

The Tablet to Hardegg (Lawh-i-Hirtik)

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- **Who were German “Templers/Templers” and when did they come to Haifa?**
- **Who was David Hardegg/Hritik?**
- **Did Hardegg meet Baha’u’llah?**
- **When was the Lawh-i-Hirtik revealed?**
- **What questions Hardegg asked Baha’u’llah?**
- **In what Language the Tablet was originally revealed?**
- **Authorised Translation of Lawh-i-Hirtik into English?**

Who were Templers and who was Georg David Hardegg:

The Association of Templers (alternatively, 'Templars') was founded by the German theologian and polemicist Christoph Hoffmann (1815-1885), 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 Hardegg (1812-1879), 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.

Both Hoffmann and Hardegg arrived in Haifa on the 30th of October 1868.

A few dozen Templar families from South Germany settled at the foot of the western cape of Mt. Carmel. They were joined by kindred families of German origin from Southern Russia, and some who had emigrated to America and become citizens, mainly from New York State.

Despite some opposition from Muslims and Christian Arabs, the number of Haifa Templars rose from about 300 in the early 1880s to around 750 at the time of the outbreak of the First World War (1914).

Bahá'u'lláh, along with His followers and members of His family, arrived as prisoners in 'Akká' on August 31st 1868 some 40 days before Hoffmann and Hardegg arrived at Haifa to found their colony.

Did Hardegg meet Bahá'u'lláh:

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.

Hardegg's desire to gain an interview with Bahá'u'lláh has been referred to by Bahá'u'lláh Himself in a scriptural Tablet (Lawh) which was perhaps written around 1875 and addressed to Hájji Mirzá Haydár Ali Isfaháni (d. Haifa 1920). In it Bahá'u'lláh stated:

“A few years ago their leader [Hardegg] desired to attain [My] presence but this request did not find acceptance in the most-holy court. Nonetheless, a sublime and Most-Holy scriptural Tablet (Law'-i-amna'-i-aqdas) was specifically sent down for him...” (A provisional translation by Stephen Lambden. cited Ganj-e Shaygan, P172-3).

Having failed to meet Baha'u'llah in person he wrote a letter asking Him about His claim. He received a mighty Tablet from Baha'u'llah known as Lawh-i-Hirtik. The Lawh-i-Hirtik has been mentioned in the writings of Shoghi Effendi as “one of the most famous Tablets of Baha'u'llah.”

Hardegg managed to have an interview in 'Akká' on 2 June 1871 with 'Abdu'l-Bahá (1844-1921), having failed to gain an interview with Bahá'u'lláh himself.

He also notes his contacts with the Bahá'ís of Haifa and records his impression that *“these people, despite all the obscurity of their knowledge, were seeking the truth”* (cited, Momen).

Hardegg most likely made other trips to 'Akká' in order to investigate Bahá'í beliefs and attempt to interest or convert the Bahá'ís to Christianity.

Date of the Lawh-i-Hirtik revelation:

Hardegg was familiar with Arabic language, yet he 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.

Zeller also forwarded his translation of the Law-i-Hirtik to the English Church Missionary Society and identified as a letter of Bahá'u'lláh to Hardegg. Furthermore, as Zeller's letter forwarding Bahá'u'lláh's Lawh-i-Hirtik was dated July 8 1872, it may be inferred that the Lawh-i-Hirtik was written between late 1868 (when both Bahá'u'lláh and Hardegg arrived in 'Akká' and Haifa respectively) and 8th July 1872.

It was thus most probably between late 1871 and early 1872 (=1288-1289 AH) that Bahá'u'lláh addressed this Tablet to the Templer leader [Stephen Lambden, The Tablet to Hardegg (Law-i-Hirtík)].

Suggested Hardegg's questions to Baha'u'llah could have been the following (Fuad Izadinia, A Study of German Templers Movement and Its Relationship with The Bahá'í):

- 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 enveloped the world of humanity?
- The return of Christ.

