

# THE MAJOR OPUS

## A STUDY OF THE GERMAN TEMPLERS MOVEMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BAHA'I FAITH

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### 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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German Templers and their relationship with the Baha'i Faith. Her constant encouragement from start to the end most appreciatively accompanied this work.

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## **FOREWORDS**

In 2007, a couple of years after the commencement of the restoration project of the International Baha'i Archives and the Shrine of the Bab in Haifa, a local Israeli architect was hired to help with the process of converting the original drawings of the 1950s to the computer aided system. Often at lunch-break we had time to talk about some other matters, especially themes regarding the Baha'i Faith. In one of the conversations, the matter of the German Templers was brought up, who had come to the Holy Land in the search of their Promised One, their Messiah. She mentioned that she knew a friend of her who knew an architect who did his doctoral thesis on the German architecture. Interestingly I got hold of Danny Goldman in Cyprus, who was happy to share his research work with me. It was a link of his thesis for this study. I needed to print it and thoroughly study it, but needed to convince D. Goldman to give me permission for printing. It took its turn until it became possible.

D. Goldmann's Doctoral thesis was a very interesting study. It was a thorough study of over 700 pages on the architecture of the German Templers in all their seven establishments around the land of Israel since 1869 to maybe mid 1930s so to speak. I was interested to see if the Shrine of the Bab of almost the same period (1900 – 1908), had received any German influence, 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 Shrine. 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 Shrine. 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 Shrine. For the design of the water reservoir, which resulted a twice failure was handled by them, and as Abdu'l-Baha indicates in one of His Tablets, He Himself directed this specific work next to the Shrine at its northeast direction, which His engineering was quite successful. It is a huge underground water reservoir, existing to its perfection even today.

In short, the communication with D. Goldmann opened more doors. He was to make a presentation in Melbourne Australia, where most Templers after their exile from the Holy Land were residing. D. Goldmann brought me some good books published by the Templers of Australia, which enhanced my general knowledge on the Movement. Later on he lent me some relevant books from his own library on different aspects of the German Templers.

D. Goldmann also sent me some quite interesting papers he has written and was writing on different topics related to this Movement. His works were my prime motivator in my research work, 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 D. Goldmann from technical, 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 leaving everything behind in Germany and coming to the Holy Land, and after 80 years, the work of three generations resulting in dissolution of their goals, except one: remain good Christians, which they always have been.

To this research I was totally dedicated and studied every bit and pieces available to me. It was easy to get the electronic address for the Society in both Germany and Australia, Peter Lange, the President of the Society in Germany for both branches of the Templers and Monika Strasser in Australia. Both were extremely helpful. P. Lange helped me with a better understanding of the movement afterwards and some its present day activities. M. Strasser on the other hand, helped with some books that she sent me as valuable gifts. She was very positive to those who showed interest in the Movement. She even sent me a copy of her mother's unpublished memoirs, where

she almost paint brushed 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 Haifa. In one occasion she remembered that 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 see Him again.

On the other hand, when a question arose to Peter Lange of his vision for the future of the Movement, as he had promised to help with 'any question' regarding the Templer's Movement. This specific question however, remained un-answered by P. Lange, and our correspondence ended there. Almost at the same time the correspondence with M. Strasser also was ended. But in spite of all, the research continued and the enthusiasm for finding out more about the fate of the members of the Movement never diminished. Contact with the Australian group was maintained through their monthly bulletin. There, a new material was found, the Case study of Assimilation and Adaption of the German Templers to the new Australian Society, a Doctoral thesis by Dr. Irene Bouzo a study of her Templer group in Australia, did an excellent analysis of 'after arrival' to their new Home in Melbourne and the way they are continuing with their lives even 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. Here again, after a copy of her thesis was kindly received, a series of questions were planned to her to answer, such as their relationship with their Kirchler cousins, and their vision for the way forward for the Movement and also some other historical subject, yet, in spite of promises, the amicable correspondence was ended and the relevant questions were never answered.

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 and be convinced that the whole movement was not a futile effort, but it had a profound meaning and a fulfillment. There were many sacrifices and losses for such a specific aim, and that, there are so many evidences that this movement was divinely oriented and had a function to perform, which accordingly – according to the Baha'is - it did – and the Mountain remained for Christ's return in the Glory of the Father – Baha'u'llah (The Glory of God).

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

1. The first generation starts in fact in Germany by Reverend Christopher Hoffmann 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 Hardegg who became attracted into this philosophy of Hoffmann while he was going through his prison sentence for his ideas against the political policies of 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. There is also Christopher Paulus, bother-in-law to Hoffmann as one of the three leaders.

The first generation of Templers' leaders, who were already in their mid-fifties, set their goal and embark on their project. There already were some deep disagreements between the first two leaders, Rev. Hoffmann and Hardegg in the practicality of the concepts of the formed philosophy as well as disagreement in 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, when 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". The other two third who remained as Templers, demeaned the breakaway group as Kirchlers or Churchgoers. Since the Templers breakaway from the State Church, they were not supposed to seek any churches' guidance anymore, as, they were all expecting the coming of Christ Who would lead them to His New Way. Yet, the Kirchlers affiliated themselves with more than one German church, which further divided the Kirchlers internally.

The schism in the original group also brought schism in their thoughts and philosophy, to the point that Rev. Hoffmann, who set his vision in the coming of Christ, that never materialized as to his expectations, and building the Temple in Jerusalem, which could not materialize physically, had to develop and further his religious philosophy, changing it several times, this, as a result, profoundly affected the second generation of the Templers who were left after the death of their leader, in bewilderment and lack of one clear spiritual goal for their future life to pursue. 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 set up goals and only satisfy themselves with their daily life of a good Christian. They asked: Was the total movement a failure? The question remained un-answered to them even up to now.

Probably Rev. Hoffmann missed the migration of the first Jewish Aliyot 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 so long neglected land of Palestine. Yet, it was just the beginning.

The first generation leaders of this movement could be historically paralleled with the movement of Baha'u'llah, the sole leader of the Baha'i movement with one set of divinely ordained principles to be disseminated around the world, which never changed and always remained the basic divine philosophy ever after. Baha'u'llah outlived Hardegg, who was His senior for five years, for thirteen years, who came the closest of the Templers to identify Him as the Figure they have been looking for all along, but remained aloof of its Truth. The passing of Rev. Hoffmann in 1885 and the transition period to the early part of the 1890s, which coincide with the passing of Baha'u'llah in 1892, could be considered as the end of the first generation of the Templers' Movement.

2. The second generation of Templers who were led by the elders of the movement, i.e. Hoffmann's and Hardegg's children and grand children, and became more engaged in the professional life and administrative matters of the communities they were involved in. Thus there was no clear goal to pursue anymore. Christ did not descend from the sky as per their general expectation, the only other goal set by Hoffmann, was to build the spiritual Temple, which was to improve and live a true Christian life throughout without seeking the help of any organized church – although one of the sons of Rev. Hoffmann, a medical doctor by profession, became a Catholic later on and joined a church. Their Kirchler cousins continued with their involvement in the church they have chosen and also like their Templer cousins, got involved in professional life as well. The history shows that son of Hardegg did marry daughter of Hoffmann and moved to Jaffa. Probably remained Templer and not Kirchler.

The second generation of the Templers could also be paralleled to the period of administration of the Master Abdu'l-Baha, as the Centre of the Covenant of Baha'u'llah, His Father, pursuing the goals as were set by Him. Abdu'l-Baha associated closely with the Templers, and later on became a resident of their neighborhood. Master, as He was called conducted business with the Templers, buying some lands He needed to build the Shrine of the Bab. He often visited them at 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. It is not known if any Baha'i children did attend German schools or not, although in one of the Templers' memoirs, there is a mention of how multinational their school was, and among the nationalities of the students, there is a mention of Persian children, where at the time, the only Persians were the Baha'is.

This second generation initiation 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 once their war enemies the British took over the Holy Land- were partially brought back.

The second Aliyot was around this period where another mass of Jewish adherents was returning to Palestine, although this inflow never ceased since it started.

Both Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha had predicted to the people of Palestine that soon the Jews will be coming back to claim their land and it is then when this land will be developed, because they truly loved their God given land for which they have been awaiting to return for generations upon generations. 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, met Abdu'l-Baha at His gardens in Bahji, the outskirts of Acre, Who invited the couple in for a cup of tea. Ben Zvi recalled it later when he became more familiar with the Baha'i movement at its commencement in the land of Palestine, especially remembering of the kindness of the old man.

3. The third generation of the Templers are battered spiritually but well-established administratively and highly regarded businessmen and in fact, the masters of the land, mostly educated and well off people, with social clubs, football teams, having their own successful Bank established in 1925, etc. interacting with the local inhabitants, the Arabs, especially with the youth of the families, mastering their language too. Their produce's fame already passed the borders of the Holy Land and reached the European and American markets where they were well received.

However during their time, after the WWI, the politics in new Germany was taking shape, which also affected the group in the Holy Land. After all, they were of course Germans and had allegiance with their motherland. The Nationalist movement of the New Germany had influenced the group to the extent that before the WWII, there were already quite a few Templer youth conscribed in the Nationalist movement which resented the governing British, who were by League of Nations mandate the protectors of the land, and were observing the some skirmishes between the local inhabitants and the triumphant Jews in Palestine, who were claiming their land day by day. This had become a dilemma for the British to keep the land calm for both sides. But as the number of persecuted and exterminated Jews in Germany and Europe rose higher at the hand of German National Socialist party, the Jews of the Holy Land could not tolerate the existence of their German enemies in their midst and in their land.

