akko (formerly Ptolemais). At this time the German colony was founded in Haifa under the leadership of my great-grandfather Georg David Hardegg. Neighbourly relations developed between him and the Baha’i founder, which also included the German Vice Consul Friederich Keller and others. These led to the subsequent permission on

126. Memories of a life in Palestine – Martha Strasser, p. 23

the part of the Turkish government that the family of the Baha'i founder was allowed to accept the offer of the German colony to move into their area. I then met the son, Abbas Effendi when he was already a white-haired man from 1910 to 1918. This son was a dignified, but also friendly and open-minded member of the German colony and the construction of the Baha'i temple (also resting place for the father), which he completed on the slopes of Carmel above the German colony, was an enriching monument.

Abbas Effendi loved the German children, and they loved him. When he left his beautiful house for a walk, all the children, especially the pre-school children, gathered near the "Persian God" who was walking in a white flowing gown with a white scarf around his white hair, with friendly blue eyes and holding a white rose from his garden in his hand. Then he would stop and speak to the children in fairly good German¹²⁷. Of course, he also had his darlings, obviously it was light blond and blue-eyed children. For example, my younger sister Gerda received a golden coin, I a tin coin. Gerda used to be white-blond and blue-eyed in her childhood my hair and eye colour was brown. The Arabs used to call Gerda 'Maaze abjad' (white kid, as an endearing term). As an old man I received my almost embarrassing compensation from a very nice American Baha'i lady in Moschi'East Africa. When she heard that I had known Abbas Effendi and often shaken his hand, she took mine, knelt down and kissed it.

Enough good news! With a cordial hug dear Nici.¹²⁸

P.S. By the way, Abbas Effendi was a great admirer of my mother to whom he gave very beautiful Persian needlework. In Berlin my mother still used a large shoulder wrap made of fine wool and decorated with small pink roses – not as a scarf, but mostly as a decorative tablecloth.¹²⁹

The above letter shows how good relation the Baha'is had with their German neighbours. They would extend any help if Abdu'l-Baha required. Some of the good memoirs have been kept in the Templers' books for posterity.

The second generation of the Templers/Kirchlers, during the lifetime of the Master, Abdu'l-Bahá, were more occupied with establishing their economical and professional status rather than a religious one as it was mentioned earlier. After the death of Hoffmann, although there were 'elders' who led the community's spiritual affairs and were elected as presidents of the Society, none were interested in searching for the 'Coming of the Lord' anymore.

The third generation of the Templers/Kirchlers who lived during the lifetime

127. It is not known if Abdu'l-Baha ever spoke German.

128. Signature illegible

129. Translated by Martha Otto – July 2010

of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi¹³⁰ who kept on living in the same house of his grandfather Abdu'l-Baha¹³¹, were more into mundane affairs and totally distanced from the original ideals of the Society.

Gottlieb Ruff affirms:

“As far as my own, the third generation is concerned; one could perhaps say that the religious aspects were pushed into the background by economic and national issues”¹³².

Regardless of what the Württembergers' movement may have gone through, there has been fulfilment! They came to fulfil what the Divine Will had spared for them. This is a different perspective, but certainly they achieved goals beyond their expectation not yet acknowledged by thoroughly. Once the station of the Bab as the returned Son, and Baha'u'llah as the Father become clear to them as the sincere Christians, then they will find the glory of their movement. They are not castaway people in the far south corner of Australia. Their coming to the Holy Land was in the Divine Plan a sublime goal and it was accomplished to its fullness. Once the fulfilment achieved, they had to become like the seed underground, although apparently nothing is left of them in Israel except a name, yet the glory of the fruits of their movement is quite manifest.

Templers' Achievements from the point of view of a Baha'i.

The Templer achievements can be analyzed as follows:

1. While the community was originally together, they succeeded in creating their most valuable settlement in Haifa¹³³. Land identified and acquired by them, was later on the land chosen by Baha'u'llah for the establishment of the Temple of the Lord – Shrine of the Bab. This was the goal to be achieved although it may not be seen today in the thinkers' circles as a Templers' achievement, yet it has a profound significance once the station of the Bab is known and His glorious mausoleum and its surrounding gardens now manifest on Mount Carmel. The mere fact that such a place came into existence, that the Supreme Manifestation of God walked on it, climbed the mountain, and pointed out the spot where the remains of the 'the King of the Messengers'¹³⁴, the Bab' should be buried, is something no other messianic group can ever boast to have achieved. Of course, if one could identify the Bab with the return of

130. Shoghi Effendi was appointed by Abdu'l-Baha as the Guardian of the Faith after His passing in 1921. Shoghi Effendi administered the affairs of the Faith worldwide for 36 years until he passed away in London on November 1957.

131. Number 7 Haparsim Street, Haifa

132. Recollection of an old Templer, The Ruffs in Haifa – by: Gottlieb Samuel Ruff – Templer Record Supplement No.4, June 2009, TSA, Heritage Group, p. 25 – 27.

133. and in a lesser degree in other six colonies

134. Baha'u'llah mentions the Bab as 'the King of the Messengers' in the Tablet of Ahmad.

Christ, who He really was, then the importance of this work for which the whole movement took place will become manifest and their total success could be declared as Christians. This could be considered as a spiritual achievement of the Templers, although they still are not aware of it.

2. The curiosity of Hardegg to know Baha'u'llah, although he never even came to know Him personally and could not recognize His lofty claim, yet Baha'u'llah revealed one of one of the 'most sublime Tablets' answering his questions as a leader of Christian denomination. Although questions of Hardegg are not at hand, but from the tone of the Tablet of Baha'u'llah in answering his questions, it becomes clear what he had asked. This Tablet is known as the Tablet of Hirtik¹³⁵, which has been revealed in Arabic. This is an achievement for the Templer Leader. Although he could not grasp the contents of what Baha'u'llah revealed for him, because of lack of efficiency in polished Arabic language, which could be called kind of failure, yet, the contents would satisfy any theologian with Christian background. As Shoghi Effendi mentions, the Tablet of Hirtik together with the Tablet to the Pope Pius IX and the Tablet to the Christians¹³⁶, known as the Most Holy Tablet, are the three Tablets of Baha'u'llah claiming His Station as Christ in the Glory of the Father.

Suggested Hardegg's questions to Baha'u'llah could have been the following:

- Why the ungodliness of the people of the earth
- What is the Significance of the Mt. Carmel
- What was the station of Saint Peter?
- Who Baha'u'llah claimed to be.
- Darkness which has envelop the world of humanity.
- The return of Christ

The reader can jump to page 80 to read the translation of the Tablet addressed to Hardegg by Baha'u'llah.

3. The other achievement of the Templers is in fact their hard work in an inhospitable and totally neglected land for which they set themselves such a high standard of improvement especially in agriculture, one result of their efforts become known worldwide as Jaffa oranges. They set the example for the 'chosen people – the Jews' to see, learn and follow how a land should be developed that would become most fruitful.¹³⁷ The

135. As the word Hardegg was pronounced in German Language sounding Hirtik, this remained as the identifying name in the Works of Baha'u'llah.

136. Addressed to a Christian clergy -Faris Effendi

137. For this see the paper written by Yaron Perry under the title of 'The Templer Settlement in the Land of Israel 1868 – 1948, and Dr. Danny Goldman's paper with the title of "Planning and Building the Templer Colonies", both published in the "Chronicle of Utopia". In both articles, the authors describe how the German

Templers' experience in all areas became very valuable to the Jews to follow, and in fact it did go beyond the borders of Palestine to the neighboring countries as well.

Once the Jews became proficient with the concept of developing this Land and were well established, working hard with love and enthusiasm, they began to compete with the German Templers in all areas.

What Baha'u'llah said about the Templers:

In a Tablet to Haji Mirza Haydar-Ali Isfahani¹³⁸, Baha'u'llah discloses the following regarding the Templer Leader, Hardegg¹³⁹:

"In all the Books there is mention of Revelation in this Promised Land, as well as in its surroundings; and a group from other countries have come to this Holy and Blessed Land and have established themselves and say that the 'coming of the Lord is nigh and we have come to understand and receive Him', notwithstanding, they are in the greatest negligence. Their chief, few years ago wanted to come to the Holy presence, but in His Holy Threshold this wish was not accepted, nevertheless a Mighty and Holy Tablet was especially revealed for him, and in that Tablet, is being documented whatever would save any fair-minded man and would lead any messenger to his destiny, although the truth of the word: 'it would not touch anyone except the pure ones' becomes clear. Anyway, they did not understand a drop from the Ocean of meaning and are still waiting, as the group before them are still waiting"¹⁴⁰.

This Tablet to Haji Mirza Haydar-Ali was revealed, as Baha'u'llah Himself testifies, 'a few years ago'. It is suggested that this Tablet has been revealed after 1873, when first Templers's leader came to know the Persian Baha'is in Haifa and became curious to know Baha'u'llah and His claim. Seemingly, Hardegg did not follow-up with the Baha'is on that specific claim, though he met with Abdu'l-Baha at least twice or even more as recorded by Abdu'l-Baha, when He met with the Baha'is in Stuttgart. Most probably the schism of the Templers into two groups, kept Hardegg worried and bewildered of the future of his Kirchler group. During all that time Abdu'l-Baha was in prison and confined in Akka, restricted His movement to interact more with the Templers. Abdu'l-Baha was only released from prison in 1908, some thirty years after the passing of Hardegg in July 1879.

Ra'fati in an article about Baha'u'llah's stay in Haifa indicates:

The existence of the German Colony, which in principle was established on the soil of Haifa because of the yearning and desire of knowing the Promised

Templers helped them to build their Jewish settlements (Kibbutzim), with construction material supplied to the Jews by the Germans.

138. One of the stalwarts of the Baha'i Faith during the time of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha.

139. Provisional translation by the writer.

140. Ganj-e Shaygan, p. 172 – A.H. Ishraq-Khavari, 124 B.

Christ and hailing the coming of the Heavenly Father, became worthy of His physical presence, in fulfilment of the promise given in the Tablet of Hardegg, which was addressed to their leader. The members of the German Templers, despite their yearning to know the Promised Christ, interpreted and deciphered the promises of the Holy Bible about His Holiness, however, as the coming of Baha'u'llah to Haifa was not according to their expectations, they became veiled and failed to recognize Him. In a Tablet Baha'u'llah addressed Ali-Muhammad Varqa, clearly mentions this¹⁴¹:

“This Servant testifies to what God testifies and confesses to what the Pen of the Most High confesses...the Prussian (German) Society in spite of their confession to their coming to this Land has been receiving Him in His coming ‘as has been mentioned in our books in which the coming of the Lord is nigh, or it has just passed’, nevertheless are not aware. The world is being filled with the stupor of negligence. Once these words were heard from the Mouth of the Will of the Owner of the people (God)...Today the sun testifies, the sea cries loud, the earth broadcasts. The stupor of want has enveloped the people in such a way that they are neglectful of themselves let alone of this Station and the knowledge of a station which is the highest desire of the chosen and sincere ones...”¹⁴²

The provisional translation of the Tablet to Hardegg, penned by Habib Tahirzadeh, et.al, is recorded in Annex I. There are two more translations available. The missionary Zeller did an inadequate translation of this Tablet for Hardegg. His translation and the translations of Steven Lambden together with the one of Habib Taherzadeh, are recorded comparatively at the end of this study.

In His mighty Tablet to Baha'u'llah addresses Hardegg five times as ‘friend’ and He calls him: **‘O thou accomplished man of understanding’** and again **‘O thou who art wise and discerning’**. In answering Hardegg, Baha'u'llah tells him **‘It behooveth your honor to attentively consider the Word of God’**. Right from the start of the Tablet Baha'u'llah indicates where these Words are coming from: these are the **‘Words of God’**, which suffice for the whole of mankind. And then He gives the example of Jesus, Who as soon as heard the **‘Word of God’**, became enraptured and embraced the **‘truth’**. This is what beseems the **‘great men’**. And He says that this is – the Word of God - which has been promised to the people of all nations. He then continues addressing Hardegg that: **‘He verily is the One Who shall build the Temple of the Lord’**. Therefore, it is not Hoffmann or Hardegg or the Templers’ that would build the Temple. It is only Him Who shall build the Temple of the Lord, this being the building of the character of men, which is the prime mission of Baha'u'llah through His teachings for all mankind, because according to Baha'u'llah, only the Word of God can re-build

141. Ra'fati, Baha'u'llah in Haifa, Pajuheshnameh vol. 3, p. 122, Autumn 1997

142. Provisional translation by the writer.

the character of men¹⁴³. The physical Temple, as the Shrine of the Bab, is also being built on Mt. Carmel.

Baha'u'llah addresses Hardegg and clearly says that ***'the people will see Him but will not recognize Him'***. This is exactly what happened with the Templers. Baha'u'llah stayed with them and associated with them for a period of three months in 1891, when He was visiting Haifa for the last time. They saw Him, and yet, they did not recognize Him as He clearly indicated. If there is no discerning eyes, by what means one can recognize the Christ in the Glory of the Father? In this Tablet, Baha'u'llah mentions of the ***'The Mystery of Reversal'***¹⁴⁴, which caused the most learned people at the time of Jesus to reject Him, whereas an illiterate fisherman without any kind of knowledge could recognize Him. And if Hardegg would have pondered this in his heart, he would have understood what happened in the past, when all but a few came to know Him. Baha'u'llah tells Hardegg that the ***'Truth is too obvious to be obscured, if he would only open his inner eyes. But if he misses the opportunity, it will not come back to him again'***, and this is exactly what happened to Hardegg. He missed the opportunity of knowing and recognizing the 'Father' for Whom he had gone through all the troubles from the moment he joined the Templers movement.

When Hardegg, in his letter to Baha'u'llah, asked about the 'darkness that has enveloped the whole world', Baha'u'llah confirms this 'darkness' by saying: ***"We testify that it pervadeth all mankind"***. Then He suggests to Hardegg how to come out of this darkness, He answers: ***"Indeed, this is true... Verily darkness is but idle fancies and vain imaginings whereby people are deterred from drawing nigh unto the Kingdom when it was manifested at the bidding of God"***. Baha'u'llah then, gives the example of the Mirrors¹⁴⁵, and the light that shines on them: ***"However, the radiance of the light which is shed upon the mirrors would vary according to the diversity of forms and colors."***

Answering his next question on the return of Christ, He answers by saying that there is no difference between the 'Spirit', i.e., Jesus, and Baha'u'llah. Again, He confirms thus: ***"It is the manifestation of the light of Divine Unity amongst men and the wondrous sign of the Ancient of Days amidst the peoples of the world"***.

At the end Baha'u'llah gives an inestimable and precious promise to Hardegg: ***"Wert thou to ponder a while upon that which We have imparted unto thee and to fulfill whatsoever hath been mentioned with perfect constancy, surely there shall appear from thy person that which hath appeared in the past"***. In other words, had Hardegg recognized Him, He would have made him into another Peter. But alas, this never happened. Hardegg did not even come

143. More on the Tablet of Hardegg see Annex I

144. The Mystery of Reversal or Sirr-I Tankis. from those who is more expected, less performs, while from those less expected perform fully, like the high Jewish priests could not recognize Christ, but Peter, a poor fisherman could.

145. The Manifestations of God – the Prophets

close to recognizing Baha'u'llah, the Glory of God, as the 'Father' whom he was expecting.

In this Mighty Tablet, Baha'u'llah explains His station in many ways. A discerning eye would at least capture one of the many signs mentioned in this Tablet.

How Hardegg could have missed the claim of Baha'u'llah and have missed recognizing His station through the veils or clouds obscuring his vision, should be analyzed in different points of view:

a. Baha'u'llah was exiled to the prison of Akka stigmatized as 'the God of Persians', obviously not a favorable title for the Christians and consequently for the Muslims who both have an arguable concept of 'Allah', 'God', 'Jesus as the Son of God' Promised One, etc. Therefore, the concept of 'The God of Persians' would be in conflict with their limited understanding and totally confusing for them. He was aloof of that.

b. The 'assemblage of Persians of Akka/Haifa' in spite of being known as a group of 'peace loving' people during the first arrival of Baha'u'llah and His entourage, went through a short period of turmoil, where few mischief makers instigated and committed improper acts, involving some of the fellow Baha'is, resulting an effect on the community in general. For a short while the news obliterated the peace of the Baha'is in the larger community. This subject became the theme of the day and Baha'u'llah went through a period of anxiety. The effect of the news reached many corners of Palestine, inclusive to Haifa, hence the German Templers, who heard of this highly surprising matter¹⁴⁶.

c. The encounter of the German Templers and the Baha'is of Haifa/Akka occurred sometime shortly after this episode. Most likely, the correspondence between Hardegg and Baha'u'llah took place after the incident. Although Baha'u'llah's claim and His peace message could not have deterred Hardegg of coming forward and inquire more about Him and His claimed message.

d. Although Hardegg received the answer to his quest in Arabic, and he was somehow familiar with this language, yet, the missionary Zeller, who has been in the land many years before him, did the translation of the Tablet into English for him, the language which Hardegg was also familiar with. Obviously both men were not versatile in high literary

146. The four followers of Azal, jealous half-brother who were sent along with Baha'u'llah to Akka by the Ottoman Government, while in Akka committed so many atrocities that some of the believers decided to kill these four and the involvement of government on the subject made an unfavorable situation which affected the reputation of the Baha'u'llah for a short period of time. Read Baha'u'llah the King of Glory.

Arabic, as, there are some areas of translation which Zeller has missed the true meaning of some words, such as the word 'arf, smell', he has taken it as 'orf, knowledge', the other word is 'anam, people' he has taken it for 'niam, sleeping ones', the word of 'hadir-e-varqa, singing of the dove' is being taken for 'the sound of the leaves of the trees', etc¹⁴⁷.

e. Hardegg himself in that period was going through a difficult situation with regard to the leadership of the Movement with Hoffmann. Possibly the consequence of investigating seriously the New Message could have been even more detrimental and difficult for the schism in the German group. Hoffmann was the spiritual leader, and indeed it was up to him to investigate the New Message and not Hardegg, but the gap between the two was too wide for any suggestion, if ever!

147. See the translation of Zeller of the Tablet of Hirtik as an annex

CHAPTER IV

The Third Generation

“We have been through Hell. Mama was shot in the forehead and is in the Scottish hospital in Nazareth. Uncle Karl Aimann and Aunt Regina were shot dead before the eyes of their children...We were only allowed to go into the house again to get the most essential of our clothes. All other Germans from the colonies are to be transported out of the country with us”¹⁴⁸.

The third generation Templers was quite distant from all the religious convictions of the first generation or in fact from any high ideals. Almost a third of them were recruited into the new German National Socialist party, later known as the Nazi Party. Some participated knowingly in the political issues of the time and many possibly unknowingly were involved in the persecution of the Jews in Germany. The Jews who were returning to their own future country, were already bitter and could not tolerate Germans in their midst. Although, the peace-loving religious group was concerned about their work, yet some negative elements among them were also filled with Nazi ideology. As a result there was a threat that the Templers were to be exterminated if they did not leave the country. The British governing body had defeated the Ottomans and come to power after WWI as an entity responsible for the lives of the inhabitants of Palestine in general. They decided to send out all the Germans, giving them the choice of Germany or Australia. A small percentage accepted to be sent back to the land of their ancestors in exchange for imprisoned Jews, whereas the majority were sent off to Australia, to be integrated to the Australian community. There they had no opportunity of building new settlements as they had done in the Holy Land. The Jews were also determined that this group should never come back again to settle on their land. Some years later, this third generation was compensated for the value of their settlements, which they left behind. Surprisingly, eighty years after living in the country of their choice with so much hardship and achieving greatly as a result of their hard work, now, there was a big vacuum. They questioned, why? What have they done to be expelled from the land they adored so much? All the sacrifices, hardships that they have gone through came to naught. Although they spoke German and were of German descent, yet their actual country was Palestine, they were born and raised there; they had all the right to live there. Yet, it was not to be as they wished, and they were expelled.

If the analyzing scholars on the matter, consider eighty years of service of the German Templers' a 'failure', maybe their terminology should be reconsidered.

The following analogy could shed some light on this subject. When a gardener

148. Gertrude W-Deininger, Here we have no lasting city., p. 69, September 1947

plants a seed, it is not up to the seed to decide what it is going to do in its new environment; it has one thing to do, to grow by its own nature. As it starts to grow roots, it simultaneously produces stems and leaves. The seed itself disappears for good. Once the tree has grown out of the seed, nothing of the original seed is left behind anymore, except its conversion into strong roots and a mighty trunk, producing fruit proceeding from the original seed. The gardener is the only one who knows the reason for planting the seed. He knew that this seed would be sacrificed, but he also knew that in some years to come he will have a harvest of fruit for the posterity.

If this analogy could be referred to the group of the Templers, then, there is no concept of 'failure' of their existence in Palestine for eighty years. Although originally the group left Württemberg with a Messianic ideology, this ideology went through a metamorphosis over the years, and in the end, it did not much resemble the original goal. Even during the time of Hoffmann and Hardegg, both before and after the rift between the two, the goal was taking different shapes. Like a tree that takes different shapes from the time of plantation to the time of giving fruit and even after that period it keeps on changing shape. Therefore, it could be argued that the outcome of the Württembergers' project after eighty years did not resemble the original gathering of the people in Jerusalem or the Holy Land. They had come to expect the coming of their Messiah and the building of the Temple. For sure it did not happen the way they were expecting it to happen, but it was a process that continued to its total fulfillment, as it was mentioned above.

Dr. Richard O. Hoffmann, then President of the Temple Society and grandson of the founder of the Society wrote in March 1985:

"Naturally, the loss of our Palestinian settlements caused us deep sorrow. We loved them, because we had a happy life and felt secure there. Furthermore, they were the result of 80 years of industrious and peaceful development work. We did not, however, regard the settlements with the specific faith of the founding generation, who believed in a literal interpretation of biblical prophecies with regard to a concrete historical situation. For this reason, the end of our Templer Communities in the Holy Land, though it meant the sad loss of our home, was not a religious catastrophe for the Temple Society and its members. In Australia they were reunited in the "Temple Society Australia", and in Germany in the "Tempelgesellschaft in Deutschland e.V."¹⁴⁹.

The above quotation sounds despondent, yet from another perspective it can be seen as an achievement and fulfillment to total satisfaction. The fruits it yields will remain with humanity for all posterity yet to be discovered. As long as the

149. Introduction to the book of 'The Holy Land Called', by Paul Sauer, published by the Temple Society Australia.

Baha'i Faith will remain, the mention of the German Templar will accompany.
Their history is eternal.

CHAPTER V

Haifa – Some early descriptions by Templers

Martha Strasser Beck a second generation Templers writes in her memoirs about Haifa:

“At the time when the first Templer immigrants decided to establish a colony or settlement, Haifa was still a small, romantic, Arabic fishing village, bordered one side by the sea. Immediately behind the village rose the steep incline of Mount Carmel that in places reached a height of 552 meters. As a glance at the map will show, Haifa is a peninsula jutting out to sea. From many places at the top of the mountain one has a view of water on both sides, and looking across the beautiful bay towards Arce, an old Crusader fortress, one can even see as far as the snow-capped peak of Mt. Hermon in Lebanon, and just beyond Acre the white cliffs of “Ras Al Naqura” are visible.

“The wide plateau of Mt. Carmel stretches in an easterly direction towards the Plain of Jesreel and towards the west it ends in a cape, falling sharply into the sea. Arabs call this cape “Ras-el-Krum”, but we called it “das Karmeleck”. Atop the hill is a lighthouse, which used to guide ships heading for Haifa, around the reefs that surround the “Karmeleck”. The main feature on the hill is “Stella Maris” the Carmelite Monastery”¹⁵⁰.

Gertrud Wassermann-Deiningner another early settler describes in her book the early life of the Templers in Haifa:

“Each time when the foundation stone for a new house was laid in the colony, all the Templers congregated and prayed for God’s blessing and protection for the new building...So gradually the German colony developed, spreading slowly from the sea to the foot of Mt. Carmel. Many were ill, until they got used to the climate, and many died. Many things were lacking, especially a competent doctor. Many families were poor, often lacking the bare necessities. When I was small my parents could only afford enough to enable my mother to cook a hot midday meal every second day, and that consisted of a pot of broad beans, which seemed delicious to us. In the evening there was a piece of turnip or some carrots. The seed fruit of the carob tree was a treat for us, and so were mulberries...”¹⁵¹

Alfred Goodrich-Fresh said the following about Haifa in his book:

“The German colony – a picturesque European village – has wide streets planted with trees, well-kept roads and gardens gay with flowers. The houses

150. Memories of a Life in Palestine, p.23

151. Here We Have No Lasting City, pp. 15/16

seem to have been transplanted here from some venerable old place in Europe, with a quotation of the Bible in black letters above each front door. In terms of cleanliness, trade, industry and agriculture, Haifa, the settlement is in fact a German town”.

“The Bay of Acre extends to the north with all its memories harking back to the times of crusades, while directly below lies Haifa which with all its gardens may well present the loveliest and most thriving picture imaginable in Palestine”¹⁵².

Anna Bulach who was born in the Haifa settlement in 1877 wrote in her memoirs:

“The community house was one of the first houses built in the German settlement in Haifa. The numerals 1869 were written above the front door, and the following text had been chiseled into the keystone: “If I forget thee, oh Jerusalem let my right hand forget its skill” [Psalm 137:5]. This probably indicated the direction of the path along which the settlers of the Temple Society intended to proceed”¹⁵³.



Original Shrine built by Abdu'l-Baha in 1900 - 1909. Observe the buttresses and stonework compared to the Folk house of the Templers.