Bahá'u'lláh visits to Haifa:

There were four visits of Baha'u'llah to Haifa as follow.

- His very first visit was on the 31st of August 1868.
- 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”*.
- 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 1307 (Hijri), the Lord of Creation moved from the shore of Akka to Haifa and arrived during the night...”*.

➤ Baha'u'llah's Fourth Visit to Haifa happened some fifteen months after His third visit, on the 27th of June 1891. According to Ra'fati (Pajuheshnameh, A Persian Journal of Baha'i Studies, vol. II No. 1, 1997) His stay in Haifa lasted for 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, too.

What Baha'u'llah said about the Templers:

In a Tablet to Haji Mirza Haydar-Ali Isfahani, Baha'u'llah discloses the following regarding David Hardegg (Templers' leader):

“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”

(A provisional translation by Fuad Izadinia, Ganj-e Shaygan, p. 172 – A.H. Ishraq-Khavari, 124 B).

Official Translation of the Tablet to Hardegg (Lawh-i-Hirtik) – Bahá'í World Centre (Sep. 2024)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الْاِقْدَسِ

قد حضر كتابك المختوم لدى المظلوم و وجدنا منه عَزْفٌ خلوصك لله المهيمن القَيّوم نسئل الله ان يعرّفك ما هو المستور في لوح مسطور و يسمعك هدير الورقآء على الافنان و خريبر مآء الخَيّوان الّذى جرى من معين مشيّة مالك الامكان بالحكمة و البيان ان يا حبيب ينبغى لحضرتك ان تتفكر في كلمة الله و عظمتها و حلاوتها أنّها لتكفي العالمين أنّ اَوّل من آمن بالزّوج قد اخذه جذب كلمة ربّه و بها اقبل و آمن منقطعاً عمّا في ايدي النّاس هذا ينبغى لحيتان البحر الاعظم يا ايّها العارف الخبير و الحبر البصير فاعلم قد منع الهوى اكثر الورى عن التّوجّه الى الله مالك الاسماء من ينظر بعين البصيرة يشهد و يرى و يقول سبحان ربّي الاعلى قد بُسّر البرّ و البحر ببرّ الله و وعد الملل بمطهر العلل أنّه لباني الهيكل طوبى للعارفين اذا اتى الميقات يصبح الكرمل كأنه اهتزّ من اهتزاز نسمة الرّبّ طوبى للسّامعين لو يتوجّه احد بأذن الفطرة لسمع من الصّخرة أنّها تنادى باعلى الصّيحة و تشهد للاله الابدى طوبى لمن وجد عَزْفَ البيان و اقبل الى الملكوت منقطعاً عن الامكان فاذا ظهر ما دُكر في الكتب ترى النّاس ينظرون و لا يعرفون

يا حبيب فانظر سرّ التّكيس لرمز الرّئيس حيث جعل اعليهم اسفلهم و اسفلهم اعليهم و اذكر اذا اتى اليسوع انكره العلماء و الفضلاء و الادياء و اقبل الى الملكوت من يصطاد الحوت هذا سرّ ما ذكر في غياهب الكلمات بالرموز و الاشارات أنّ الامر عظيم أنّ بطرس الحوارى مع علوّ شأنه و سموّ مقامه امسك اللّسان اذا سُئل انك لو تتفكّر فيما مضى خالصاً لوجه الرّبّ لترى النّور مشرقاً امام وجهك و تجعله نصب عينيك أنّ الحقّ اظهر من ان تغشيه الحجابات و الطّريق ابين من ان تغطيه الظّلمات و اليقين اشهر من ان تستره الظّنونات و الّذين مُنعوا اولئك اتبعوا اهوآتهم و هم اليوم نيام راقدون سوف ينتبهون و يركضون و لا يجدون طوبى لمن وجد العَزْفَ اذ هاج أنّه فاز بما فاز به عباد مخلصون