The period of the third generation of the Templers 1921-1950 could correspond to the period of post-Abdu'l-Baha, which parallels to the period where His grandson Shoghi Effendi who was appointed by Him as the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith, whose prime responsibility was to develop and beautify the gardens surrounding the Baha'i Shrines, expand the horizons of the Faith throughout the world, translate the major Writings of his grandfather and great-grandfather 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, the permanent divine guidance would act as the ever shining light of justice would envelop the earth where no more darkness would penetrate the divine wisdom of God.

As per passing of years, life became more difficult for the Germans residing in the Holy Land's seven German Colonies. If they wouldn't leave the land of the Jews, they would be having a similar fate as the Jews had in Germany. The British protection of Germans became itself a dilemma, as the German Nationalist Movement turned against the British too, giving even more reason for exiling Germans either back to Germany or to a British Colony. These were gathered and banished in an unfair way to Cyprus and then to Melbourne, Australia from 1939 to 1948. The last remnants of the Templers were leaving the Holy Land when Shoghi Effendi started with the beautification of the Shrine of the Bab in 1948, by building a superstructure over the original building, what made it as the foremost beauty of the Mount Carmel and the icon of the Baha'i Faith in Israel. This work also coincided with the declaration of the independence of Israel as the Jewish State to the surprise of the local Arab inhabitants.

As much as Shoghi Effendi appreciated and used the professional hands of the German Templers in many of his development enterprises, 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, due to his high agenda of compressed and complex duties of 36 years. There was no spare time for him to engage himself unless in urgent and necessary matters or official occasions, where his newly established International Council could not have handled. He had the work of ever-growing world Faith that had multiplied tens folds virtually in every corner of the planet, for which he was the head. 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 Baha'i World, dealing with internal affairs of the Faith in with the present government at the time and writing his messages to the Baha'is around the 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.

One incident, which is being recorded by Dr. Ruhe [Door of Hope, p. 229] worth recounting here: *"In the house with the prophetic inscription 'Der Herr ist nahe' a little girl was born, probably in 1887, 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 [probably Melbourne, where all the Templers were exiled to] 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. Schmidt. She recalled having seen Baha'u'llah in the room at the north-west corner of the ground floor."*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Once in Haifa, one cannot miss the great beauty of the German Colony with Swabian 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 mountain, industry at the seashore and housing 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?

The fascinating story behind this Messianic and Millenarians 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 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 Jerusalem-, as they believed. A strange land that everything was foreign to them, language, culture, food, comfort and much more. Yet, what made them determined to stay and never to look back and no bridge to cross behind? Such a movement could not have been something purely manmade, how could it? The new 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 their belongings or give them away and embark to venture a new rewarding life in the land of the Prophets, called The Holy Land, as their ultimate destination, Jerusalem. 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, who lead the group to the port of Haifa in Palestine, arriving on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 1868 were considered the twin leaders.

Just two months prior to their arrival, another handful families from the east, were exiled to the desolate city 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 Persians. Coincidentally the both group were from the Aryan racial background – if that at all matters!

The Leader of this movement was Husayn-Ali Nuri, titled Baha'u'llah, the Glory of God, Who claimed that He has received the latest message of God, a special message for the east and the west; a message to bring all those who were of His fold and all those who were not of His fold, but had to be brought together and be united as one fold under one Shepherd; the promise that Lord Christ had given.

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, the other group was on the contrary had no liberty of moving in and out of the ruin fortress and prison city of Acre. They had no means they had no material facility to arrange themselves a better life, to make a more comfortable living. They were prisoners by strict orders of the Sultan of the great Ottoman Empire!!

On that historic day of 31 August 1868, when Baha'u'llah stepped out of the ship to the land of Haifa, there was a turning point for then the small village of Haifa. There

was an encounter between this Prisoner 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 Himself in His Tablet of Carmel. See Annex III

The soil of Haifa became blessed by the footsteps of this Prisoner though only for few hours. Their sailboat soon arrived and took them from the village of Haifa to the fortress city of Acre across the bay, reaching there in the evening of the same hot August day to be lead to their filthy and lonely cells.

Many Baha'is who like to know the history behind these two movements on this particular spot, embarked to find out more and to see if the claim of One could satisfy the need of the other. 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.

## CHAPTER I

### Renovation of the Old Garment

It is the philosophy of the Baha'i Faith that civilization has no start and will have no end. It is ever advancing. In Baha'u'llah's words: "This is the eternal covenant of God", "This is the ever advancing civilization", "This is the ancient Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future..." 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 grade to grade, teacher to teacher until it is mature enough to stand and receive its mentor to guide it throughout the life towards an unfolding destiny.

Humanity is blessed to have permanent Guides. Those souls selected by the Almighty, were given the special task of guiding humanity for a period of time. Once mankind was mature enough, it was lead to its next stage.

When the Teacher was physically absent, instead the role was played by those who claimed to be erudite and knowing, and continued sheltering those whose guide was their Teacher.

As the path to 'knowledge' is only one path, the Teachers, in order 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 remain." Another one said, "No one comes to Heaven except through Me." And other similar sayings have been recorded in almost every religious philosophy.

There is a Teacher for every stage, and when the pupils fulfill the requirements, they are guided to the next stage, for which there is yet another Teacher. The path of learning is the same; it is the continuation of the previous path.

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 claimed His station. It is for this reason that sects were created and schisms took place in every religion and cults created. This is a fact well documented in recorded history. Controlling the mind of people unfortunately became their prime interest, fragmenting the religious precepts. (It should be noted here that the Baha'i Faith is an exception in falling into schism because there are written documents by the Founder of the religion, Baha'u'llah, appointing His successor, and the fact that the priesthood being abolished).

It is known to the followers of diverse religions, that a time will come when humanity goes beyond the adolescence and will reach its 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 accepted '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" revealed by Baha'u'llah. The Messianic and Millenary groups all awaited a certain period of time the nineteenth century, each one according to the calculations made from their own holy book.

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

This is the year -1884 - when a young man of 24, by the name of Siyyid Ali-Muhammad from Shiraz, Persia, claimed to be the Lord of Time, 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, was oppressing the population to such a degree that, if the voice for freedom pronounced by the Báb was not raised aloud at that time, the fate of the noble people of Iran would have taken to an abyss. His timely call revolutionized the whole country and the region. People who were begging their Lord to put an end to the atrocities they were suffering took the call of the Bab as the answer to their prayers. Many thousands leaped forward, accepted the new Message and freed themselves from the yoke of the Shí'ah clergy and corrupt government, and many met their death through their finding.

Soon the Báb was arrested, imprisoned and exiled to the remotest corners of Iran. Only six years after proclaiming His message of the Dawn of a New Day, 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 the reign of power by calling the defeat of the infidels; people were oppressed again. But the new Message had already caused a deep chasm among the clergy, which initiated slowly their downfall from which they never recovered again. 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 to a certain degree. Clergy was thing of the past of the dark ages.

The mingled bodies of the Bab and His companion, the youthful Anis, were thrown into the moat outside the city of Tabriz and guarded by few sentinels. Yet, His loved ones rescued the bodies and took them to a hiding place. For fifty years the illumined body of the Báb and His companion changed places fourteen times - from mosques to villages to cemeteries or to houses of believers, until they were finally transported with great honor to the Holy Land. Persians lost the opportunity of the offer of providing a resting place for the Lord of the Age, 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 Báb, intensified to such a degree that, as per recorded history, twenty thousand souls were massacred; 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 possessions. The clergy and the hostile mob were everywhere backed by the power of the corrupt governors, and anyone known to be a 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 be killed, so they could claim their reward from the government or the clergy, and be assured of a high place in the heaven.

After a few Bábís tried to avenge the Báb by attempting to kill the Shah, Nasirid-Din of Qájár – the King of Iran - the only remaining prominent Bábí, Mírzá Husayn-Ali, titled Baha'u'llah, son of a prominent minister at the court of Nasirid-Din's father, Fath-Ali,

was arrested, put in underground filthy dungeon and after four months together with His family were exiled to Baghdad in the Ottoman Empire.

While imprisoned in an atrocious underground dungeon in Tihrán (the Síyáh Chál or Black Pit), Baha'u'llah perceived the first Divine intimations. Those Bábís chained next to Him could clearly feel the change while listening to His melodious, divine utterances. That was in July 1853. Four months later He was freed from the dungeon with the condition of leaving the country together with His whole family. In the middle of a severe winter they left Iran forever - never to see it again. He was 36.

The end of His ten years' stay in Baghdad is marked by His open Declaration to those close to Him that He is the One promised not only by the Báb, but indeed, that He is the Father, the Promised One of all ages, the Glory of God, the Shah-Bahram, the Fifth Buddha, the Tenth Avatar, the reviving spiritual power of the whole of humanity. His fame in Baghdad had reached all the corners of Iraq and had alerted the Islamic clergy again both in Iraq and in Persia, His homeland again. Thousands of believers, who had been in hiding after the waves of persecution, 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 in order 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, Constantinople, called Islambul – the abode of Islam (now called Istanbul). He arrived there in 1863 and soon afterwards was again exiled to the farthest European section of the territory, the town of Adrianople – today's Edirne, where Baha'u'llah remained for five years.

In Sacred Baha'i literature, Edirne is mentioned as 'the Land of Mystery'. This is the place where Baha'u'llah addressed the kings and prominent rulers of the world of His time, each one with a mighty Tablet, revealed in their names, inviting them to investigate this New Revelation, to become united for the sake of humanity and to root out their problems once and for all; not to waste their most precious possessions, their people, and to strive for their advancement. They should leave behind all blind religious, racial and patriotic prejudices, and promote the unity of mankind.

