

Home of Baha Ollah, Acca
 Syria March 7th 1915

Dear friends,

This afternoon the Beloved sent for us. As I entered the room I found him sitting in his accustomed place, near the window and looking into the street. I could see that he was sad, his forehead was furrowed with lines, his eyes were misty and contemplating. No wonder, no wonder! the bloody events of the last 8 months have left their marks upon his loving heart; they have made their lasting impressions upon his divine constitution. He is indeed the "Man of sorrows", carrying on his shoulders the burdens of all these destructive catastrophes and deploring the sad and melancholy mistakes of his fellowmen. Except on another occasion I had not seen the Master weeping but on this afternoon ^{as} he sat there, laboring under a mountain of thought I saw several ^{precious} hot tears falling on his cheeks and snow white beard. Ah me! All his life he has been working day and night for the Cause of international Peace and comity, both in the Orient and the Occident and now towards the sunset of his heavenly existence what barbaric scenes and ~~savage~~ portraits are painted by the cruel hand of Time on the fair and transparent canvas of his vision! With what pity and compassion he looks upon the vast battlefields of misguided humanity and with what pain and suffering he groans and weeps over their errors and sins! Each news of carnage is like unto a poisoned dagger into his tender heart. He is suffering but he does not tell us how much! During the last 8 months I have often seen him ^{submerged} in a sea of thought, thinking, deeply thinking over the miseries and negligence of mankind who have preferred the shedding of blood and the destruction of populous cities to universal peace and solidarity. Moreover all the paths of communication are closed and we are out of touch with the believers whose news and letters gave him so much joy and pleasure. Again we are surrounded by spies of many descriptions and they are ^{on} the alert to catch one word from our lips, carry it to the authorities and thus make trouble. Thus the atmosphere from every standpoint has become too close and depressing and the Beloved with his sensitive, delicate nature has felt the effect of this restraint and confinement.

These were my thoughts as I sat in his beautiful sad presence and looked into his calm sad Countenance. But let me translate for you his touching words which in a way confirmed the correctness of my mental cogitation. He raised his head slowly, fixed his sad, sad eyes on our faces and spoke in a low conversational tone. Now and then he would stop, and either become silent or ^{peak} about some outside subject, - then go back to his favored theme and take up the thread just where it was left. He said: - "During the last two years the world has gone through a terrific earthquake. Bloodthirstiness and ferocity has become widespread. Mercy and compassion have flown away from amongst the nations and governments. The world of humanity has become like unto a primeval forest wherein lurks beasts of prey, lions, leopards, hyenas, bears, wolves and venomous serpents. They attack and tear each other to pieces with an unexampled fury and frenzy. The battlefield of human slaughter is raging with an impetuous madness and anger. The goddess of Vengeance is reaping a rich harvest of blood and tears. To whichever direction one gives his ears, he hears the news of war and inhumanity, the events of a barbaric culture and the results of a faulty civilization. No sadder and more heart-rending news can ever be conceived by man! The globe is encircled with a girdle of destroying conflagration. It has become like unto a wide-mouthed furnace wherein the red fire of suppressed hatred and enmity is burning and from the cavernous stacks of which leap forth the flaming tongues and dark smoke of ^{millions} human sacrifices offered by tyrannous Kings and blinded emperors. The very air in which we breathe is vitiated with these ^{four} odors and pestilence and cholera will dog the steps of heedless humanity. It is as though religious love and international comity never existed. All the emotions, feelings and opinions of mankind have become wrapped ^{up} with the spirit of war and carnage. Spiritual principles are set aside. The vital topics of international interest are forgotten. The face of justice is beclouded, The heart of Love is petrified. The mind of Truth is poisoned. The Eyes of sympathy are blind-folded. The ears of Kindness are deafened. The Voice of Peace is silenced. The hands of universal charity are cut off. The feet of friendship are amputated. The head of wise statesmanship is severed from its trunk. The body of the world's

