

Home of Baha-Allah
 Acca. Syria Nov. 26th 1914

Dear friends!

The Islamic world is putting forth her last iota of moral and physical energy. The final issue will be tremendously significant and of far-reaching importance not only to the Mahomadan religion and its future but to the whole East. The minds of the greatest religious and political leaders of the Orient are grappling with such vast problems of defense and offence that no statesman, how far-seeing his vision can foresee the course of events or conjecture what routes will they take in the next few years. The Mahomadan world is inoculated with such virus of religious fanaticism that may poison the very springs of human affection and wipe away the last traces of international comity. In viewing the seething, swaying arena one stands astonished at the unprecedented scale of blind antagonism and religious upheaval. The world has never witnessed and probably shall never witness again such broad spectacle of friendly forces, such demonic manifestation of the spirit of rabid and mad enthusiasm, such dark, frenzied and wild fanaticism! It is moreover, being constantly fanned by the propagation of daily dispatches from the Sublime Porte, religious manifestos sent out by the "Council of Ulema" and irrational appeals to the brutal elements of populace. Now that these devilish powers are set loose upon the world of humanity no power on earth can check them. Like unto a furious ^{torrent} they are now flowing and raging hither and thither, harrowing with swift velocity through the grounds of the hearts and leaving behind gaping chasms and yawning openings of malignant hate and bitter enmity. "When the doom shall be ready to light upon them, we will cause a monster to come forth to them out of the earth and cry to them, 'Verily men have not believed our signs.' And on that day shall be gathered out of every nation a company of those who have gainsaid our signs, in separate bands; Till they come before God, who will say, 'Treated ye my signs as impostures, although ye embraced ^{them} not in your knowledge? Or what is it that ye were doing?' And doom shall light upon them for their evil deeds, and noight shall they have to plead. On that day there

shall be a blast on the trumpet, and all that are in the heavens and all that are on the earth shall be terror-stricken, save him whom God pleaseth to deliver, and he shall come to him in humble guise. And thou shalt see the mountains ^{which} thou thinkest so firm, pass away with the passing of a cloud " Thus clearly has prophesied Mohamad concerning these latter days, he in whose name and under whose banner they are sending out such pronouncements and committing such excesses of which the founder of Islam is entirely unaware. The Turkish Government is putting forward this very last vestige of her physical and moral and religious forces and if she fail in this her last struggle her national independence and territorial integrity will be dreams of the past. In today's dispatches I have found the following manifesto issued from the "religious Council of the Empire held in Constantinople:-

"A declaration was issued today from the holy, supreme ecclesiastical Council held in the Sublime Port, authorized by all the divines and Ulemas and concurred by His Majesty, the Sultan, the Great Caliph. In this document it is clearly stated that Russia, England and France's aim is the complete destruction of the edifice of the religion of Islam. Therefore it is incumbent upon every Mohammedan living on the face of this terrestrial globe to wage the holy war against these enemies of religion. All the Muslims from the age of 20 to 45 are included in this command. The Muslims who are living in Asia, Europe and America and other parts of the world are commanded to stand firm before the enemies. Should they experience any signature on the part of their foreign governments who are the foes of Islam they must arise and protest against it and be not enlisted in their armies nor fight against the Army of the Great Caliph. This will be conducive ^{to their obtaining} great spiritual reward. The supreme Council was adjourned by reading the holy verses of Koran concerning Jahaad." This was the dark, menacing bell hurled by the spiritual leaders of Islam, the one shaft that has kept the Powers of Europe trembling with fear and apprehension. Like a terrific voice it has gone abroad, filling the hearts and the minds with hate and spite. For the worse day they had kept in their armory another magical weapon which does not fail to appeal strongly to the popular imagination. This is no other than the "Standard of the Prophet" the unfurling of which will arouse millions of zealots to the defense of their religion.