Even this period was not free from severe tests. The old believers, the Bábís, who were not expecting the promised one of the Bab appearing so soon, imperiled the life

of the whole community. They were left without hope, their country did not want them, and the new Community was shaping differently from their expectations. Baha'u'llah was becoming the point of attraction to friend and foe. His dignity, His words and exhortations were having a great influence upon all, friends and others. Those firmly attached to their fanatical religious ideologies gathered momentum together with the old enemies, spread calumnies against Baha'u'llah to such a degree that the host government decided to exile the Community even farther, in two separate groups. Most Baha'is were sent to the foul dungeon of 'Akká, and others, to Famagusta in Cyprus, as prisoners for life. The arrival of Baha'u'llah in the Holy Land occurred on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 1868.

This is how Baha'u'llah, the Founder of the New Era, found His way to the remote city of 'Akká, fulfilling the ancient prophecies about the importance of this desolate place, calling it the New Jerusalem, descended from Heaven. He had proclaimed His Message publicly in Baghdad in 1863. He proclaimed His mission publicly while in Adrianople, between 1863 and 1868. Later on from His prison cell in 'Akká He continued writing tablets to kings and rulers of His time, such as Queen Victoria of Great Britain, Tsar Alexander II of Russia, Napoleon III of France, to the Pope Pius IX, as well as to the Kings and the leaders of America, telling all Who He was. The year was 1869.

The next chapter deals with the Movement of the Templers, who, like many other Messianic groups, were expecting the coming of Messiah.

It is interesting to note that although Christoph Hoffmann, the founder of the 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 in 1861 that the millennium reign would start in 1869. However, these dates never became a dogma of the movement, writes Benjamin Zev Kedar in his paper "From Religious Messianic to Political Messianic" (Chronicle of Utopia, p.22). Only a few years later Hardegg received a Tablet from Baha'u'llah, in answer to his questions as who does He claim to be! (See Annex 1)

## CHAPTER II

### The Württembergers – The First Generation

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

(Motto of the Templers, Memories of Palestine, p.38)

**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...**

(Nelly Schumacher, When it Rains out of a Blue Sky, p. 8)

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 of all who appreciate 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 Templers (German Temple Society - not to be mistaken for the Knights Templar, a Crusader Order of the 11<sup>th</sup> century who wanted to liberate Jerusalem from the infidel). 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 possible. There was a strong confrontation by the Lutheran State Church, which ultimately expelled the group from church membership. Dr. 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", 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.” (The Holy Land Called, p.31)*

Hoffmann was convinced that in Dr. 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”.* (Ibid. p.33)

The founder of the German Templers, Christoph Hoffmann, records in his book, “Orient and Occident” in 1870 that: “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 in order 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, 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 him and his followers to 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, he urged the farmers, and craftsmen to play a leading role, to till the land and produce food, to build roads and houses. Later on, settlers with other professions would follow. 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...” (Chronicle of a Utopia, p.7)

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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 it to be in Jerusalem, the City of God, the Holy City, the Quds. Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687 – 1752), from Württemberg, predicted the date of 1836 A.D. for the coming of the Messiah. 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", Yaron Perry wrote in his paper entitled "The Templar Settlement in the Holy Land 1868 – 1948" – Chronicle of Utopia, p.26. Without knowing the exact time, people should nevertheless be prepared to receive Him, should they be worthy of His arrival. Yet, 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.

Sara Turel writes:

*"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 God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (Corinthians3:16) [Sara Turel, Chronicle of a Utopia, p.7]*

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"* Dr. Sauer writes that, *"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.” (p.34)*

Professor Yossi Ben-Artzi of the University of Haifa, who wrote many research papers on the Templers, in his work “The Case of The German Templers in Eretz-Israel, from Ideology and Landscape in Historical Perspective”, also writes:

“...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’ (*das Volk Gottes*) 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).”

[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].

Benjamin Zev Kedar in his paper ‘From Religious Messianism to Political Messianism’ writes:

*“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 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.*" (Chronicles of a Utopia, pp 17 – 18)

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." (ibid)

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..." (Ibid, p 19)

## **ARRIVAL**

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 travelled ahead of them, and by the surviving settlers Bez, Heuschele and Hessenauer [of the failed settlement of Samuniyeh and Chnefiss]. 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 Templer 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 Morgen- (German land measurement unit between 2 to 10 metric dunums) was acquired and subdivided according to a plan by Hardegg into 12 lots of 1-1/4 Wurttemberg Morgen each [1 Morgen approx. 3000m<sup>2</sup>]. 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 Templers settlement was laid near Caifa with appropriate religious solemnity and in the presence of the members of the Temple Society, the Prussian Vice-Consul Ziphos (a Greek) from Acre, several officials and some Arab friends...

“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.

“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 north-west 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 settlements [the latter refer to what could be termed footholds in towns such as Nazareth and Tiberius], 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...” [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]

### **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 be 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. [Words of Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, p. 75]

At the same time when the movement of the Templers was shaping up, a parallel movement of Zionism was also taking place in Europe in order to bring the Jews back to their ancestral and Promised 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.

Could the Jews have come the Holy Land prior to the German Templers? – this is a valid question; and yet, it was not to be so. It required a hard working, mono-cultured people with exceeding love for the land to come and cultivate it, make it productive and build on it, then the Jews could come, as they did, 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, who would claim the land as their own to develop it with the same love as the German Templers, if not more. After all, they were the rightful people to establish themselves in their ancestral homeland.

Therefore, the role of the German Templers was the role of an older brother to show them how and what to do anywhere in the Holy Land. The German Templers employed many Jews in their farms, in all their seven establishments of Haifa & Jaffa (both in 1869), Sarona (1871), in Rephaim, outskirts of Jerusalem (1873), in Wilhelma (1902), in Bethlehem of Galilee (1906) and in Waldheim (1907). And the Jews, who were buying land in different parts of the Holy Land, knew well, that sooner or later the onus of developing their land would be on them. They were learning fast. The Holy Land, so they believed, has always been their land, their goal, love and aim of their lives for generations: "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 and they had a duty to fulfill. They trained both Jews and Arabs. The latter had been living in the land for generations, but not to develop it, this was not their mission; they just wanted to maintain it, whereas the Jews did have a mission - that is why they had to learn fast and work hard to develop their beloved land.

## **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 the 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 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. But this time, although 'Akká and consequently Palestine was again in the hands of the Turks, the city remained totally destroyed and abandoned, in such a way that 'Akká became in the words of Baha'u'llah, 'the most desolate land', a totally ruined city. The war had destroyed it. The war had decimated its population. That seat of governors was converted into a heap 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 hold Baha'u'llah for over two years and kept being as such even during the British control up until after the WWII.

The Württembergers, prior to their arrival in the Holy Land, stopped over in Istanbul in order to negotiate some land purchases 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. Huber, the Christian missionary who knew the Württembergers from back home in Germany, had met the group previously. 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 Jaffa. Although Jaffa had a port with a wharf for ships to dock and was the gateway to the Holy City of Jerusalem, but the sea was often very rough. So, the German Templers accepted Huber's suggestion and docked in Haifa. (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).

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 only after the fulfillment of the fact. Therefore, the answer is no, it could not have happened thus, as there needed to be a Divine reason for the fulfillment of a prophecy, a 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. Then, what about Mount Carmel and its meeting with its Lord? What about the establishment of the future Throne of the Lord on it? What about the Sea-Land-Mountain Highway? And the establishment of the Seat of the Divine World Order on Mount Carmel, how would these happen? The chain links are all divinely put together and each one follows the next without any alteration. 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 it would have not happened. Once the German Templers had fulfilled their mission, they had to evacuate the land, although they had

never thought of leaving Palestine. They loved the Country; they felt it was their own home, dear home, for which they had worked so hard to develop it. Yet, obviously, they had partly sided with the National Socialists – the Nazis, who were at war with the British and were exterminating the Jews all over in Europe. The Jews were already shaping their land. Could they tolerate their enemies in their own land? They forced the Germans out with the determination of never having them back again in their adoptive land, and took over their settlements (later on paid the full amount to the Templers). By that time, the German Templers had already fulfilled their divinely ordained mission, i.e. responding to the Divine Call, building the Kings' Highway, -the Carmel Avenues- where it would lead to the spot where the Temple of God would be built, but not by them. They were initiating the foundations for the development of the Holy Land.

The very second generation, were not at all like those first generation Templers who had come to build the 'Temple', they became industrialists and landowners, contractors both with the British inside Palestine and with the French outside the country, 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 an 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 originally 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 was busy building the foundations of that Holy Place, where the Most Holy Remains of the Prophet of God, the Bab, martyred in Iran in 1850, was on its way to be settled in the heart of Carmel, above the colony of the Germans, overlooking the city of Haifa. (Although not confirmed yet, but the original Shrine building has striking resemblance to the Templer's Hall in Wilhelmina designed and built probably by Jakob Schumacher in 1905 when the Shrine was being built. Once this fact confirmed, then it could be said that the Templers also had a hand in building the Temple of God as they originally had in mind).

The German Templers were systematically evicted from the Holy Land between the years 1930 to 1948 due to the reason mentioned earlier, in different stages, when the embryonic State of Israel was being formed and eventually created. The British gave the Templers the choice of going back to Germany, or to Melbourne, 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, where they were going

to be alien in the Country of their ancestors and also Germany was totally devastated after WWII and there were no prospect for them anymore there anyway.

