

Second Tablet to Napoleon III: Tablet study outline

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Name of Tablet in Arabic or Persian: Lawh-i-Napulyun (second)

Translation into English: Second Tablet to Napoleon III. Sections translated in Gleanings

CLVIII, Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh 17-23, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf 46-56.

Significance of Name: named after recipient

Tablet was revealed in: Arabic

Name of Recipient: Napoleon III, Emperor of France

Reason for Revelation of the Tablet: As one of the epistles to the rulers of the world, this

Tablet fits in with the overall themes of informing the rulers of His station and Message and

calling them to accept the new Revelation, reminding them that their earthly rule is not

ultimately real, for only God holds true power. This Tablet, as a follow-up to the first

Tablet to Napoleon to which there had been no reply, also has the element of chastizing the recipient for his heedlessness.

Questions asked that are answered in Tablet:

Thought not really a question, Bahá'u'lláh does respond to a private utterance of Napoleon:

"O King! We heard the words thou didst utter in answer to the Czar of Russia, concerning the decision made regarding the war (Crimean War). Thy Lord, verily, knoweth, is informed of all. Thou didst say: 'I lay asleep upon my couch, when the cry of the oppressed, who were drowned in the Black Sea, wakened me.' This is what we heard thee say, and, verily, thy Lord is witness unto what I say. We testify that that which wakened thee was not their cry but the promptings of thine own passions, for We tested thee, and found thee wanting."

Date of Revelation: circa 1869

Place of Revelation: Akká.

Role of Amanuensis or Secretary: not known — it is known, though, that the

Tablet was translated into French for Napoleon by a French consular agent in Akká, who then sent it to the emperor.

Other Tablets revealed at about the same time:

There were many Tablets revealed around this time, most notably the epistles to the Kings, such as the Súriy-i-Ra'ís, Lawh-i-Fu'ád, Lawh-i-Ra'ís II, Tablet to Pope Pius IX, Tablet to Czar Alexander II, and the Tablet to Queen Victoria.

Style, subject, and genre of the Tablet: [?]

I. Tone of Tablet

1. Tablets with the tone of command and authority.

II. Subject Covered by Tablet (could include the following)

2. Writings in which laws and ordinances have been enjoined for this age and laws of the past abrogated.

4. Tablets concerning matters of government and world order, and those addressed to the kings.

6. Tablets exhorting men to education, goodly character and divine virtues.

7. Tablets dealing with social teachings.

III. Literary Genre of Tablet:

1. Letter to an individual.

Voice of Tablet: [?] Bahá'u'lláh and God (re the latter, an example is when Bahá'u'lláh says "Verily, there is none other God but Me, the Ever-Forgiving, The Most Merciful!")

Outline Contents of Tablet:

A brief summary of the parts of this Tablet that have been translated (not necessarily in order) could include that the "King of Paris" is warned not to deny Bahá'u'lláh's claim.

Bahá'u'lláh announces Himself and calls on the Emperor to arise and serve Him. The monks are called out of seclusion that they may marry and benefit mankind. The Emperor, though, is insincere in his concern for the oppressed. Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes courtesy, and declares that for his deeds the Emperor will lose his kingdom.

Bahá'u'lláh tells Napoleon that when He was in Iraq He was badly treated, and His situation deteriorated from day to day. However, He was being persecuted for saying the

same thing as

Moses, Jesus and Muhammad had said before Him. He expresses His longing to be sacrificed

for the unity of the world, admonishes Napoleon to take responsibility for his people, and

advises him to turn away from worldiness and towards God.

As well as rebuking Napoleon for his insincerity, Bahá'u'lláh tells him not to kill or judge

unjustly, but to be trustworthy and to give to the poor. He should realize that both

possessions and sovereignty are temporary. His selfishness will be the cause of his own

downfall. Remember the kings of the past, Bahá'u'lláh points out: where are their empires

now?

In an untranslated part of the Tablet, according to Taherzadeh (vol. 3, p. 115), Bahá'u'lláh

also announces that the two greatest festivals in the Faith are the festival of Ridván and the

declaration of the Báb, followed by the birth of Bahá'u'lláh and the birth of the Báb.