ثمّ اعلم أنّا رأينا بأنّ الصّاد الظّاهرة في كلمة صلح قد طُرزت بطراز الالف القائمة أنّها لهي المذكورة في لوح منشور و عند ظهور انوار تلك الكلمة الالهية فُتح باب السّماء و ظهر ملكوت الاسماء و تمّ الامر بالهآء بعد اتّصالها بالالف المبسوطة الّتي طُرزت بالنقطة البارز عنها الاسم المخزون و السرّ المكنون و الزمزم المصون و أنّها لهي النّقطة الّتي منها ظهرت الاشياء و اليها اعادت ثمّ رأينا الكلمة نطقت بكلمة وجدها كلّ حزب من الاحزاب على لغته و لسانه و عند نطقها اشرقت من افق بيانها شمس اظلمت عند انوارها شمس السّماء و قالت قد زين رأس السّبعين باكليل الاربعين و اتّصل بالسّبع قبل العشرة و عند ذلك ناحت و قالت ما لى ارى البيت لا يعرف صاحبه و الابن لا يلتفت اباه و كذلك الرّاجى ملجأه و مثويه

يا ايّها الطّائر في هواء العرفان من عرف الجارى المنجمد و الطّائر السّاكن و الظّاهر المستور و المشرق المحجوب بأخذه جذب الاشراف على شأن يطير باجنحة الاشتياق في هواء القرب و القدس و الوصال و ما ذكرت حضرتك في الظّلام نشهد أنّه احاط الانام طوبى لمن اضآء بنور المشرق من افق رحمة ربّه الاقدس أنّ الظّلام هو الاوهام و بها مُنع الانام عن التّوجّه الى الملكوت اذ ظهر بامر الله مالك الجبروت

و اما ما ذكرت أنّ فلاناً ظنّ ان لا اختلاف بيننا من جهة الرّوج هذا حقّ لأنّ الرّوج مقدّس من ان تعتربه الاختلافات او تحويه الاشارات أنّه لظهور نور الاحديّة بين البرية و آية القدم بين الامم من اقبل اليه فقد اقبل الى من ارسله و من اعرض عنه اعرض عمّن اظهره و انطقه أنّه كان على ما كان و يكون بمثل ما قد كان أنّما تختلف اشراقات تجلّيه في المرايا باختلافات صورهنّ و الوانهنّ

يا حبيب لو ينكشف رمز من سرّ الّذى كان مقتمعاً بالسرّ لتضطرب افئدة الّذين اخذوا ما عندهم و نبذوا ما عند الرّبّ أنّ حضرتك لو تتفكّر فيما القيناك و تقوم على ما دُكر بالاستقامة الكبرى ليظهر منك ما ظهر من قبل يا حبيب أنّ الطّير بين مخاليب الظّلم و النّفاق لا ترى لنفسها من وكر لتسكن فيه و لا من فضآء لتطير اليه و في مثل تلك الحالة تدّع البرية الى الحيوة الابدية طوبى لأذن واعية نسئل الله ان يجمعنا في بساط واحد و يؤيّدنا على ما يحبّ و يرضى

“In the name of God, the Most Holy

Thy sealed letter hath reached the presence of this Wronged One, and from it We have inhaled the sweet savour of thy devotion to God, the Omnipotent Protector, the Self-Subsistent. We beseech Him to make known unto thee that which is concealed within the Written Tablet, and to grant that thou mayest catch the accents of the Mystic Dove that singeth upon the celestial bough, and hear the soft murmur of the water that is life indeed as it floweth in a stream of utterance and wisdom from the fountainhead of the Will of Him Who is the Lord of all mankind.

O friend! It behoveth thee to reflect upon the Word of God, to ponder its greatness, and to meditate upon its sweetness. This Word, verily, is sufficient unto the peoples of the earth. The first one to believe in Him Who was the Spirit (Jesus) was so enraptured by the Word of God that, in his eagerness to embrace its truth, he detached himself from everything that men possess. Such is the condition of all who would be leviathans in the Most Mighty Ocean.

