

Tiberias, Sea of Galilee
— Syria

June 5th 1914

Dear friends!

Filled with many spiritual experiences, redolent with the divine fragrances of the Kingdom today stands out in the Bahai calendar as one of the most beautiful and significant days that I have so far spent in the servitude of Abdul Baha. To sail on the sea of Galilee with the Master and to listen to his Teachings and instructions while the boat is gliding on its smooth surface brings to my ^{mind} parallel events which transpired 1900 yrs ago when Christ sailed on the same sea in the boats of his fishermen disciples and ^{the event} such a unique and peerless privilege that I rubbed my eyes several times ^{to see} whether it was ^{all} real or ~~was~~ a dream! But my enthusiasm is carrying me beyond the starting point. A few days ago the Master invited the officials of the government of Tiberias to pass a day at Hogaib and the date was settled on Friday. A gasoline launch belonging to the hotel management was hired yesterday by the Beloved himself. It was so decided that all the guests should come very early in the morning so that we might cross the Lake

and reach the other side before sunrise and have our breakfast there. This was just what I loved the best. For this reason it was about 3.30 am when I heard the clear voice of the Master calling us to get up and be ready. Although we were going to have tea and other delicious things yet Khosro offered us a cup of tea before we descended the stairs of the house. We locked the door because there was going to be no one in. The main door is quite large and has a small opening in it which many people suppose to be the Needle's Eye spoken of by Jesus Christ, for the difficulty of getting a camel through is apparent when ^{first} you look at it ~~at the first glance~~. Such ^a large door with small wicket forming part of the same door is of every day sight in the Holy Land.

Little by little our guests arrived and gathered on the landing. Several were late and thus the sun appears before we could get off. Meanwhile the Master and the rest sitting on boxes of potatoes talked of the beauty of the Lake. Coffee was served and one by one they ^{arrived} came. As the launch could not hold all the guests a large boat was towed to it to accommodate everyone.

The names of some of those who were the guests are as follows: Mohamad Ali Bey, governor; Zakki Bey, Inspector General of Syria; Rashid Effendi, Director of Finances; Toubek Effendi, the judge; our host, the old Mofti and his two sons; Sheikh Said Tabari, president of the board of Municipality, Ashraff Effendi, City Accountant; Rostam Ramazan, head of the tax department; Gadri Effendi, lawyer; Ebrahim Effendi Elyaz, Military Agent for enrolling new recruits; Hosni Effendi Zahve, Surveyor; Hosni Effendi Khalif, Secretary to the Governor; Salim Effendi, first assistant to the Director of Finances; Ali Effendi, Supervisor of the villages; Said Effendi Molker, chief clerk and a number of merchants and prominent men in the busy life of the town. Including ourselves we were altogether in the two boats thirty three people. The distance to be crossed between Tiberias and Nagail is about 8 miles and is covered in 1 hour and fifteen minutes. While we were in the boat the Samovar was boiling and tea was ^{generously} served copiously. The Beloved sat between the Governor and the Inspector General and kept talking to them now in Turkish and again in Arabic. Now he would speak most eloquently on the deeper meaning and spiritual

significance of a verse in the Holy Books and then just as naturally explain the Copernicum system of astronomy, or the theory of Aurora Borealis in the North Pole, or the principle of declination of the compass, - the horizontal angle between the needle and the true north and south line - and his meeting with the Discoverer of the North Pole, Admiral Peary in the United States. The talk was more scientific and intellectual and our guests listened to him with deep and reverent attention. By this time we reached the other side of the shore. Mirza Abdor-Raouf and his brother and Aga Ali and several Loroestrian Bahai farmers from Adasayah and the neighboring Bedouins were lined on the shore to welcome the King of Kings with his guests. An impromptu pier was arranged and after a few minutes we were all landed safely - sitting on the large Veranda - a few feet from the shore. Tables were set and we had all a hearty breakfast. After this the Master as the host commenced to welcome them to the garden and related for their amusement and instruction several stories relating to his life in Acre and his connection with the officials

in that city. Then somehow the question of law was touched. The Beloved said:—"Man, as an individual unit of human society must not base his deeds ^{according to} upon the law of retaliation. He must forgive, just as God forgives the sins and transgressions of his servants. But the community as a whole must enact a set of defensive laws for the protection and safeguard of the rights and property of the individual. Such laws will have a salutary and deterrent influence over the minds of the lawless and unrestrained. For example if a person breaks the hand of your son, you have no right to revenge yourself by breaking his hand; but the body of police through its courts of laws and the decision of jury may measure to the offender a similar retribution to serve as an example, so that other members of ~~the~~ Society may not commit such evil deeds. Hence, individuals must fashion their lives according to the law of forgiveness, but the community in the most up-to-date, humane methods must punish the criminals, or in other word instruct them in the better ways of life." Then the question of Divinity and the proofs of

His existence were brought forth: "Just as the created things of this world are infinite, so as a necessity the Essence of God must also be infinite. We confess that we do not know the essence of electricity and ether, but we know it by its effect of light, heat, magnetism and attraction. These evident and undeniable effects lead us to the conclusion that there must be a cause, ~~of~~ the function and nature of which we are entirely unaware. Do we not see the signs and traces of God - the Unknowable, primal Cause - scattered all about us? Are not these "effects" sufficient reason to demonstrate to us that there is behind all of them, a Creative Cause?" On and on the Beloved spoke, filling their minds and hearts with the jewels of wisdom and heavenly ideals.