Haifa - some early Baha'i observations:

The Master's Houses in Haifa¹⁵⁴ in the vicinity of the German Colony:

152. In a Syrian Saddle” (Matthew's Colonial Library, London 1905, quoted by Theodora Wieland in her article published in the book of “Memories of Palestine”, p.8

153. Memories of Palestine

154. Abdu'l-Baha had three houses rented in Haifa for His day-to-day business. In one He kept the sarcophagus, which had just arrived from Burma for later to be placed in the vault of the Shrine housing the

“The Master’s house in Haifa, where Khan (Ali Quli Khan ¹⁵⁵, later His secretary) first saw Him, was a ‘block’ or so from the beach and from the embarcadero built for the arrival of Kaiser Wilhelm II the year before, in 1898. The house was not isolated, there were other houses around it and it gave on a street roughly parallel with the sea and extending to the German Colony street – the place where the German Adventists once lived, looking for the Lord to appear on Mount Carmel, the Mountain of God.

In those days Abdu’l-Baha’s confinement in ‘Akká, not yet re-imposed as it would be later because of the never-ending conspiracies of the Covenant-breakers, was less strict. Every week the Master could go to Haifa and spend a few days there in order to supervise the excavating for the foundation of the Bab’s Tomb on the slopes of the mountain. The family remained in ‘Akká and the Master would spend the night in His rented house.



Folk House in Bethlehem in Palestine. Observe the buttress and overall similarities of the building with the original Shrine of the Bab (Courtesy of the Temple Society Australia)

As the work required more and more of His time, He came more often to Haifa. He therefore rented a second small house on the avenue known as the German Colony, lined by stone houses with sacred Scriptural verses over their doors, about the coming of the Lord. This avenue led directly from the sea front to the foot of the mountain. And here Khanum, His sister, the Most exalted Leaf¹⁵⁶, or one of His daughters and a son-in-law, could stay and look after Him, and He would pass the night.

At the time of Khan’s arrival, the first rented house was used by Abdu’l-Bahá as an office and a place where He could receive the pilgrims and other visitors. A flight of brick steps led up from the street to an open courtyard surrounded on

remains of the Bab also recently brought to Haifa/Akka. The constant guests that would arrive from Europe or America, would stay a night or two in those houses as well. He would finally build His own house in the vicinity of the German Colony, number 7 Haparshim Street.

155. Ali-Quli Khan, later became Charge D’Affairs of Iran in Washington.

156. Bahiyih Khanum, His only sister was four years His junior.

three sides by rooms; and a door giving directly on the streets was the one to the Master's reception room. Here there was an iron bedstead where He sometimes rested in the daytime. At first there had been two beds here and Jinab-i-Furughi¹⁵⁷ slept in one of them. Besides several chairs, the room's other furniture consisted of a large table at one side, on which Abdu'l-Bahá kept writing materials, papers, some flowers, rose-water and a plate heaped with rock candy¹⁵⁸.

The room next to this one, measuring about fourteen by sixteen feet, was a kind of storeroom for household and other articles – brooms, odds and ends. Against the wall, beside a barred window giving onto the courtyard, stood a table of plain wooden boards with a raw, wooden backless bench, on which Khan was apt to lie down and sleep at night, and wooden pegs for his few spare clothes dotted the rough wall. In one corner, away from the window, rested a large sarcophagus especially built to order by the Baha'is of Rangoon, Burma, and sent by them to the Master, to hold the sacred remains of the Báb, which as directed by the Master had recently been brought out from their hiding places in Persia. This sarcophagus was to be transported to the Tomb of the Bab as soon as the Tomb was completed and ready to receive the holy dust. This, the room's most prominent feature, was in a sort of wooden packing case, and Khan himself was greatly surprised when told – in after years by a trusted attendant of the Master's – that as he sat at his table near the window and did his translations month after month, the sacred remains of the Báb and His companion¹⁵⁹, so recently brought out of Persia, may well have been here in this very room. His informant was apparently Muhammad-Ali (the caretaker), and looking back over the room in memory, Khan gathered that, for a time at least, the sacred remains could have been hidden in the beautiful, carved – he thought empty – sarcophagus. The date of Khan's tenure was sometime 1899, perhaps late spring.

At the back of the house was a room where travelers could stay temporarily, before leaving for 'Akká, and next to this, also with barred windows on the back street, was the room of Siyyid Taqí Manshadi, to whom all the mail was assigned by Abdu'l-Bahá. His room was piled high with letters, papers and packages relating to this perennial task of reaching out to the world and linking the Baha'is to their heart and center. He allowed no one except Khan to enter this room. Manshadi would carry the mail to the post office or ship, and in his famous, child-like handwriting – well-known everywhere – he would enclose a brief, bare account of Baha'i news with the Tablets – laconic, but all the news. A small *cha'i khanih* was adjacent to this room¹⁶⁰.

157. Mirza Mahmoud Foroughi, one of the early stalwart believers in the Faith.

158. Why the Master liked to give the Baha'is rock candy we do not know. Perhaps it was because it would last and they could save it, as Khan did throughout life. Or perhaps, as we sometimes think, it was a symbol, because in the East candy is put in the mouth of a sheep before it is ritually sacrificed)

159. Muhammad-Ali, titled Anis (dear one), the companion of the Bab, who was martyred together with the Bab on 9 July 1850, his body was merged inseparably with that of the Bab.

160. Marzieh Gail, *Summon Up Remembrance*, p 110/111, *Tea-house where tea was prepared*

Construction of the Shrine on Mount Carmel

Habíb Moayyed¹⁶¹, who became a medic in Beirut sponsored by Abdu'l-Bahá and attended the sick for many years in Haifa, 'Akká and Abu-Sinan, compiled a book with the title "Memoirs of Habíb". Being in Haifa at that time (from 1907 to 1915 he stayed in the presence of the Master Abdu'l-Baha on and off, making many observations about Abdu'l-Bahá and his contacts with the Germans and their Colony. There are some stories that are apt to be related here, quoting Abdu'l-Baha Who said:

"We built the Shrine of the Báb on different terraces¹⁶² so that the visitors coming from the sea can reach it. Paths will be built, and flower gardens will be made; verdant trees will be planted, and the German Colony will become as the flower garden of the Shrine of the Bab. This Shrine was built despite the opposition of Sultan 'Abdu'l-Hamíd and his people who acted on his orders. Where is Nasirid-Din Shah, who should resurrect from his grave and see? He wanted to exterminate the Cause with his sword. He told Hájí Karím Khan¹⁶³, the head of the Shaykhí at the time, who wrote a refutation book against the Bábí Faith every year, that your book is no good my sword will uproot the Bábís', not the book... Now We have built the Shrine and the Sacred Body has found its abode, let us see what will happen from now on..."¹⁶⁴

Acquiring the required land

Again, Abdu'l-Bahá tells the story of how difficult was to get a piece of land He wanted for the Shrine's surrounding:

"The Commander of Haifa a sworn enemy of the Faith, was opposed to the construction of the Shrine of the Báb and told the registrar that the building in question on Mount Carmel, South of Haifa, was 'an unknown building' and its existence 'was against the order', and, because it was on the outskirts of the town, the Sultan himself should approve its construction. The registrar wrote a note indicating, that because of political restrictions, a construction permit could not be issued.

The Governor of 'Akká, and Salih Effendi the engineer, who were of our acquaintance, asked one of the members of the top officials of Haifa to investigate and report. He reported back that 'there should be no objection to the construction. There are only six rooms [on this project], and on Mount Carmel, this is not going to be the only building, there is a huge church (Carmelite) and the Germans also have their buildings, therefore there is no political restraint'. The Governor received the report and sent it to the Commander of Haifa. The

161. One of the youths arrived from Iran to attend Abdu'l-Baha in His many works.

162. At the time there were only some terraces from the bottom of the Mount Carmel to the Shrine of the Bab, today, there are nine terraces below the Shrine and nine above, and each one with its own beauty.

163. Leader of the Shayki sect of Islam, an inveterate enemy of the Faith at the time in Iran.

164. Memoirs of Habib, p. 313-314, translated from Persian.

Commander rejected the report and said this matter should be decided directly by Sublime Porte in Istanbul. They wrote that Abdu'l-Bahá wants to build a Shrine for the Báb, and because of the questions they asked, the matter became an issue. It is obvious what kind of enemy 'Abdu'l-Hamíd was, and that he was expecting any excuse to act upon [us].

I decided to go and visit the Commander Myself in his office to silence him in this regard. I tried hard. He said, 'I have no enmity with you, but I am afraid I will be held responsible later on'. I asked him 'what is that restrains you?' He answered that 'only I know'. I asked him 'what negative consequences would this have?' He said, 'only I know'. We left the office together thinking that if I would accompany him to his home, he might reconsider his decision and the result would be positive. We reached home and I saw that nothing had improved. We entered the building. He climbed the first, the second and the third step, and suddenly he fell and died. I called him, 'Commander, Commander, Commander!' to no avail, he was dead.

After his death, we started the construction of the building. We did not have an access road to the building. The existing path was in a very bad condition. We wanted to open a path, but the owner of the land would not give us permission to do so. He was instigated by the enemies of the Faith (the Covenant breakers)¹⁶⁵ and was adamant. Finally, after two months he accepted, but later the person who was working for the Germans approached him and changed his mind, telling him that these people have to pay a lot of money for this piece of land, therefore, break your promise. He asked for more money. This postponed the project for another three months. It was very difficult, but finally he accepted. Again, the enemies made him change his mind; he started with some excuses and broke his agreement again. He asked for all the trees on the land, I accepted to give them all to him. He asked for a borderline to be drawn by a wire so that we don't get onto his land. I told him if he agreed, I would make a dividing wall between the properties. Again, he broke his agreement and asked for a trusted person to be the arbiter. He himself suggested Sádiq Pasha¹⁶⁶. We agreed to meet Sádiq Pasha at his home. I went there and he never showed up. It was a rainy day. Sádiq Pasha himself went for him in the rain and when he came back, he was soaked and muddy. He was quite angry because he was told that he was not at home. This made me extremely sad; I did not eat or drank even tea, did not even meet anyone, and in the darkness of the night I was saying the prayer of the Bab silently over and over again all night until early in the morning I fell asleep. Around noon when I woke up, one of the believers approached me saying 'the interpreter of the Consul of the German Society¹⁶⁷, and his nephew have been here since early morning waiting for you'. The nephew of the Leader said: 'There is a piece of land owned by a German lady who is ready to sell it. You can take

165. The Covenant Breaker were those members of Abdu'l-Baha's family that opposed Him and became His sworn enemies during His lifetime and the time of the Guardian Shoghi Effendi.

166. Officer of the governor.

167. Christoph Hoffmann II, the grandson of the Founder of the German Templers.

as much as you need of this land’.

As sad as I was the previous night, I became very happy. Together we went to the registrar’s office. I saw that all the sale documents were signed and sealed by the leader without any conditions. I told the nephew of the leader that I may also buy some land from him, so that we also do business with you. He said, ‘we are here to serve you not to do business. We have come to take the burden from you, not for interest or commission. As we heard you have had some problems, we have come to serve you’.

Anyway, we completed the purchase of the land, and then I had a wall built. A path was opened and despite the enmity of ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd, the Shrine was built. Then We received the marble sarcophagus ordered from Bombay which had a gilded calligraphy of the Greatest Name. It arrived at the Customs Office. I did not want them to open it, and it was not opened... Where is Nasirid-Din Shah to come here and see the blessed Body, which had no rest for fifty years, because of him - and now is resting here?¹⁶⁸



Cluster of cypress trees on the purchased land, and the citrus trees planted at the back by Abdu’l-Baha.

Kings’ Highway

Again, on another occasion He said:

“We should recognize this bounty and speak out in His praise. In the days of the Blessed Beauty and His Highness the Bab, no one came to understand who they really were, as we now know. In the future kings on foot, will be walking, while holding pots of flowers and bunches of florae over their heads and will come to visit the Shrines...”¹⁶⁹ This of course is reference to the road leading to the Shrine from the sea, which is being referred to as the ‘Kings Highway’.

Promise to crucify Abdu’l-Baha...

On the occasion when Jamal Pasha¹⁷⁰, asked Him about the Germans¹⁷¹:

168. Memoirs of Habib, pp. 314 – 317, translated from Persian.

169. *Ibid*, p. 317

170. The general of the Ottoman Army who promised to either slay or crucify Abdu’l-Bahá.

171. Due to lack of exact dating of different anecdotes in the book, it is difficult to identify the related people with stories. After G.D. Hardegg had left the Society in 1874, Christoph Hoffmann, the Founder of the Movement, took the leadership of Haifa Colony too, and in 1884, five years before he passed away, his

*“He asked Abdu’l-Bahá who built the German Colony? Abdu’l-Bahá answered: ‘The grandfather of the present leader who is living in Haifa, built the German Colony. He created a religious cult, which was based on the imminent return of Christ. He built this Colony so that when Christ appeared, he would go to visit Him.’ Jamal-Pasha upon hearing this story became very angry saying: ‘A new cult? If he had been here, I would have sorted him out’. Then Jamal Pasha asked Abdu’l-Bahá what had weakened the Ottoman Empire. He answered: The existence of many cults. The Pasha asked: ‘What is the remedy?’ Abdu’l-Bahá answered: ‘The remedy is that the heads of the different cults and sects of Islam in the Ottoman Empire should come together and consult about one religion and become united in all aspects’.”*¹⁷²

...And sincere the Germans concern

The same author has written of the concern the leader of the German Templers had for the life of Abdu’l-Bahá:

*“When Jamal Pasha went to Jerusalem, due to the constant instigations of the Covenant breakers his animosity increased again and he promised if he conquered Egypt soon, he would crucify Abdu’l-Bahá on his return. Then, in a sneering manner he added: “Whatever Abbas Effendi decides either choose to be hanged or to be crucified; I will do as He wants.” The President of the German Society came to the presence of Abdu’l-Bahá and said: “I am very sad and very concerned because Jamal Pasha has sworn that he is going to crucify you and has asked me to take care of you until his return”. Abdu’l-Bahá answered: “You should not be disturbed or sad; it is alright, because he has put the condition of ‘if’ to this matter. The condition is ‘if’ he is back triumphant from Egypt, ‘if’ he is going to drown the British in the Suez Canal; then there is no problem, we are also ready to give our blood, too”*¹⁷³.

Two days later the same President of the German Society rushed to His presence and repeated that he was worried about Him. Abdu’l-Bahá asks him: “What is the news?” The German Leader said that yesterday Jamal Pasha was fighting the British around the Suez Canal, but today there was a telegram from him from Bi’r al-Sab¹⁷⁴; this matter had greatly disturbed him because there is a distance between the battlefield and Bi’r al-Sab! Abdu’l-Bahá answered: “This is

brother-in-law Christoph Paulus became the leader until 1890 when he retired. After him Christoph Hoffmann II became head of the Community until his death in 1911, when Christian Rohrer took the leadership and when he died in 1935 his deputy Philipp Wurst, and upon his death six years later in 1941 Nikolai Schmidt became President of the German Templers. Source: History of the Temple Society, <http://home.vicnet.net.au/>.

172. Memoirs of Habib, p. 318, translated from Persian.

173. The Book ‘The Servant, The General & Armageddon’ written by R & D Maude, a most informative book in its peculiar style, mentions that the taking Haifa by the British forces came so suddenly that the orders of Jamal Pasha could not be executed. For more information read the chapter ‘The Battle for Haifa’ of the same book.

174. Beersheba, Be’er Sheva in Hebrew, biblical town southern Israel, now a city in Negev, Israel

very simple, and you should not be worried at all; I will explain it to you. When the Pasha felt that the fire of the British was burning and they were winning, he became afraid and fled and fled and by the most convenient way got himself to Bi'r alSab." The German Leader thought a bit and then said: "I agree with you, it seems it can only be the way you said"¹⁷⁵

And soon Jamal Pasha died, and his solemn promise died with him!

Tabernacle of Universal Peace

"This same blood-thirsty Jamal Pasha, who in 1917 took one third of the Ottoman troops to the Suez Canal to defeat the British, was himself defeated together with his German allies and could never do what he promised to the enemies of the Faith, which were the blatant Covenant breakers and their associates in the Holy Land. Sometime earlier these same enemies of the Faith had bribed the Pasha with the only big tent of the Baha'ullah¹⁷⁶. According to Abdu'l-Bahá, this same tent had been mentioned many times in the Old Testament as the 'Tabernacle of the Universal Peace', which should be raised on Mount Carmel where the representatives of the nations would get together to consult about bringing peace to humanity. Abdu'l-Bahá was very sad about this great loss"¹⁷⁷.

Many times, Abdu'l-Bahá had described in the gatherings of the friends what will happen around Mount Carmel. On one occasion in 1908, Habib Mo'ayyed recounts:

"This Holy Mountain of God is the ultimate hope of the Prophets, and all those circumambulating the precincts on High have expressed the glad tidings concerning this Revelation and this Spot as well as their ultimate desire to be present on such a Day and see for themselves the greatness of that Day. On this spot the Tabernacle of the Most Great Peace will be raised and the foundation of the New World Order will be laid. All these barren lands will be developed. The Jewish people, who for almost two thousand years have been scattered, will gather, come to the Holy Land and enter the Cause of God. From here the Spiritual Civilization will encircle the world and bring prosperity and comfort to humanity..."¹⁷⁸

In the same account as above, Abdu'l-Bahá says:

"Look at the madness of the governments of Iran and the Ottoman Empire, how they banished Baha'u'llah from Iran to Baghdad, then to Islambol¹⁷⁹, then to

175. Ibid, p. 320

176. Baha'u'llah had three tents for His travels. The only remaining of those three is being kept in the Archives of the BWC for special occasions.

177. Habib's Memoirs, pp. 207 & 238

178. Ibid, p. 61

179. Islambol meaning abode of Islam. Today it is called Istanbul, previously called Constantinople.

Rumili¹⁸⁰ and 'Akká, to exterminate the Faith of Baha'u'llah. But they were unaware of doing the greatest service to the Cause of Baha'u'llah. They handed the Holy Land to His Highness and didn't understand why.

The Jewish People will embrace the Blessed Cause because there is no other way out for them.

The future of Mount Carmel is very bright. I can see now that the whole of Mount Carmel is one area of light, and there are a thousand ships docked at the



Cypress trees during the time when it was owned by Wilhelm Deiss, prior to its selling to the Master Abdu'l-Baha.

Haifa Bay, and I see the Kings of the earth with crowns of flowers in their hands, in prayer and meditation, facing the Most Holy Shrine, sobbing and walking towards the Shrine of the Most High¹⁸¹.

When a crown of thorns was placed on the head of His Holiness Christ, He could see with His inner eyes the humility and humbleness of the Kings and Emperors of the earth before Him, which no one

else could have seen that time. Now besides Mount Carmel being covered in light, I can see Houses of Worship, hospitals, schools, places for the needy and orphanages, and all kinds of wellbeing organizations being built on it.”¹⁸²

Mount Carmel

And again Abdu'l-Baha says about the future of Mount Carmel:

“...I have seen many places; nowhere is the weather as mild as at the Shrine of the Bab. Soon this mountain will be developed; fine buildings will be built on it. The Shrine of the Bab will be built in a most glorious way. Gardens will be made with flowers of different hues. Terraces will be built. From the bottom of the mountain to the Shrine there will be nine terraces and nine more terraces will be built from the Shrine to the top of the mountain. From the sea to the Shrine there will be one road; everything will be beautified with gardens and flowers. The pilgrims, who come by ship, will see the dome of the Shrine. Removing their crowns, the kings of the earth, as well as the queens of the world, while respectfully coming to see the Shrine of the Báb carrying bouquets of flowers,

180. Rumili, the European section of Turkiye, today, Edirne, and before it was called Adrianopolis.

181. Shrine of the Most High is referred to the Shrine of the Bab on Mt. Carmel.

182. Habib's Memoirs, p. 322

*they will kneel and prostrate on the ground and offer their crowns to Him...*¹⁸³

In the book of Memoirs of Habib, there is a story of a building belonging to a German Templer that stood between the German Colony and the path to the Shrine. This building was blocking the access. The story goes like this:

“There was a building between the mountain and the German Colony which Abdu’l-Bahá wanted to buy and demolish it to open the path. The enemies and the Covenant-breakers were stopping the sale. One of these people had told the owner not to sell the building now, as Abdu’l-Bahá should be obliged to pay a lot more for it. The Templer became greedy and did not sell his building. When Abdu’l-Bahá heard about this, he commented “don’t worry, don’t pay any attention, this building will be demolished in the near future”.

When the triumphant British Army entered Haifa, in order to clear a path for its army, the commander ordered the demolition of that same building and the path was opened”^{184, 185}.

183. Ibid, pp 57/58

184. Ibid, pp. 385/8

185. Checking the German Colony outline map, drawn by Schumacher, the engineer of the time, he said the house had belonged to the Pfander family, one of the early settlers in Haifa. Yet, Dr Ruhe in his book, Door of Hope, p 227 has a story about the Pfander family’s house: “In the house with the prophetic inscription ‘Der Herr ist nahe’ ‘The coming of the Lord is at hand, is still standing in perfect shape. Therefore, the building in question should have been another house.

CHAPTER VI

Baha'ullah's visits to Haifa

Baha'ullah's four visits to Haifa of which three were done with previous planning. According to what Ra'fati:

"His Holiness Baha'ullah, as per testimony of many Writings at hand, totally agrees with what is written in the Old and the New Testaments concerning the importance of Mount Carmel, and He was fully aware of the prophecies regarding it in Jewish and Christian literature. His mentioning of Mount Carmel in His Most Holy Book, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, which was revealed at the beginning of His arrival in the Holy Land, testifies to it:

"This is the day on which Kalim¹⁸⁶ reached the Ancient Light...This is the day in which the Garden of God¹⁸⁷ rushed with yearning to see Him..."

"The revelation of these Writings in the Book of Aqdas and other Writings, show that right from the beginning of His arrival in the Holy Land, Baha'ullah was aware of the Mountain of God on which He would build the Temple, the Holy Shrine of the Bab. His trips to Haifa were in fulfillment of the prophecies in the Holy Books of the past"¹⁸⁸.

He mentions the coming of the German Templers and the consequently the establishment of their colony at the foot of Mt. Carmel that became worthy of receiving the Glory of God, i.e., Baha'ullah. Thus, the prophecies indicated in the Tablet of Hirtik¹⁸⁹, which had been revealed earlier, were fulfilled. Ra'fati mentions the following from the Pen of Baha'ullah:

"...The Society of the Prussians¹⁹⁰, although they testify that their coming to this Land was to receive the Revelation, as it had been mentioned in our Books that His coming is nigh or has already passed, yet they are not aware of it. The world is drawn in negligence. One day these words were heard from the mouth of the Will of the Owner of Humanity¹⁹¹...Today the sun testifies, the ocean cries aloud, the earth informs (of this Truth). The stupor of negligence of the people has enveloped them to such a degree that they are not aware of anything except themselves, let alone of this Station and the knowledge of such a Station that has been the highest desire of angels and those near to God"¹⁹².

186. Title of Moses, He Who spoke with God.

187. Allusion to Mount Carmel

188. Rafati. Pajuheshnameh, Persian Journal of Baha'i Studies, vol. II No. 1, 1997.

189. Tablet to Hardegg

190. Referring to the German Templers.

191. Alluding to God, the Almighty.

192. The same reference as 175.

According to Ra'fati, the Revelation of the Tablet of Carmel¹⁹³ as a Charter of ordinances for the interment of the remains of the Bab in the Mountain of God, happened when Baha'u'llah was immersed in a sea of tribulations due to what was happening to His followers in Iran. This by itself testifies that nothing in this world can ever become a barrier to the fulfillment of divine prophecies.

In that Charter, the Tablet of Carmel, He mentions that soon *“the City of God which is descended from Heaven”* and *“the Ark of God will sail on Thee”* will be established upon thee. The meaning of the ‘City of God’ is the establishment of the Temple of God, i.e., the Holy Shrine of the Bab, and the meaning of the ‘Ark of God’¹⁹⁴ is the establishment of the Ark of the Laws of God, which it is the source of the infallible body of the Universal House of Justice. The Ark of God next to the City of God in the heart of the Carmel has already been established in fulfillment of the prophecies by devotional efforts of His followers from all over the world.

There were four visits of Baha'u'llah to Haifa:

1. His very first visit was on the 31st of August 1868, when the Austrian ship Lloyd Triestino docked early in the morning by the shore of Haifa¹⁹⁵, to send those destined to the fortress of ‘Akká with a sailboat. In the afternoon of the same day Baha'u'llah and all other passengers stayed in Haifa for a few hours before taking off to their destination, i.e., the city of Acre. For this visit, Ra'fati¹⁹⁶ mentions the following from the Pen of Baha'u'llah:

*“Verily His Temple was established upon the Mountain of God at the beginning of His arrival; to this testify whatever has been written in the Books of the Messengers. Verily both sea and land were privileged by His footsteps and seeing Him and smelling His luminous robe...”*¹⁹⁷

2. His second visit to Haifa happened almost fifteen years later, on the 6th of August 1883. This trip lasted a few weeks and is mentioned by His Pen of Glory in another Tablet with words such as *“the Desire of Carmel aimed to visit the Mountain of God as is being mentioned in the past Books”*¹⁹⁸. On this trip Baha'u'llah stayed at a hotel in the German Colony. This could have been the Karmel Krafft Hotel. This building was

193. In April 1891 Baha'u'llah visited Haifa for the last time and once on Mt. Carmel, He revealed a Tablet in honour of the Mount Carmel, which is a conversation between the Creator and the creation, see annex 2.