O thou learned doctor and percipient divine! Know that the people have, for the most part, been hindered by their passions from turning themselves to God, the Lord of all names. Whoso looketh with his inner eye, however, shall be granted vision, and shall testify to what he witnesseth, exclaiming: "All praise be unto my Lord, the Most Exalted!" The tidings of God's loving-kindness have been announced to land and sea, and unto the nations hath been given the promise of the advent of Him Who shall heal their sicknesses, even Him Who shall build up the Temple of the Lord (Cf. Zechariah 6:12-15). Well is it with them who understand!

Lo, the appointed time is now arrived, and Carmel crieth out as if moved to ecstasy by the soul-stirring breezes of her Lord. Happy are those who hear her cry! Whoso hearkeneth with his inner ear shall hear the voice of the Rock (Peter) as he beareth witness, with a mighty voice, to the Everlasting God. Blessed are they who perceive the savour of Divine utterance and, severing themselves from the world of being, advance towards the Kingdom.

Behold! The things that had been mentioned in the Books of old have now

appeared, and yet the people, though they look upon them, comprehend them not!

Regard thou, O friend, the mystery of the Great Reversal in the Sign of the Sovereign. Through this reversal He hath caused the exalted to be abased and the abased to be exalted. Call thou to mind how, in the days of Jesus, it was those who were distinguished for their learning, the men of letters and religion, who denied Him, whilst humble fishermen made haste to gain admittance into the Kingdom—this is the meaning of that which hath been expressed by symbol and allusion in the obscurities of words.

Great, immeasurably great is the Cause! Peter, the Apostle, despite the pre-eminence of his rank and the loftiness of his station, when questioned held back from speaking. Wert thou, with thy thoughts centred wholly on God, to reflect upon the happenings of former times, thou wouldst see the light shining refulgently before thy face, and wouldst keep it constantly before thy gaze.

The truth is, of a certainty, too evident to be enshrouded in a veil, the way

too clear to be obscured by darkness, and certitude too manifest to be eclipsed by any fleeting whim. Those who have been debarred therefrom are the followers of their corrupt desires. Today they are reposing on their bed of slumber; ere long they shall awake and rush, without avail, to find the things that have escaped them. Well is it with them who have inhaled the Divine fragrance at the time when it was shed abroad: These, verily, have attained unto that which is the portion of the sincere among God's servants.

Know thou that We have seen the letter "Şád", which appeareth in the word "şulḥ", (Peace) become embellished by the ornament of the upright Alif. This, verily, is that which hath been recorded in an outspread Tablet (Lawh-i-Manshur). No sooner were the splendours of that Divine Word revealed than the portals of heaven were unlocked, the Kingdom of Names made manifest, and all was brought to consummation by the appearance of the letter "Há", which had been connected to the recumbent Alif, itself embellished by the Point from which had sprung the Treasured Name, the Hidden Secret, and the Guarded Symbol—that same Point from which all things have appeared and unto which they have all returned.

Thereupon We saw the Word give utterance to a Word which was received by every people in accordance with its own particular tongue and language. As it spoke forth, there rose above the horizon of its utterance a Sun of such effulgent splendour that, overshadowed by its radiance, the celestial sun grew dark; then it cried out: “The brow of seventy hath been adorned with the diadem of forty and united with the seven before ten”; at this it sighed, and moaned aloud: “Alas, I see the house oblivious of its Master, the son unmindful of his Father, the seeker heedless of the sanctuary and refuge for which he yearneth.”

O thou who soarest in the atmosphere of understanding! Whoso perceiveth that which though solid, floweth; which though static, flieth; which is both manifest and hidden, both resplendent and obscure will be so enraptured by the effulgence of heavenly illumination that he will rise up on the wings of ardent longing into the empyrean of nearness, holiness, and heavenly reunion.