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 in a foreign land. They had to integrate in the Australian society and become as one with the people of the host country. Now, the new generation identifies itself more as Australians than Germans, and most of them have forgotten their forefathers' faith's philosophy altogether. Yes, they are Templers, they are wonderful citizens, quite pious Christians, but there is no goal for them to fulfill. 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 to the author:

*"...we are not content with our spiritual life which has lost so much of its intensity compared with the Templer 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 Templer 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."* [Personal correspondence of the writer with Mr Lange, dated June 2011]

Here are the words of a Templer who loved the land of his choice, i.e. the Holy Land but was deprived from it:

*"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*". [Gotthilf Hornung, Memories of Palestine, An old Templer reminisces, p. 36]

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

Of the seven German Templers settlements, only one prominent name has survived. The most prominent being the German Colony in Haifa, which is one of the most beautiful spots on earth, as some believe. 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. Coincidentally he was facing 'Akká, where Baha'u'llah was 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 Shekhinah, 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 others are still to be fulfilled. For each step a person or a group is required to achieve the goal. Nothing else remains after the accomplishment, except what would remain from a seed in the soil. If it is faithful to the Divine Covenant, it will grow roots and stems, and continue to develop into another form. If not, it will just perishes into naught!

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 of time, serving in any capacity they could. He 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 and about 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. Unfortunately,



he could never understand the meaning of the Tablet. Baha'u'llah wrote in a Tablet to Varqa the martyr, an important statement about the Templers:

*“The Community of Prussians (Templers), although declaring that we have come to this Land in order 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...”*  
Tablet to Varqa – Pazhuheshnameh, vol.2, no 1, Autumn 1997, p. 122, my translation]

The reader is referred to read the Tablet to Hardegg –Tablet of Hirtik- as the annexure to this paper in order to see how He answered to the questions of Hardegg.

M. Momen (The Babi and Baha'i Religions, 1844-1944, p. 236) writes an interesting finding of Professor Alex Carmel, where the latter finds number of articles, which were appeared in the German Templer's Magazine *Suddeutsche Warte*. The first mention, he writes, was in a letter from Schumacher (q.v.) and was published in the number for 29 June 1871 (p. 101):

*“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 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 more could 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, met Hardegg, perhaps more than once. Hardegg was quite impressed by this young man of maybe 27 or 28 years of age, of His vast knowledge and His depth in interpreting the Holy Writings. That is why perhaps that Hardegg wrote an article about this movement, which appeared on the *Suddeutsche Warte* (pp. 113-14) on 20 July 1871. Momen writes in his book *'The Babi and Baha'i Religions, 1844 – 1944* (pp. 236-238) the following: "It shows that Hardegg had met 'Abdu'l-Baha long before the interview at which Huber was present... Hardegg's article was as follows:

*"In the town of Haifa by Carmel live a few Persians, who earn their living as metal and wood-workers. 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 Illuminator of God'; 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 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-Bab 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.*

*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."*

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 thirds remained with Hoffmann, who soon (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” (ibid).*

It is not known at the stage if Hardegg tried to persuade Hoffmann on the new found Faith to be explored, as in that time the relationship between the two leaders was getting to the lowest point. Neither it is known if Hoffmann ever had a chance to explore the Baha'i doctrine, though in his writings there are quite a few statements on peace, love and unity, resembling Baha'u'llah's teachings.

But according to Gottlob David Sandel in his article on Georg David Hardegg, 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 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 mentions page 9:

“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 the circa 60 families sided with Hardegg. After his death in 1879, they became a lost cause. Lutheran missionaries looked after them now and then, until the Prussian

*Jerusalemsverein* began to care for them and provided a Pastor and teacher. Before that, they were forced to continue sending their children to our Templers 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 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.” [Templer Record Supplement #4, Recollections of an old Templer, TSA Heritage Group, June 2009]*

*“...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.” Wikipedia, Immanuel Church (Tel Aviv-Yafo) –, p.2*

Miller, et.al, in their book, Biographies from Swabia and Franconia, vol. 9, published in 1963 has researched the revolutionary character of Hardegg (1812 -1879). He indicates 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, in order 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 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.” [ibid, p 18]*

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, busying himself with other things, and watching how his dreams were only illusions that never became reality. As a result of a heart attack on the 9<sup>th</sup> 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-Deininger, 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 Reichsbruderbund (German Brotherhood).

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

"Some friends, especially the former German Consul Friedrich Keller, surrounded him and formed a group which 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." [Revolutionary and Co-founder of the German Temple Society 1812 – 1879]

Max Miller, et.al, mention that Hardegg was busy writing and publishing many essays on religious studies, such as the Wahabites (a Sunni sect of the Saudis) and "an essay was dedicated to the Persian sect of the Baha'is (The Persian Sect of the Baha'is and their Refuge in Akko and on Mount Carmel". 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 did not leave the perimeter of 'Akká before 1875, only to go to the Ridvan Garden and later on to Mazra'ih –both within the greater Akka environs- where he secured a more pleasant environment for His beloved Father. It is not yet 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 considered to be the very first article that had ever been written in a Western magazine by a non-Baha'i, [see Momen, Babi and Baha'i Religions, vol.1]

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."

[Quotation: - Mein Herz ist bei euch, Abdul Baha in Deutschland -by Werner Gollmer, Bahá'í Verlag 1988, pp. 44-45, translated by Martha Otto]

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 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 1888. He passed away in 1889 in Jerusalem where his remains were buried in the Templer Cemetery. Both of these 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 leadership of the movement, thus bringing the long standing tensions between the two leaders to an end.

Yaron Perry, in his paper "The Templar Settlement in the Land of Israel" 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 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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..."*

There are some points in the above quotation worth analyzing about Hardegg's expectations and the Templers' expectations. It is ironic that Hardegg was looking to the 'west' - why did he not look to the 'east', in the direction from which the Messiah should have come? Did or did he not expect Him to come? Perhaps Hardegg's expectation was to receive a massive of Templers from the west, to overtake the Holy Land and as Prof. Carmel says, hence Hardegg' disappointment in his last days. The other point is the concept of 'failure', mentioned by Professor Alex Carmel, who is an undisputed specialist on the subject of the Templers.

The Templers may have not achieved their goals as they had envisioned, but 80 years of hard work, could that have been for nothing? No achievement whatsoever?

D. Goldman wrote the following on this topic to the writer when the latter asked him his point of view in an email back in 2010:

*“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 backup 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 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 actually 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 Templar 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”.*

### **Baha’i Point of view**

From a Baha’i point of view, the Templers movement, as a messianic group, maintains its high position among all other groups, through both leaders, and of course more through Hardegg than Hoffmann, who, does not seem to have had any contact or interest in other neighbouring groups while in Haifa. However, 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.* [see Orient and Occident, vol. 1] (emphasis added)

But it is Hardegg who wrote to Baha'u'llah. He met with the Master Abdu'l-Bahá; he is the one who designed 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 this 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 Afnán writes (provisional translation):

*"...The Blessed Beauty was in Haifa on many occasions and ordered the 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..."* [Rahiq-i-Makhtum, Vol. II, pp. 100/101]

Abdu'l-Bahá started moving to Haifa in 1907 in a permanent character, although He has been on and off living in Haifa before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> 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, building the Shrine of the Bab as envisioned by His illustrious 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 whole Templer school rose up on their feet, while the funeral procession was passing, which had never been done for any other religious leader by the Templers.

Despite the philosophical character of the Templers, and although they were neighbours, they never came to investigate the Baha'is and their claims. 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, he did not understand a word, as attested by Baha'u'llah Himself.

## 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...”**

[From Memories of a life in Palestine – Martha Strasser, p. 23]

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 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 (She refers to Shoghi Effendi, the grandson of Abdu'l-Baha, f). 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 German. 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. [Signature illegible]*

*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. [Illegible handwriting]*

*[Translated by: H. Martha Otto, July 2010]*

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 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. 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'.

The third generation of the Templers/Kirchlers who lived during the lifetime of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, 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."

[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]:

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 to fulfil. This is a different perspective, but certainly they achieved goals beyond their expectation not yet acknowledged by them. Once the station of the Bab as the 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 a continent. 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 nothing is left of it, yet, the glory of the born tree and its fruits is manifest.

The Templer/Kirchler achievements can be analyzed as follows:

1. While the community was originally together, they succeeded in creating their most valuable settlement in Haifa. Land identified and acquired by them, was the land chosen by Baha'u'llah for the establishment of the Temple of the Lord. This was the goal to be achieved although it may not be seen today in academic circles as a Templers' achievement, yet it has a profound significance once the station of the Bab is known. 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, 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 coming of 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. This could be considered as a spiritual achievement of the Templers, although they are not aware of it as yet.

2. The curiosity of Hardegg to know Baha'u'llah, although he never even came close to know Him and His lofty claim, made Baha'u'llah to reveal one of the 'most sublime Tablets' from His pen in answer to his questions. Although questions of Hardegg are not at hand, but from the tone of the Tablet of Baha'u'llah in answering his questions, type of questions become clear. This Tablet is known as the Tablet of Hirtik in Arabic, or the Tablet of Hardegg. This again is an achievement that only a Templer Leader has attained. Although he could not grasp the contents of what Baha'u'llah revealed for him, which could be called kind of failure, yet, having the Pen of Glory to reveal a Tablet in answer to his specific theological questions, is a highly meritorious achievement for the Templers as well as for Baha'is.

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

- Ungodliness of the people of the earth
- Significance of the Mt. Carmel
- The position of Peter
- Baha'u'llah's claim
- Darkness which has enveloped the world
- The return of Christ

In a Tablet to Haji Mirza Haydar-Ali Isfahani, Baha'u'llah indicates (provisional translation):

*"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 most great 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 revealed for him especially, 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".*  
[Ganj-e Shaygan, p. 172]

This Tablet to Haji Mirza Haydar-Ali was revealed, as Baha'u'llah Himself testifies, 'a few years ago', i.e. after 1971/2. Therefore, it seems that after the revelation of the Tablet of Hirtik, there was no follow-up by Hardegg, the recipient of Baha'u'llah's Tablet.