194. The physical Ark on Mt. Carmel consist of five buildings related to the New Revelation of Baha'u'llah, namely the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, the seat of the International Teaching Centre, the seat of the Study of the Holy Texts, the International Archives building and the International Library, which still to be built.

195. Due to the building up of silt at the port of ‘Akká, no ship could have docked there, therefore, Baha'u'llah and His entourage had to be taken to their destined confinement by a small and uncomfortable boat.

196. Vahid Ra'fati, scholar, Baha'i World Centre

197. See Annex 2, Tablet of Carmel

198. Ra'fati, Pajuheshnameh, A Persian Journal of Baha'i Studies, vol. II No. 1, 1997, Reference 7

located at the northern corner of Jaffa Street and Ben Gurion Avenue¹⁹⁹ and since it has been demolished.

Ra'fati mentions another Tablet revealed in honor of Haji Abdu'l-Hamid of Zarqan in September of the same year, thus:

"...for a few days the Mountain of God became the seat of the Temple, and this is the Station which had been mentioned in the past Books. The voice of the Spirit²⁰⁰ had been raised in this place and all the other Prophets have told of this Station. This is the Mountain of God. Since its creation until now, it has been waiting to see Him; thanks be to God that it has attained its desire and the Voice was raised.... Whatever was written in the Books of God have become manifest. Happy those who understand, and woe betide the negligent"^{201, 202}.

3. The Third Visit to Haifa happened seven years later the 1st of April 1890. The very next day He recorded that *"Thanks to the Desire of the Worlds that in the middle of tribulations, the banner of speech was raised up...yesterday, 10 of Sha'aban 1307²⁰³, the Lord of Creation²⁰⁴ moved from the shore of Akka to Haifa and arrived during the night..."* In the same Tablet, prior to these words, He prays for humanity saying: *"...The mercy He offered has surpassed a cup or a gallon measure, now the revelation is manifest as a scale of ocean upon ocean²⁰⁵. We pray the All-Glorious God to give pure motive to mankind so that no one would remain without a share and would not be deprived of His ever-generous bounties..."* And then He adds: *"...O people, His Holiness the Desired One²⁰⁶ has manifested Himself, today is the day of the lovers and the time to be inflamed with the fire of unity. From the unity of the hearts, a tender fire will be lit. By the life of the Desired One, that fire is present and flows in all created things...Friends should strive to tear asunder the*

199. Originally Carmel Avenue

200. Allusion to His Holiness Jesus Christ, Ruhullah, the Spirit of God is His title in the Islamic and Baha'i literature.

201. The terminology of 'Temple' is used for the being of the Manifestation of God, and also, to the place where the remains of the Manifestation of God is being deposited. Abdu'l-Baha refers to the Shrine of the Bab as the Temple of God, as, the remains of the Holy Manifestation of God is being put to rest in that place. And reference of Baha'u'llah to Himself as the 'Temple', again, is allusion of Manifestation of God.

202. Ra'fati, Pajuheshnameh, Persian Journal of Baha'i Studies, vol. II No. 1, 1997, p. 87. Also see Annex 2, Tablet of Carmel. This is provisional translation.

203. First of April 1890.

204. The Manifestation of God, is the Lord of Creation in each and every cycle He appears, representing the Godhood. It was the case of Moses, Christ, Muhammad and all the other Manifestation of God when they were commissioned by the Almighty to appear on earth and disseminate His mighty Will. Here, it is alluded to Baha'u'llah Himself, the Father, the Glory of God.

205. This refers the Revelation of Baha'u'llah in compared to the previous revelations. According to Christ, 'He will guide you to All Truth. The ocean upon ocean is all Truth.

206. Referring to Baha'u'llah Himself, the Desired of all Nations

veils of the people with their wisdom and speech, until all would be able to see the signs of might and glory and speech from the hands of the Cause with no veil and cover...”²⁰⁷

It is recorded that Baha’u’llah stayed in Haifa for two weeks because He had Professor Edward G. Brown²⁰⁸ as His guest from 15th to 20th of April of the same year when he was entertained in the Mansion of Bahji on the outskirts of the city of Acre²⁰⁹ and recorded the following after he had attained to His presence:

“The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one’s very soul, power and authority sat on that ample brow; ...No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain^{210!}”

Ra’fati indicates that when Baha’u’llah arrived in Haifa, He stayed in His tent on a vacant land close to Beit Zahlan, next to the Community Hall of the Templers where is still standing today as the Haifa Museum. This was the very first building Hardegg built in the Colony. It was used as their spiritual gathering place²¹¹. The said vacant land was in front of the Oliphant House, # 16 Ben Gurion Avenue in the German Colony, soon He moved to the house that belonged to Sir Laurence Oliphant²¹².

4. Baha’u’llah’s Fourth Visit to Haifa happened some fifteen months after His third visit, on the 27th of June 1891. Ra’fati, in his research, refers to a Tablet where He mentions this trip; it is recorded that: *“...These days the throne of the Temple is in Haifa, together with some friends and pioneers and travellers. Thank God that they all practice righteousness and are illumined with the light of detachment, and every day they are in His presence, this is an incomparable bounty...”²¹³*

Baha’u’llah’s return to Acre must have been around the beginning of August

207. Ra’fati, Pajuheshnameh, Persian Journal of Baha’i Studies, vol. II No. 1, 1997

208. British Orientalist (1862 – 1926), who visited Baha’u’llah in person for few days in Baha’u’llah’s residence in Bahji outskirts of Acre, in 1890.

209. British Orientalist of Oxford University. See Baha’u’llah King of Glory, GR Publishers, 1980

210. See, Edward Granville Brown and the Baha’i Faith, H.M. Balyuzi, GR Publishers, 1975

211. The Templers did not believe to have a church, as the coming of Christ was close and they did not need a physical church, but a gathering hall would suffice for their gathering and a place for schooling their children.

212. Laurence Oliphant 1829-1888 British South African, author, traveller, diplomat and military personnel. He was the only British who was allowed to live among the German Templers in their colony. Accordingly, to the house he occupied was owned by a German Templer, by the name of Oldorf, who came to Haifa with the American Templer. He was a carpenter. Later he had sold his house to Oliphant and moved to Ashdod”. He was already dead two years earlier when Baha’u’llah arrived in Haifa and moved to the Oliphant House during His stay in Haifa.

213. Ra’fati, Pajuheshnameh, A Persian Journal of Baha’i Studies, vol. II No. 1, 1997, see the fourth visit.

1891, as He celebrated the Twin Birthdays of the Bab and of Himself in the Mansion of Bahji, on the 7th and 8th of August. Therefore, His stay in Haifa had been, according to Ra'fati, around forty days.

On this trip, Baha'u'llah also stayed in the Beit Abyad, a house belonging to Elyas Abyad which was in the proximity of the German Colony, and on land to the East of that building He raised His tent, too²¹⁴. Later, He raised His tent on a separate vacant land²¹⁵.

His fourth visit to Haifa, according to Ra'fati, was longer and more important. At that time Baha'u'llah again visited Mount Carmel and the French Convent, which had been established at the top of the mountain facing the Mediterranean Sea. He also visited the Cave of Elijah²¹⁶ that is in a lower part of the same location as the Convent.

Right at the top of the Mount Carmel, where the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, was able to purchase some land for the future Baha'i Temple in the Holy Land, is the spot where Baha'u'llah in His last trip revealed the Tablet of Carmel mentioned earlier and in its vicinity, He pointed to Abdu'l-Baha the showing the exact location of the future Shrine of the Bab.

Identifying the location of the Shrine

Husayn Eqbal²¹⁷, one of the companions of Baha'u'llah, was present at the time and has related to posterity his observations when the Heavenly Father, Baha'u'llah, was seated in the shadow of a cluster of young cypress trees. His Son, Abdu'l-Bahá was also seated next to Him, while other companions were all around them. Pointing out to His son Abdu'l-Baha, by His finger the land He should purchase, and where the remains of the Báb were to be buried. At the time, according to one account the specific land to be purchased pertained to a Christian Arab, Elias Modavvar^{218*}, while the land on which the cypress trees were planted owned by Wilhelm Deiss, though this is quite ironic, how could an

214. The building today is a branch of Mercantile Discount Bank, at the corner of Allenby Street and Italian Lane.

215. A piece of land of about 50mX20m at the corner of Hagefen Street and Morad Keramim Lane in the German Colony, which today has been converted into a beautiful small garden by the Baha'i World Centre. On the exact place of the tent some cypress trees have been planted on the exact spot where His tent had stood and is owned by the Baha'i World Centre.

216. There are two caves of Elijah, the upper one next to the Convent and lower one, which is the main cave. The Cave of Elijah is a pilgrimage place for Jews, Christians and Muslims. Master Abdu'l-Bahá also stayed in its vicinity for over a month. David Ruhe, *Door of Hope*, pp. 186-188.

217. Eqbal's memoirs were recorded in an article by Badi Bushru'i, *Ahang Badi*, numbers 3&4, year 28, 1973 Persian.

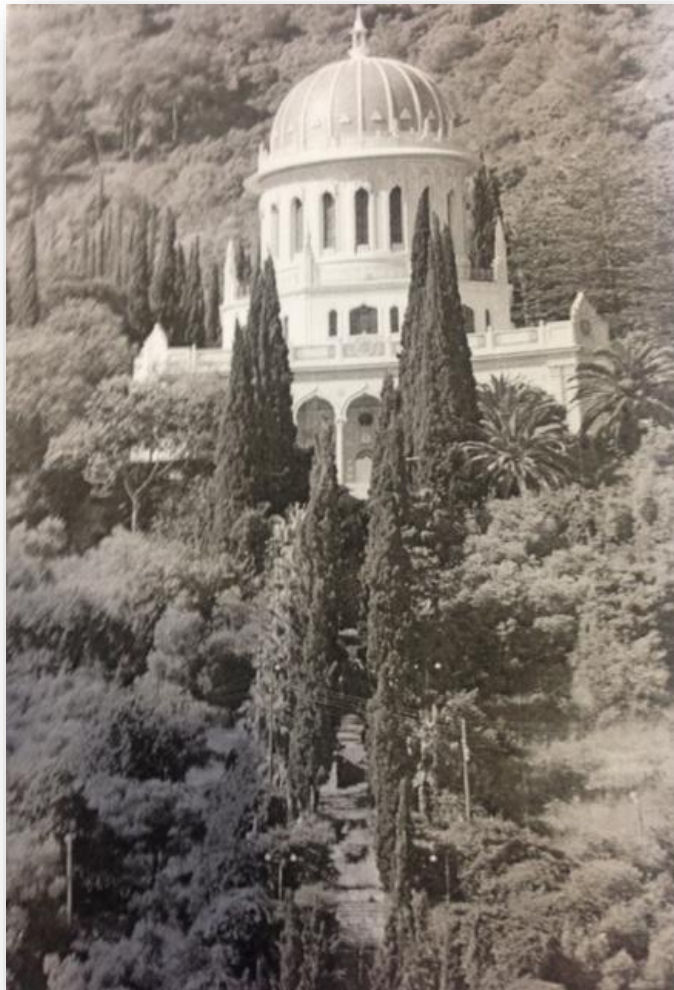
218. Muhammad-Ali Faizi, *Malaka'i-Karmel (The Queen of Carmel)*, p.44, Baha'i National Institute, Iran

*Note: Seemingly the pieces of land acquired by Abdu'l-Baha for the Shrine of the Bab on Mt. Carmel were purchased from the German Templers. Clarification is needed as to Elias's land within the Templers' properties.

Arab own land within the Templers' land. There are only few meters of distance between the two spots, i.e., the cypress circle and the Shrine. On the map drawn by the Engineer Schumacher only the Templers owned that land.

In Ra'fati's article mentioned earlier, there is a Tablet from Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to Mírzá Áqá Afnán²¹⁹, a relative of the Báb, mentioning this particular piece of land, which was the choice of Baha'u'llah, and that He was very eager to have it purchased at any cost. He liked it for its physical beauty as the Master put it but of course its spiritual significance was at that time known only to Baha'u'llah. It took several years in the mid-1890s before the Master Abdu'l-Bahá was able to secure that land.

In the same above source, Abdu'l-Bahá mentions that He asked the friends of Rangoon to prepare a one-piece sarcophagus from the best alabaster, which the region was famous for. Abdu'l-Baha Himself sketched the design of the sarcophagus and sent it to them; the final product in 1899, with many difficulties reached its destination in Haifa. The friends of India had also asked to prepare a fine coffin from the best Ebony wood of India²²⁰, which was installed in the same sarcophagus. Abdu'l-Baha had also instructed His brother-in-law, Mírzá Asadu'lláh in 1897 to go to Iran to bring the Holy remains of the Bab in a special box, which have been hidden for fifty years since His martyrdom in July 1950, in many different places and take it to the Holy Land, i.e., to Akka with utmost respect in such a way that the contents of the box would not be detected by any one friends of



Shrine and the terraces in 1957 during the time of the Guardian Shoghi Effendi

219. The Afnans are the relatives of the Bab, literary means twigs of the main trunk.

220. Ebony wood, which seemingly becomes petrified after hundred years.

foes. This had to be brought in by the instructions of Abdu'l-Baha on a 'running throne'²²¹.

While writing the Tablet, Abdu'l-Bahá had already started the construction of the Shrine on Mount Carmel in 1899. He asked the addressee of the Tablet, to come and participate in the basic earthwork of the foundation, which accordingly, has many merits and heavenly blessings. He adds that He is so happy to see that a permanent place is being prepared for the Divine and luminous Holy Temple of the Bab, which had received so much maltreatment from the foes for so many years, and He thanks God for the means prepared for the final interment with utmost glory which will become the place of wonder for humanity.

Again, in a separate Tablet addressed to another relative of the Báb, Mírzá Muhammad-Baqir Afnán, in whose honor the water reservoir was built next to the Shrine by the Master. He gives a progress report, thanking God for the lower section (vault) of the Shrine has been completed most delicately. Also, the plot of land above the present one has also been purchased to prevent others to buy and build over it. This piece of land He mentions is the same where the cypress trees are located, where the Blessed Beauty rested under their shade. This piece of land according to Ruhe belonged to a Templer by the name of Wilhelm Deiss²²².

Ra'fati writes in his article that the commencement of this construction, was prophesied by Baha'u'llah in the Tablet of Hardegg revealed some nineteen years earlier:

*"Both land and sea have rejoiced at the glad tidings of the land of God and all nations have been promised the advent of Him Who will purge the ills and infirmities of the world. He verily is the One Who shall build the Temple of the Lord. Blessed are they that recognize the truth"*²²³.

And in another Tablet to a certain Baghdadi, He writes:

*"...verily the land of Shaam²²⁴ testifies to the sanctity of God, Who has manifested Himself. Verily the Mount of God is vibrating by the breezes of His presence. It is being named Carmel²²⁵, which calls, saying, verily the Builder of the Temple has come and has sanctified everything, happy those who reach and see"*²²⁶.

221. The running throne was a seat for kings and queens carried by at least four people. The Arc of Covenant had been carried by the Jews from Egypt to the Holy Land in the early years of their arrival.

222. The Door of Hope p 193. More on this piece of land see the chapter on the Cypress Trees.

223. Provisional translation.

224. Comprises of Damascus, Beirut, Ashkelon and the Holy Land.

225. Carmel literary means the vineyard of God, Carm and Il. Orchard, garden.

226. Ra'fati, Pajuheshnameh, mentioned earlier.

Referring to the above Tablet, the Tablet of Carmel as mentioned earlier, is a conversation between the Creator and the created one, between the Lord, the Builder of the Temple, and the Mountain of God, upon which the Temple was going to be built. There are many prophecies in this Tablet such as: the building of the Temple, i.e, the Shrine of the Bab, and the completion of the Ark of God, the Seat of the Universal House of Justice - from where the Law of God will be disseminated to every part of the earth - and its ancillary buildings (the International Teaching Centre, the Centre of the Study of Texts, the International Baha'i Archive and the International Baha'i Library, together with the nineteen Terraces, are the fulfillment of this Holy Tablet of Baha'u'llah.

CHAPTER VII

TEMPLE OF THE LORD

The Shrine of the Bab

Abdu'l-Baha clarified that in this Revelation, The Bab as the 'Son' and Baha'u'llah as the 'Father'. The Bab -the Forerunner of Baha'u'llah's Revelation- was identified in the Baha'u'llah's Writings as 'The King of Messengers'. He was the Prophet Founder of the Babi Revelation that was declared on 23 May 1844 in Shiraz, Iran, and at the same time He announced the coming of Baha'u'llah, the return of Christ in the Glory of the Father, 'Whom God shall make manifest'. And as per the Islamic traditions, the Bab's claim is of being the 'Lord of the Age', in other words, the expectation is to have the 'Lord of the Age' to come and prepare the path for the coming of the 'Father'²²⁷.



Shoghi Effendi –
Guardian of the
Baha'i Faith
1897-1957

The exalted station of the Bab required having a mausoleum befitting to His rank, the rank of 'the Lord of the Age'. For this, a magnificent preparation was needed:

1. Should be in the Holy Land, as identified by the Bible.
2. Should be in Haifa, as identified by Baha'u'llah.
3. Should be on the Mount Carmel, as identified By Baha'u'llah, where the German Templers were also expecting.
4. Should be built by the Branch, as identified by the Bible. Abdu'l-Baha had been titled 'The Most Mighty Branch and Shoghi Effendi, the Chosen Branch'²²⁸.

The conditions were met. The Holy Land was the land for the Temple of the Lord, where the Father had already arrived. The city was chosen by the Father Himself to be in Haifa, on the Mt. Carmel, mentioned in the Bible. He chose the spot even before the German's arrival, contemplated in the Tablet of Carmel in His visit to Haifa back on 31 August 1868. The German Templers' most meritorious accomplishment was to establish themselves – through Hardegg –

227. There is a striking similarity between the two Manifestations of God, i.e. Jesus Christ and The Bab. The reader might want to investigate on the life of Bab 1819 – 1850 to see the similarities.

228. Under the instructions of Baha'u'llah, His son Abdu'l-Baha and His grandson Shoghi Effendi built the Temple on Mt. Carmel. Abdu'l-Baha built the rooms and Shoghi Effendi built the superstructure over it.

to the already chosen spot by the Father, Who made His choice public by showing to the Branch where the Temple should be built, that was in April 1891 in His last visit to Haifa. The 'Branch' remained to make the move, to secure the land, which was shown to Him by the 'Father'; have the remains of the 'Lord' to be transferred from the land of His martyrdom – Iran – to the Holy Land; have the marble sarcophagus prepared as the permanent resting place of the holy remains of the Bab. All these happened when He, Abbas Effendi, Abdu'l-Baha 'the Most Mighty Branch', was in the severest persecution and imprisonment in Acre.

Around 1896 Abdu'l-Baha secured the required land, and four years later in the early 1900, the holy remains of the Bab, after being in hiding places for half a century were brought to Haifa. In 1901, He started to have the excavations of the Lord's Temple. In the same year, the Ottoman government again imposed restrictions on His liberty to be able to move freely around, and He was to return to the prison city of Acre, confined for another seven years before in 1908, as a result of the Young Turks Revolution, He was finally released and freed once for all, together with all the other political and religious prisoners. But in the meanwhile, He was directing the construction of the Shrine from Acre. Only a year later, in 21 March 1909 He ended His task by placing the remains of the Bab in the Sarcophagus in the underground vault at the presence of east and west believers, securely sealed, and announced to the Baha'is around the world that the Temple of the Lord is being completed by placing the Shkinah into the Arc of the Covenant in the bosom of the Mt. Carmel.

The early building was a simple elegant six rooms structure with a style, which had its influence from the east and the west, especially from the actual Templar architecture. And in about 20 years later, His successor, Shoghi Effendi, His grandson, the Chosen Branch, completed the building by adding identical three more rooms at the south side of the building, completing the nine rooms, and it took another 28 years before a competent Canadian architect, Sutherland Maxwell²²⁹, designed the superstructure of the Temple of the Lord in its utmost beauty and perfection crowned with a golden dome. It was in 1953, on the hundredth anniversary of the declaration of Baha'u'llah's new Revelation, that the completed Temple was inaugurated. Only in early 2001 the 19 terraces were completed, thus, the Temple of the Lord, the Queen of Carmel, shined as the icon of the Baha'i world.

Florence Breed, one of the early western believers wrote the following as her observations:

"...Bordering the road were 'the thrifty little homes and gardens of the German farmers', whose now dead fathers, had established the colony to wait here for the coming of the Lord'. She wrote of the Tomb as 'an imposing structure...two

229. Canadian Architect William Sutherland Maxwell had become the father-in-law of Shoghi Effendi in 1937.

stories high...and which will, when finished, I understand, have an added story'. She could not, of course, have visualized its future golden dome, which would make this Shrine 'the Queen of Carmel'. But she wrote of 'Abdu'l-Baha's achievement in building this Tomb though Himself a captive – He the 'humblest and mightiest servants of Baha'u'llah'. She told how one day, the Baha'i prophecy said, ships of all nations were to ride down at the blue Gulf of Akka, and how, up gleaming flights of white marble stairs, pilgrim kings, gifts in their hands, would be climbing to this Shrine²³⁰.

"In the sitting-room downstairs He continued: 'When obstacles stopped us on all sides and calamities hemmed us in, we started building the Bab's holy Tomb on Mount Carmel'²³¹.

Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith had beautified surrounding the edifice with unique gardens to the utmost possible way, and it was until 2001 that the Temple of the Lord, supreme terraced gardens were completed to its perfection. Millions of admirers from around the world have visited it reverently, admired its beauty, simplicity, and spirituality.

This is the Temple of the Lord – The Queen of Carmel - and its brief history envisioned and inspired by The Father, Baha'u'llah the Glory of God, built by the Branch, Abdu'l-Baha, as the Bible testifies, holding in its bosom the remains of the youthful Prophet, the Bab, the forerunner of Baha'u'llah, embellished by Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian, and adorned by 19 Terraces at the ministry of the Universal House of Justice, the perpetual leader of the Baha'i Faith.

230. Marzieh Gail, quoting her mother, Summon Up Remembrance, p.223. GR Publishers

231. Ibid, p. 256

CHAPTER VIII

Jerusalem

The Abode of Peace! Place of most holy for the Jews, which kept them together in diaspora for centuries. Always 'next year in Jerusalem' was the only hope that they strived and lived for. The significance of the 'Abode of Peace' is indeed of most significant for all the three major Faiths, Jews, Christians and Muslims. This has been the most contentious place on earth in the religious history, and it is a holy city for them all. The true love these three Faiths have for the city is not describable. The Temple of Solomon, which contained the Holy of Holies was kept there, the Lord Christ was crucified and His holy remains were kept there, and according to the traditions, Prophet Muhammad reportedly had ascended to heaven from the most holy Temple of the Jews, Temple of Solomon²³², thus this City becomes the third most holy place for them after Mecca and Medina.

Christoph Hoffmann together with some Templers, moved the Jerusalem with the intention of one day to build the Temple of the Lord there, in the meanwhile, working on the real temple, which is the moral life of the adherents, which they called the real Temple.

Jerusalem in Templers' words

Christoph Hoffmann in his book²³³ dedicates a whole chapter to the reason why Jerusalem is the preferred place on earth where the 'Building of the Temple' should begin.

Although Christ has prophesied that: "The time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem"²³⁴. So, where else? Indeed, that is the decision of the Glory of God.

In the words of Hoffmann: "The Temple Society certainly does not intend to revive the Jewish superstition that was condemned by divine judgment and claim that Jerusalem is holier and a better place for worship than any other place on earth. Rather, we abide by the saying of Christ that genuine worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth...Of course, it does not follow from this that Jerusalem alone should be excluded from the worship of God. On the contrary, if the Temple is to be built everywhere, then clearly it may not only be built in Jerusalem, but indeed should be built there. The judgment of God, which decreed that Jerusalem and Palestine were to be destroyed by the Gentiles, was not meant to last forever, but according to Christ's own words only until the time of the Gentiles fulfilled²³⁵. There will and must come a time when the Temple will

232. Al-Aqsa Mosque has been built over the ruins of the King Solomon's Temple 1035 AD.

233. Orient and Occident,

234. John 4:21

235. (Luke 21:24)

be rebuilt in Jerusalem, too, in other words, when the spiritual and material conditions ordained by God will be established there. An integral part of this process will be the introduction of religious observances and consequently the designation of holy places of public worship ²³⁶.

“These considerations, which indicate that Jerusalem and Palestine, just as much as any other country, deserve to be the location for Christian activity aimed at spreading the knowledge of God, or, to use the common expression, for missionary activity, adequately justify the Temple Society’s endeavor in this country: it has exactly the same rights as the Catholic monasteries and the Protestant missions in Palestine. These considerations, in fact, constitute a perfectly good reason for preferring Jerusalem and Palestine to any other place, because, as mentioned above, carrying out Christ’s work in this country would be an even greater testimony for the power of Christ’s spirit than if the same goal were pursued and attained in any other country.²³⁷

“It is all the more remarkable then that our plan to establish the Temple in Jerusalem has been met with the greatest opposition by the representatives of the Protestant missions, especially by the Mission of Basle...in Württemberg...Of course, Jerusalem and Palestine have a far greater significance for the Temple Society than simply being preferred as a field of activity... and the best way to spread Christian knowledge of God amongst all nations, is to establish a Temple in the spirit of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem, which involves rebuilding the city and the country...²³⁸

“...the Temple Society believes in the possibility and necessity of a complete fulfillment of everything the prophets predicted about Jerusalem. Whether this Jerusalem of the future, the center of Salvation, of the spiritual and moral improvement of all humanity, is to be located at the site of the old Jerusalem in Palestine or at some other place on earth – this is a question of secondary importance...²³⁹

“Our task, however, and the need of our time, is to build that Temple in Jerusalem, which is described in Revelation 11, and on which the prophets of Israel, particularly the last three, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, threw some light in connection with the reconstruction of Jerusalem and the Temple after the return of Israel from Babylon²⁴⁰.

