

Home of Baha-Allah, Acca, Syria
November 14th 1914

Dear friends!

Oh Religion how much blood has been and will be shed in thy name before the people come to the simple realization that Thou art Peace and not war, love and not hate; amity and not enmity; light and not darkness, truth and not falsehood; mercy and not wrath! A "holy War" in this 20th century is impossible, still this nightmare of ages has become an actual reality and stares into our faces with its unholy appearance. "War" is not "holy"; it is a curse from the depth of hell, it is the torch of the arch-enemy of mankind. The official cablegram containing the declaration of "holy War" by Turkey is given today in wide circulation and I tremble at the very thought of it! My God! Why hast Thou left mankind so far away from Thee! Those who are acquainted with the history of Islam know full well what an unspeakable catastrophe the "Holy War" is! "Jihad" means the declaration of frantic, fanatical, religious war against all the enemies of Mohamadan religion. Such an ominous declaration of "Jihad" is issued to all the Moslems by the "Commander of the faithful," the Sultan of Turkey and as consequence of this, the Eastern world with its teeming millions is thrown adrift on a wide tempestuous sea of internal and external revolutions, turmoils, bloodshed and utter lawlessness. By a hundred thousand times it is more alarming in its fearful consequences than the successive bolts of the Thunderer, it is ^{an} "appalling calamity the like of which it is difficult to find through the pages of human history. Oh! What a ghostly, fearful time we are facing! The world is indeed dark and inhabited by monsters and demons! I shudder as I write these words, tears are flowing on my cheeks as I strive to picture the East and the West arrayed against each other, armed to the teeth, ready to tear each other to pieces! What fiendish thoughts of murder lurk in the minds of men! What diabolical ideas are current amongst all classes of people! Indeed the world is thrown into such black quagmire of horrors that no imagination can conceive its dirful results! The present government in Turkey has aimed her last dart in the declaration of "the Great Holy War," and many

people believe she has imperilled her future independence by this rash act of folly. Once the fountain of the religious fanaticism of the East is tapped, no human power will be able to stem the irresistible tide of fury and ferocity. There are well-informed men who swear that Germany is behind this latest move of Turkey - in fact there is a consensus of opinion about this fact. The Turkish fleet is manned by German officers and the ^{plans of the} Army is drawn by Germans as well. It is also asserted that the object of Germany is to use this country's ^{military} resources to distract the attention of her powerful enemies, - so that they may become obliged to divert their concentrated forces from the European theatre of war to the East. If this move succeed it will be considered as the turning point of this world-wide tragedy and spread the typhoid of war practically to all parts of the world. Turkey during all her career had never thrown such an inflammable bomb amongst her subjects, the explosion of which has endangered the happiness and prosperity of 300 million Mahomedans. She has sown the seeds of bigotry and fanaticism, the bitter fruits of which will be the intensification of the dormant powers of hatred and enmity between the people of the East and of the West. It will take years of ceaseless labor on the part of the lovers of humanity to uproot these trees and again spread abroad the fragrance of the flowers of brotherly feeling and goodwill. We are indeed living in a most barbaric age in which carnage has become the accepted rule and savage traits the predominant influence. The larger the area of conflict the more difficult the future work of humanitarians and pacifists.

At this moment the Master is also sending out a call for the general mobilization of his army of Peace, - so that they may muster their forces of love and strike a telling blow to the enemy. Are they ready to answer his call with half the readiness of these armies of death? Are they in a position to show a united front to the foe of humanity? Will they be prepared to wage this spiritual war of righteousness? If so, they will surely be confirmed with the Angels of the Supreme Concourse and their victories will be eternalized in the Kingdom of Abha. The Bahais must

indeed manifest superhuman courage and firmness in gathering around themselves the army of Peace and unfurl the Flag of Peace. The Beloved ^{expected} the American people in general and the Bahais in particular may render a worthy service in this field. If a soul sows one seed in this form the God of Peace will bless it with a thousand harvests. The believers in the United States alone can display activities in the arena of Universal Peace; all other nations are in the throes of war and the voices of the lovers of Peace are muzzled for the present. They can neither speak about Peace nor protest against war. They are the silent, worried spectators of this deadly contest.

Now let me translate herein the very unique Constantinople official cable about "El Jahad-e Akbar" - the Great Holy War:-

"His Holiness the Commander of the faithful has issued forth the special, public declaration of the holy "Jahad" to all the Mohamadaus. After inciting them to this, which is no other than their plain religious duty, he declares that although the Turkish government was in a state of perfect neutrality yet our enemies acted in such a manner that we were obliged to arise and defend our rights. When Russia, France and England opened before ~~our~~ faces the doors of hostilities we were forced to declare war against them and he united with Germany and Austria-Hungary. Therefore it is the incumbent duty of all the Moslems to arise in the accomplishment of the responsibilities of the present "Jahad"; - so that they may become enabled to deliver the See of the Great Caliphate from the accumulated injustices and tyrannies of these enemies and free our future generations from the oppressions of these accursed foes. This "Jahad" will be the means of bringing to an end their long line of cruelties and inhumanities which have been increasing during the last several ages.

"Likewise the blessed "Fatwa" (the religious proclamation issued by Sheik-El-Islam) is published broadcast to 300 millions Mohamadaus who are living in the East and in the West to arise with one mind in this "Great Jahad"; - so that

they may protect their national, civic and economic rights and deliver their persons from the hands of the implacable enmity of these governments. They must know that the continuation of their national life is dependent upon the upholding of the duties of the present "Jihad". The final results shall demonstrate to the whole world that we have resorted to this course, - in order to protect our own inalienable rights. Just as our courageous, noble ancestors, heading their invincible armies fought with the whole world in past ages, similarly the Osmanlis of today are the inheritors of those heroic and sterling qualities and will walk in the footsteps of their invulnerable grandseries. With the help of God and His Grace and Mercy our government will come out of the present war crowned with a magnificent victory, greater prestige and added honor and influence in the Council of Nations.

"Our Minister of War has commanded that all our soldiers must be imbued with the spirit of "Jihad" in the present struggle and impressed ~~upon~~ their minds in a stirring speech that they must so fight that their glorious achievements on the field of battle may move the whole world with admiration. We further said that in the path of the promotion of the Word of God they must deem martyrdom as the highest reward for they shall enter in the most delectable paradise and obtain the riches of this world and the world to come."

Let me mention - en passant - that the Orthodox Mohamadaus look upon the Sultan of Turkey as the vicegerent of God and Sheikh-El Islam fills a position amongst the Moslems analogous to Pope amongst the Catholics and therefore the "commands" of these two persons are issued to 300 millions said to take up the cause of the "Holy Jihad". We will watch the results of this historic document.

Today the Beloved did not come down. Many distracted Christians called on him; many liberal Mohamadaus interviewed him but he had nothing to say to them on the above subject. He kept a uniform silence. In the evening Motosarrafi called and was with him for an hour discussing the above subject.