Principal themes of the Tablet:

Bahá'u'lláh's announcement of His claim and the call to Napoleon to teach it;

Bahá'u'lláh's

exhortation to Napoleon to be virtuous and trustworthy and responsible for his people; the

call to monks to abandon celibacy; prediction of the eminent downfall of Napoleon.

Tablet's relationship to other tablets:

This Tablet was revealed at about the same time as the Tablets to Fu'ád, to Queen Victoria,

the Czar of Russia, and to Pope Pius IX. In all of these, Bahá'u'lláh announces His mission,

admonishes the recipients to virtuous behavior, warns them about a failure to heed His

proclamation, and makes predictions about their empires. Queen Victoria is the only one

with a positive note; dire predictions are made for the others.

Bahá'u'lláh actually wrote two tablets to Napoleon III. The first Tablet, which was written

in a mild tone, was received with discourtesy and disrespect. It is reported that he flung

down the tablet saying "If this man is God, I am two gods!" The second was

revealed in
majestic language with a supreme authority declaring that its Author is none
other than the
King of Kings.

Later, in the Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh again referred to Napoleon III in his
apostrophe to Kaiser
Wilhelm, in which He wrote: "Say: O King of Berlin! ... Do thou remember the
one whose
power transcended thy power, and whose station excelled thy station. Where is
he? Whither
are gone the things he possessed? Take warning, and be not of them that are
fast asleep. He
it was who cast the Tablet of God behind him when We made known unto him what
the hosts
of tyranny had caused Us to suffer. Wherefore, disgrace assailed him from all
sides, and he
went down to dust in great loss. Think deeply, O King, concerning him, and
concerning them
who, like unto thee, have conquered cities and ruled over men. The All-Merciful
brought
them down from their palaces to their graves."

Biography or bio note of the recipient of the Tablet:

The American Heritage Dictionary gives the following definition of Napoleon:
"Originally Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. Known as Louis Napoleon.
1808-1873.
Emperor of the French (1852-1871). A nephew of Napoleon I, he led the
Bonapartist
opposition to Louis Philippe and became president of the Second Republic
(1848). After
proclaiming himself emperor (1852), he instituted reforms and rebuilt Paris.
His
successful imperialist ventures were overshadowed by a failed campaign in
Mexico (1861-
1867) and the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), which resulted in his
deposition."

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was born in Paris, on April 20, 1808, the third and
last son of
King Louis of France and Queen Hortense of Holland. His uncle was Napoleon I,
thus making
him heir to the throne of France. After the downfall of his uncle, in an
invasion of Russia,
the Bonaparte family was banished from France.

Napoleon III was educated privately in Switzerland and Bavaria. His mother

taught him the history of the Napoleonic legend. Thus he was possessed to emulate the example, and finish the interrupted work, of his imperial Uncle. However, Napoleon III was known as a dreamer and a conspirator; he had a shifting nature that was hypocritical and reckless.

In his desire to further the work of his uncle he began to aggrandize himself and formulate a political program. He portrayed himself as a social reformer, political liberal, military expert and proponent of agricultural and industrial development. He desired to overthrow the monarchy but, failing in his attempt, he was deported to America.

In 1836 and 1840 he led two unsuccessful attempts to overthrow the regime of King Louis Phillipe. He was captured and condemned to life imprisonment. He escaped to London in 1846, but returned in 1848. King Louis Philippi was ousted in 1848 and Louis Napoleon renewed his quest as a candidate for the Presidency of the new French republic. To the astonishment of political veterans, he won by a landslide. However, in 1849 the Royalists had a legislative victory limiting him to a 4 year term. Resolving this by a coup d'etat on December 2 1851, he assumed dictatorial powers, extending his term to ten years.

His reign is divided into two periods by historians. The dictatorship persisted until 1860; thereafter he began a series of liberal reforms that culminated in a limited monarchy. This period was marked by labor legislation, a movement toward free trade, and a revival of opposition parties. His most durable work was the reconstruction of Paris.

However, he was blinded to the dangers of French security and because of his own passions and desires he was a weak leader. In 1870 he led France to defeat in the Franco-Prussian War in the Battle of Sedan (1870), an event which marked one of the greatest military capitulations recorded in modern history. A ferocious civil war ensued, and the crowning of William I, the Prussian King, as Emperor of a unified Germany, took place in the Palace of Versailles. Napoleon III died in exile on January 9 1873 at Chislehurst,

England.

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