236. Occident and Orient”, p.80 of 94

237. (Ibid, p. 81)

238. (Ibid, p. 82, 83)

239. (Ibid, p.89)

240. (Ibid, p.91)

Jerusalem - City of Peace²⁴¹ - in the Baha'i Literature

Abdu'l-Bahá explained what in reality the meaning of the word 'Jerusalem' is: "...it is not a city built of clay and stone, yet, it means the inner part of the 'religion of God', the Holy of Holies, and as such, it should be achieved in the heart and the soul, and people should not only be satisfied with the physical conditions of the Holy City. While the real Jerusalem is being built within, this will last forever, while thousands of temples and cities will come and go with no traces whatsoever left of them. The Holy of Holies, the Religion of God, does not accept any change and does not go out of fashion. What is meant by the Holy City, is the laws and ordinances of the religions which accept change and are renewed in each dispensation. That is why in the Bible the word of 'New Jerusalem' is being pronounced, which of course is not another city but another chapter in the successive revelation of religions with new sets of laws and ordinances, and which is also called 'the Heavenly Jerusalem'²⁴².

241. Jerusalem is often called Zion; Mount Zion is the hill on which the fortress of the city was built. Wikipedia
242. Abdu'l-Baha, Some Answered Questions, Chapter 18.

CHAPTER IX

Shkhinah - The Arc of Covenant

Shkinah is a Hebrew feminine word, its Arabic version is Sakinah, which means to settle or dwell. It relates to the feminine attributes of God, Sophia. In Arabic the word Sakinah is a feminine name. It is recorded that the great granddaughter of Prophet Muhammad, the daughter of Imam Husayn, was named Sakinah as, accordingly she was the first woman being named thus. It also has the connotation of peacefulness and serenity.

This terminology has been used in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and in the Baha'i Faith. Although in Judaism this word is not in the Scripture, yet its concept is being widely used in the Talmud by Rabbinic scholars. Its connotation is the physical presence of God. The word frequently used by Baha'u'llah as 'Sakinatu-llah', where God resides.

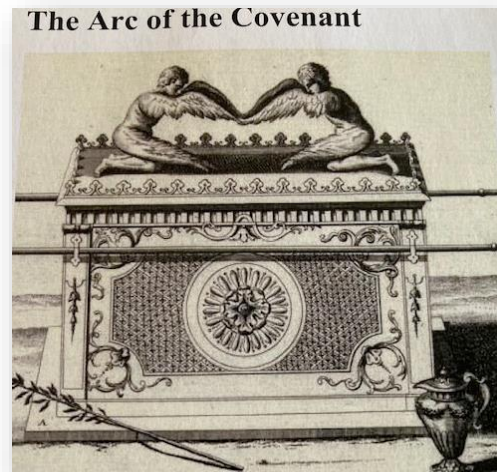
The Torah reports that Shkhinah is what caused prophets to prophesy and King David to compose his Psalms. The Shkhinah manifests itself as a form of joy connected with prophecy and creativity²⁴³

The Talmud also reports *"that The Shkhinah does not rest amidst laziness, not amidst laughter, not amidst lightheadedness, not amidst idle conversation. Rather, it is amidst the joy associated with a mitzvah (a meritorious or charitable act) that the Shekhinah comes to rest upon the people... Thus the Shkhinah is associated with the transformational "Spirit of God"244 ...*

The Shkhinah in the New Testament is commonly equated to the presence or indwelling of the Spirit of the Lord²⁴⁵ in the believer, drawing parallels to the presence of God in Solomon's Temple.

Some Christian scholars believe that the Glory of the Lord and Shkhinah are the same thing and therefore, the Messiah is the Shkhinah's presence.

When God inscribed by lightning the Ten Commandments on two Tablets of rock through the Prophet Moses, these were kept in a box called 'The Ark of the Covenant', indicating the Covenant of God with the people of Israel. The box to be described below was kept under a Tabernacle, a tent, to be protected at all



The Arc of the Covenant

243. (Pesachim 117a).

244. Wikipedia on Jewish understanding of Shkhinah.

245. (Generally referred to as the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of Christ)

times. Once however, the Shkhinah, the Ark of the Covenant, was placed in Solomon's Temple, the use of the Tabernacle came to an end²⁴⁶.

It is also said that when the Israelites begged Moses that they wanted to always have the presence of God with them, God ordered Moses to build a box wherein He would be dwelling. That was the Ark of the Covenant.

Aba Eban the former prime minister and scholar of the history of Israel described the Ark:

"According to the Bible, the Israelite invaders carried with them the Ark of the Covenant, an acacia-wood box measuring about 4 feet long, 2 ½ feet wide, and 2 ½ feet high. Covered with gold both inside and out, the Ark was "defended" by two golden cherubim, poised at either end with wings outstretched. When the Israelites encamped, the Ark was lodged within a richly decorated tabernacle that was itself protected by a tent of ram and goats' skins and guarded by Levites. When the Israelites marched, the Ark marched with them, supported on two wooden staves that slipped through four gold rings attached to its feet, two on each side. After Joshua settled in Shiloh, the Ark resided there, too, but even then, it was often carried into battle. On one such occasion, near Eben-Ezer, the Ark fell into the clutches of the Philistines, but to them, the Bible tells us, it brought only evil; when they installed it in their temple at Ashdod, their chief god Dagon toppled from his pedestal and was shattered. Eventually, David brought the Ark to Jerusalem, where it was later housed in Solomon's Temple, within the Holy of Holies, the most sacred of all Jewish shrines. But the Bible makes scant mention of the Ark thereafter, and by the time of the prophets it seems to have been lost. Thus, we know neither the ultimate fate of the Ark nor the exact nature of its contents. However, the early Israelites conceived the Ark of the Covenant when they settled in Canaan. What were contained in that sacred chest were an essential idea, a covenant, and an agreement that defined the responsibilities of human beings and their relationship with God. It was a mutual relationship. If they would fulfill His commandments, He would protect and sustain them..."²⁴⁷

Sakinatu'llah, where the spirit of God resides.

Many of the words belonging to the older Divine Revelations are being revived in the Revelation of Baha'u'llah. In this regard He frequently mentions the word of Sakinatullah whenever He speaks about His own presence or that of the Bab in a specific place. For example, in a Tablet, addressing the recipient who apparently had lost his house and possessions, He refers to His own departure from the house of Baghdad, and says: "...it happened to you as it happened to the sarcophagus (the house) in which dwelled Sakinah (Shkhina) (Baha'u'llah)..."²⁴⁸

246. "...Lord said that He would dwell in a thick darkness." (1Ki. 8:12)

247. Aba Eban, "Heritage", p. 38

248. "Ad'iyih Mahboub", pp. 93-99 – A book containing some of the writings of Baha'u'llah in Persian and Arabic.

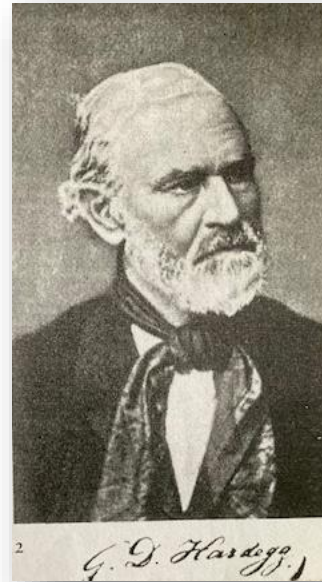
The Ark of the Covenant is the dwelling place of Shkhina, where the Holy of Holies resides. According to Abdu'l-Baha, the Holy of Holies is an inseparable part of the Ark of the Covenant, and this is eternal, renewed only by the dwelling place, otherwise, *“This is the ancient Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future”*, as Baha'u'llah explains.

Abdu'l-Bahá describes this matter extensively:

“...the Law of God is divided into two part; one is the fundamental basis which comprises all spiritual things, that is to say, it refers to the spiritual virtues and divine qualities; this does not change nor alter: it is the Holy of Holies which is the essence of the Law of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Christ, Muhammad, the Bab and Baha'u'llah, and which lasts and is established in all the prophetic cycles. It will never be abrogated, for it is spiritual and not material truth, it is faith, knowledge, certitude, justice, piety, righteousness, trustworthiness, love of God, inward peace, purity, detachment, humility, meekness, patience, and constancy. It shows mercy to the poor, defends the oppressed, gives to the wretched, and uplifts the fallen.

“These divine qualities, these commandments, will never be abolished; nay, they will last and will be established forever and ever. These virtues of humanity will be renewed in each of the different cycles; for at the end of every cycle the spiritual Law of God, that is to say, the human virtues, disappears, and only the form subsists.

“Thus, among the Jews, at the end of the cycle of Moses which coincides with the Christian manifestation, the Law of God disappeared, only a form without spirit remaining. The Holy of Holies departed from amongst them; but the outer court of Jerusalem – which is the expression used for the form of the religion – fell into the hands of the Gentiles. In the same way the fundamental principles of religion of Christ, which are the greatest virtues of humanity, have disappeared, and its form has remained in the hands of the clergy and priests. Likewise, the foundation of the religion of Muhammad has disappeared, but its form remains in the hands of the official ‘Ulamá priests²⁴⁹.



Hardegg's autographed picture.

Thus, the meaning of the terminologies used in the Revelations of the past and their true meaning by the advent of this Revelation becomes quite obvious.

Ezekiel's prophecies are quite interesting when compared with the Revelation of the Babi/Baha'i Faiths:

249. Abdu'l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, chapter "Influence of the Prophets"

“And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east; and his voice was like a noise of many waters; and the earth whined with his glory... And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate²⁵⁰ whose prospect is toward the east...And I heard him speaking to me out of the house...and he said to me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defiled,...”²⁵¹

Further in it continues speaking of the Shkhina: *“And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of you, and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you...”²⁵²*

The Shkhinah, is the place of the Temple (the Shrine of the Bab), where His holy Remains are being kept. Notwithstanding, the Most Holy Shrine for the Baha'is, is the Tomb of Baha'u'llah, the Lord of the hosts, outskirts of Acre, Israel.

250. The Bab, meaning gate

251. Eze. 43:2 to 43:7, (emphasis added).

252. Zek. 2:11

CHAPTER X

Kingdom of God

“Tear asunder, in My Name, the veils that have grievously blinded your vision, and, through the power born of your belief in the unity of God, scatter the idols of vain imitation. Enter, then, the holy paradise of the good pleasure of the All-Merciful. Sanctify your souls from whatsoever is not of God, and taste ye the sweetness of rest within the pale of His vast and mighty Revelation, and beneath the shadow of His supreme and infallible authority. Suffer not yourselves to be wrapt in the dense veils of your selfish desires, inasmuch as I have perfected in every one of you My creation, so that the excellence of My handiwork may be fully revealed unto men. It follows, therefore, that every man hath been, and will continue to be, able of himself to appreciate the Beauty of God, the Glorified. Had he not been endowed with such a capacity; how could he be called to account for his failure?”²⁵³

The writings of Christoph Hoffmann are quite focused on the ‘Building of the Kingdom of God on Earth’. During his life he wrote several books on Peace, Orient & Occident and many essays all leading to the same final thought, all leading his sublime vision to the theme of the Kingdom of God.

In conclusion, according to the ‘Prayer of the Lord, Thy Kingdom come...’, the Templers as well as most of the Christian churches and independent religions, seek this unique matter and all try to see the Kingdom of God be established on earth, when mature humanity would live and would conduct its affairs on justice, fairness, love and understanding. To get to this end, according to the Baha’i teachings, this is a process and not an event. This process has obviously started since the dawn of the New Revelation, where a line is drawn between its start²⁵⁴ and onward, giving an ever-growing impulse to the whole of creation, of whatever background, sciences, arts, music, literature, inventions and discoveries, which are all through the new breath infused in the conscience of Mankind.

To close this research work, it is to mention that certainly the Templers had a station as they were the only one group among hundreds of Millenarists and Messianic movements, who came face to face²⁵⁵ with Baha’u’llah, Who claimed to be ‘the Father’ and also with His Center of Covenant ‘the Branch’, Abdu’l-Baha, for many years, dwelling in their midst.

As per the teachings of the Baha’i Faith, the relationship of the Faiths of God, i.e. Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the Baha’i Faith and many others fits in a simple analogy, consider is a school with different grades where each grade has its own teacher and its own textbook to prepare the students for the forthcoming

253. Baha’u’llah; Gleanings of the Writings of Baha’u’llah, p. 143

254. The Baha’i Revelation starts on 23 May 1844, when the Bab declared His mission.

255. In 1890 when Baha’u’llah got sick in Haifa spent a night or two at one of the Templer’s home. Indeed a scant members of the group did see Baha’u’llah face to face.

higher grade, where the students once have been capacitated by the previous teacher, will be looking forward to see the new teacher and the new text. Nothing will be contradictory among the different grades, but everything complementary. All teach the same truth according to the capacity of the students in each grade. And according to Baha'u'llah, the grades of the school of humanity are infinite, ***“This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future”*** therefore, as long as humanity exist, there will be new teachers and new texts containing the new words of God, as God is infinite, so is His teachings. The Teachers' way in any specific period, is the only way to capacitate the students, and His book is the only book for that matter, and until the students get to the next grade, they will face the same process, repeating again the same truth but of course in a higher degree.

Annex I

TABLET OF HIRTIK – Addressed to Georg David Hardegg

Story behind the finding of the Tablet

Though the Tablet of Hirtik has been mentioned in the writings of Shoghi Effendi as “one of the most famous Tablets of Baha’u’llah”, as recorded in the article of, Faruq Izadinia on ‘Understanding the Divine Word’²⁵⁶ referring to the Tablet of Hirtik. he writes, this Tablet was identified by M. Momen, after he found the translation of the same by the missionary Zeller in the 1870s. The Research Department of the Baha’i World Center confirmed the true addressee of the Tablet of Hirtik as Georg David Hardegg, and its nature was in accordance to the reference of Shoghi Effendi’s remarks mentioned above. The revelation of this Tablet by the pen of Baha’u’llah has possibly been in 1872.

Having said that, up to date, there is no official translation of this Mighty Tablet, which according to the beloved Guardian, together with the Most Holy Tablet²⁵⁷ (1870), and the Tablet to the Pope Pius IX (1869) , are the mightiest Tablets revealed by the Pen of His Manifestation addressing the Christendom. There are, however, some attempts done by some individuals in translating it to English. First attempt was done by Reverend John Zeller, who at the request of Hardegg, made an inadequate translation. According to Izadinia, there are seven misunderstandings by Zeller while attempting to make the translation available to Hardegg. The seven analyzed points will be mentioned in a later stage.

The second attempt was by Stephen Lambden, who has an interesting story of how he came across this Tablet in its Arabic language. He mentions his story in his article²⁵⁸, also see annex III.

“On first coming to know something of the nature of the Lawh-i-Hirtik through the note on it in ‘Abd al-Hamid Ishraq Khavari’s Ganj-i-shaygan, I wrote to the Baha’i World Centre in Haifa requesting a copy for detailed study. On receipt of typed copy I began to try to work out what consonants H-R-T-K might signify, as they were evidently neither indicative of an Arabic nor a Persian construction. Ignoring the pointing and guessing that it might indicate the name of the recipient of the letter, the name Hardegg eventually sprang to mind. I then consulted Moojan Momen’s book, The Babi and Baha’i Religions, and was delighted to find that what was obviously a very garbled translation of the Lawh-i-Hirtik had been forwarded by the missionary Rev. John Zeller (c. 1830- 1902) to English Church Missionary Society and identified as a letter of Baha’u’llah to Hardegg. Furthermore, as Zeller’s letter forwarding Baha’u’llah’s Lawh-i-Hirtik was dated

256. See ‘Safine Erfan # 14, p. 401, Asr-i-Jadid Publishers, Darmstad, Germany - 2011

257. Tablet to the Christians, see The Writings of Baha’u’llah, p. 175, Baha’i Publishing Trust, India - 1986

258. Stephen Lambden and Kamran Ikbal, Light of Irfan, vol. 4, pp. 97-100,
http://irfancoolquia.org/pdf/lights4_lambden_ekbal.pdf

July 8, 1872, it may be inferred that the Lawh-i-Hirtik was written between late 1868 (when both Baha'u'llah and Hardegg arrived in 'Akka and Haifa respectively) and 8th July 1872. It was thus most probably between 1871 and early 1872 that Baha'u'llah addressed this Tablet to the Templer leader.”

And finally, Habib Taherzadeh, et.al.²⁵⁹, a scholar par excellence, who at the time of finding of the Tablet was residing in Haifa, a master in Arabic language, with the help of some other of his erudite friends of the Baha'i World Center made another translation though not published in any form. A friend, graciously supplied the writer with a copy of the same. However, not unless the official translation of this Tablet is available, the accessible literature can only help to appreciate the nature of this important work of Baha'u'llah.

At continuation, the translation of Habib Taherzadeh:

“In the Name of God, The Ever Blessed

Thy sealed letter hath reached the presence of this Wronged One and from it have We inhaled the fragrance of thy devotion towards God, the Help-in-Peril, the Self-Subsisting. We beseech God to acquaint thee with that which is latent in the inscribed Tablet and to enable thee to hearken unto the melody of the Dove warbling upon the branches and to perceive the murmur of the water of life which through the power of wisdom and utterance gusheth out of the well-spring of the Will of the Lord of mankind.

O friend! It behoveth your honor to attentively consider the Word of God and to appreciate its ascendancy and sweetness, for verily it sufficeth all the dwellers of the earth. The first one²⁶⁰ to believe in Him Who was the Spirit²⁶¹ became enraptured by the Word his Lord had uttered, and through the potency of His Word he turned unto Him and embraced the truth, wholly detached from the worldly things that men cherish. Thus beseem the leviathans of the Most Great Ocean.

O thou accomplished man of understanding; O thou who art wise and discerning! Know thou of a truth that selfish desires have deterred the generality of mankind from turning their faces towards God, the Lord of Names. Whoso beholdeth with the eye of insight will be moved to testify and bear witness to the truth, exclaiming: Glorified is my Lord, the Most Exalted. Both land and sea have rejoiced at the glad tidings of the land of God and all nations have been promised the advent of Him Who will purge the ills and infirmities of the world. He verily is the One Who shall build the Temple of the Lord. Blessed are they that recognize the truth.

When appointed Hour is come, Carmel will raise her voice and cry aloud. Methinks she trembleth before the stirrings of the breeze of God. Well is it with

259. Habib Taherzadeh and Ali Nakhjavani

260. Saint Peter, the Apostle

261. Jesus Christ

them that perceive. Were any one to incline his inner ear he would readily observe the Rock²⁶² crying out, bearing witness unto the ever-abiding Lord. Blessed the man that hath discovered the sweet savors of this utterance and set his face towards the Kingdom, rid of all attachments to the world, inasmuch as when that which is mentioned in the Book will come to pass, thou wouldst find the people seeing with their eyes but recognize not.

O friend! Consider thou the Mystery of the Great Reversal²⁶³, symbolizing the sign of the Sovereign, for it hath caused the exalted among the people to be abased and the abased to be exalted. Moreover, call thou to mind the circumstances at the time of the coming of Jesus when the divines, the learned and the men of letters rejected Him, while he that was only a fisherman directed himself towards the Kingdom. This is the meaning of that which is expressed by way of allusions and mysteries amidst the shadows of the words. Verily, great, immensely great, is the Cause of God. Peter, the Apostle, despite his exalted position and lofty station, did hold his tongue when he was interrogated²⁶⁴.

Indeed, shouldst thou, wholly for the sake of the Lord, ponder in thy heart on that which occurred in the past, thou wouldst behold the light shining resplendent before thy face and wouldst make it the object of thy constant attention. For the Truth is too obvious to be obscured by veils²⁶⁵ and the path too conspicuous to be concealed by darkness and the certitude too securely established to be wrapped up in false imaginings. They that have suffered themselves to be kept back are but the ones who have followed the promptings of their own selfish desires and are in this Day, lying fast asleep. Ere long will they be roused from their slumber, will rush forth, but alas shall discern naught. Well is it with him that inhaleth the fragrance the moment it is diffused. Verily he hath attained unto that which the sincere servants of God have attained.

Know thou, moreover, that We found the letter S, which occurreth in the word 'sulh'²⁶⁶, to have been adorned with the ornament of the vertical Alif²⁶⁷ which is glorified in the widely disseminated Tablet. And when the effulgent light of this heavenly Word shone forth, the portals of heaven were flung open and the Kingdom of Names was manifested and the Revelation of God fulfilled through the appearance of the letters H and 'A after their having been linked up with the horizontal Alif bejeweled with the point²⁶⁸ [B linked with Ha – Baha] – the Point out of which the treasured Name hath been revealed, and the hidden Mystery unraveled and the preserved Secret divulged. It is the point from which all created things have been generated and thereunto have returned. Thereupon We witnessed the Word utter a word which is common to the vocabulary and

262. Dome of the Rock, Referring to Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the third holiest place for the Muslims.

263. The high will become low and the low will become high.

264. Referring to denying Christ three times.

265. The truth of the sun is the sun itself, does not need any other proof.

266. Solh in Arabic means peace.

267. Alif is the first letter, i.e., 'A'. Salih – the Righteous One, referring to Jesus' remarks to Peter when He asked Peter why do you call me the Righteous, as there is only one Righteous Who is in the Heaven.

268. The word point means dot. In Arabic/Persian alphabet, the letter 'B' is the horizontal Alif with one dot under the character, while 'P' has three dots under the character and 'T' has two dots above the character.

language of every nation. And no sooner had it been uttered than there shone forth above the horizon of its utterance a Luminary, before whose effulgent splendor the sun in the heavens did obscure. Then the Word exclaimed: Verily the head of seventy is now attired with the crown of forty, which is linked up with seven before ten²⁶⁹ There at the Word groaned aloud, saying: How strange to see the house unmindful of the landlord, and the son ignoring his father, and in like manner the eager soul turning away from the shelter and abode he hath been seeking.

O thou who soarest in the atmosphere of true understanding! He who hath known the fluid that is solid and hath recognized that which is still and yet it soareth, the Seen and the Unseen, the Resplendent and the Hidden, such a man is so carried away by the radiance of His glory that he will soar on the wings of longing in the atmosphere of divine presence, of holiness and reunion.

As regards that which your honor hath mentioned about darkness, We testify that it pervadeth all mankind. Happy is he who is illumined by the light that shineth resplendent from the horizon of the mercy of his Lord, the Most Exalted. Verily darkness is but idle fancies and vain imaginings whereby people are deterred from drawing nigh unto the Kingdom when it was manifested at the bidding of God, the Lord of the realm on high.

As to the remark thou hast made concerning the view expressed by so-and-so to the effect that there is no difference between us on the subject of Spirit²⁷⁰ Indeed, this is true, inasmuch as Spirit is sanctified from being harmed by the outburst of human discord and is exalted above the insinuations of evil suggestions. It is the manifestation of the light of Divine Unity amongst men and the wondrous sign of the Ancient of Days amidst the peoples of the world. Whoever turneth thereunto hath verily turned unto Him Who hath bestowed it, and whoso breaketh off from it hath broken off from Him Who generated it and hath given a voice unto it. Verily He hath been supreme above all that hath been and shall be and He now is what He hath ever been. However, the radiance of the light, which is shed upon the mirrors, would vary according to the diversity of forms and colors²⁷¹.

O friend! Should a token of the hidden secret, which is enshrined in mysteries, be divulged, the souls of them that have clung to the things current amongst men and cast away that which is with God would be sorely perturbed.

O friend! Wert thou to ponder a while upon that which We have imparted unto thee and to fulfill whatsoever hath been mentioned with perfect constancy, surely there shall appear from thy person that which hath appeared in the past²⁷².

O friend! This Bird is fallen into the clutches of tyranny and sedition, unable to find itself a nest wherein it could abide, nor is there a space to wing its way unto it, yet, despite such conditions it summoneth mankind unto the eternal life. Well

269. According to Abjad numerology: 'A amounts 70, M to 40, Z to 7 and I to 10 – hence the word Mu'azzi the Comforter.

270. Referring to Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God.

271. Referring to different Manifestations of God, i.e., Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, etc.

272 That Hardegg will become Peter like, the Apostle.

is it with the attentive ear.

We entreat God to gather us within a single court and to graciously enable us to do that, which is pleasing and acceptable unto Him.

Signed, The Wronged One”²⁷³

Three Comparative existing translations

There are merits in other translations, though the concepts be different and the words to carry the true understanding of the original be different. Therefore, at continuation a comparative translation of the three available versions paragraph by paragraph, where the letters HT stands for Habib Taherzadeh, ST for Stephen Lambden and Z for John Zeller.²⁷⁴

Paragraph One: H.T.

In the Name of God, The Ever Blessed

Thy sealed letter hath reached the presence of this Wronged One and from it have We inhaled the fragrance of thy devotion towards God, the Help-in-Peril, the Self-Subsisting. We beseech God to acquaint thee with that which is latent in the inscribed Tablet and to enable thee to hearken unto the melody of the Dove warbling upon the branches and to perceive the murmur of the water of life which through the power of wisdom and utterance gusheth out of the well-spring of the Will of the Lord of mankind.

Paragraph One: S.L.