Meanwhile coffee was served, tea was drunk, fruits eaten, a number of the guests ~~were~~ ^{walked} ^{roving} in the garden ^{and} admiring the orange, mandarin and lemon trees. Before noon fifteen more Arab guests arrived with their horses and the Master as a noble Sheikh welcomed and

entertained them. Then for an hour or two ~~severe~~
 started to blow and the lake got quite rough, ^{thousands}
 of ^{little} pearly-white ^{little} waves ^{were} dancing on its surface,
 washing the shore, ^{and the music of the wind and cadence} with quite much noise and
~~music.~~

An elaborate lunch was served consisting of
 several kinds of Pilaw and roast meat and chickens
 and various kinds of deserts etc. There were nearly
 one hundred people to be fed and according to their
 rank and station in life group after group sat around
 the table till they were all fed and satisfied. As a
 mark of honor to his guests the Master did not eat
 with the first group but walked around the table
 and served.

Then the guests being used to take a short nap in
 the afternoon went to the large ~~of~~ orange grove
 skirting the ^{sea} shore; rugs and mats were spread
 under the trees and they ^{were} lulled to sleep by the wafting
 of the cool breeze rising from the swelling sea. The
 Beloved also slept under ^{one of the} such a tree. Personally
 I was so glad to retire under my own tree. I sat on my
 mat and instead of sleeping I used the time in writing.

So many nightingales were singing sweetly above my head, mingling their soul-uplifting^t songs with the music of the waves; the refreshing breeze cooled the brow and the rays of the sun played and relieved through the interstices of the green branches. Oh! it was so charmingly quiet and beautiful, so delightfully sweet and heavenly. The atmosphere was ^{inter}woven ~~in~~ with the spiritual romance of the East, bringing back to mind the past days of the Holy prophets and the Patriarchs who lived and taught on these ^{shores} grounds.

After the nap tea was served in the veranda and the Master again spoke vividly about his experiences in California and gave an outline of his talk before the Forum Club of San Francisco.

With Mirza Jalal, Khosro and two Arab guides we rode to the top of the mountain ^{where there is} containing the ruins of a large, ancient town called El-Hosn. It is a Roman town. ^{In} The ruins were interspersed ~~with~~ tall columns of granite, peristyles, engraved stones, cisterns and arched rooms etc. For nearly half an hour

we walked through these noble ruins and mused over the lives of thousands of people who have lived and died here generations ago. Their graveyard on the slope of another mountain ^{has been} excavated, their stone sarcophagi are thrown hither and thither, many of them mutilated and their treasures no doubt pillaged by the antiquarians to enrich the museums of Europe and America - both private and public. The city was built on the highest plateau of a rocky mountain - a plain tableland overlooking deep ravines, precipices and valleys and having a full commanding ^{view} of the Lake. It was after sunset when we reached the garden and found the Beloved still engaged in happy conversation with the governor and the Inspector General.

The Tomb of Mirza Mohamad Gali - the brother of Baha-ollah and the father of the three sons who superintend the cultivation of the garden is here in the midst of the grove. The Master walked through the garden and visited the tomb, standing before it a few minutes and offering a prayer.

About 8 o'clock dinner was served in the veranda, while the glorious, silvery moon was shining. Then at 9.30 the launch and the boat were brought into service. On account of the roughness of the sea they were anchored quite away from the garden and the Master and all the guests following him walked on the shore till they reached the spot. The boat could not be brought close enough to the shore so that every one ~~may~~^{might} step into it. Hence the boatmen pulled off their clothes and taking hold of each person ^{in turn} raised him up in the air and carried him to the boat. The Beloved was quietly speaking with the Governor and watching the waves when all of a sudden Mohamad Ali Hagme's Cook's chief Boatmen - a tall, sturdy Arab ^{took} ~~got~~ hold of him, enfolded him in his capacious arms and waded through the rushing water toward the boat, and before we knew what has happened the Master was safely put in the boat to his own amazement. When all the guests ^{were} ~~got~~ safely in the launch and the boat, we sailed ^{away from} ~~off~~ the shore.

As the Sea was rough and as we sailed slowly along the Eastern shore as far as the Jordan river and then returned toward Tiberias on the Western shore it took us about 3 hours to reach our destination. The night was simply divine, the silver rays of the almost full moon shimmering ^{ed of the water} on the surface and the Master - wide-awake - ^{gave} giving us spiritual ~~food~~ ^{talks}. The Captain of the launch was a little ^{sleepy} and made one or two mistakes - so that the launch reeled and lurched for a few minutes, but he was immediately called to his senses and his responsibility was knocked into his mind by the governor and other officials. But the Master assured them that there ^{was} ~~will be~~ no danger, and ^{that} ~~we~~ ^{would} shall land safely. "Rest ye assured in the Protection of God. He will preserve His own children under all circumstances. Be ye not afraid nor be ye agitated. He holds the scepter of power in his hand and like unto a hen he gathereth his chickens under his wings. To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the sun. A time to be born and a time to die, a time to weep and

a time to laugh; a time to keep silence and a time to speak. Now, friends this is the time of assurance and faith and not fear and dread." By this time the sea was comparatively calmed and it ~~was~~ ^{past} twelve when everybody ~~was~~ ^{had} landed safely and the Master standing erect on the prow of the vessel bade farewell to the guests and wished them to have a good night and pleasant sleep. I opened the window and the Beloved entered the house. I walked in after him. "Didst thou enjoy the day?" he asked me as he ascended the stairs. "Yes, my Lord! It was the best day of my life." When I entered into my room the incident in the launch brought to my mind another similar event ^{on the same sea} 1900 years. "And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, inasmuch that the ship was covered with waves. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"