Vahid 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 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 spiritual leader. The members of the Templar Society, 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 this:

*"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..."* [Pajuheshnameh vol. 3, p. 122, Autumn 1997, Provisional translation]:

The provisional translation of the Tablet to Hardegg, done by Habib Taherzadeh, could be seen as the Annex 1. There are two more translations available. The missionary Zeller did an inadequate translate 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 behoveth 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. Later on He says to 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 will build the Temple. It is only Him Who shall build the Temple of the Lord, this being the building of the character of men through the physical Temple, which now is being built on Mt. Carmel, because according to Baha'u'llah, only the Word of God can re-build up the character of men.

[More on the Tablet of Hardegg see Annex I]

Later on Baha'u'llah addresses Hardegg saying 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. In this Tablet, Baha'u'llah mentions of the *'The Mystery of Reversal'*, which caused the most learned people at the time of Jesus to reject Him, whereas a fisherman without knowledge recognized Him. And if he would ponder this in his heart, he would understand what happened in the past, when all but a few came to know Him. He 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, asks 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 Mirrors (the Manifestations of God – the Prophets), 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.”*

He answered his next question 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 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 with the stigmatized by being ‘the God of Persians’, obviously not a favorable title for the Muslims and consequently for the Christians who both have an arguable concept of ‘Allah’, ‘God’, ‘Jesus as the Son of God’, 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 a short but lasting effects 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 and the German Templers too, who heard of this highly surprising matter.
- 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 Hardegg, did the translation of the Tablet into English (his first language which Hardegg was also totally familiar with) for him. Obviously both men were not versatile in literary 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', etc.
  - e. Hardegg himself in that period of time was going through a difficult situation with regard to the leadership of the Movement with Hoffmann. His attention to the New Message – if paid more attention to – could have been even more detrimental for the schism in the German group. Hoffmann was the spiritual leader and 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!
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. 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 helped them to build their Jewish settlements (Kibbutzim), with construction material supplied to the Jews by the Germans. The Templers' experience in all areas became

very valuable to the Jews, 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 well established, working hard with love and enthusiasm, they began to compete with the German Templers, again in all areas.

## 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.”**

[Here we have no lasting city, Gertrude W-Deininger. p. 69, September '47]

The third generation Templers was quite distant from 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 fed 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 government had defeated the Ottomans and come to power after WWI as an entity responsible for the lives of the inhabitants of Palestine. 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, whereas the majority was sent off to Australia, to be integrated with the Australian population. 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. Suddenly eighty years after leaving the country of their birth there was a big question, why? What have they done to be expelled from the land they adored? All these sacrifices, hardships that they have gone through came to naught? Although they spoke German and were of German descent, yet their country was Palestine, they were born and raised there; they had all the right to live here. Yet, it was not to be as they wished and they were thrown out.

If our scholars, such as Professor Alex Carmel and others, consider eighty years of service, such as the German Templers' a 'failure', maybe their terminology should be reconsidered.

The following analogy could shed some light on this subject. When a gardener 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 and produces stems, the seed itself comes to naught. Once the tree has grown out of the seed, nothing of the original seed is left, 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. 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 Templar 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.”*  
[Introduction to the book of ‘The Holy Land Called’, by Paul Sauer, published by the Temple Society Australia]

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.

## CHAPTER V

### Haifa – Some early descriptions by Templers

Martha Strasser (Beck) a second generation Templar writes in her memoirs about Haifa:

*“At the time when the first Templar 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 the 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.”*  
[Memories of a Life in Palestine, p.23]

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...”* [Here We Have No Lasting City, pp. 15/16]

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 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”.* [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]

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.”* [Memories of Palestine]

### **Haifa - some early Baha’i observations:**

The Master’s Houses in Haifa in the vicinity of the German Colony:

*“The Master’s house in Haifa where Khan (Ali Quli Khan, 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 reimposed as it would be later because of the never-ending plots 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.*

*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 Leaf, 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 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-Furughi 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, roses-water and a plate heaped with rock candy. (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).*

*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 companion, 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 of 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 (pantry where tea was prepared) was adjacent to this room. [Summon Up Remembrance, p 110/111]*

## **Construction of the Shrine**

Habíb Moayyed, 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), he made 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. In quoting Abdu’l-Baha:

*“We built the Shrine of the Báb on different terraces 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 Hájj Karím Khan, 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...” (Memoirs of Habib, p. 313-314).*

## **Acquiring the required land**

In the next section, 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 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 in order 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 down 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) and was adamant.*

*Finally after two months he accepted, but later on 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. 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 Pasha. 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 at he was told that he was not at home. This made me extremely sad; I did not eat or drink not 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 Society (Christoph Hoffmann II), 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 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 in spite of 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? (Memoirs of Habib, pp. 314 – 317)*

## **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 flowers over their heads, and will come to visit the*

*Shrines...*" (Ibid, p. 317) 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 Pasha, the general of the Ottoman Army who promised to either slay or crucify Abdu'l-Bahá, asked Him about the Germans\*:

*"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.'"*

[\*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, and in 1884, five years before he passed away, his 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/>. ]

### **...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: (Ibid, page 320)

*"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".*

*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 Be'er Al Sebb'a; this matter had greatly disturbed him because there is a long distance between the battlefield and Be'er Al Sebb'a! Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "This is 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 fled and by the most convenient way got himself to Be'er Al Sebb'a." The German Leader thought a bit and then said: "I agree with you, it seems it can only be the way you said." [Ibid, p. 320]*

And soon Jamal Pasha died and his solemn promise withered away.

[\*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].

## **Tabernacle of Universal Peace**

"This same blood-thirsty Jamal Pasha, who in 1917 took one third of the Ottoman troops to the Suez Canal in order 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 biggest tent of the Blessed Beauty. 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 should get together to consult about bringing peace to humanity. Abdu'l-Bahá was very sad about this great loss." [Habib's Memoirs, pp. 207 & 238]

Many times Abdu'l-Bahá has 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...”* [Habib's Memoirs p. 61]

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 Islambol (Constantinople), then to Rumili (Adrianopolis) and 'Akká, in order 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 Haifa wharf, 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 High (the Báb).*

*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 aid organizations being built on it.”*

[Ibid. p 322]

## **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, they will kneel and prostrate on the ground and offer their crowns to Him...”* [Ibid. pp. 57/ 58]

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 (provisional translation):

*“There was a building between the mountain and the German Colony which Abdu’l-Bahá wanted to buy and demolish it in order to open the path. The enemies and the Covenant-breakers were stopping the sale. One of these people had told the owner not 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 his army, the commander ordered the demolition of that same building and the path was opened”\**. [pp. 385/8]

(\*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: “In the house with the prophetic inscription ‘Der Herr ist nahe’ a little girl was born, probably in 1887, her name Wilhelmine Pfander; she married to become Mrs Deininger. In 1977, the wife of Gerhad 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 Deininger at her home in South Australia (Melbourne?) 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 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 Schmidt. She recalled having seen Baha’u’llah in the room at the north-west corner of the ground floor.” Either the Pfander family had two houses or the mentioned house belonged to someone else. F.

## 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 Dr. Ra'fati has mentioned in his detailed article:

*"His Holiness Baha'u'llah, 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 Kalim (title of Moses, Who spoke with God) reached the Ancient Light... This is the day in which the Garden of God (Carmel) rushed with yearning to see Him..."*

*"The revelation of these Writings in the Book of Aqdas and other Writings, shows that right from the beginning of His arrival in the Holy Land, Baha'u'llah 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".*

Pajuheshnameh, vol. III, thus (provisional translation):

He mentions the coming of the German Templers and the consequent 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 Hirtik (Hardegg), which had been revealed previously, were fulfilled. Dr. Ra'fati mentions the following from the Pen of Baha'ullah: (provisional translation)

*"...The Society of the Prussians (Germans), 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 Humanity (the Lord)... Today the sun testifies, the ocean cries loud, 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".*

[Ibid, Pajuheshnameh, vol. III]

According to Ra’fati, the Revelation of the Tablet of Carmel (1891) 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 the 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’ 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 First Visit happened on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 1868, when the Austrian ship Lloyd Triestino docked early in the morning by the shore of Haifa (due to the building up of silt at the port of ‘Akká, no ship could have docked there), in order 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 final destination, i.e. the city of Acre. For this visit, Ra’fati mentions the following from the Pen of Baha’u’llah:

[Also see Annex 2, Tablet of Carmel]

*“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...”*

2. His Second Visit to Haifa happened almost fifteen years after the first one on the 6<sup>th</sup> 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”*. 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 located at the northern corner of Jaffa Street and Ben Gurion Avenue (then Carmel Avenue) and since 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 (Provisional translation):

*"...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 Spirit (Jesus Christ) 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".* (Also see the Tablet of Carmel)

3. The Third Visit to Haifa happened seven years later on the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 (1 April 1890), the Lord of Creation (The Father) 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 ocean. 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 One 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 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..."*

It is clear that Baha'u'llah stayed in Haifa for two weeks because He had Professor Edward G. Brown as His guest from 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> of April that same year when he was entertained in the Mansion of Bahji on the outskirts of the city of Acre.

Ra'fati indicates that when Baha'u'llah arrived 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 place (as they did not believe in any church,) as well as the school for their children. The vacant land was located in front of the Oliphant House, # 16 Ben Gurion Avenue in the ex-German Colony, which belonged to Sir Laurence Oliphant. According to D Goldman “The house was owned by one German Templer, his name was Oldorf, he was a Templer who came with the American group a little later. He was a carpenter. After he had sold the house to Oliphant he went to Ashdod”. Later on Baha’u’llah moved to the Oliphant House during His stay in Haifa. Two years prior, Sir Oliphant had already passed on.