In the name of God, the Most Holy

Thy sealed letter arrived before the Wronged One. There from did We catch a fragrance of thy sincerity towards God, the Protector, the Self-Subsisting. We entreat God that He might inform thee of that which is concealed in an inscribed Tablet; might enable thee to hearken unto the cooing of the Dove upon the branches and murmuring of the Water of Life which hath flowed with Wisdom and Explanation from the spring of the Will of the King of Existence.

Paragraph One: Z.

In the name of God the most high!

Exalted teacher!

Your sealed letter to the oppressed arrived, and we recognized from the same your uprightness towards the Almighty all-preserving God. We ask God, that He may reveal to you the hidden knowledge written upon a tablet and let you hear the rustling of the leaves from the tree of knowledge and the murmuring of the waters flowing from the essence of the creator ruling over all with wisdom and intelligence.

273. Sometimes Baha'u'llah alluded to Himself as 'Mazlum', the Wronged One, the One Who has been treated unjustly, The Oppressed One.

274. Note: Moojan Momen in his book *Babi and Baha'i Religions, 1844-1944* has Zeller's partial translation. The writer thanks him for having facilitated the remaining and unpublished paragraphs.

Paragraph Two: H.T.

O friend! It behoveth your honor to attentively consider the Word of God and to appreciate its ascendancy and sweetness, for verily it sufficeth all the dwellers of the earth. The first one to believe in Him Who was the Spirit (Jesus) became enraptured by the Word his Lord had uttered, and through the potency of His Word he turned unto Him and embraced the truth, wholly detached from the worldly things that men cherish. Thus beseem the leviathans of the Most Great Ocean.

Paragraph Two: S.L.

O beloved one! It is necessary that thine eminence contemplate the Word of God, the grandeur and sweetness of which sufficeth all the worlds. The first of those who believed in the Spirit (Jesus) was enraptured by the Word of his Lord and through it turned and believed, detached from whatsoever the people possess. Such action is incumbent upon the fishes of the Most Great Ocean.

Paragraph Two: Z.

It is your first duty to contemplate the work of God whose excellence and sweetness fills the worlds. He who believes in the Spirit receives him, he will be clothed with the word of righteousness and through the same he will receive and believe, though he may be cut off from all that is in the hands of men. This is necessary even for the great fishes in the greatest sea.

Paragraph Three H.T.

O thou accomplished man of understanding; O thou who art wise and discerning! Know thou of a truth that selfish desires have deterred the generality of mankind from turning their faces towards God, the Lord of Names. Whoso beholdeth with the eye of insight will be moved to testify and bear witness to the truth, exclaiming: Glorified is my Lord, the Most Exalted. Bothe land and sea have rejoiced at the glad-tidings of the land of God and all nations have been promised the advent of Him Who will purge the ills and infirmities of the world. He verily is the One Who shall build the Temple of the Lord. Blessed are they that recognize the truth.

Paragraph Three: S.L.

O thou informed mystic knower and insightful religious leader! Know thou that base passion hath hindered most mortals from turning their faces unto God, the King of Names. Such, however, as gaze with the eye of insight, shall bear witness and seeing, exclaim, 'Praise be unto my Lord, the Most Exalted.' Land and sea hath rejoiced at the Beneficence of God. The nations were given the promise regarding the appearance of the Healer of Infirmities. He, assuredly, is the expected Builder of the Temple. Blessed be such as are possessed of mystic knowledge.

Paragraph Three: Z.

Oh, you learned experienced and clear-sighted teacher, know, that indulgence prevented most mortals from approaching to God who rules the heavens. He, however, who wants to see, perceives the light, which testifies, so that he may exclaim: Praise be to the Lord, the Most High! The righteousness of the Lord is made known to land and sea; he has promised the restorer of all errors! He builds the temple, and blessed are those who can comprehend it.

Paragraph Four: H.T.

When appointed Hour is come Carmel will raise her voice and cry aloud. Methinks she trembleth before the stirrings of the breeze of God. Well is it with them that perceive. Were any one to incline his inner ear he would readily observe the Rock crying out, bearing witness unto the ever-abiding Lord. Blessed the man that hath discovered the sweet savours of this utterance and set his face towards the Kingdom, rid of all attachments to the world, inasmuch as when that which is mentioned in the Book will come to pass, thou wouldst find the people seeing with their eyes but recognize not.

Paragraph Four: SL.

When appointed time came, Carmel cried out, trembling as if shaken by the breezes of the Lord, Blessed be such as hearken! Should anyone with the ear of the inner nature, the same would assuredly hear the cry from the Rock. It verily, proclaimeth in a most elevated voice and beareth witness unto the Eternal God. Blessed be such as catch a fragrance of the Utterance and turn unto the Kingdom, detached from the contingent world. When that which is mentioned in the Holy Books hath come to pass, thou shalt see the people beholding but not understanding.

Paragraph Four: Z

When the appointed time has come, Carmel will break out in joy as if moved by the gentle breathing of the Lord, blessed are those who hear it! He who walks with open ears receives an answer from the rock. He shouts with a loud voice and bears witness to the eternal God. Blessed is he who finds the knowledge and is free of all doubts! If that appears, which is written in the books, men will see and not comprehend.

Paragraph Five: H.T.

O friend! Consider thou the Mystery of the Great Reversal, symbolizing the sign of the Sovereign, for it hath caused the exalted among the people to be abased and the abased to be exalted. Moreover, call thou to mind the circumstances at the time if the coming of Jesus when the divines, the learned and the men of letters rejected Him, while he that was only a fisherman directed himself towards the Kingdom. This is the meaning of that which is expressed by way of allusions

and mysteries amidst the shadows of the words. Verily, great, immensely great, is the Cause of God. Peter, the Apostle, despite his exalted position and lofty station, did hold his tongue when he was interrogated.

Paragraph Five: S.L

O beloved one! Behold the mystery of the reversal on account of the symbol of the Ruler for He hath made the exalted ones their lowly ones and their lowly ones their exalted ones. And call thou to mind the fact that when Jesus came, He was rejected by the divines, the learned and the educated. He who was a mere fisherman, on the other hand, entered the Kingdom. This is the mystery of what was mentioned in the heart of the words by means of intimations and allusions. Great, great is the Cause! Peter the Apostle, in spite of his excellence and the eminence of his station, held back his tongue when asked about it.

Paragraph Five: Z

My dear friend! Contemplate the mystery of assimilation (tankis) the type of the leader (ar-rayyis) whereby the exalted is debased and the debased is exalted. Consider also, that when Jesus appeared he was denied by the learned, the wise and the educated, and fishers received the Kingdom. Thus, was fulfilled what had been indicated in obscure words by types and signs. The matter is great and important; for Peter the Apostle according to his excellence and supremacy pronounced the word, when he was asked.

Paragraph Six: H.T.

Indeed, shouldst thou, wholly for the sake of the Lord, ponder in thy heart on that which occurred in the past, thou wouldst behold the light shining resplendent before thy face and wouldst make it the object of thy constant attention. For the Truth is too obvious to be obscured by veils and the path too conspicuous to be concealed by darkness and the certitude too securely established to be wrapped up in false imaginings. They that have suffered themselves to be kept back are but the ones who have followed the promptings of their own selfish desires and are in this Day, lying fast asleep. Ere long will they be roused from their slumber, will rush forth, but alas shall discern naught. Well is it with him that inhaleth the fragrance the moment it is diffused. Verily he hath attained unto that which the sincere servants of God have attained.

Paragraph Six: S.L.

Shouldst thou consider sincerely what hath heretofore come to pass, for the sake of the Lord alone, thou wilt assuredly see the Light shining before thine eyes. The truth is too manifest to be wrapped up in veils, the Path too open to be enveloped in darkness and the Certainty too evident to be obscured by doubts. Those who have been held back are the ones who have followed their lusts and are today slumbering, sleeping. They shall wake up and run around but find no place to hide. Blessed be such as catch the fragrance of Truth, then awaken, that they

might attain whatsoever the sincere servants attained.

Paragraph Six: Z

When you consider past events in the light of the Lord you will see his light appear before your face and before your eyes. Truth is too clear to be covered by veils and the road too open to be hidden by obstructions and faith by obscure meanings. Those who have erred, have followed their lusts and are now among the slumbering and sleeping; they awake, run, and are not to be found. Blessed is he who finds knowledge, and being uneasy penetrates as others of the redeemed servants of God...

Paragraph Seven: H.T.

Know thou, moreover, that We found the letter S, which occurreth in the word 'sulh' (peace), to have been adorned with the ornament of the vertical Alif (Salih – the Righteous One), which is glorified in the widely disseminated Tablet. And when the effulgent light of this heavenly Word shone forth, the portals of heaven were flung open and the Kingdom of Names was manifested and the Revelation of God fulfilled through the appearance of the letters H and 'A after their having been linked up with the horizontal Alif bejeweled with the point [B linked with Ha, the Point out of which the treasured Name hath been revealed, and the hidden Mystery unraveled and the preserved Secret divulged. It is the point from which all created things have been generated and thereunto have returned. Thereupon We witnessed the Word utter a word which is common to the vocabulary and language of every nation. And no sooner had it been uttered than there shone forth above the horizon of its utterance a Luminary, before whose effulgent splendor the sun in the heavens did obscure. Then the Word exclaimed: Verily the head of seventy is now attired with the crown of forty which is linked up with seven before ten. There at the Word groaned aloud, saying: How strange to see the house unmindful of the landlord, and the son ignoring his father, and in like manner the eager soul turning away from the shelter and abode he hath been seeking.

Paragraph Seven: S.L.

Know thou that We saw the exterior letter *S'ad* (ص) in the Word "Peace" (S'ulh'). It, verily was adorned with the ornament of the upright letter "A" (ا) and is what hath assuredly, been mentioned in an Outspread Tablet. And upon the manifestation of the lights of that Divine Word, the Gate of Heaven was opened, and the Kingdom of the Names appeared. And this matter was completed through the letter "H" (ه) after which it was united to the leveled letter "A" (*alif*) which was adorned with the point (. of the letter "B" = ب) from which the Treasured Name, the Hidden Mystery and the Guarded Symbol (بهاء = Baha) emerged. It, verily, is the Point (.) from which existence hath appeared and unto which it hath returned. The We saw the Word which uttered a Word which every community found to be according to its own tongue and language. When that Word was uttered, a Sun

shone forth from the Horizon of the Announcement, the Light of which eclipsed the sun of the heavens. It said, 'The head of seventy hath been adorned with the crown of the forty and been united with the seven before the ten'. Then it lamented and it said, 'What is this that I see? The house doth not recognize its master neither doth the son pay heed unto his father; nor likewise is the hopeful seeker cognizant of his place of refuge and heaven.

Paragraph Seven: Z

Zeller has not been able to understand and translate the paragraph 7.

Zeller's translation of paragraph 7 is as follows:

You may know that the letter Sad (ص) contained in the word [صالح] is perfected by Alif [ا] for it is mentioned in the revealed tablet. At the appearance of the splendour of the divine word the *door* [باب] of heaven opened and the Kingdom of heaven approached; and after the issue of the letter h [هـ] which being united with Alif was perfected in the *point*. We received the hidden name, the covered mystery, the dark type. The *point* is the bliss into which all things return. Upon this we saw that the word was speaking through the word, and this was made known to different religious communities according to their languages and tongues, then appeared a sun surpassing and obscuring in splendour of the sun of heaven and shouted. The *leader* of the seventy has been crowned with the crowns of the forty; and seven comes before ten. At the same time, it groaned and said: What is it that I see the house whose owner does not know it, neither does the son turn to his father, nor the oppressed to his deliverer.

Paragraph Eight: H.T.

O thou who soarest in the atmosphere of true understanding! He who hath known the fluid that is solid and hath recognized that which is still and yet it soareth, the Seen and the Unseen, the Resplendent and the Hidden, such a man is so carried away by the radiance of His glory that he will soar on the wings of longing in the atmosphere of divine presence, of holiness and reunion.

Paragraph Eight: S.L.

O thou who soarest in the atmosphere of mystic knowledge! Whoso knoweth the One in Whose Person what floweth yet exhibiteth solidity; what soareth yet is at rest; what is manifest yet concealed and what is resplendent yet veiled, shall be seized by the attraction of the divine Effulgences to such an extent that he will fly on the wings of yearning in the atmosphere of nearness, holiness and reunion.

Paragraph Eight: Z.

Oh, thou bird in the heights of science; he who knows how water crystallizes, he who knows the silent happiness, the secret assurance, the covered rise of the sun, he draws in the rays of light in such a manner that he flies with the wings of desire in the atmosphere, approaching the completion of holiness.

Paragraph Nine: H.T.

As regards that which your honor hath mentioned about darkness, We testify that it pervadeth all mankind. Happy is he who is illumined by the light that shineth resplendent from the horizon of the mercy of his Lord, the Most Exalted. Verily darkness is but idle fancies and vain imaginings whereby people are deterred from drawing nigh unto the Kingdom when it was manifested at the bidding of God, the Lord of the realm on high.

Paragraph Nine: S.L.

With regard to that which thine eminence hath mentioned concerning the darkness, We bear witness that it hath encompassed the creatures. Blessed be he who hath been illumined by the Light which shineth forth from the horizon of the Mercy of his Lord, the Most Holy. The darkness is the vain imaginings by virtue of which the people were prevented from turning towards the Kingdom when the King of the Divine Realm appeared with the Cause of God.

Paragraph Nine: Z.

What you learned Sir, have mentioned with regard to the darkness of ignorance is confirmed by us, for the same encircles the sleeping. Blessed is he, who sees in the horizon the rays of the morning with the mercy of the most Holy Lord. Darkness is the illusion of the sleeping, who thereby are prevented from the pilgrimage towards the Kingdom which the Almighty Ruler revealed by His express order.

Paragraph Ten: H.T.

As to the remark thou hast made concerning the view expressed by so-and-so to the effect that there is no difference between us on the subject of Spirit. Indeed, this is true, inasmuch as Spirit is sanctified from being harmed by the outburst of human discord and is exalted above the insinuations of evil suggestions. It is the manifestation of the light of Divine Unity amongst men and the wondrous sign of the Ancient of Days amidst the peoples of the world. Whoever turneth thereunto hath verily turned unto Him Who hath bestowed it and whoso breaketh off from it hath broken off from Him Who generated it and hath given a voice unto it. Verily He hath been supreme above all that hath been and shall be and He now is what He hath ever been. However, the radiance of the light, which is shed upon the mirrors would vary according to the diversity of forms and colors.

Paragraph Ten: S.L.

As for what thou hast mentioned, that a certain person hath supposed that there are no differences between us with regard to the Spirit (Jesus), this is indeed the truth inasmuch as the Spirit (Jesus) is sanctified beyond being overwhelmed by differences or encompassed by symbolic expressions. He, verily, is the Light of Oneness among mankind and the sign of the Ancient of Days among the peoples. He who turneth unto Him (Jesus) hath turned unto He (God) who sent Him

(Jesus) and who rejecteth Him had rejected He who caused Him to be made manifest and to speak forth. He hath ever been what He was and will ever remain the same as what He was; only the Effulgence of His Theophany in the Mirrors varies on account of Their different forms and colors.

Paragraph Ten: Z.

We fully agree to your words with regard to the spirit and see that there is no difference between us. The spirit is too pure to be attained by differences, neither can it be comprehended by outward signs, for he is the appearance of the light of unity among creatures and the symbol of progress between nations. He who receives him, receives him who has sent him, and he who opposes him, opposes him from whom he proceedeth. He is what he is and remains what he has been, but his rays differ according to the purity of the mirrors and according to the difference of forms and colours.

Paragraph Eleven: H.T.

O friend! Should a token of the hidden secret, which is enshrined in mysteries be divulged, the souls of them that have clung to the things current amongst men and cast away that which is with God would be sorely perturbed.

Paragraph Eleven: S.L.

O beloved One! Should a hint of the secret, which was veiled in mystery be disclosed, the hearts of those who cling unto what they possess and cast away what is with God would be thrown into confusion.

Paragraph Eleven: Z.

Oh friend, when the symbol is revealed to those who may be convinced, then the hearts of those will tremble, who have robbed what they possess and thrown away what belongs to the Lord.

Paragraph Twelve: H.T.

O friend! Wert thou to ponder a while upon that which We have imparted unto thee and to fulfill whatsoever hath been mentioned with perfect constancy, surely there shall appear from thy person that which hath appeared in the past.

Paragraph Twelve: S.L.

If thine eminence would ponder upon what We have set forth for thee and rise up according to what hath been mentioned with the greatest steadfastness, there would, verily, be manifest from thee what was previously made manifest.

Paragraph Twelve: Z.

Honoured Sir! When you consider what we told you, then will come to pass through you that which formerly happened.

Paragraph Thirteen: H.T.

O friend! This Bird is fallen into the clutches of tyranny and sedition, unable to find itself a nest wherein it could abide, nor is there a space to wing its way unto it, yet, despite such conditions it summoneth mankind unto the eternal life. Well is it with the attentive ear.

Paragraph Thirteen: S.L.

O beloved one! This Bird is ensnared betwixt the talons of oppression and hypocrisy, and seest no nest wherein he might dwell nor any retreat unto which he might wing his way. In such a state doth He summon mankind unto everlasting life. Blessed be the attentive ear!

Paragraph Thirteen: Z.

Oh friend! The bird is in the claws of oppression and wickedness and findeth no nest where he may rest nor space where to flee to. In this condition the creature supplicates for life everlasting. Blesses is the ear that hears and the eye that sees!

Paragraph Fourteen: H.T.

We entreat God to gather us within a single court and to graciously enable us to do that which is pleasing and acceptable unto Him.

Paragraph Fourteen: S.L.

We ask God that he might bring us together in the same place and might assist us in what He loveth and is well-pleasing unto Him.

The Wronged One

Paragraph Fourteen: Z.

We ask God that He may unite us in the same place and give unto us that which is well-pleasing in His sight.

(Signed) The imprisoned.

The oppressed

Some analyses I

Understanding the Divine Word

Researcher Faruq Izadinia in his descriptive published article²⁷⁵, referring to the Tablet of Hirtik, analyzes the misunderstandings of Zeller while he was engaged in translating this Mighty Tablet for Hardegg. He points out on 7 paragraphs as Zeller's misunderstandings. And Baha'u'llah in a Tablet addressed to Mirza Haydar-Ali²⁷⁶ quoted earlier, mentions that 'these people didn't understand a word of this Mighty Tablet'.

His seven analyses described below:

1. At the beginning of the Tablet, Baha'u'llah refers to Peter, the first who believed in Jesus in these words: *"The first one to believe in Him Who was the Spirit (Jesus) became enraptured by the Word his Lord had uttered, and through the potency of His Words, he turned unto Him and embraced the truth, wholly detached from the worldly things that men cherish. Thus beseem the leviathans of the Most Great Ocean"*.

Zeller translated these meaningful words that is totally devoid of what Baha'u'llah intended to say. His translated words thus: *"He who believes in the Spirit, receives him, he will be clothed with the word of righteousness and through the same he will receive and believe, though he may be cut off from all that is in the hands of men. This is necessary even for the great fishes in the greatest sea"*.

2. The intention of Baha'u'llah while mentioning Peter, when he was asked of being the Christ's follower, withheld his tongue, but Zeller did not understand this intention. Let us see the intention of Baha'u'llah and the translated words of Zeller:

In the paragraph 5 Baha'u'llah writes: *"Verily, great, immensely great, is the Cause of God. Peter, the Apostle, despite his exalted position and lofty station, did hold his tongue when he was interrogated"*. These same words were translated by Zeller thus: *"The matter is great and important; for Peter the Apostle, in spite of his excellence and the eminence of his station, held back his tongue when asked about it"*. He totally misses the point addressed by Baha'u'llah.

3. The translator has done the interpreting work at the face value of the words without understanding the true meaning of them. This especially is obvious in the paragraph 7, where Baha'u'llah writes *"Verily the head of seventy is now attired with the crown of forty which is linked up with seven before*

275. Safineh Irfan, vol. 14, page 401- Understanding the Divine Word.

276. One of the early believers during the time of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha.

ten” There at the Word groaned aloud, saying: How strange to see the house unmindful of the landlord, and the son ignoring his father, and in like manner the eager soul turning away from the shelter and abode he hath been seeking²⁷⁷.

Where Zeller translates: “The leader of the seventy has been crowned with the crowns of forty; and seven comes before ten.” At the same time it groaned and said: What is it that I see the house whose owner does not know it, neither does the son turn to his father, nor the oppressed to his deliverer.

4. Baha’u’llah reiterates in the paragraph 5: *“Verily, great, immensely great is the Cause of God...”* and because of this greatness of the Cause then he gives the reason of the failure of Peter. He says: *“Peter, the Apostle, despite his exalted position and lofty station, did hold his tongue when he was interrogated”*. Yet, Zeller, because of lack of understanding the Words of Baha’u’llah, translates: “The matter is great and important”!
5. Another misunderstanding of Zeller is on the paragraph 8, where Baha’u’llah says: *“O thou who soarest in the atmosphere of true understanding! He who hath known the fluid that is solid and hath recognized that which is still and yet it soareth, the Seen and the Unseen, the Resplendent and the Hidden, such a man is so carried away by the radiance of His glory that he will soar on the wings of longing in the atmosphere of divine presence, of holiness and reunion”*.
6. Where Zeller wouldn’t grasp the meaning of these Words, therefore he translates: “Oh thou bird in the heights of science; he who knows how water crystallizes, he who knows the silent happiness, the secret assurance, the covered rise of the sun, he draws in the rays of light in such a manner that he flies with the wings of desire in the atmosphere, approaching the completion of holiness”. He does not understand that what Baha’u’llah is saying here is the recognition of the Author of Revelation that is bound to complete detachment and needs deep insight in order not to observe the transitory, in order to understand the truth.
7. The paragraph 13 is the indication of Baha’u’llah’s supreme task that even in the direst conditions; He summoneth the mankind to the eternal life. He says: *“O friend, This Bird is fallen into the clutches of tyranny and sedition, unable to find itself a nest wherein it could abide, nor is there a space to wing its way unto it, yet, despite such conditions it summoneth mankind unto the eternal life. Well is it with the attentive ear!”*

Zeller has totally missed the point and has translated the Holy Words as

277. This sentence is a direct address to Hardegg

per his limited understanding: “Oh friend! The bird is in the claws of oppression and wickedness and findeth no nest where he may rest nor space where to flee to. In this condition the creature supplicates for life everlasting. Blessed is the ear that hears and the eye that sees”!

Some Analyses II

Reviewing some aspects of the Tablet of Hirtik

Scholar Muhammad Afnan has written an article²⁷⁸, reviewing some aspects of the Tablet of Hirtik. His scrutinizing pen delves deep in the meaning of some of the terms, which Baha’u’llah has specifically chosen to use for this Tablet that help to better understand its contents. He has not translated the Tablet from Arabic into Persian to access another version of it but has shed light on the meaning of some of its words and sentences, which only by reading the two or three other existing English translation of the Tablet, one would better understand its contents.

Georg David Hardegg, whose story was written above, through some Persian believers approached Abdu’l-Baha, visiting him in Akka at least twice, sometimes in 1872 and through the encouragement of the Persian believers, wrote a letter to Baha’u’llah asking for His identity and some questions for Him to answer, to which, Baha’u’llah revealed this mighty Tablet. Hardegg, though familiar with the Arabic language, yet asked his friend Reverend John Zeller, who was a resident clergy in Nazareth for many years, to translate the response of Baha’u’llah for him.

One of the most important impacts of the Templers’ movement was certainly prompting Georg D. Hardegg to inquire the character of their neighbors’ movement in Haifa and Acre, trying to know their philosophy and the nature of the claim of its Leader. Momen has cited the following:

“I can give notice of yet another spiritual phenomenon, which can strengthen our belief. This concerns 70 Persians, who have been banished to ‘Akka’ on account of their belief. Mr. Hardegg has already spent considerable time and effort to discover the actual basis of their belief, and had dealings with them through an interpreter...”²⁷⁹

As a result of such an inquisitive mind, Baha’u’llah’s answer, opened yet another door of understanding to the Bible’s allusions and references.

278. Perusing some aspects of the Tablet of Hirtik, published in Persian journal Golchin-e Erfan.

279. Momen, op. cit., 236 quoting Hardegg’s essay on the Baha’is.

The heart of the study of the German Templers' episode is this same Tablet, which Afnan navigates deeply into its ocean of substance and polishes its hidden gems, which unfortunately neither the recipient of the Tablet nor those close to his circle could understand and appreciate it and thus, lost their opportunity of recognizing the 'Father' for Whose coming, the Templers left Germany and rushed to the Holy Land to receive Him.

Following is M. Afnan's article conceptually translated.

This mighty Tablet contains many signs referred to the prophecies of the Christian Holy Books, which Hardegg has been familiar with. The indications mentioned by Baha'u'llah Himself open a door of understanding to the hidden meanings of those books. At the same time, Baha'u'llah has used many new expressions that could have been alien to his understanding, such as:

- Melody of the Dove warbling upon the branches²⁸⁰
- Perceive the murmur of water of life²⁸¹
- Well-spring of the Will of the Lord of mankind²⁸²
- Wisdom and Utterance²⁸³
- Word of God²⁸⁴
- Enraptured by the Word of the Lord²⁸⁵
- The Most Great Ocean²⁸⁶
- Inner ear²⁸⁷
- Sweet savors of Utterance²⁸⁸
- Ridding of all attachments of the World²⁸⁹
- Expressed by way of allusions and mysteries amidst the shadows of the words²⁹⁰
- Manifestation of the light of Divine Unity amongst men²⁹¹
- Wondrous sign of the Ancient of Days amidst the people of the world²⁹²
- Perfect constancy²⁹³
- Eternal Life²⁹⁴
- Attentive ear²⁹⁵

280. Hadir'ul-Vargha

281. Kharir-i-Ma'ul Hayavan

282. Ma'in-i-Mashiyyat-i-Malik-i-Imkan

283. Hikmat va Bayan

284. Kalimatu'llah - Christ

285. Jadb-i-Kalimih-i-Rab

286. Bahr-i-A'azam, Baha'u'llah

287. Udun-i-Fitrat

288. Arf'ul-Bayan

289. Monqate'an An-ul Imkan

290. Sirr-i-ma dakara fi ghiahib-ul kalimat bel rumuz va isharat

291. Zuhur-i-Nur-i-Ahadiyyih bain-ul bariyyih

292. Ayit-il-Qadam bain'ul Umam

293. Istiqamitih Kubra

294. Hayat-i-Abadiyyih

295. Udun-i-Va'iyih

- Single court²⁹⁶

There are many more signs that are mentioned in this Blessed Tablet²⁹⁷.

