Thou seest me, O my God, bowed down in lowliness, humbling...

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

نسخه اصل فارسی

— 190 —

Thou seest me, O my God, bowed down in lowliness, humbling myself before Thy commandments, submitting to Thy sovereignty, trembling at the might of Thy dominion, fleeing from Thy wrath, entreating Thy grace, relying upon Thy forgiveness, shaking with awe at Thy fury. I implore Thee with a throbbing heart, with streaming tears and a yearning soul, and in complete detachment from all things, to make Thy lovers as rays of light across Thy realms, and to aid Thy chosen servants to exalt Thy Word, that their faces may turn beauteous and bright with splendor, that their hearts may be filled with mysteries, and that every soul may lay down its burden of sin. Guard them then from the aggressor, from him who hath become a shameless and blasphemous doer of wrong.

Verily Thy lovers thirst, O my Lord; lead them to the wellspring of bounty and grace. Verily, they hunger; send down unto them Thy heavenly table. Verily, they are naked; robe them in the garments of learning and knowledge.

Heroes are they, O my Lord, lead them to the field of battle. Guides are they, make them to speak out with arguments and proofs. Ministering servants are they, cause them to pass round the cup that brimmeth with the wine of certitude. O my God, make them to be songsters that carol in fair gardens, make them lions that couch in the thickets, whales that plunge in the vasty deep.

Verily Thou art He of abounding grace. There is none other God save Thee, the Mighty, the Powerful, the Ever-Bestowing.

O ye my spiritual friends! For some time now the pressures have been severe, the restrictions as shackles of iron. This hapless wronged one was left single and alone, for all the ways were barred. Friends were forbidden access to me, the trusted were shut away, the foe compassed me about, the evil watchers were fierce and bold. At every instant, fresh affliction. At every breath, new anguish. Both kin and stranger on the attack; indeed, onetime lovers, faithless and unpitying, were worse than foes as they rose up to harass me. None was there to defend ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, no helper, no protector, no ally, no champion. I was drowning in a shoreless sea, and ever beating upon my ears were the raven-croaking voices of the disloyal.

At every daybreak, triple darkness. At eventide, stone-hearted tyranny. And never a moment’s peace, and never any balm for the spear’s red wounds. From moment to moment, word would come of my exile to the Fezzan sands; from hour to hour, I was to be cast into the endless sea.

Now they would say that these homeless wanderers were ruined at last; again that the cross would soon be put to use. This wasted frame of mine was to be made the target for bullet or arrow; or again, this failing body was to be cut to ribbons by the sword.

Our alien acquaintances could not contain themselves for joy, and our treacherous friends exulted. “Praise be to God,” one would exclaim, “Here is our dream come true.” And another, “God be thanked, our spearhead found the heart.”

Affliction beat upon this captive like the heavy rains of spring, and the victories of the malevolent swept down in a relentless flood, and still ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remained happy and serene, and relied on the grace of the All-Merciful. That pain, that anguish, was a paradise of all delights; those chains were the necklace of a king on a throne in heaven. Content with God’s will, utterly resigned, my heart surrendered to whatever fate had in store, I was happy. For a boon companion, I had great joy.

Finally a time came when the friends turned inconsolable, and abandoned all hope. It was then the morning dawned, and flooded all with unending light. The towering clouds were scattered, the dismal shadows fled. In that instant the fetters fell away, the chains were lifted off the neck of this homeless one and hung round the neck of the foe. Those dire straits were changed to ease, and on the horizon of God’s bounties the sun of hope rose up. All this was out of God’s grace and His bestowals.

And yet, from one point of view, this wanderer was saddened and despondent. For what pain, in the time to come, could I seek comfort? At the news of what granted wish could I rejoice? There was no more tyranny, no more affliction, no tragical events, no tribulations. My only joy in this swiftly passing world was to tread the stony path of God and to endure hard tests and all material griefs. For otherwise, this earthly life would prove barren and vain, and better would be death. The tree of being would produce no fruit; the sown field of this existence would yield no harvest. Thus it is my hope that once again some circumstance will make my cup of anguish to brim over, and that beauteous Love, that Slayer of souls, will dazzle the beholders again. Then will this heart be blissful, this soul be blessed.

O Divine Providence! Lift to Thy lovers’ lips a cup brimful of anguish. To the yearners on Thy pathway, make sweetness but a sting, and poison honey-sweet. Set Thou our heads for ornaments on the points of spears. Make Thou our hearts the targets for pitiless arrows and darts. Raise Thou this withered soul to life on the martyr’s field, make Thou his faded heart to drink the draught of tyranny, and thus grow fresh and fair once more. Make him to be drunk with the wine of Thine Eternal Covenant, make him a reveler holding high his cup. Help him to fling away his life; grant that for Thy sake, he be offered up.

Thou art the Mighty, the Powerful. Thou art the Knower, the Seer, the Hearer.