4. Baha’u’llah’s Fourth Visit to Haifa happened some fifteen months later, on the 27<sup>th</sup> 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 (The Father) 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...”

Baha’u’llah’s return to Acre must have been around the beginning of August 1891, as He celebrated the Twin Birthdays of the Bab and of Himself in the Mansion of Bahji, on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of August. Therefore, His stay in Haifa had been, according to Ra’fati, around forty days.

On this trip, Baha’u’llah stayed in the Beit Abyad, a house belonging to Elyas Abyad which was located in the proximity of the German Colony, and on land to the East of that building He raised His tent, too. The building today is a branch of Mercantile Discount Bank, at the corner of Allenby Street and Italian Lane. Later on He raised His tent on a separate vacant 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.

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 Elijah that is in a lower part of the same location as the Convent. 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. (See Door of Hope – Ruhe)

Right at the top of the Mountain, the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, was able to purchase some land for the future Baha'i Temple in the Holy Land, measuring around two hectares. But the most important events of Baha'u'llah's trip were His revelation of the Tablet of Carmel and the showing the exact location of the future Shrine of the Bab, to His son Abdu'l-Baha.

### **Identifying the location of the Shrine**

Husayn Eqbal, 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. He pointing out to His son Abdu'l-Baha with His blessed finger the land He should purchase, and where the remains of the Báb were to be buried. At the time, according to one account – (A.M. Faizi, Malaka'i-Karmel, p.44), the specific land to be purchased pertained to a Christian Arab, Elias Modavvar\*, while the land on which the cypress trees were planted owned by Wilhelm Deiss, though this is quite ironic, how could an 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.

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

In Ra'fati's article there is a Tablet from Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to Mírzá Áqá Afnán, a relative of His Holiness the Báb mentioning this particular piece of land which was the choice of Baha'u'llah, and that He was very eager to have this piece of land to be purchased at any cost. He liked it for its physical beauty as the Master put it. Of course, it took several years (1895/6) before the Master Abdu'l-Bahá was able to secure that land.

In the same mentioned Tablet, 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 it reached its destination in Haifa in 1899 with

many difficulties. The friends of India were also asked to prepare a fine coffin from the best wood of India - (ebony, which becomes petrified after hundred years) also arrived. At the same time, He asked His brother-in-law, Mírzá Asadu'lláh in Iran to bring the Holy remains of the Bab all the way on a 'running throne' with utmost care and respect. The running throne resembles the Arc of the Covenant carried by the Jews in the early years of their arrival to the Holy Land.

While writing the Tablet, Abdu'l-Bahá had already started the construction of the Shrine on Mount Carmel. He asks the addressee, 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, 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, built next to the Shrine was dedicated by the Master. He gives a progress report, thanking God for the lower section of the Shrine that was completed most delicately. Also the plot of land above the present one was also purchased to prevent others to buy and build over it, which would not be appropriate. 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 Deiss. (The Door of Hope p 193)

He also mentions the water reservoir which today divides Terrace nine from Terrace ten, northwest to where the Shrine is located. He writes that because of Him being imprisoned in 'Akká He was not able to oversee its construction handled by foreign (German) and Ottoman engineers. They left the work unfinished, therefore causing the north wall to collapse and wasted a lot of effort; then He Himself engineered it and it was built much stronger. He mentions that this is not a water reservoir; it is a sea (of water) (it has a volume of approximately 340 cubic meters).

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.

And in another Tablet to a certain M. Baghdadi He writes:

“...verily the land of Sham (which comprises Damascus, Beirut, Ashkelon and the Holy Land) 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 Carmel, which calls, saying, verily the Builder of the Temple has come and has sanctified everything, happy those who reach and see”.

The Tablet of Carmel (see Annex II), 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: the building of the Temple, 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, (yet to be built), 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 was identified in the Baha'u'llah's Writings as 'The King of Messengers'. He was the Prophet Founder of the Babi Revelation that happened in May 1844 in Iran and at the same time He announced the coming of Baha'u'llah, The Glory of God, the Father, 'The One God shall make manifest'. 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'.

Note: 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.

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 (identified By the Bible)
2. Should be in Haifa (identified By Baha'u'llah)
3. Should be on the Mount Carmel (identified By Baha'u'llah – German Templers)
4. Should be built by the Branch (identified by the Bible, Abdu'l-Baha – The Most Mighty Branch & Shoghi Effendi, the Chosen Branch)

The conditions were met. The Holy Land was the land for the Temple of the Lord, where the Father had already had arrived. The city was chosen by the Father Himself to be 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 in 31 August 1868. The German Templers' most meritorious accomplishment was to establish themselves – through Hardegg – 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 best marble sarcophagus as the permanent resting place of the holy remains of the Bab. All these happened when He, Abbas Effendi, Abdu'l-Baha 'the Branch' was in the severest persecution and imprisonment in Acre.

Around 1896 He secured the land and four years later in the early 1900, at His request, He received a marble sarcophagus from Rangoon, Burma. The earthly remains of the Prophet martyr – The Bab, arrived to the Holy Land from Iran after being in hiding places for half a century. In 1901, with the offer of some of the early believers, He started to have the excavations of the Lord's Temple to start. In the same year, the Ottoman government again imposed restrictions to His liberty 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's Revolution, He was finally released and freed once for all, together with all the other political and religious prisoners. In the meanwhile, He was directing the construction of the Shrine from Acre through intermediary believers. 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 in the underground vault 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 from the east and the west its influence, 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 Maxwell designed the superstructure of the Temple of the Lord in its utmost beauty and perfection with a golden dome. It was in 1953, on the hundreth 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. Florence wrote of the Tomb as 'an imposing structure...two 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 Shrine. (Summon Up Remembrance, p.223)

"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.' (Ibid, p. 256)

Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith had beautified to the utmost possible way, surrounding the edifice with unique gardens, 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.

## **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 of 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 ascended to heaven from the most holy Temple of the Jews, Temple of Solomon, thus this City becomes the third most holy place for them after Mecca and Medina.

Templers moved the Jerusalem with the intention of one day to build the Temple there too, in the meanwhile, working on the real temple, which is the moral life of the adherents, the real Temple.

### **Jerusalem in Templers' words**

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

Christ's prophecy: "The time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem" (John 4:21).

"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 (Luke 21:24), only until the time of the Gentiles fulfilled. There will and must come a time when the Temple will 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... "Occident and Orient", p.80 of 94

"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. (Ibid, p. 81)

"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 (p. 82)... 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... (Ibid, p. 83)

"...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... (Ibid, p.89)

"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 Babylon (Ibid, p.91).

## **Jerusalem in the Baha'i Literature**

Abdu'l-Bahá explained what in reality is meant this word of 'Jerusalem':

"...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'".

## CHAPTER IX

### Shekhinah - The Arc of Covenant

*Shekhinah* or *Shkkinah* 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 granddaughter of Prophet Muhammad, the daughter of Husayn, was named Sakinah 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-Illah', where God resides.

The Talmud reports that Shekhinah is what caused prophets to prophesy and King David to compose his Psalms. The Shekhinah manifests itself as a form of joy connected with prophecy and creativity (Pesachim 117a). The Talmud also reports "*that The Shkkinah 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 Shkkinah is associated with the transformational "Spirit of God"...*

The Shekhinah in the New Testament is commonly equated to the presence or indwelling of the Spirit of the Lord (generally referred to as the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of Christ) 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 Shekhinah are the same thing and therefore, the Messiah is the Shekhinah'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 Arc 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, in order to be protected at all times. Once

however, the Shekhinah, the Arc of the Covenant, was placed in Solomon's Temple, the use of the Tabernacle came to an end. "...Lord said that He would dwell in a thick darkness." (1Ki. 8:12)

It is also said that when the Israelites begged Moses that they wanted to have the presence of God with them at all times, God ordered Moses to build a box wherein He would be dwelling.

Aba Eban, in his book writes:

*"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..."* ("Heritage", p. 38)

### **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)...”* “Ad’iyyih Mahboub”, pp. 93-99

The Ark of the Covenant is the dwelling place of Shekhinah, 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 not 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 (priests) [Some Answered Questions”, chapter “Influence of the Prophets]*

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:

*“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 gate 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 for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile,...” (Eze. 43:2 to 43:7), (emphasis added).*

Further in Zek. 2:11 it continues speaking of the Shkhinah: *“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...”*

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.

## 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?”**

Baha'u'llah; GWB, p. 143

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 churches and religions, seek this unique matter and all try to see the Kingdom of God be established on earth, the time 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 Faith, 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 start in 1844 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 face with He, Who claimed to be ‘the Father’ and the His Center of Covenant ‘the Branch’, 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 higher grade, where the students will be looking forward to see the new text and the new teacher once they have been capacitated by the previous teacher. Here, nothing is contradictory among the different grades, but 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. The teachers' way in that period of time 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 repeats again 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 his article, Faruq Izadinia on ‘Understanding the Divine Word’ [Safine Erfan # 14] referring to the Tablet of Hirtik, he writes, was identified by M. Momen, after he found the translation of the same by the missionary Zeller in the 1970s. The Research Department of the Baha’i World Center, confirmed its true addressee as the Tablet of Hirtik, 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 Tablet (Tablet to the Christians) and the Tablet to the Pope Pio Nono, 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 Faruq Izadinia, there are seven misunderstandings of 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 S. Lambden, who has an interesting story of how he came across this Tablet in its Arabic language. He mentions his story in his article – see annex III – of *Lights of Irfan*, book four:

*“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 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 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 8<sup>th</sup> July 1872. It was thus most probably between 1871 and early 1872 that Baha'u'llah addressed this Tablet to the Templer leader.”* (Lights of 'Irfan, book four, pp. 97-100)

And finally Habib Taherzadeh, a scholar par excellence, who at the time of finding of the Tablet was residing in Haifa, who was a master in Arabic language, with the help of some other of his erudite friends of the World Center made another translation though not published in any form. H. Grossmann, the ex-member of the House of Justice, 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 H. 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 one (Peter, f) to believe in Him Who was the Spirit (Jesus, f) 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. (emphasis added, f)

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 (Dome of 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.