As it has been mentioned earlier, Georg D. Hardegg had written a letter to Baha'u'llah, at which Baha'u'llah has mentioned it as 'Thy sealed letter to the presence of this Wronged One'. The appellation of 'Wronged One' is what Baha'u'llah addresses Himself in many of His Tablets.

In this Tablet, Baha'u'llah praises Hardegg for his sincerity and invites him to ponder on the 'words' of the Tablet, which are the same as those of Christ. Afnan describes that the meaning of the 'the melody of the Dove' is reference to what has been revealed from His Blessed Pen, Who Himself is the Dove of the heavenly Paradise, i.e., the Blessed Beauty, Baha'u'llah.

On the next paragraph, Baha'u'llah addresses Hardegg as 'O friend'²⁹⁸. This designation in both Arabic and Persian literature, is given to those who are very close acquaintance. Accordingly, John, the disciple of Christ also had the title of 'friend'. This could also be the reason for which Baha'u'llah addressed Hardegg as such. His belief and the purity of his intention in the search of Christ, his sincerity and yearning must have won him such a highly designated title from Baha'u'llah, Who expected that Hardegg is worthy of attaining the understanding of the Truth. Yet, his yearning anticipations had not detached him from his attached superstitions, which had enveloped many leaders of religion at the time of the New Revelation.

The word '*friend*'²⁹⁹ in the Baha'i literature has a vast usage. The expressions of '*friends*' and '*friends of God*' are used among the Persians to identify the believers in Baha'u'llah, i.e, 'Baha'is'.

The phrase of '*the Word of God*'³⁰⁰, which has been used both in the Bible and Qur'an, refers to His holiness Christ, but generally it means 'what comes from the World of God' and that is why it is being used for the Manifestation of God and His direct Utterances or Writings.

The phrase '*the first to believe in Him*'³⁰¹ is an innovative expression pertaining to this Revelation, and contains a specific and precise meaning, which in this context, it refers to Peter, the first disciple of Christ. Baha'u'llah indirectly tells Hardegg of what beseemeth him is to ponder the way Peter did by listening to

296. Bisat-i-Vaahid

297. The above statements were taken from Taherzadeh's translation.

298. Ya Habib

299. Habib, plural: Ahbab, and Ahebbba: Friends of God are alluded to the Baha'is.

300. Kalimatu'llah

301. Avval man'a'man – The First Believer

the Word of Christ and became detached from everything else. This is the way the 'leviathans of the Most Great Ocean' react.

Baha'u'llah, then speaks of '*selfish desires*' of the generality of mankind that have deterred them from turning their faces towards '*the Lord of Names*'. Here He assures him that whosoever would behold Him with the 'eye of insight', would only exclaim '*Glorified is my Lord, the Most Exalted*' and would praise the Lord. Where Baha'u'llah addresses Hardegg as 'Arif al khabir', M. Taherzadeh has translated the allusion as '*O thou accomplished man of understanding*' and S. Lambden has translated this same word as '*O thou informed mystic knower*'. According to Afnan, in this Revelation this word has been addressed only to those who have recognized the Truth of the Manifestation and has nothing to do with someone with mystical knowledge common in the jurisprudence of religion. And the word 'Habr', translated as '*wise and discerning*' by Taherzadeh or '*insightful religious leader*', by Lambden, is not used in Persian language, as it is a title given to the leaders of religion. In Arabic, the '*Habr-i-A'zam*' is a title given to the Pope, the maximum leader of the Catholic Church.

In the proceeding lines of the Tablet, reference is made to what testify '*both land and sea have rejoiced at the glad-tiding of the land of God*' as translated by Taherzadeh and '*Land and sea hath rejoiced at the Beneficence of God*' by Lambden, is according to Afnan, '*land and sea rejoice from the beneficence of the Promised One of God*' and '*He Whose rise would purge the ills and infirmities of the nations*', as the expected builder of the Temple, has come.

Afnan uses a past tense for the following line, which Taherzadeh translates '*When appointed Hour is come Carmel will raise her voice and cry aloud*' and Lambden '*When appointed time came, Carmel cried out*'. But Afnan writes: '*The appointed time has come*' and '*Carmel has raised its call. Fortunate are those who have a hearing ear*'.

'No doubt', he writes, '*if anyone would listen with the God-given ears, would hear from the Rock*³⁰² *the testimony of this Revelation*'. Then Baha'u'llah points out that '*such signs and ciphers have already become manifested, and people do see them, but they do not hear the Message and cannot perceive*'³⁰³

Baha'u'llah then, reiterates the subject of 'mystery of reversal', which has been mentioned in His works over and over again, telling of the fall of the Sovereigns and the rise of the downtrodden. Such an allusion has also been mentioned in the previous Holy Books, especially this could be seen in the Bible³⁰⁴ "the first

302. Reference to either Peter, the Rock, or Temple of the Dome of the Rock, which also being called the Rock.

303. Isaiah 35 and 65

304. Mat. 19:30

ones become last and the last ones become first”, and witness to this is the denial of the priests, the learned ones and literary men during the time of Christ, while the one who was a fisherman, became distinguished by his faith, alluding to the First, the Most Outstanding disciple³⁰⁵.

Then Baha’u’llah refers to the loftiness of the Cause and the tests it holds that even Peter, being of such elevated rank, failed confessing his faith.

Baha’u’llah exhorts Hardegg that if he would ponder sincerely and for the sake of God over such occurrences, he would see the light of the Revelation shining in front of his eyes, because the “*Truth is too manifest to become enveloped by veils and the path is too clear for the darkness to prevent its recognition*”. Those who remained deprived from recognition are those who have remained entangled with their idle fancies and remained in the slumber of ignorance. Soon they will be awakened from their sleep and rush forth but shall perceive naught. Happy are those who learned of His Revelation and reached to what the masters of sincerity have attained.

Afnan briefly describes the meaning of what Baha’u’llah reveals as an abstruse sentence to be deciphered of the allusion of ‘the Righteous One’, mentioned in the Bible³⁰⁶. The meaning of adorning the letter ‘S’ in the word ‘Sulh - Peace’ with the vertical ‘Alif – A’, refers to the word ‘Salih – Righteous’ as mentioned in the story of the person who called Christ as the Righteous Master ‘Salih in Arabic’. He denied Himself of such a designation, as it did not pertain to His Revelation. Baha’u’llah mentions that this matter is being recorded in the ‘Lawh-i-Manshur’³⁰⁷, where according to Afnan is an allusion to the Bible, where Taherzadeh translates it as ‘widely disseminated Tablet’ and Lambden as ‘an Outspread Tablet’.

In continuation of this sentence in this Tablet, Baha’u’llah refers to the Revelation of the Bab as ‘opening of the door of Kingdom’³⁰⁸ and appearance of the Kingdom of Names in the World of Being and the fulfillment of the Cause. The connecting of the letter ‘H’ to the horizontal ‘Alif – ‘A’ adorned with a dot³⁰⁹, from which the blessed name of BHA or BAHA becomes manifest and that is the hidden name and concealed mystery and the guarded and veiled divine secret, which is the primal point through which All-things have become manifested and return to³¹⁰.

305. Peter, the first Apostle

306. Mat. 19: 15-17

307. Lawh-i Manshur, refers to widely disseminated Tablet. In many of the Writings of Baha’u’llah, He refers to the Lawh-i Manshur, widely disseminated Tablet, it is the concept of heart, conscience and whatever the Revelation of God requires and permits. It is a Tablet that there is everything in it, even our actions, thoughts, etc. Indeed, it is the universal conscience. But a separate Tablet namely Manshur Tablet does not exist.

308. Fath-i-bab’us-Sama

309. Horizontal Alif adorned with a dot under it, is the letter B in Arabic/Persian.

310. The name BAHA – Glory, was the mystery name of God within the Islamic dispensation, only to be announced by the Promised One, The Bab.

Next, in reference to the sentence of *'We observed the Word utter a Word'*, according to Afnan this sentence is referred to the words pronounced by Christ, Who was the 'Word'³¹¹, Who promised the coming of Paracletes or the Comforter, which again has been mentioned in this Tablet through an abstruse way. The word in Arabic is 'Mu'azzi'³¹² and Baha'u'llah uses the Arabic numerology - Abjad system and gives it as a puzzle to Hardegg to decipher! He says the head of seventy is adorned with forty and was attached to a seven before ten. In the numerology of Abjad, the numerical value of 'Ain'³¹³ is 70 and M' is 40. Z's value is 7 and Y's is 10. Therefore, M adorns the head of 'A, and Z before Y³¹⁴. Thus, M'AZI, once written in Arabic, it reads Mu'azzi. Although the letter Z is doubled, yet the puzzle remains to be solved with only one Z.

Then Baha'u'llah reminds Hardegg, who has stepped into the atmosphere of knowing the Truth, that knowing the Manifestation of God, is indeed the embodiment of opposites, which will lead him to such a sublime ardor and fervor that he would soar in the heaven of holiness and proximity. The Manifestation of God is the 'hidden evidence' and the 'veiled dawning place', in other words, He encompasses the opposites³¹⁵.

Hardegg in his letter to Baha'u'llah refers to darkness and obscurity as it has been mentioned in the Bible³¹⁶, where the Blessed Beauty³¹⁷ affirms that this has enveloped the humanity and gives assurance to those who have become illumined with the light, shining from the horizon of the Mercy of God. Then He adds that darkness is not but their superstitions, which prevent them from approaching the Kingdom of God.

Then Afnan refers to the remaining lines of the Tablet that these are clear proofs of the unity of God and unity of Messengers. He confirms that if there are differences, it is because of the shapes of different mirrors that God has manifested Himself onto them. However, if the truth of such hidden mysteries were divulged, then consternation will envelop those who are fond of their own futile beliefs and have forgotten whatever the 'Lord of Hosts' has chosen for them.

Then Baha'u'llah with utmost kindness admonishes him that if he would arise with full steadfastness in the Cause of God, it will be manifested from him what was manifested from the Disciples of Christ. After such an assurance, Baha'u'llah then mentions of Himself as the Divine Bird being entangled within the grasps of

311. "We observed Christ utter a word".

312. The Comforter, reference to Baha'u'llah

313. Pronounced EIN, not to take it as A, which its value is 1.

314. Taking into consideration that the Arabic alphabet does not have vowels as the Latin alphabet has.

315. The Manifestation of God is the most sublime Being but concealed to the eyes of the people. i.e., Christ, as great as He was, but appeared in the eyes of the people not as the King of Kings, but as a poor man.

316. John, 14, 15, & 16

317. Blessed Beauty and Ancient Beauty refer to the Manifestation of God, here refers to Baha'u'llah.

tyranny and hypocrisy, and has no nest to dwell in, and there is no space where it could take its flight to, yet at such a condition, He guides the people to the everlasting life. Good for those who have hearing ears.

At the end of the Tablet, Baha'u'llah affectionately prays for him that *'We plead God to gather us together within a single habitation and help to confirm us with His good-pleasure'*.

Annex II

The Tablet to Hardegg (Lawh-i-Hirtik) – Stephen Lambden

A Tablet of Baha'u'llah to the Templer Leader Georg David Hardegg
Introduced and translated by Stephen Lambden:

Mirza Husyan 'Ali Nuri entitled Baha'u'llah (the "Splendor of God"³¹⁸, 1817-1892) Who founded the Baha'i Faith in the middle of the 19th century, addressed a number of scriptural tablets³¹⁹ to Christians during the latest, West Galilean³²⁰ period of His religious ministry (1868-1892 CE). Most notably His Lawh-i-Pap³²¹ and Lawh-i-Aqdas³²² which most probably was addressed to Faris Effendi³²³, who had been converted to the Baha'i religion by Mulla Muhammad Nabil-i-Zarandi (1831-1892) in Alexandria (in 1868).

It is now clear that the letter of Baha'u'llah commonly referred to as the Lawh-i-Hirtik was also addressed to a Christian named Gerog David Hardegg³²⁴ (1812-1879). During the time of Baha'u'llah's imprisonment in 'Akka', Hardegg was the leader of the *Tempelgesellschaft*³²⁵ community in Haifa.

On first coming to know something of the nature of the Lawh-i-Hirtik through the note on it in 'Abd al-Hamid Ishraq Khavari's *Ganj-i-Shaygan*³²⁶, I wrote to the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa requesting a copy for detailed study. On receipt of a typed copy, I began to try to work out what the consonants H-R-T-K might signify, as they were evidently neither indicative of an Arabic nor a Persian construction. Ignoring the pointing and guessing that it might indicate the name of the recipient of the letter, the name Hardegg eventually sprang to mind. I then consulted Moojan Momen's *The Babi and Baha'i Religions* and was delighted to find that what was obviously a very garbled translation of the *Lawh-i-Hirtik* had been forwarded by the missionary Rev. John Zeller (c. 1830-1902) to the English Church Missionary Society and identified as a letter of Baha'u'llah to Hardegg. Furthermore, as Zeller's letter forwarding Baha'u'llah's *Lawh-i-Hirtik* was dated July 8, 1872, it may be inferred that the *Lawh-i-Hirtik* was written between late 1868³²⁷ and 8 July 1872. It was thus most probably between late 1871 and early

318. Better known as The Glory of God

319. Known as Alwah in Arabic, plural of Lawh, meaning a Tablet, a divine letter.

320. Acre, in Arabic Akka, in Hebrew Akko

321. Lawh-i-Pap, Tablet to Pope Pius IXth c. 1869.

322. Most Holy Tablet, late 1870s? (Possibly in 1868, because Baha'u'llah received the recipient's letter just before He landed in Haifa/Akka, and probably shortly after He answered that letter as the Most Holy Tablet.

323. Faris Effendi was a Catholic priest in the same prison in Alexandria, Egypt, as Nabil was kept and heard and believed in Baha'u'llah, immediately wrote Him a letter, hence his answers as the Most Holy Tablet.

324. The name of Hardegg is pronounced Hirtik in southern Germany.

325. Meaning 'Association of Templers'

326. Abdu'l-Hamid Ishraq-Khavari, Ganj-e Shaygan

327. When both Baha'u'llah and Hardegg arrived in 'Akka' and Haifa respectively.

1872³²⁸ that Baha'u'llah address this Tablet to the Templar leader.

Hardegg and the Tempelgesellschaft

The *Tempelgesellschaft* was founded by the German theologian and polemicist Christoph Hoffmann³²⁹ whose religious orientation was rooted in German `Pietism of a highly chiliastic nature. Influenced by the belief that God's judgment and the Parousia³³⁰ of Christ were at hand, and critical of the "conventional Christianity" of his day, he came, whilst residing in Ludwigsberg in the early 1850's, to advocate the creation of the "people of God"³³¹. He was apparently influenced either by events of the Crimean War (1853-6) or the belief that the Ottoman Empire was crumbling, in such a way that he convinced the idea that he and his people might become heirs to the biblical promises. He abandoned a theory centering upon the Temple³³² and its restoration and dreamed of a mass emigration to Palestine.

In 1854 such visionary ideas let Hoffmann to establish the *Gesellschaft fur Sammlung des Volkes Gottes in Jerusalem*³³³. In this he was aided by his associate Georg David Hardegg a native and merchant of Ludwigsberg, who had turned to mysticism after being imprisoned for revolutionary activities. By the mid-1850s Hoffmann and Hardegg had managed to enlist around 10,000 members. An attempt was made via the Frankfurt Assembly to petition Sultan 'Abd al-Majid³³⁴ for permission to settle in Palestine. This petition failed and the members of the association had to content themselves with the establishment of a settlement near Marbach (1856). Four of the leaders of the movement, including Hoffmann and Hardegg, visited Palestine in 1858. To some extent they came to realize the largely impractical nature of their eschatologically oriented ambitions. Then, in 1859, the leaders of "God's people" were formally expelled from National Evangelical Church. Consequently, in 1861, they set up their own distinctive religious body at Kirchenhadhof, the *Deutsche Tempel*³³⁵. Hoffmann acted as spiritual leader and Hardegg as provisional secular leader, with an advisory council of 12 elders.

By 1867, number had dwindled to just 3,000, including women and children. Despite this, in 1868, a group of Templar families made an abortive attempt to settle in the Nahalal area. Though by this time a bitter antagonism had come to exist between Hoffmann and Hardegg, it was decided to emigrate to Palestine and attempt to gain support for the movement from there. Thus, both Hoffmann

328. Hijri dates have mostly been used by Baha'u'llah at the time, i.e., 1288-sd1289 AH.

329. b. Leonberg 1815 d. Jerusalem 1885

330. presence, return

331. *Ger. Das Volk Gottes*

332. Jerusalem, Solomon's Temple

333. The Association for the Assembling of God's People in Jerusalem

334. Ottoman Sultan from 1839-1861

335. The German Temple

and Hardegg arrived at Haifa on the 30th of October 1868. They began to be establishing, amidst considerable local opposition and difficulty, an initially agricultural settlement. A few dozen Templer families from Wurrtemberg³³⁶ settled at the foot of the western cape of Mt. Carmel. According to Katz they were “joined by kindred families of German origin from Southern Russia, and by some who had emigrated to America and become citizens, mainly from New York state”³³⁷.

In 1869 Hoffmann migrated to Jaffa where he came to establish a school and a hospital. By 1874 the breach between Hoffmann and Hardegg was such that the latter founded his own Temple Unity having gained the support of about one third or perhaps 200 members of the Haifa community. These supporters of Hardegg subsequently returned to the Evangelistic Church, though the Haifa Templers under new leadership continued to prosper. They contributed notably to the modernization and improvement of local Haifa conditions. Despite sometimes marked local opposition from Muslims and Christian Arabs, the number of Haifa Templers rose from about 300 in the early 1880s to around 750 at the time of the outbreak of the First World War (1914).

Among the letters contained in J.M. Emerson’s travelogue entitled *New York to the Orient* (1886) is one that includes detail about local circumstances in Haifa and Acre including the position of the “German Colony”:

*One of the most noteworthy and interesting features of Haifa is the settlement here of group of Germans, known as the German Colony. They came here some twenty-five years ago, being prompted to emigrate thither by a religious sentiment. There are three distinct colonies of them in Palestine –at Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa – consisting of about one thousand members. The colony here [at Haifa] numbers some three hundred persons, and they are in many respects a remarkable people. The appearance of the part of the city they occupy is in striking contrast with the main town in that it is regularly laid out and is clean and orderly. These colonists are the only people who have ever come to live in Palestine who are self-supporting*³³⁸.

Hardegg and the Baha’i religion

As previously indicated, Baha’u’llah, along with over 70 followers and members of His family, arrived as prisoners at ‘Akka’ on August 31st, 1868, some 40³³⁹ days before Hoffmann and Hardegg arrived at Haifa to found their colony. Though at first subject to strict confinement within the barracks as decreed by Sultan ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, He had, by late 1871, managed to establish Himself in the house of ‘Udi

336. S. Germany

337. Katz 1994:263

338. Emerson 1887:113

339. In fact, it was 60 days.

Khammar in the heart of the Christian quarter of 'Akka'. From there, Baha'u'llah succeeded in gaining the devotion of a number of local notables, including Shaykh Mahmud 'Arrabi³⁴⁰.

Hardegg came into contact with the Baha'is in Haifa and 'Akka' before Baha'u'llah's move to the House of 'Udi Khammar. Jakob Schumacher³⁴¹ a naturalized American citizen of German origin³⁴² and Templer who became head of the Haifa colony after Hardegg wrote the following letter published in the official Templer publication *Suddeutsche Warte* of June 29, 1871:

I can give notice of yet another spiritual phenomenon, which can strengthen our belief. This concerns 70 Persians, who have been banished to 'Akka' on account of their beliefs. Mr. Hardegg has already spent considerable time and effort trying to discover the actual basis of their belief and had dealings with them through an interpreter just yesterday³⁴³.

Shortly after the publication of Schumacher's note on the Baha'is, an article by Hardegg himself, dated June 15, 1871, was published in the same organ of the Templers for 20 July 1871. This article provides some details of Hardegg's effort to understand Baha'i doctrine and history. Hardegg also refers to an interview he had in 'Akka' on 2 June 1871 with Baha'u'llah's eldest son 'Abdu'l-Baha (1844 – 1921), having failed to gain an interview with Baha'u'llah Himself. He also notes his contacts with the Baha'is of Haifa and records his impressions that "these people, despite all the obscurity of their knowledge, were seeking the truth"³⁴⁴. Hardegg most likely made other trips to 'Akka' to investigate Baha'i beliefs and attempt to interest or convert the Baha'is to Christianity.

The missionary James J. Huber (1826-1893), who resided at Nazareth during the 1870s has recorded in a letter dated November 28, 1872, that Hardegg had invited him to accompany him on a visit to 'Akka' (to meet the) Baha'is. They travelled together to 'Akka' in October 1872 having been promised an interview with Baha'u'llah by some of the Baha'is. Perhaps as a result of Baha'u'llah's withdrawal in the house of 'Udi Khammar flowing Baha'i-Azali³⁴⁵ tensions and the misdeeds of certain Baha'is which culminated in the murder of several Azalis.

Hardegg's desire to gain an interview with Baha'u'llah has been referred to by Baha'u'llah Himself in a scriptural Tablet, which was perhaps written around 1875

340. d. late 1890s, later Mufti of 'Akka

341. (1825-1891); American consular agent for Haifa and Acre for almost twenty years),

342. Katz, 1994:120

343. *cited Momen, op. cit., 236*

344. *cited, Momen, ibid 237.*

345. The Azalis are the followers of Baha'u'llah's younger half-brother Mirza Yahya (c. 1830-1914) who was entitled Subh-i-Azal (The Morn of Eternity) and had been exiled to Cyprus from Turkey in 1868.

and addressed to Haji Mirza Haydar ‘Ali Isfahani³⁴⁶. In it Baha’u’llah stated that all the [Holy] Books “make mention of the appearance of the Promised One in the Holy Land”. He alludes to the Templers who came from afar to settle in the regions of the blessed Holy Land. Calling to mind the well-known German Templer inscription *Der Herr ist nahe* [1871]³⁴⁷, the Templers are represented as having said *zuhur nazdik ast*, “The theophany [manifestation] is nigh and we have come that we might attain unto it (his presence).” Nevertheless, Baha’u’llah adds, they remain in great heedlessness.

None of the Templers had become Baha’is. Reference is then made to Hardegg and to the writing or revelation of the *Lawh-i-Hirtik*:

A few years ago, their leader [Hardegg] desired to attain [My] presence but this request was not find acceptance in the most-holy court. Nonetheless, a sublime and Most-Holy scriptural Tablet (Lawh-i-amna’-i-aqdas) was specifically sent down for him. In that Tablet was established that which enableth every righteous one to attain salvation and every wayfarer to reach the goal. Yet the confirmation of the utterance, “Let none touch it save those who are pure” was manifest for they did not attain even a drop of the ocean of its significances³⁴⁸.

Though Baha’u’llah represents the 19th century Templers as a people who failed to understand or respond to His message, the Baha’is seems to have had cordial relations with them. Baha’u’llah Himself, on several occasions, perhaps had personal contact with them in the course of His several trips to Haifa during the 1880 and early 1890s.

346. d. Haifa 1920, cf. Ganj, 172-3

347. Meaning, “God is nigh” (cf. Ruhe, op. cit. 193n)

348. cited Ganj-e Shaygan, 172. A.H. Ishraq-khavari, 1968, Baha’i Publishing, Tehran

Annex III

Tablet of Carmel revealed by Baha'u'llah - Haifa, June/July 1891

As it was mentioned previously, in His fourth visit to Haifa, in June 1891, Baha'u'llah walked over the Mount Carmel, went to the Christian monastery, and was received by the monks and at its vicinity. Later, on the land of the monastery, He revealed in a loud voice the divine verses, which He called the Tablet of Carmel. In this Tablet, He mentions the encounter of the Creator with the Creation, where Baha'u'llah speaks with the ancient Mt. Carmel. It is an interesting dialog. Then, a conversation between Baha'u'llah and the Mount Carmel, which He records in this Tablet.

As there is no time difference of the first or last visit of Baha'u'llah to the Mt. Carmel in a period of 23 years, it seems that His conversation with the Mt. Carmel refers to His first encounter back on August 31, 1868, when He first landed in Haifa prior of being taken to the penal colony of Acre in the same day.

The reader can appreciate in this Tablet, the allusions of Baha'u'llah to the establishment of the future Seat of God over this Mountain³⁴⁹, which fulfills the words of Baha'u'llah in this Tablet, by the building of the Temple of the Lord, the Shrine of the Bab started by Abdu'l-Baha in 1901, followed by the superstructure over the original building by the Guardian Shoghi Effendi in 1953, and the building of the first five administrative building, i.e., the Archives in 1957, followed by the Seat of the Universal House of Justice in 1983, and the building of the International Teaching Centre simultaneously with the building of Centre of the Study of Texts in 1999/2000. The fifth building, i.e., The International Library still to be built in future to be located at the east of the Arc. The building of the 18 Terraces on both north and south of the Holy Shrine of the Bab, inaugurated in 2001, culminates the words of Baha'u'llah in this Tablet.