This also they have raised in Constantinople amidst a veritable mammoth demonstration. Another "holy Flag" of the Prophet is raised in Medina, headed by the guardian of the Tomb of Mohamed with 30,000 warriors - we may call them Mohamedan ^{crusaders}. They are walking towards Damascus and new recruits are joining the disorderly ranks all the time. According to the highest religious authority this is the very last narrow they have put in the bow and if this fail in its mark nothing will save them. Daily telegrams by the Ottoman censor Bureau announce desultory victories achieved by the Ottoman armies in Caucasasia and by the Arabs on the frontier of Egypt and Syria but no important engagement has been ^{so far} recorded. According to the latest news the Turkish army has not yet crossed the desert to reach Syria. They are being rushed from all parts to Acreh and massed there for a concerted departure. Thousands of empty petroleum tin boxes are taken from the inhabitants to fill them with water and carry them with camels for the army. Wooden covers are made for these boxes to protect them from breaking. Syria has become a camping ground of imperial militarism. Nothing is heard but war and Jihad. In every city, town and village, meetings are organized and people are kept at feverish heat. Now a new law is promulgated as regards the organization of a volunteer army. Very few are left behind to form such "civil guards". They are to be organized from amongst the youths and the old men. Prominent citizens are appointed Commanders, Colonels, adjutants etc and under the discipline of an experienced officer they go through exercises 2 or 3 hours a day. In Acre one regiment of a thousand men is being formed "to protect the town from foreigners." Another regiment is stationed in Kofré-yassif. As this village is Christian in population the large Protestant Church is confiscated and used as a Barrack. It has several wells and the soldiers are pleased with the abundance of water. All the French and English schools and hospitals are appropriated by the state and their ample resources are placed at the disposal of the army. The lovely English hospital in Haifa was transferred to the Ottoman government without so much as per your leave and all its furnitures and drugs sent to Damascus. The French nunneries and monasteries are also taken and their inmates shipped by the Italian steamers to the country. Because the Turkish government has not fine school buildings, he has simply transferred the students to the newly acquired ^{French and English} schools.

Another Imperial Trade lately issued is the release of all the prisoners of minor crimes, in order that they may be enlisted as soldiers and fight for the preservation of their religion. They tell me there are about 30,000 such criminals who will be set loose upon the country. The prisoners of Acca and Haifa as well as all other coast towns are sent into the interior and allotted between the various jails. All the communications with the outside world are brought to a stand still and not even a postal card can be mailed to Egypt. Wild rumors are circulated about the strong fortifications built by the English along the Canal, how great guns are placed at intervals, how even ⁱⁿ the streets of Cairo cannons are to be seen, how both ends of the canals are protected by Dreadnoughts and cruisers and how ^{on military grounds} all the Turkish subjects above forty five are given leave of departure. If four or five people are gathered in one place they are immediately dispersed. All the Egyptian Pashas whose loyalty to the English throne are in the least doubted are immediately exiled or imprisoned. The deposed Khedive, Abbas Helmi Pasha has joined the Turkish cause and will head the army of invasion. In interviews published in the Newspapers he has unmistakably declared himself in favor of Turkey and relying on Turkish arms to deliver his country from the traitorous English and the tyranny of the army of occupation. There are many German officers in the army who conduct the plan of the war according to their ^{own} tactics. Thousands of empty bags are taken with the army and it is hinted that these bags will be filled with sand to be thrown in the canal and impede the transference of ships from Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. Many, many boats are also carried no one knows for what purpose. All the train services are stopped save for military purposes and loads of wheat and provisions are sent to the army. For three days we have received not even the few lines of censored news on the pretext of the atmospheric disturbances in the air and the breaking of the telegraphic communications. In Haifa they are organizing a band of red Cross volunteers so that if there will be any bombardment they may have a force to take care of the wounded. The government is still pursuing this policy of confiscation and the inhabitants are taxed right and left, even needles are taken in the name of the army. Another law is enforced that

all the stores are kept open, the doors will be broken in and the goods taken by the administration. If letters or newspapers are sent direct to Haifa the latter are destroyed and the former are opened and not delivered unless it is perfectly harmless. One of the inhabitants of Acca arrived last week from Egypt after the greatest difficulty. An open letter was found on him for a man in this town from his father. Although the letter was quite harmless yet the bearer was hailed before the Police and his case is still pending in the Military Court. These were only a few words concerning the events which are transpiring around us. Under all these changing conditions the Beloved has shown the most wonderful calmness and serenity, looking towards the future with undisturbed faith.

During the last seven days we have had rain and hails and for the last three days there was a terrific storm, the sea was lashed to fury. The waves arose like unto the mountains, scaling the high walls of fortification, filling the streets with its thousands sprays. This evening Mirza Jalal and Mirza Mohsen arrived from Haifa and they brought the news of great havoc wrought by this great storm. They tell us the streets are furrowed deeply by the rushing streams coming down from the mountain, many walls were fallen, several houses were destroyed and a few people were carried to the sea by the force of the water. A rather pathetic or tragic story was related that a family had gone out to call on their friends. When they returned to their house they found it does not exist: the water had wash it away entirely. In the morning they were seen in the street trying to ~~find~~ unearth some of their belongings from under the ruins. The storm is still continuing and while I am writing this, the roars of thunder are heard, the flash of lightning is seen and the river of water is descending from the sky.

This morning we had tea with the Beloved. In the afternoon ^{several} people called on him and afterwards Khosre washed his blessed feet. It was so lovely to see him washing his feet and brought to mind another story of the Bible. In the evening a number of officers called on him and they were speaking for hours on the current subjects of these trying days.