Respecting thy comments on the question of “darkness”, We testify that it hath encompassed all mankind. Happy the man who hath been illumined by the light of Him Who hath shone forth resplendent from the horizon of the mercy of His Lord, the Most Holy. This darkness is naught but the idle imaginings of men, by which they have been prevented from directing themselves towards the Kingdom when, by the bidding of God, the Lord of the realm on high, it was made manifest.

As for thy mention of the opinion expressed to thee by a certain individual that, in so far as concerneth the Spirit, there existeth no difference between us, his assertion is correct, for the Spirit is too exalted either to admit of differences or to be comprehended by allusions. It is the revelation of the Light of God’s singleness amongst men, the Sign of His ancient eternity before the nations. Whoso turneth himself thereto hath turned himself unto Him Who sent it forth, and whoso turneth away therefrom hath turned away from the One by Whose power it hath been manifested and endowed with utterance.

It hath not changed from age to age, and such as it hath been it shall remain. Such differences as may be witnessed in the effulgence of its light are to be attributed to the mirrors that receive it, and to the disparity, in form and colour, of the images they reflect.

O friend! Were but a single token to be revealed of the Secret which hath lain wrapped in mystery, the hearts of all those who, clinging to the things of men, have cast away the things of God, would be thrown into perturbation. Shouldst thou, having meditated upon the words that We have addressed to thee, arise with perfect steadfastness to act in such wise as We have intimated, thou wouldst undoubtedly accomplish such things as have been witnessed in a former age.

O friend! This Bird lieth imprisoned beneath the talons of cruelty and malice; It seeth for itself neither nest wherein to shelter nor heavenly expanse in which to fly. In such a plight as this, it summoneth mankind unto everlasting life. Blessed then be the attentive ear!

We beseech God to unite us in one holy court, and to graciously assist us to do that which is pleasing and acceptable unto Him”.

(Bahá'u'lláh)

Some further analysis of selected lines of the
Tablet

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No sooner were the splendours of that Divine Word revealed than the portals of heaven were unlocked, the Kingdom of Names made manifest, and all was brought to consummation by the appearance of the letter “Há”, which had been connected to the recumbent Alif, itself embellished by the Point from which had sprung the Treasured Name, the Hidden Secret, and the Guarded Symbol—that same Point from which all things have appeared and unto which they have all returned.

The word “Sulh” (Peace) in Farsi (and Arabic) is written as follow:

صلح

This word is consisted of three letters: S (ص), L (ل) and H (ح).

The word Saleh (the Righteous One) is written like this:

صالح

This word is consisted of four letters S (ص), A or Alif (ا), L (ل) and H (ح).

Mohammad Afnan briefly describes (Perusing some aspects of the Tablet of Hirtik, published in Persian journal Golchin-e Erfan) 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 Bible (Mat.19:15-17). 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.

The word “Baha” (Glory) in Farsi (and Arabic) is written as follow:

بها or بهاء

This word is consisted of three letters: B (ب), H (ه) and A or Alif (ا).

In Abjad numeric the letter H(ه) is equal to 5. The word “Bab”(باب) is also numerically equals to 5. In the writings of the Bab the letter H is standing for Huva (هو-God) as well as His title “the Bab” (باب).

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’ 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 dot, 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 to¹.

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

“The brow of seventy hath been adorned with the diadem of forty and united with the seven before ten”

Jesus in His Utterances promised the coming of the Comforter, which again, according to Afnan (Perusing some aspects of the Tablet of Hirtik, published in Persian journal Golchin-e Erfan), has been mentioned in this Tablet through an abstruse way. The word in Arabic is ‘Mu’azzi’ [(معزي) The Comforter, reference to Baha’u’llah] 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 ‘M’ (م) is 40, ‘Ain’ (ع) is 70, ‘Z’ (ز) value is 7 and ‘Y’ (ي) is 10. Therefore, M adorns the head of ‘A, and Z before Y (معزي). 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.

Reference:

A Study of German Templers. Movement and Its Relationship with The Baha'i Faith. Fuad Izadinia, 2014.