The Text of the Tablet of Carmel

All glory be to this Day, the Day in which the fragrances of mercy have been wafted over all created things, a Day so blest that past ages and centuries can never hope to rival it, a Day in which the countenance of the Ancient of Days hath turned towards His holy seat. Thereupon the voices of all created things, and beyond them those of the Concourse on High, were heard calling aloud: 'Haste thee, O Carmel, for lo, the light of the countenance of God, the Ruler of the Kingdom of Names and Fashioner of the heavens, hath been lifted upon thee.'

Seized with transports of joy, and raising high her voice, she thus exclaimed: 'May my life be a sacrifice to Thee, inasmuch as Thou hast fixed Thy gaze upon me, hast bestowed upon me Thy bounty, and hast directed towards me Thy steps.'

349. Referring to the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, already majestically built in 1983-5.

Separation from Thee, O Thou Source of everlasting life, hath well nigh consumed me, and my remoteness from Thy presence hath burned away my soul. All praise be to Thee for having enabled me to hearken to Thy call, for having honoured me with Thy footsteps, and for having quickened my soul through the vitalizing fragrance of Thy Day and the shrilling voice of Thy Pen, a voice Thou didst ordain as Thy trumpet-call amidst Thy people. And when the hour at which Thy resistless Faith was to be made manifest did strike, Thou didst breathe a breath of Thy spirit into Thy Pen, and lo, the entire creation shook to its very foundations, unveiling to mankind such mysteries as lay hidden within the treasures of Him Who is the Possessor of all created things.'

No sooner had her voice reached that most exalted Spot than We made reply: Render thanks unto thy Lord, O Carmel. The fire of thy separation from Me was fast consuming thee, when the ocean of My presence surged before thy face, cheering thine eyes and those of all creation, and filling with delight all things visible and invisible. Rejoice, for God hath in this Day established upon thee His throne³⁵⁰, hath made thee the dawning-place of His signs and the dayspring of the evidences of His Revelation. Well is it with him that circleth around thee, that proclaimeth the revelation of thy glory, and recounteth that which the bounty of the Lord thy God hath showered upon thee. Seize thou the Chalice of Immortality in the name of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, and give thanks unto Him, inasmuch as He, in token of His mercy unto thee, hath turned thy sorrow into gladness, and transmuted thy grief into blissful joy. He, verily, loveth the spot which hath been made the seat of His throne, which His footsteps have trodden, which hath been honoured by His presence, from which He raised His call, and upon which He shed His tears.

Call out to Zion, O Carmel, and announce the joyful tidings: He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come! His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest; His all-encompassing splendour is revealed. Beware lest thou hesitate or halt. Hasten forth and circumambulate the City of God that hath descended from heaven, the celestial Kaaba³⁵¹ round which have circled in adoration the favoured of God, the pure in heart, and the company of the most exalted angels. Oh, how I long to announce unto every spot on the surface of the earth, and to carry to each one of its cities, the glad-tidings of this Revelation--a Revelation to which the heart of Sinai hath been attracted, and in whose name the Burning Bush is calling: "Unto God, the Lord of Lords, belong the kingdoms of earth and heaven." Verily this is the Day in which both land and sea rejoice at this announcement, the Day for which have been laid up those things which God, through a bounty beyond the ken of mortal mind or heart, hath destined for revelation. Ere long will God sail His Ark³⁵² upon thee and will manifest the people of Bahá³⁵³ who have been mentioned in the Book of Names.'

350. The Seat of the Universal House of Justice

351. Point of Adoration

352. The Administrative Centre as mentioned before, the Ark's buildings.

353. Members of the Universal House of Justice elected every five years, who legislate laws not in the Holy Texts.

Sanctified be the Lord of all mankind, at the mention of Whose name all the atoms of the earth have been made to vibrate, and the Tongue of Grandeur hath been moved to disclose that which had been wrapt in His knowledge and lay concealed within the treasury of His might. He, verily, through the potency of His name, the Mighty, the All-Powerful, the Most High, is the ruler of all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth³⁵⁴.

354. Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 173, Baha'i Publishing Trust, India

ANNEX IV

The Circle of Cypress Trees

At the south of the Shrine of the Bab, over the wall on the Terrace 11, there is a circle of old cypress trees, about nine of them now, though accordingly, the original number has been fifteen. Apparently, this cluster of the trees was part of the land purchased by the Master Abdu'l-Baha. At continuation some research is done, due to its mention in some Baha'i literature and its existence up today.



Maria Deiss at her wedding to Mr. Vonberg

the date of this photo, the land is likely to have been in Baha'i hands. The Master was initially, only be able to purchase two plots, one where the trees stood, and the other where the Shrine was to be built³⁵⁷ Another possible reason for taking such a photo would be to record the site where Baha'u'lah visited. We know from another photo that Abdu'l-Baha planted a fruit orchard where these grape vines are located within probably between 1900 and 1905. We also know from the note attached to the rear of this photo that Abdu'l-



Maria Deiss Vonberg and her family. Maria Deiss daughter of Wilhelm Deiss, from whom Abdu'l-Baha purchased the land on which stands the cypress trees cluster.

According to Andrew Blake³⁵⁵, with the help of Ali Nakhjavani³⁵⁶, in his detailed pictorial history, presented in 2001, mentions these types of the trees, have been identified as *Cupressus sempervirens*. The identified picture has been dated pre-construction of the Shrine, possibly in late 1890s or early 1900s. In his analysis of the photo, he writes: “*There is no sign of the Shrine – the first building to be constructed in this area. At*



Gerhardt and Ghertie Schmelzle and the family in Australia. Gerhardt's grandfather was a good friend of Abdu'l-Baha, who would regularly visit them.

355. Andrew Blake horticulturist, served at the BWC during the project of the Terraces of the Shrine of the Bab.

356. Ali Nakhjavani, served as member of the Universal House of Justice for 40 years, (1963-2003), he also was member of the second Baha'i International Council, 1960-1963.

357. Comments quoted by Ali Nakhjavani.



Gerhardt and Ghertie Schmelzle fourth generation Templers and their daughter and grandchildren.

Baha purchased this land from someone who grew grapes here³⁵⁸, this may be one of the earliest photos we have of this area. So, this photo is likely to have been taken at some time between 1895 and 1905³⁵⁹”.

Once the BWC staff, A Blake, who made a study on the existing vegetation of the Baha’i property over the Mount Carmel, wrote: *“It was reported by Mr. G. Schmelzle, a Baha’i from Australia who was reared in the German Templer Colony in Haifa, that*

the area behind the Shrine of the Bab was owned by a relative of his. ‘Abdu’l-Baha attempted to buy the site of the trees but was refused because the ground was covered with grapevines – a source of income. Shortly afterwards the grapevines developed a blight and died. ‘Abdu’l-Baha was then able to buy the land he wanted³⁶⁰” The sale of the land has been prior to the commencement of the construction of the Shrine of the Bab, in 1901.

D. Ruhe writes: *“The Templer Wilhelm Deiss not only planted the famous cypresses behind the Shrine of the Bab, but also sold his vineyard on the mountain to ‘Abdu’l-Baha, then became His gardener. The Guardian, as is recorded in ‘The Priceless Pearl’, appreciated his Templer neighbors for their solid virtues, myopic though they were with regard to the significance of the Faith and its fulfillment of Bengel’s Prediction³⁶¹.*

Gerhard and Gertie Schmelzle, together with their daughter, Jessica – the only known Baha’is from Templer background, visited Maria Vongerg Deiss, daughter of Wilhelm in 1975 in Melbourne when she was over eighty years old. Jessica Schmelzle made a tape recording and later on transcribed and sent to the Baha’i World Center, recounting of almost daily visits of Abdu’l-Baha to her father conversing about the land and the crops Wilhelm had. Abdu’l-Baha was interested to buy his land and for a long time W. Deiss was not interested to sell it, she said: *“...up to the day when all the vineyard, were destroyed by a fungus, then he sold the vineyard to Him. Mr. Deiss became later gardener of Abdu’l-Baha. In the very early days, he planted – Mr. Wilhelm Deiss planted the cypresses under which later Baha’u’llah was sitting when...³⁶²”*

358. Wilhelm Deiss, a German Templer, who Abdu’l-Baha befriended and used to visit regularly for the purchase of his piece of land, which was so important to Him,

359. The identified photo AVD number is NN 3365 FN 6255.2, provided by Mr. Andrew Blake.

360. Which included the clump of cypress trees.

361. The German, Johann Albrecht Bengel predicted the fulfilment of the coming of Christ will be in 1836.

362. Tape recording AV CT 141 – 355

In a Tablet from Abdu'l-Baha reiterates the existence of the cypress trees when the land was going to be purchased by Him:

“Abdu'l-Baha wrote: "There was a huge piece of land above the land of the Holy Shrine which if it would be in hands of the strangers, they would have built something on it which would result a big problem. And that land was many times trodden by the Holy steps of the Blessed Beauty. There were some cypress trees on it. Under their shadow, the Ancient Beauty had sat several times and the friends would come to His presence. That piece of land in these days was purchased for a high amount of two thousand tumans and was added to the Holy Shrine³⁶³”.

It is not known the reason why Wilhelm Deiss, a Templar, has planted in his vineyard a cluster of 15 cypress trees in a form of a circle. Among all the available Templers literature, nothing indicates pointing to discover the reason for the plantation of these trees. Any thought might merely be a speculation.

As per the Baha'i Persian literature, it is recorded by the story of Husayn Iqbal, who was present at the time when Baha'u'llah was sitting on a chair in the middle of the circle of cypress trees and Abdu'l-Baha sitting in front of Him, listening to the utterances of Baha'u'llah, indicating to His son, about the exact place where the remains of the Bab should be interred. It was sometimes in late June 1891 when Baha'u'llah visited Haifa for the last time and climbed the Mount Carmel visiting the Cave of Elijah and the Christian monastery on the top of Mount Carmel, where at its vicinity³⁶⁴ Baha'u'llah revealed the Tablet of Carmel. Iqbal, when at the presences of the beloved Guardian sometime in 1949 recounting the story, he was then encouraged to write down this story so he could make it a part of the history of the Faith. Iqbal recounted that there were 15 young cypress trees whose trunk thickness were around the thickness of a finger³⁶⁵ which had a scant shade. This suggests that the trees were around five or six years old, which make the time of their cultivation around 1886³⁶⁶.

What Templers say?

Martha Otto at a request, wrote to the German Templers in May 2015, asking the ex-president of the Society and the archivist/historian of the Society³⁶⁷ about this issue. The following is what she received and shared for the sake of this Annex.

He wrote to M. Otto:

“I cannot find the answers to your questions in my memory alone but will have to find some older files and plans. It is quite remarkable how many persons have lately shown an interest in the origin of the cypresses on Mt. Carmel... Obviously,

363. Selections of the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha, vol. 4, p. 68. Persian

364. Today it is the site of the future House of Worship.

365. Around one inch of thickness, although such a small trees do not give shade enough to cover one from the June sun in Haifa. They must have been thicker than an each.

366. M.A. Faizi, Malakei-i-Karmel, pp.41-42.

367. Peter Lange the ex-Archivist of the Tempelgesellschaft. Peter Lange has been a great help with this study.

the Baha'is are of the opinion that a German Templar had created a circular cypress grove half-way up Mt. Carmel in extension of the street of the German Colony. A circular earth wall had indeed been built to supply the trees with rainwater. I have such a photograph. After the reconstruction of the Baha'i Gardens and the Shrine of the Bab, pictures show a circular cypress grove directly above the Shrine. My assumption is that the cypress grove was planted prior to the construction of the Shrine by Baha'is in order to mark the spot designated by Baha'u'llah where the Shrine should be built. After the construction of the Shrine these trees were left there and venerated.

one of the inquirers, contradicts this assumption by saying that there were indications that this group of trees was planted by Templars from the colony. To date I have not found any proof, therefore. Why should the Templars have planted these trees half-way up the mountain? As Archivist of the Temple Society, I know practically every document or memorial booklet from the early years of the colony, and I have never seen anything of the sort. But I do want to check whether we still have plans of the plots of the colonists on Mt. Carmel, and whether Wilhelm Deiss owned land there.

Please tell me honestly what this searching of the planter of one or more trees all is about. I don't want to invest a lot of time in answering a relatively insignificant question. Who has created the "rumor" that the cypresses come from the Germans? They certainly planted some in the gardens of the colony, but as for Mt. Carmel, I have only heard about vines being planted there.

I will contact you again when I have found some useful information to solve this problem³⁶⁸.

With the above description, it becomes obvious that the Templars per se as a Society have not had this circle of cypress trees planted, therefore, the aspect of this being a memorial site for them should be discarded. The only other possible aspect, which might still be relevant, and this cannot be proved yet, is that Wilhelm Deiss planted the cluster in his land as a personal inspiration of which he did not divulged a word to anyone. The mystery remains unsolved.

368 Email from Martha Otto to the writer, May 26, 2015



Probably Cornelia Wortz, who lived near Abdu'l-Baha, who associated with the family of the Master and their daughters did handy work together.



Maria Deiss Vonberg and the family



Baha'i land on Mount Carmel during the time of the Guardian



Shrine of the Bab during the time of the inauguration of the Terraces, 2001

ANNEX V

German Quotations on Templer Houses in Haifa³⁶⁹

House # 1, year 1870, *"Lord let thy countenance shine above us"*

Museum bldg. year 1869, Gemeindehaus der Templer *"Should I forget thee Jerusalem may my right hand be forgotten"*

Same house, year 1890 *"The Lord has helped up to now"*

House # 26 on the side: *"Emmanuel – God with us"*

House # 32 on the side: *"Thy Kingdom Come"*

House # 18 *"From the depth I call to you Lord."*

House # 15-year 1870 inscription has been removed.

House # 4 *"All the help that came before and after was done by thee"*

House # 7 Today the Post Office *"The spirit and the bride speak come Lord Jesus"*

House (# removed) On side of house *"...he will inherit of old"*

House # 61 *"Commend your ways to the Lord and trust in Him, He will do well"*

House # 53 on the side: *"Lord who will remain on your holy mountain"*

House # 43 House :Levon T." on the side: *"He that overcometh shall inherit all things"*

On Hagafen Str. Next to Baha'i Tent Garden: ***"The Lord is Nigh"***

369 Translated into English by Martha Otto, ex-BWC volunteer during the research of this study. She was a great help.

ANNEX VI

Memories of Haifa and the Baha'i in the past and now Recounted by some Templers from Australia

Recently I had the great pleasure of a visit by Tante Kathe (Beilharz Jetzt Keller), our pre-school kindergarten – teacher in Haifa. Tante Kathe guided us in the thirties from the age of three up to the age of six or seven towards school discipline, singing, listening to stories, and games. On one occasion I remembered being marshaled in awe – nothing to be touched³⁷⁰, through the beautiful gardens over the rustling crush-tile paths, down to many tiring steps.

Forty years later, Tante Kathe as youthful as ever, gave me two treasured color photos of Haifa. One, a view of our “Kolonie” was hastily incorporated in my colored postcard collection “views of Haifa” dating back to at least 1905. On this recent photo our “Kolonie” is crowned by ever-present dome of the Baha'i.

Our oldest record of the Baha'i, then called Babi, is in Fr. Lange's 'History of Temple Society' pps 446 – 448. It refers to a report by Hardegg in the “Warte” about a visit to Abbas Effendi (Abdu'l-Baha) – in Acre – presumably in 1872.

Now last month (over 100 years later) the following extract appeared in “Treffpunkt 205” Interesting to us today is the fact, that the Baha'i World Center Library in Haifa shows lately a lively interest in our literature, and has acquired through its chief, Mr. William P. Collins, the new edition e.g., the various Carmel Books, as well as the Beilharz – Chronik and our Cemetery – in memoriam – booklet.

The cursory reader this news may have been interesting. On reflection however some sobering facts emerge. For my own enlightenment, I dearly hope to be corrected. Since Chr. Rohrer's 'Is the Bible....' In the thirties or twenties, there has been no book from our midst until C. Bitzer's and L. Beilharz's books, not even a customary critique putting Carmel's seemingly slanted 1868 – 1918 book into a proper perspective.

The Baha'i on the other hand realized a long time ago, that to substantiate and illuminate their founders, they have to glean every grain of reference from every possible source, and for this purpose they have the Baha'i World Centre Library in Haifa. Based on these admirable resources center they print comprehensive, well-illustrated books e.g. 'The Baha'i World', which the local Baha'i Community donates to your district library. I suggest a visit to your nearest library to look up the Baha'i as a most interesting, educational and sobering experience. Let's learn from them.

370. Referring to the Baha'i Gardens over Mt. Carmel

In 'The Baha'i World 1868-73' I came across the familiar 1877 view of Haifa with the following footnote: German Templar Colony at foot of Mt. Carmel, Haifa, Engraving 1877. "The Templars³⁷¹", wrote Shoghi Effendi in "God Passes By", "in anticipation of the coming of the Lord had forsaken their homes and forgathered at the foot of the mountain in the same year of Baha'u'llah's Declaration in Baghdad 1863".

Shoghi Effendi – Abbas Effendi's grandson – the so-called Guardian, walked frequently in the cool of the evening in the shade of our tree-lined 'Alleen'³⁷² in the thirties, usually lecturing to several reverently following disciples, who intermittently would bow to him.

The governing body, which took over on Shoghi Effendi's passing is well described in The Baha'i World. Let me not weary you with organizational details, nor the dogmatism of Baha'u'llah's teachings, in such rules as: no alcohol, no drugs that confuse the mind. However, let me take you to the Encyclopaedia Britannica 1978. Under 'Haifa the same up-to-date view of our Kolonie as Tante Kathe's (Grandfather Ehmann's house already on the 1869 plan of the Kolonie, still there, on the top left-hand side of Carmel Avenue). Yet no note of who planted the many beautiful tree mentioned, not who planned or built the suburb shown, but the Persian Gardens and the Baha'i are referred to. The Baha'i Faith of course merits several pages in the tail in the Macropedia interspersed with such data as: in 1971 they had National Governing Bodies in 100 countries and no fewer than 6000 local spiritual assemblies world-wide.

As said before, these active, local communities donate their literature to local libraries. There we can read through Dr. Esslemont's 'Baha'u'llah and the new Era'. Many passages strike a responsive chord: e.g. page 79 ...Some are content with, but the through the words is tested by deeds and dependent upon life. Deeds reveal the station of the man...

Passages like these are food for thought. Here we have a sect, no older than our own, as little aggressive in their missionary zeal (Esslemont p.80) as we are yet imbued with the same unadulterated altruism of our now seemingly unreal experiment in Palestine. The deeds spoke louder than words. Remember how to huge establishment of a new Haifa was triumphed over. Pettychism could not prevent Hardegg's visionary stamp of beauty being indelibly imprinted generations to come on the face of Haifa.

Yet where is our pale counterpart to the Baha'i W.C. Library³⁷³? Where can our young, trained in the use of reference libraries, nourish their knowledge of our

371. Should read 'Templers'. Not to be mistaken by Medieval Knights Templars, the Catholic military order.

372. Tree-lined Street or boulevard

373. Should read: Baha'i World Centre Library

heritage by means of sensibly collated material of all aspects of our past? This void must perplex in spite of our negligence, tribute to our pioneering work can be found in new Israeli reference books, tribute to deed, a natural human characteristic.

I sincerely hope, our editor's intention to print articles on the past, and on member's opinions on issues concerning the present will eventually give a balanced view of 'the quality of life' of our settlements. Contrasted against the progress or otherwise, have achieved as 'sybarites wallowing in affluence'. We may even find an answer to the nagging question, why we, with the most 'liberated' of teachings linger toward His Kingdom, while the Baha'i sect in spite of dogmatism of Baha'u'llah's and Abdu'l-Baha's (Abbas Effendi) teachings has been growing spectacular working towards His Kingdom on Earth.³⁷⁴

Werner Ehmann

374. This interesting article written by a Templer, presumably in original German and then translated into English, analyzing the Templers and Baha'is movements from an objective point of view. The Templer Record No. 385 – Werner Ehman, May 1979. Copy of the article was obtained from the Baha'i World Center Library.

ANNEX VII

“Der Herr ist nahe”

The early Templers in Haifa

The following article is a transcription of a recorded tape by Gerhard Schmelzle in 1975. The copy of this article was obtained from the Library of the Baha'i World Center. Gerhard's mother was a Templer. The tape was sent to the Baha'i World Center where it was transcribed. Together with the tape, some pictures have also been sent along with the tape, as described in this article, but seemingly they are not available. Separately, some pictures – probably relevant to the article were given to the writer in 2002/3 by Mr. Saeid Darakhshan of Australia, during his volunteer service at the Baha'i World Center, Haifa.

The photos are numbered for clarification.

Photo number 1 says “A street in Haifa, the house Baha'u'llah occupied for the time.” We questioned several people including the Mayor of Haifa. This house belonged to the family of Friederich Appinger and was built (in) 1905, and therefore was not in existence at the time of Baha'u'llah. Later this house was renovated and rebuilt into the motel – hotel Appinger, which is still in existence on the top of Mount Carmel Avenue.

Photo number 2, 2a and 2b, is the house of the Pfander family. When I went to South Australia in search for the elderly Templar people, I was guided to the home of Mrs. Wilhelmine Dininger, spelled WILGELMINE DININGER. Her maiden's name is Wilhelmine Pfander, the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Pfander who did build the house around 1869 – 71 and engraved over the door “Der Herr ist nahe.” The elderly lady, Mrs. Dininger was born in the house in eighteen hundred and eighty-seven (1887).

On {...} the picture number two I showed and explained to her how near her grandparents were to the truth, that the Herr – the Herr was near through the presence of Baha'u'llah when He pitched His tent on the foot of Mount Carmel, next to her home. When I told her this, she gave me a most wonderful smile and said quietly “I saw Baha'u'llah. I must have been a girl between four and five of age” she said. “They brought a Man in, very sick into my grandfather's and father's home. Several Persian men and women were with Him. There was a moment when the door of the room was open and no one around, my curiosity took over” she said, “and I went to the room and looked behind the door where the bed was standing. I saw Baha'u'llah. He was sick and weak, and I saw His piercing eyes and the long black hair.”

It came later to me that the name Baha'u'llah would not have been strange to her, as the children grew up with the Arabic language as well as their own. She said, “Baha'u'llah was only for a few days in the room.” On photo number 2, I made a cross over the window of the room Baha'u'llah was in for a short time. I questioned her several times – if she was sure it was Baha'u'llah. She said, “Yes, I knew the name.”

It is for the House (of Justice) to decide how authentic this story is – story can

be. Personally, I felt very blessed listening to her. Mrs. Wilhelmine Dininger lives with her daughter now at 98 Avenue, Joslin, South Australia³⁷⁵.

On picture 3 is Mrs. Vonberg, former(ly) Maria Deiss in her younger years, she is now over eighty. I found Mrs. Vonberg in a home for elderly people in Tanunda, 50 miles north of Adelaide. Gisela and Evelyn, my two daughters, came with me because they knew her from the time they were little. When we saw her first her face had a heavy fixed expression, due to long term of medication, the matron told us, and I was warned that she has not spoken for three months besides saying please and thank you. My heart dropped; I thought I was too late. Mrs. Vonberg looked – uh – Mrs. Vonberg took us to her room and sat down in a fixed pose – fixed pose and looked – and looked at us. So, I had to speak all the time. I told her why I came, asked her about ‘Abdu’l-Baha in connection with her family, if she would – and if she would have any pictures, and if she could tell me about ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s visit to her parents’ home and, etc., etc. I spoke to her for more than one hour. Then I said I had to go, if I could see her the next day again? Her eyes smiled and to our biggest surprise she said loud and clear, “Come tomorrow at half past one, but I have one picture you can have, and I will look for them tonight.” She kissed us and brought us to the door and waved for quite a time. The girls and I felt very happy, and we remembered the time years back when Mrs. Vonberg came to our house and we would sit around her listening to her telling us from ‘Abdu’l-Baha and she not once would stutter, while she very often would stutter through any other conversation. Next day I went again to see Mrs. Vonberg. She had the photos all ready and talked to me about her parent’s home in 79 Allenby Road where ‘Abdu’l-Baha was a friend of the family. ‘Abdu’l-Baha always came by Himself to rest in her parents’ garden. He would suck the honey flowers and sit on the little wall at the well. ‘Abdu’l-Baha gently several times, or better, from time to time would ask her father if he would sell the vineyard on Mount Carmel. Naturally, the answer was no, up to the day when all the vineyards were destroyed by a fungus, then he sold the vineyard to Him. Mr. Wilhelm Deiss became later the gardener of ‘Abdu’l-Baha. In the very days, he planted – Mr. Wilhelm Deiss planted the cypresses under which later Baha’u’llah was sitting when He revealed the Tablet of Carmel. Mrs. Vonberg gave all the details of all the visits of ‘Abdu’l-Baha to her parents’ home plus her personal contact with ‘Abdu’l-Baha to Thelma Hewson to be written down and sent to Ruhyyih Khanum³⁷⁶. I saw the Hewson family and they said a full report on the Deiss family in connection with ‘Abdu’l-Baha has been given to Ruhyyih Khanum some years ago. Mrs. Vonberg spoke for more than two hours to me. The matron came in several times, and I could see that she could not believe what she saw. We spoke in German and therefore she didn’t know what was involved. But the word did go around before I even left her that Mrs. Vonberg spoke for a long time, and

375. Joslin is a suburb of Adelaide in the City of Norwood. Wikipedia

376. Mary Maxwell, daughter of May and William Maxwell who became wife of Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Baha’i Faith in 1937. She was given the name, for which she was famous, as Ruhyyih Khanum, meaning ‘Handmaiden of Glory’.

she seemed to be very happy. We both parted in loving memory of 'Abdu'l-Baha. When I left Mrs. Vonberg, I was asked by many people, "what made her speak? Why was she so happy?" What could I say? Before I even knew, I said, her love to 'Abdu'l-Baha. To explain who was 'Abdu'l-Baha, I had to tell her, or better I should say, I had the opportunity to tell them first of Baha'u'llah.

