

Tiberias, Sea of Galilee  
Syria

May 22<sup>d</sup>, 1914

Dear friends!

The best view of the sea of Galilee is at sunrise or sunset, when the brown mountains - with cultivated patches here and there - are brilliant with purple, red, yellow and violet colours; at eventide, when the shadows deepen in the still water and the stars appear in their unearthly glory; or as I am sure, best of all, will be by moonlight (which I hope to see in four or five nights) when all darkness is vanished, all that is monotonous in tone is softened, and all inequalities and barrenness are harmonized. How I love to get a boat and sail on its calm surface by moonlight - thus dreaming of those "mighty events" and spiritual works of the Master. The most inspiring views of the lake are of course at Tiberias looking towards Capernaum and as I heard it mention by the tourists the most interesting and sacred part of the sea is in the neighbourhood of Capernaum and here the views are also remarkably

striking.

Sir Charles Wilson in describing these shores and places says:— "The hills, except at Khan Minyeh, where there is a small cliff, are recessed from the shore of the lake, or rise gradually from it; they are of no great elevation, and their outline, especially on the eastern side, is not broken by any prominent peak; but everywhere from the southern end the snow-capped peak of Hermon is visible, standing out so sharp and clear in the bright sky that it appears almost within reach, and towards the north, the Western ridge is cut through by a wild gorge, 'the valley of Doves', over which rise the twin peaks or Horns of Hattin. The shore line, for the most part regular, is broken on the north into a series of little bays of exquisite beauty; nowhere so beautiful than at Gennesareth, where the beaches pearly white with myriads of minute shells, are on one side washed by the limpid waters of the lake, and on the other shut in by a fringe of oleanders, rich in May with their blossoms red and bright.

"The lake is pearl-shaped, the broad end being towards the north; the greatest width is six and three quarters



from Mejdal, 'Magdala', to Kherse, 'Gergesa' about one third of the way down, and the extreme length is twelve and a quarter miles. The Jordan enters at the north, a swift, muddy stream, colouring the lake a good mile from its mouth and passes out pure and bright at the south. On the north-western shore of the lake is a plain, two and half miles long and one mile broad, called by the Bedouin El Thueeir, but better known by its familiar Bible name of Gennesareth; and on the north-east near Jordan's mouth, is a swampy plain, El Batihah, now much frequented by wild boar, formerly the scene of a skirmish between the Jews and Romans, in which Josephus met with an accident that necessitated his removal to Capernaum. On the West there is a recess in the hills, containing the town of Tiberias; and on the east, at the mouths of Wadys Semakh and Lik, are small tracts of level ground. On the south the fine open valley of the Jordan stretches away towards the Dead sea and is covered in the neighbourhood of the lake with luxuriant grass.



The sea of Galilee is 680 feet below the Mediterranean, but the level varies slightly with the seasons. The water is bright, and, except in the neighbourhood of Tiberias, where it is polluted with the sewage of the town, is good for drinking purposes. Many travellers who have time and leisure take the advantage of rowing upon the lake, and, apart from the intense interest of the associations of this sacred sea, I am sure, it is in any way the most enjoyable <sup>mode</sup> of travelling from Tiberias to Capernaum. The best view of both sides of the lake is thus obtained, and the traveller is perhaps able to realize some of the scenes in Gospel history better in this way. There are also a great number of fish in the lake, large and small, and of various kinds. Those who are fond of fishing, like the apostles of Christ, may generally obtain a hook and line of the Arabs in the neighbourhood of the lake, and an impromptu boat may be easily constructed or better still before starting on their voyage let them <sup>add</sup> the fishing instruments to their articles of trip. The best place for fishing is Et-Talighah and near the Khan Mingejeh Cliff. Having performed his prayers and drinking his <sup>simple</sup>



cup of Loufa the Beloved asked me whether I would like to walk with him through the Bazaar which I promptly answered "yes." Leaving the hotel we walked through several small streets before we reached the Bazaar, - small shops of all descriptions lining the walls and vendors of various articles taking the rest of the space - so there was hardly any path to pass through. Dogs were actually sleeping in the middle of the road and no one seemed to be bothered about it. Dirt and filth were visible everywhere, the Jews swarming and screaming. It was a veritable pandemonium of curses and execrations! The Beloved looking at this wild scene and disorder said:-

"What a vast difference exists between these people and the Westerners! They are thoughtful, intelligent and civilized while these people are jabbering and fighting with each other like ferocious beasts. It might take a long time before the likenesses of these meetings which were held in America are made possible of realization here."

He showed me also the house in which he lived 20 yrs ago when he visited Tiberias!

Upon our return to the hotel, a few young Turks were waiting to interview the Master. He welcomed them with a beaming cordiality and answered their many questions on the state of affairs with perspicacity and terseness.

One of the believers from Haifa brought the American Newspapers and Magazines and their contents gave us a little diversion. In the Afternoon <sup>the</sup> Matosarruf of Acre arrived on his way to Nazareth and accompanied with Gaemmagam, the judge and the Mufti and 6 other government officials called on the Beloved at the hotel. They were here for more than 2 hours, sitting ~~on~~ the open veranda of the Hotel. I was in my room on the second floor and I heard all the time the silvery voice of the Blessed One ringing out through the space and filling the hearts of the listeners with the ideas of justice and fairness. In the evening we were again invited to dinner by Shuk Said Tahari where the Matosarruf and the rest were present. The Master spoke to them about America and how public meetings are conducted there. A question on the Alphabetical letters in the first Chapters of the ~~Koran~~ <sup>Qur'an</sup> ~~gave~~ <sup>brought</sup> forth a most lucid and ~~comprehensive~~ <sup>comprehensive</sup> interpretation.