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.

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. 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, 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, f*), 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 – Baha (Arabic script in notes) Note: With horizontal Alif and one point, the only letter that can be formed is B by placing the point under the Alif. No other form or letter is conceivable, f]* – 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 [*According to Abjad numerology: 'A amounts 70, M to 40, Z to 7 and I to 10 – hence Mu'azzi (the Comforter) f]*. 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 Spirit (Jesus, f). 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 (Baha'u'llah, f) 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.

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 past (become like Peter, f).

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.

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)

Note: Whatever in brackets with small letters with the letter 'f' next to it is from the writer.

There are merits in other every good translation, 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 H Tahirzadih, ST for S Lambden and Z for John Zeller.

Note:

M 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.

## **Comparative translations**

1. 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.

1. 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.

1. 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.

2. 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.

2. 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.

2.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.

3. 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.

3. 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.

3.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.

4. 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.

#### 4.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.

#### 4.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.

#### 5. 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 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 interrogated.

#### 5.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 (Peter),

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.

#### 5.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.

#### 6.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.

#### 6.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.

#### 6.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...

#### 7.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 likned with Ha – Baha (*Arabic script in notes*) Note: With horizontal Alif and one point, the only letter that can be formed is B by placing the point under the Alif. No other form or letter is conceivable] – 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 [*According to Abjad numerology: 'A amounts 70, M to 40, Z to 7 and I to 10 – hence Mu'azzi (the Comforter)*]. Thereat 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.

#### 7.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* = ا ) 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.

## 7.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 splendor 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.

## 8.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.

## 8.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.

8.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.

9.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.

9.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.

9.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.

10.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.

10.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.

10.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.

11.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.

11.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.

11.Z.

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

12.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.

12.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.

12.Z.

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

13.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.

13.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!

13.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!

14.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.

14.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

14.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 F.Q. Izadnia in his descriptive published article in Safineh-i-'Irfan, vol. 14, under the title 'Understanding the Divine Word' referring to the Tablet of Hirtik, analyzes the misunderstandings of Zeller while translating this Mighty Tablet for Hardegg. He points out on 7 paragraphs as Zeller's misunderstandings. No wonder why Baha'u'llah in a Tablet addressed to Mirza Haydar-Ali 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 go 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 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. [This sentence is a direct address to Hardegg].

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 per his limited understanding: “Oh friend! The bird is in the claw 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 M Afnan has written an article, reviewing some aspects of it under the title of ‘Perusing some aspects of the Tablet of Hirtik. This article has been published in the Persian journal of Golchin-i-Erfan. 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.

Revered 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 Akka, 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...”*

Momen, op. cit., 236

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.

The heart of the study of the German Templers' episode is this same Tablet, which Afnan navigates deeply into its ocean 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 branches [Hadir'ul-Vargha],
- Perceive the murmur of water of life [Kharir-i-Ma'ul Hayavan],
- Well-spring of the Will of the Lord of mankind [Ma'in-i-Mashiyyat-i-Malik-i-Imkan],
- Wisdom and Utterance [Hikmat va Bayan],
- Word of God [Kalimatu'llah - Christ],
- Enraptured by the Word of the Lord [Jadb-i-Kalimih-i-Rab],
- The Most Great Ocean [Bahr-i-A'azam] (Baha'u'llah, f),
- Inner ear [Udun-i-Fitrat]
- Sweet savors of Utterance [Arf'ul-Bayan],
- Ridding of all attachments of the World [Monqate'an An-ul Imkan],
- Expressed by way of allusions and mysteries amidst the shadows of the words [Sirr-i-ma dakara fi ghiahib-ul kalimat bel rumuz va isharat],
- Manifestation of the light of Divine Unity amongst men [Zuhur-i-Nur-i-Ahadiyyih bain-ul bariyyih],
- Wondrous sign of the Ancient of Days amidst the people of the world [Ayit-il-Qadam bain'ul Umam],
- Perfect constancy [Istiqamitih Kubra],
- Eternal Life [Hayat-i-Abadiyyih]
- Attentive ear [Udun-i-Va'iyih]
- Single court [Bisat-i-Vahid]

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

[The above statements were taken from M. Tahirzadih's translation]

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. Dr. 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 [Ya Habib]. 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 superstitions, which had enveloped many leaders of religion at the time of the New Revelation.

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

The phrase of '*the Word of God*' [Kalimatu'llah], 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*' [Avval man'a'man], 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 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 khahir', M. Tahirzadih 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 M. 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 Tahirzadih 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 Tahirzadih and '*Land and sea hath rejoiced at the Beneficence of God*' by Lambden, is according to M. 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.

M. Afnan uses a past tense for the following line, which Tahirzadih translates '*When appointed Hour is come Carmel will raise her voice and cry aloud*' and Lambden '*When appointed time came, Carmel cried out*'. But M. 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* [reference to either Peter, the Rock or Temple of the Dome of the Rock, which also being called the Rock] *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*' [Isaiah 35 and 65].

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 Bible [Mat. 19:30], "the first 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 disciple – Peter.

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.

M. 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 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.

Baha'u'llah mentions that this matter is being mentioned in the 'Lawh-i-Manshur', where according to Dr. Afnan states it, to be an allusion to the Bible, where Tahirzadih translates it as 'widely disseminated Tablet' and Lambden as 'an Outspread Tablet'.

In continuation of this sentence in this Tablet, Baha'u'llah makes reference to the Revelation of the Bab as 'opening of the door of Kingdom' 'Fath-i-bab'us-Sama' and appearance of the Kingdom of Names in the World of Being and the fulfillment of the Cause. The connecting of the letter 'H [pronounced Ha]' to the horizontal 'Alif – A' adorned with a dot, [horizontal Alif adorned with a dot under it, resembles the letter B in Arabic] from which the blessed name of BHA or BAHA (Glory) 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 to.

Next, in reference to the sentence of *'We observed the Word utter a Word'*, according to M. Afnan this sentence is referred to the words pronounced by Christ, Who was the Word [We observed Christ utter a word], Who promised the coming of Paraclitus or the Comforter, which again has been mentioned in this Tablet through an abstruse way. The word in Arabic is 'Mu'azzi – the Comforter 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 'A' [pronounced EIN, not to take it a A, which its value is 1] 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 Y. Taking into consideration that the Arabic alphabet does not have vowels as the Latin alphabet has. 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 [of the Promised One], 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 opposites.

Hardegg in his letter to Baha'u'llah refers to darkness and obscurity as it has been mentioned in the Bible [John, 14, 15, & 16] where the Blessed Beauty 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.

M. Afnan then 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.

Baha'u'llah then 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 that the Divine Bird is being entangled within the grasps of 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 <sup>(1)</sup>

Introduced and translated by Stephen Lambden

Mirza Husyan 'Ali Nuri entitled Baha'u'llah (the "Splendor of God", 1817-1892) Who founded the Baha'i Faith in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, addressed a number of scriptural tablets (alwah) to Christians during the latest, West Galilean (Acre = Ar. 'Akka) period of His religious ministry (1868-1892 CE). Most notably His Lawh-i-Pap (Tablet to Pope Pius IX<sup>th</sup> c. 1869) and Lawh-i-Aqdas ("Most Holy Tablet," late 1870s?) which most probably was addressed to ("Dr.") Faris Effendi 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 Hardegg (=Hirtik) (1812-1879). During the time of Baha'u'llah's imprisonment in 'Akka', Hardegg was the leader of the *Tempelgesellschaft* (Association of Templers) 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*,<sup>2</sup> (and since it had not been published), I wrote to the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa requesting a copy for detailed study. On receipt of a typed copy (cf. text below) 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.<sup>3</sup> 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 1868 (when both Baha'u'llah and Hardegg arrived in 'Akka' and Haifa respectively) and 8 July 1872. It was thus most probably between late 1871 and early 1872 (=128801289 AH) that Baha'u'llah address this Tablet to the Templer leader.

## Hardegg and the Tempelgesellschaft

The *Tempelgesellschaft* was founded by the German theologian and polemicist Christoph Hoffmann (b. Leonberg 1815 d. Jerusalem 1885) whose religious orientation was rooted in German Pietism of a highly chiliastic nature. Influenced by the belief that God's judgment and the parousia ('presence', return) 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" (*Ger. Das Volk Gottes*). 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 [Jerusalem] Temple and its restoration and dreamed of a mass emigration to Palestine.

In 1854 such visionary ideas let Hoffmann to establish the *Gesellschaft für Sammlung des Volkes Gottes in Jerusalem* (The Association for the Assembling of God's People in Jerusalem). 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-Majid (Ottoman Sultan from 1839-1861) 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* (The German Temple). 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 Templer 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 and Hardegg arrived at

Haifa on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 1868. They began to establishing, amidst considerable local opposition and difficulty, an initially agricultural settlement. A few dozen Templar families from Wurrtemberg (S. Germany) 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” (Katz 1994:263).