In her parents' home, 79 Allenby Street is still Mrs. – Miss Paulin – Paulin Deiss living. We feel it is best for Gisela to make contact again to get the permission to take photos of the house, garden, balcony, etc. it would be so much better to read the report Mrs. Vonberg gave years ago to Ruhyyih Khanum to understand and to find - to understand this story better and to find the places of interest.

Number 3-1 shows the house of the family Deiss in the very early times. It is marked with little square around it.

Photo number 4 shows Mr. Johannes Pross, the mayor of Haifa and his wife Maria. He remembered 'Abdu'l-Baha very well but had not been in contact – had not been in contact with Him. He thinks, and several people did agree that 'Abdu'l-Baha could have been knighted in the Governor's residence in Hospital Street, corner Allenby Street. Mr. Pross said the document should be still there.

In photo number 5 we see great-grandfather Bubeck's house standing right at the end of Mount Carmel Avenue. To me it says, 'Behold, to here and not further.' Right where his house was standing is the beginning of the path towards the stairs, which lead up to the Shrine. So, this little house stopped any further building in the line of the Carmel Avenue towards the Shrine. God works in mysterious ways!

Photo number 6, Bubeck's home and shed on the property blocking the way to the Shrine.

Photo number 7 shows that the blockage, great-grandfather Bubeck's house, including the shed are demolished by nineteen hundred twenty-nine (1929) or even earlier, and the way up to the Shrine is free.

Number 8. A Templar wedding. Abdu'l-Baha did send lots of white carnations for the Templar Hall where the wedding was held. The festival part of the wedding was held at great-grandfather Bubeck's home. Gerhard's auntie, Cornelia Wortz, lived at the time of 'Abdu'l-Baha, in Hospital Street at her parents' home, the little home which lies back from the street and next to Gerhard's mother's home, where Tony took the photo of us with the Jewish family. 'Abdu'l-Baha came quite frequently to Gerhard's grandfather's home. 'Abdu'l-Baha would call out, "Don't you want to give an old man a glass of water." 'Abdu'l-Baha would talk for a little while outside with grandfather and then would wander on. One day, grandfather

asked Him to come into the house and not to stay in the sun. 'Abdu'l-Baha told His companions to go on and followed grandfather into this house. They talked about the harvest of the wheat and (on) grandfather's vineyards. From that time, 'Abdu'l-Baha, when He passed grandfather's home, would wave His companions and go alone, to see grandfather. 'Abdu'l-Baha gave auntie Cornelia three – three rings on different occasion. One she is still wearing. When she was sick, 'Abdu'l-Baha came several times and visited her and brought her apple juice. Auntie Cornelia spent nearly every afternoon with the daughters of 'Abdu'l-Baha on the roof – on the roof balcony of Gerhard's mother's house, next to grandfather's house. They did do needle work and talked and had a happy hour. Auntie Cornelia said that they were very happy girls, and they had a long-term friendship.

'Abdu'l-Baha invited for three days to Bahji where she met the (Greatest) Holy Leaf. Nineteen-hundred seventeen (1917), when the first Germans – when the first German airplane landed in Haifa with Lt. Railing and observer Parker, 'Abdu'l-Baha asked two gardeners to pick the nicest flowers and then He asked Auntie Cornelia if she would take the flowers and welcome the officers in His name. She still is full of joy when she talks about 'Abdu'l-Baha and His family. Auntie Cornelia lives in Melbourne. For years and years 'Abdu'l-Baha would pass Gerhard's parents' home every day at the same time and would wave to his mother on the balcony and she would wave back to Him, but they never actually met. Gerhard's mother was a Templar.

This is as far as our search took us. We went to all the places where the Templars lived. Barossa Valley, Adelaide, other places in South Australia, Bayswater, Boronia, East Bentley, Richmond, in Victoria. In Sidney are a few people left but not from Haifa.

There are – there are hardly any left of the old people who knew 'Abdu'l-Baha. We will keep on trying to learn of more points of interest and we try for more photos.

The blessing of Baha'u'llah may be with all of you.

Love, Gerhard and Gertie

Correction: Dininger is spelled DEININGER.

We also include two documentary plans of the settlement of Haifa, which may be of use as the Persian properties are shown.

END

Recording received from Mrs. Gerhard Schmelzle through her daughter Gisela in 1975.

Miss Gisela Schmelzle
c/o Dernacourt Junior Primary School
Parsons Parade
Dernacourt
Adelaide
South Australia³⁷⁷

23. Abdu'l-Baha's short stories on the German Templers³⁷⁸

Added information in Feb. 2019 from the book: the diary of Badi Bushrui

While he was studying in Beirut, Badi accompanied Abdu'l-Baha in the Holy Land for over two years. He was the confidant of the Master. In many conversations the beloved Master told him and some other friends present on different matters such as German Templers.

The whole story of the Master's relocation to Tiberias from 20th of August to 26th of September 1916 – during the First World War – to arrange for the transportation of grains. He had the Persian Baha'is from Yazd who had been called to establish themselves in Adasiyyih and work in the huge pieces of land He had then purchased and had His uncle Mirza Muhammad-Quli, the youngest half-brother of Baha'u'llah to live and supervise them. It took Abdu'l-Baha almost forty days in the heat of the summer of that year, staying in the German Templer's hotel in Tiberias and organize the very intricate matter of transportation of the grain to Haifa and Akka, to save the people from starvation. He was quite happy to stay in the Hotel with his two companions, each occupying one room, having their meals prepared by the Hotel's cook. They had high regards for the Master, and He could negotiate a flat rate for His staying during all that period, where the tourists were scarce, and it was convenient for both parties. For sure there have been conversation with the Germans by the beloved Master, but these are not recorded. Many a time Badi mentions of a full description of the Master regarding the Templers in Haifa, their history, their contacts but unfortunately these have not been recorded in the diary, except some extracts here and there that these will be mentioned below.

First of all, during the war, the Ottoman Army had confiscated any available food for its own soldiers. Secondly, the Army had confiscated the camel and other

377. Tape recording AV CT 141 – 355

Dr. David Ruhe has added by hand to first draft of transcription "northwest room first floor".

First draft transcription contains the following insertion, which is not a part of the tape: "[Dr. Esselmont, in his pilgrim notes, says that this house was demolished by the British Army at the end of the war...1918 or 1919]"

378. Badi Busrui, extracts from his book of Dar Zell-e-Shajareh-e Mithaq (Under the shadow of the Tree of the Covenant),

means of transportation for the use of the Army. Thirdly, if it would find out of the availability of any food, it would confiscate it. Therefore, Abdu'l-Baha had to solve these problems before He could have the grain to be taken away.

He had friendly relationship with the Governors and the Army Commandments of different cities. He had to see them and clear the loads from being confiscated in different check-posts, in a time that the scarcity of food had taken the mercy of the people away. Everybody was hungry and, in this chaos, to take food from one city by caravan to another, it needed armed men to accompany the caravan and clearance permits, sometimes with the requirement of five different signatures of the authorities for the caravan leader to be able to pass the check-posts for free passing.

On the page 231 of the book, regarding Tuesday 14th of September 1916 –Haifa he says:

During the afternoon, together with one of the servants of the Threshold we took a walk at the presence of the Master and in a new piece of land located at the end western side of the Colony, whose well had recently reached water, He sat a while and said: Make this well a path to be a benefit for all the people. Then He made a mention of the Germans of this town that they have put a cap over all the wells and have deprived the people. Then He said that 'Man should always strive to the point possible to become cause of good.'

On the page 277 there is the following comment by the beloved Master, Tuesday, 12 October 1915:

...In the afternoon He took a walk leaving His home in Haifa, when He reached the German Colony, He said: "It is the quarter of silence"³⁷⁹ there is no physical movement neither spiritual. They always working and have a good ambition –high mindedness. It would have been excellent if they would had spent this ambition in faith and certitude. The mole underground makes wonderful designs, yet it is always underground not above it."

Then He sat for a while in the lobby of the Hotel Carmel before He took off towards the sea. At the return He mentioned of a certain British Lord that he was a very detached man. He built the upper floor of the Carmel Hotel. He had great ideas about service to the humanity, the Blessed Beauty also had regards for him, but as much as the enemies of the Faith said improper matters to him, he distanced himself...³⁸⁰

On the page 252 of the same book regarding the Thursday 25 November 1915, it

379. In Persian literature, the quarter of silence or the valley of silence is an insinuation for the cemetery, burial-ground,

380. Probably Laurence Oliphant, who got himself built a house which is still standing dilapidated in today's Ben Gurion boulevard, where Baha'u'llah spent some nights. His wife in her book about Haifa has mentioned unfavorable matters about the Faith, clearly under the influence of Mirza Badi'u'llah and Mirza Zia'u'llah i.e., two half-brothers of the Master. She mentioned that she helped them, as they were in dire economic condition, etc.

indicates that:

...His Holiness came out of His house and sat at the porch. A German craftsman was busy repairing the chairs; therefore, He mentioned the Germans and their morals and behaviour saying, "that these people came to these regions for the second coming of Christ, and their coming was coincided with the coming of Baha'u'llah".

On the page 417 regarding Sunday 19 March 1916, it is stated:

"In the evening He called the friends, and His talk regarded the German Templers, that we should befriend them, because after the War, the Germans will come here, and it will be very difficult for these people."

Sunday 14 May 1916 has a story on the page 481:

News was brought in, that the Chief of the Army of this area³⁸¹ was on his way to Haifa and will be the guest of the Master. Therefore, today from early morning He was doing all kinds of arrangements, preparing the necessary elements. He sent Aqa Mirza Mohsen³⁸² together with two maids and Khosrow³⁸³ to Akka to make all the preparations for receiving the guest in Akka. He called on the German baker and asked him to bake special bread. He said there is no flour, therefore after lunch, He went to the Commandant and got one bag of the best flour from the Army deposit and gave it to the mentioned baker to make the special bread.

Tuesday 30 May 1916, another story mentioned on the page 496:

Two days ago, He went for a walk and visited a German, who is a happy old man who has endeavored a lot on the gardening of his house. He sat in his home for a while and when He was about to leave, he had said that I have an English book, which I don't understand its contents, I give it to you to be translated for you. This morning He said that parts of this book was read, which is called 'Mountain of God'. In 1851 in Berlin a group found out that the fulfillment of the prophecies and the coming of the Promised One is at hand and it will be in the Holy Land, therefore five hundred families leave to come these areas and make themselves laws and orders.

(At the footnote regarding the above in the same page it is written: This group, first under the leadership of Leonard Colber, after 1844 which they did not see the physical coming of Christ, decided to come to Carmel and awaiting His coming. They built houses on the two sides of the street that at the present it extends from the sea to the first Terrace. The Blessed Beauty at His visit of Haifa stayed in one of the houses in this area).

On the page 503 (4 June 1916 -Haifa) it is recorded that regarding the Mt. Carmel the Master said "God willing Baha'is will develop this Mountain, I see this mountain shining, because there will be built the place for the orphans, schools, and hospitals, and praises of God will touch the heavens. These lands all will be Baha'i

381. Jamal Pasha, his story of planning to kill Abdu'l-Baha was recounted earlier.

382. Son-in-law of Abdu'l-Baha

383. The carriage driver, a very faithful servant.

lands, but will not happen in our times, but –pointing out to the younger Baha'is- they will see it. We put the foundations and that is the Shrine of the Bab and the Pilgrim House.”

About the importance of Mt Carmel on the page 537 (7 July 1916 -Haifa) He was talking on the how honorable is the Mt. Carmel that how much the Saints and Prophets were desiring to be in this Day to be present at the Manifestation of God, but they couldn't.

Monday 10 July 1916 – Haifa, p. 541

In the morning He was sitting on the terrace in front of His house and the students³⁸⁴ were present. He was mentioning the German Templers of Haifa that they came here from Germany to receive the Promised One and they became deprived. Later on, He mentioned of the Millerist³⁸⁵ that they were from America. They gave away whatever they had and climbed the mountains to receive Him on that night, expecting Him to come down from the sky and they will entertain Him [but they were deprived].

Friday 18 August 1916 – Nazeret, p. 579/580

[Master intended to go to Tiberias saying that: “I want to go to where His Holiness Christ from His early life to the end lived there, it has special spirituality, especially during the night, when the moon is out, next to the lake of Tiberias...] On His way He stopped at Mjaydel [now in the south of Lebanon] and He entered the house of a Christian and rested a while and asked for tea... Then there was a mention of the surrounding villages. He was told that there are two villages belonging to the Germans [Templers], one of them is the famous Betlehem that since they got the place it has become immensely productive, because they work, day and night, it is a very fine place. Then He said, in this place [Mjaydel] due to ‘homaye-raje’eh³⁸⁶, hundred and forty people died, and of dysentery six people died, but there not even one person became sick.

Sunday 10 September 1916, Tiberias (German Hotel), p. 613/14

...He was resting at the lobby of the Hotel, to the two years old son of the Hotel owner, to whom most of the time He had special favor and kindly attention, gave some money, then He said, ‘what a mystery does in this money have that even children are attracted to it?’

384. Persian students studying in Beirut who would come during their vacation and spend time in service.

385. Adventists had calculated the exact date from the Bible, as 23 May 1844, which coincided with the Declaration of the Bab in Shiraz, Iran.

386. Kind of bird flu?

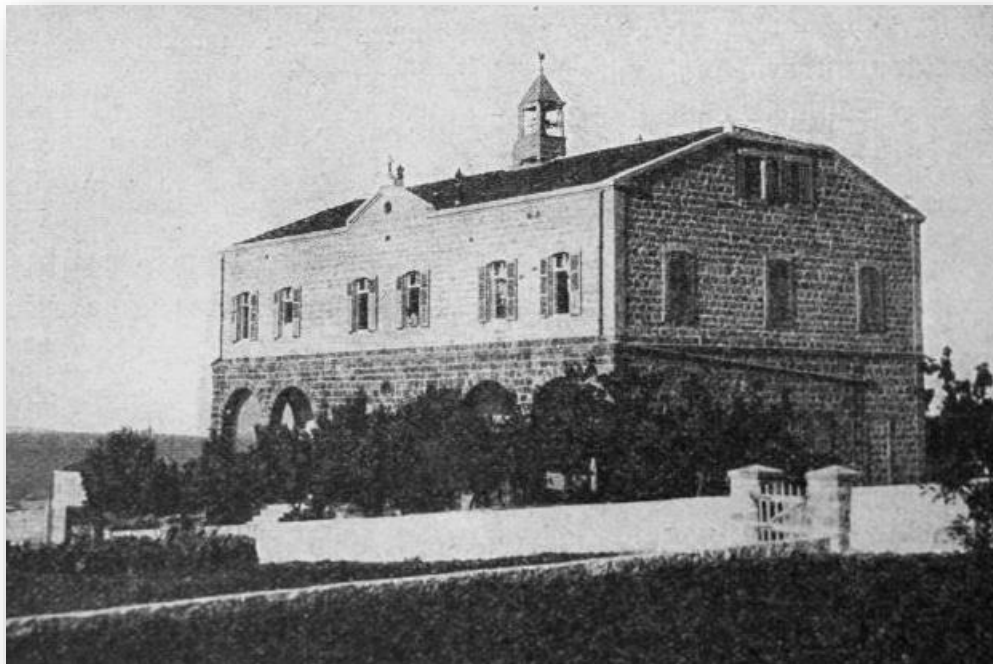
The development of the Colony in Haifa in different periods



Haifa and Haifa (Courtesy of the Temple Society Australia)



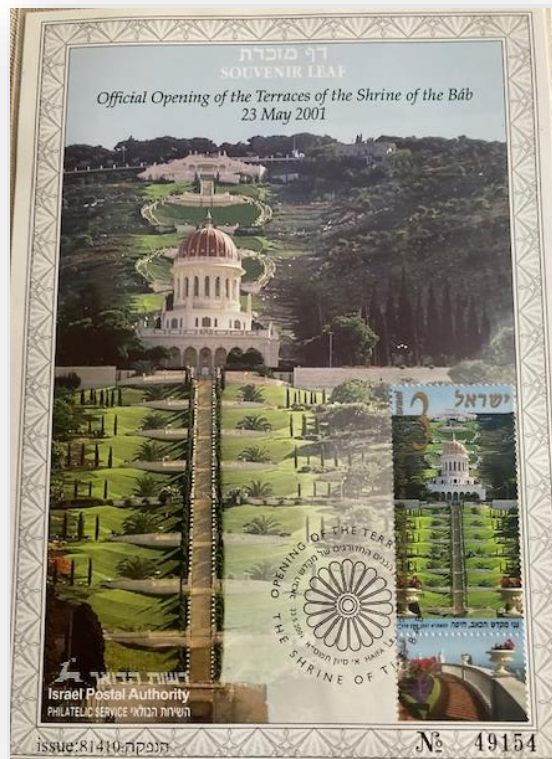
German Colony, showing the house in front that Abdu'l-Baha wanted to buy but He was denied, and British troops demolished it when they invaded Haifa in 1917. Read the story. (Courtesy of the Temple Society Australia)



Community Centre in Haifa
The first building the Templers built in Haifa, Carmel Ave

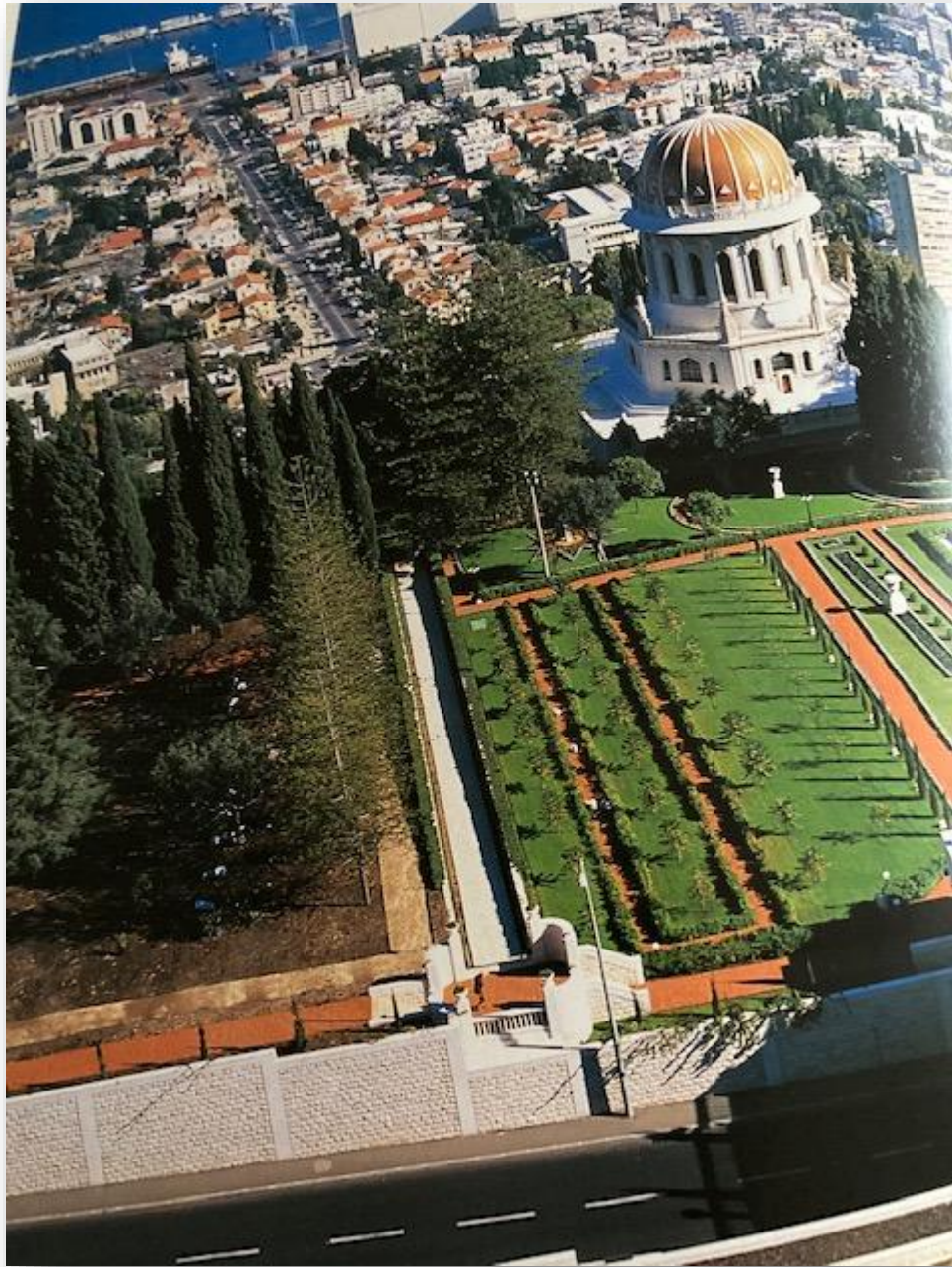


Postal stamp of Israel, in honor of the opening of the terraces

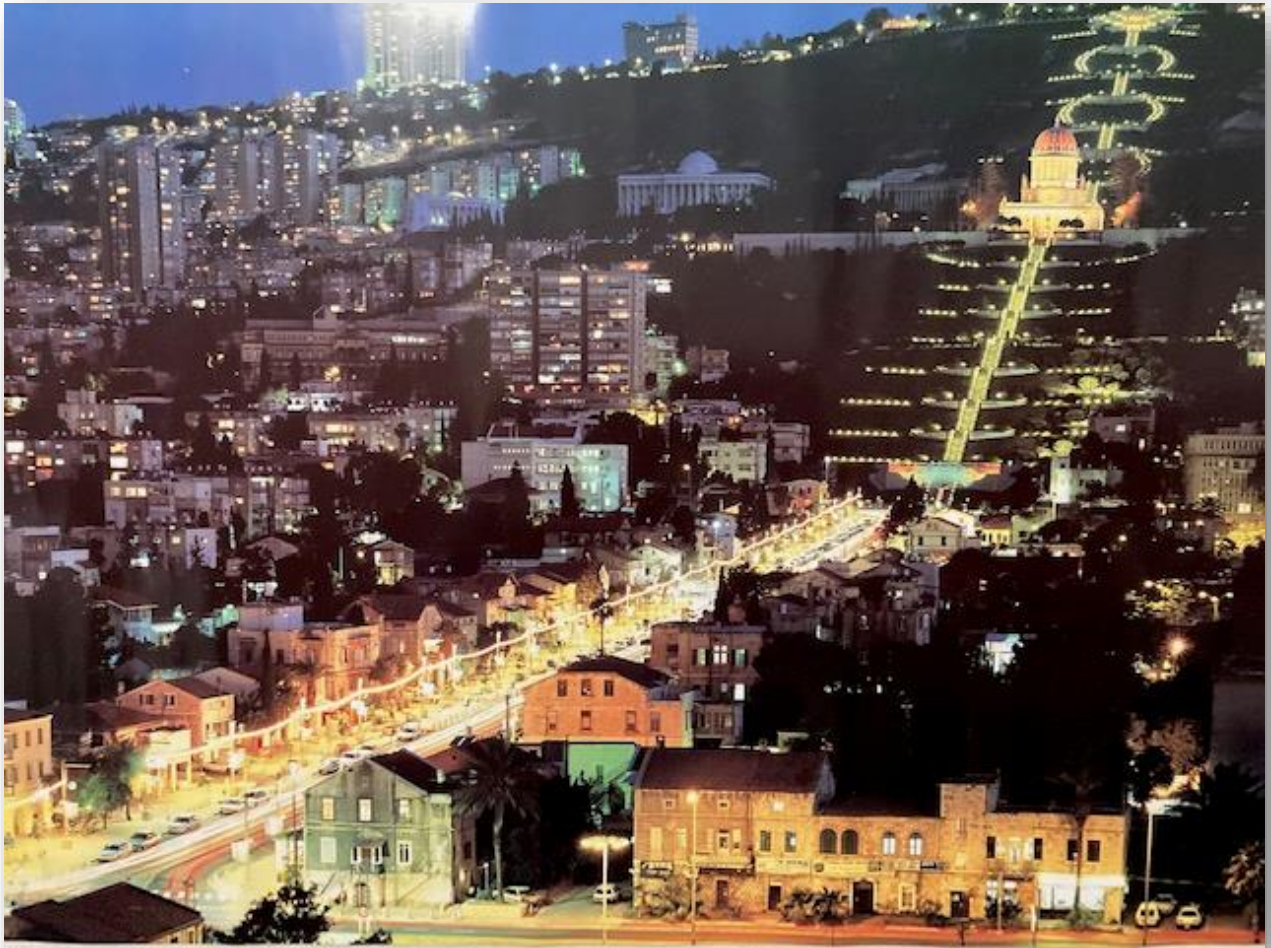




Haifa and Haifa Bay scene from Mount Carmel



German Templers' Carmel Avenue (Today Ben Gurion Avenue) from Mt. Carmel



The German Templers' Avenue and its attachment to the Baha'i Gardens. (The King's Highway)