security is paralyzed. The fire of conciliation is extinct and the fountain
 of amity is dried. The battle-cry of the warriors reach the ears and the
 lamentations of the oppressed ascend to the height of heaven! When I was
 in Haifa I had a conversation with a German Minister regarding this European
 war. He insisted upon the fact that the Germans are engaged neither in an
 offensive or defensive war but they are carrying a 'holy war' against their
 implacable enemies. I said: 'how can 'war' in its literal sense be ever
 termed 'Holy'? Is the shedding of blood a 'holy' act? Thou ~~who~~ art a
 Minister of the Gospel dost claim ^{that} the war is holy and the cause of the
 progress of a nation but thy Master, Jesus Christ says: 'Put thy sword
 in the scabbard!'. Now which one of you are right? Surely thy
 Master, to whom thou bearest allegiance and in whose name thou
 hast attained to fame and fortune. Thou dost plant a tree in a prepared
 soil, water it every week, take care of it, look after its growth and protection
 from insects in season and out of season - till after several years of labor
 it blossoms and produces fruits. It is a goodly tree and thou art glad as
 thou ~~look~~ ^{kept} at it and dreamest that in a month its fruits will be ripened
 and thou and thy friends will enjoy them exceedingly. Then when thou
 art occupied with some other work a stranger passes by and with
 the axe in his hand cuts it to the ground and runs away. Imagine
 well the state of thine own feeling when thou returnest and lookest
 at the scene!! Now this world is a spiritual garden and mankind
 are the trees which are being planted in the soil of Providence by the
 loving hand of the Almighty. Tenderly and solicitously He has been
 taking care of them and watering them for all these years and then
 lo and behold! these robbers make their way into the orchard and uproot all
 the trees with the axes of oppression and injustice, leaving behind a waste
 wilderness, where owls dwell and ferocious beasts make their homes, changing
 the serene night into a hellish pandemonium with their screeches and
 howls. God is the Kind Shepherd and all the people are His sheep and lambs.
 He leads them into green pastures and waters them from the cool springs, but
 the wolves in sheep's clothings have entered into the flocks and are
 tearing the innocent sheep into pieces. God is the Supreme Architect and

and each man or woman is a divine edifice, reared up with His own Blessed hand; but some of our fellowmen enjoy the thoughts and acts of destruction and go on demolishing these heavenly palaces built by the Arch-Mason of the world. Nowadays if a person says one word against the established order in Syria ^{he} will be arrested and thrown into jail or hanged on the pillory. Why? Because he has expressed his own opinions or the voiced the thoughts of others. But the general of the army may become the cause of the destruction of a hundred thousand souls, and the devastation of many homes; still will he be hailed as a conqueror, a patriot, a hero, an able general, a powerful commander. To such ^{or} low degree, sinks the perversion of judgment and the debasement of the power of reason!

"But out of all this impenetrable darkness there rises the beaming of Light of Faith and out of these uproars and wild confusions one hears the voice of Peace. Above this reign of Terror there is the Sovereignty of Truth and beyond this welter of carnage one sees the resplendent era of brotherhood. Were it not for this godlike assurance this world would have been indeed a charnel-house! The people of faith lament over the present heedlessness of mankind but are consoled by the inspirations of the angels of Grace who fill their hearts with bright prophecies concerning the future glory and tranquility of our habitable globe! The realities of the teachings of the prophets will be unveiled and the principles of divine humanity will be put in force. Love will be once again enthroned and the laws of justice and pity will be promoted. The light of God will shine ^{forth} and the heavenly ideals will be promulgated. It is my earnest hope that the Bahais will become great factors in this universal reawakening, become the sowers of the seeds of good-fellowship, the planters of the trees of hope, the servants of the Cause of Universal Peace and the teachers of compassion and commiseration; thus the Kingdom of God be established upon the earth and the brilliant era of celestial brotherhood be inaugurated. The believers of God must dispel these dark clouds from the horizon of humanity - so that it may become illumined with the rays of the Sun of Truth! This is their work! This is their duty. This is their responsibility; This is their final task."