In 1869 Hoffmann migrated to Jaffa where he came to establish a school and a hospital.<sup>4</sup> 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 of the perhaps 200 (?) members of the Haifa community. These supporters of Hardegg subsequently returned to the (German) 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).<sup>5</sup>

Among the letters contained in J.M. Emmerson’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” (=Templers):

*One of the most noteworthy and interesting features of Haifa is the settlement here of group o 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. (Emmerson 1887:113).<sup>6</sup>*

### **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 31<sup>st</sup> 1868 some 40 [60days] 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 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 'Arrabi (d. late 1890s, later Mufti of 'Akka').

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 Schumacher (1825-1891); American consular agent for Haifa and Acre for almost twenty years), a naturalized American citizen of German origin (Katz, 1994:120) and Templer who became head of the Haifa colony after Hardegg [see the full story at the beginning] wrote the following (partially cited) 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 yesterday. (cited Momen, op. cit., 236)*

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" (cited, Momen, ibid 237). Hardegg most likely made other trips to 'Akka' in order 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' 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-Azali tensions and the misdeeds of certain Baha'is which culminated in the murder of several Azalis.<sup>7</sup>

Hardegg's desire to gain an interview with Baha'u'llah has been referred to by Baha'u'llah Himself in a scriptural Tablet (*Lawh*), which was perhaps written around 1875 and addressed to Haji Mirza Haydar 'Ali Isfahani (d. Haifa 1920) (cf. Ganj, 172-3). 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]", meaning, "God is nigh" (cf. Ruhe, op. cit. 193n) 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.<sup>8</sup> 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 significances. (cited Ganj, 172-3).*

Though Baha'u'llah represents the 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

## Notes

- 1) This article and the provisional translation of the *Lawh-i-Hirtik* was first published in the *Baha'i Studies Bulletin* vol. 2/1 (June 1983), 32-63 (C Hurqalya Publications). It has been very slightly revised since that time. This printing is without the detailed commentary, which can be found in revised and expanded form on the author's (forthcoming) personal website, which contains an electronic reprint of the whole *Baha'i Studies Bulletin* (1982).

- 2) Refer, Ganj, 172-3. Here Ishraq Khavari mistakenly identifies the followers of the recipient of the *Lawh-i-Hirtik* with the Millerites, the followers of William Miller (1782-1849 CE).
- 3) Refer Momen, *The Babi and Baha'i Religions*. 216-8.
- 4) In 1871 Hardegg's son Ernst became US consular agent in Jaffa. There he remained in office until 1909 when he resigned at the age of 70 (Kark, 1994: 114).
- 5) On the Tempelgesellschaft refer to the entries in the bibliography below and Whitley, 'Friends of the Temple in *Encyclopedia of Religions and Ethics* (6:14-2, Kolb, 'Friends of the Temple', Ussishkin, 'Templers (Tempelgesellschaft)' Enc. Judaica' 15:994-996 (this article is especially useful for details on 20<sup>th</sup> century Templar history); Carmel, *Die Siedlungen*; idem, 'The German Settlers in Palestine...' 442-465; cf. also Oliphant, *Haifa or Life in Modern Palestine*, 17ff: Momen, *The Babi and Baha'i Religions* 215f, 503, 506f, 521. For some useful information on contacts between Baha'is and Templars see Ruhe, *Door of Hope*, index.
- 6) A recent booklet put out by the Haifa Torusit Board entitled, '*Baha'i Shrine and Gardens on Mount Carmel, Haifa-Israel*' contains two pages, which illustrate the Haifa project, "the restoration and development of the main axis of the German Templar Colony". This small booklet contains some excellent photographs and details about the 19<sup>th</sup> century Templar building project and its anticipated restoration.
- 7) 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.
- 8) The interview with Baha'u'llah did not materialize. Instead Hardegg and Huber conversed with 'Abdu'l-Baha (cf. Momen, *op. cit.*, 218)

## Annex III

### Tablet of Carmel revealed by Baha'u'llah - Haifa, 1891

*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. 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 treasuries 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 throne, 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 Kaaba 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 Ark upon thee, and will manifest the people of Bahá who have been mentioned in the Book of Names.'*

*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 earth. (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, there is a circle of old cypress trees, about nine of them, though accordingly, the original number was 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.

According to horticulturist A Blake, with the help of A Nakhjavani, in his detailed pictorial history, done in 2001, he mentions the type of the trees, 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 sigh of the Shrine – the first building to be constructed in this area. At 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 built [Comments by Ali Nakhjavani]. 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-Baha purchased this land from someone [W. Deiss] who grew grapes here, so 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 1905.”* [The identified photo AVD number is NN 3365 FN 6255.2].

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 (which included the clump of cypress trees) 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 but the land he wanted.”* 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 Prediction. [Door of Hope, p. 193]*

Gerhard and Gertie Schmelzle, together with their daughter, Jessica – the only known Baha’is from Templer background, visited Maria Vongerg Deiss, daughter of Wilhelm 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...”* (Corresponds to tape recording AV CT 141 – 355)

In a Tablet from Abdu’l-Baha in which He reiterates the existence of the cypress trees when the land was going to be purchased by Him:

“Abdu'l-Baha (Persian Selections of the Writings of ‘Abdu'l-Baha, vol. 4, p. 68. says: "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 Shrine.”

It is not known the reason why W. Deiss planted in his vineyard 15 cypress trees. Among all the available Templers literature, nothing is being indicated pointing to discover the reason for the plantation of these trees. Anything else might merely be a speculation.

As per the Baha’i Persian literature, it is recorded by the story of H. 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 April 1891 when Baha'u'llah visited Haifa for the last time and climbed the Mount Carmel visiting the Cave of Elijah and the Christian Convent on the top of Carmel, where at its vicinity – today the Temple site – revealed the Tablet of Carmel. Mr. Iqbal, when at the presences of the beloved Guardian sometime in 1949, encouraged by him to recount this story to be a part of the future history. H Iqbal recounted that there were 15 young cypress trees whose trunk thickness were around the thickness of a finger [plus or minus one inch], 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 1886. [From Malakei-i-Karmel, M.A. Faizi, pp.41-42].

One point yet may stay unanswered which the future historians could delve in. Did W. Deiss remain a Templar or did he join the Kirchlers. Templars have recorded most of the history of the early settlers in the Holy Land. If however Deiss did join the Hardegg's group, the Kirchlers, it is possible that such an information would have been lost.

### **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 actual archivist/historian of the Society, Peter Lange, 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. My latest correspondent was Mark Hellaby. Obviously, 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.

*Mr. Hellaby contradicts this assumption by saying that there were indications that this group of trees was planted by Templers from the colony. To date I have not found any proof therefore. Why should the Templers 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 is all 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 problem.*

*[Email from Martha Otto to the writer, May 26, 2015]*

With the above description, it becomes obvious that the Templers per se as a Society have not had this circle of cypress trees planted, therefore, the aspect of this being a holy site for them should be discarded. The only other possible aspect, which might still be relevant and this cannot be proved yet, is that W. Deiss planted it in his land as a personal inspiration of which he did not divulged a word to anyone. The mystery remains unsolved.



## ANNEX V

### German Quotations on Templer Houses

(Translated into English)

By: Matha Otto

Beginnig at the bottom of Ben Gurion Avenue:

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 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"***

## ANNEX VI

### **The Templer Record No. 385 – Werner Ehman - May 1979**

Memories of Haifa and the Baha'i in the past and now

The following 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. Copy of the article was obtained from the Baha'i World Center Library.

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 touched; - 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 this 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.

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 Templars", 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' 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 Ehmman'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 words, 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 the 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. Library? Where can our young, trained in the use of reference libraries, nourish their knowledge of our heritage by means of sensibly collated material of all aspects of our past? This void must perplex the 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.

Werner Ehmann

(Source, BWC Library)

## ANNEX VII

### 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, while serving at the World Center.

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 for the – in search for the elderly Templar people, I was guided to the home of Mrs. Wilhelmine Dininger, spelled WILGELMINE DININGER. Her maiden 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 – times if she was sure it was Baha'u'llah. She said, "Yes, I knew the name." It is for the House to decide how authentic this story is – story can be. Personally, I felt very blessed listening to her. Mrs. Wilhelmine Dinger lives with her daughter now at 98 Avenue, Joslin, South Australia. (It should be in Melbourne, where the colony of the Templers were exiled – F. I.)

On picture 3 is Mrs. Vonberg, former(ly) Maria Deiss in her younger years, she is not 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 Ruhiyyih Khanum. I was the Hewson family and they said a full report on the Deiss family in connection with 'Abdu'l-Baha has been given to Ruhiyyih 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 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 Ruhiyyih 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 Australia

Corresponds to tape recording AV CT 141 -355

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\* 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]”

## **Glossary**

The following are Baha'i terminologies used in this study:

- **Abdu'l-Baha = Abbas Effendi, son of Baha'u'llah and Center of His Covenant, lit. Servant of Baha**
- **Blessed Beauty = Baha'u'llah, lit. The Glory of God**
- **The Bab = Prophet founder of the Babi Religion, the Forerunner of Baha'u'llah, lit. The Gate**
- **The Father = Baha'u'llah, The Glory of the Lord**
- **Master = Title given to Abdu'l-Baha by Baha'u'llah**
- **Covenant breaker = Those Baha'is who opposed the leadership of Abdu'l-Baha**
- **Tablet = Letters written by the pen of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha**
- **Temple of the Lord = Where the holy remains of the Bab, is kept, Shrine of the Bab**
- **Shkhinah or Shekhinah = The Arc of the Covenant, lit. Where the Lord Reposes**
- **The Most Great Branch = Abdu'l-Baha**
- **Branch = Title in Bible of Who would built the Temple of the Lord = Abdu'l-Baha**