

He is the All-Glorious.

Praise be unto Thee, O my Lord, O my Lord! I cry unto Thee from within the depths of my heart, within mine inmost being, the reality of mine essence, the very core of my life. I call Thee to mind from mine outward and mine inward self, from out my very bones and flesh and blood, from my soul and heart and tongue and pen—afire with the fire of my love for Thy chosen ones, frenzied with yearning over Thy greatly favoured ones, those who have cast away their lives upon Thy pathway and given up their own selves for love of Thee, and their own blood for desire of Thee. They are the ones who have made themselves the arrow's target, who have found sweet the lance-head's biting steel, who craved that, for the upraising of Thy Word, their heads be raised upon the spear-point, and that their hearts be torn apart—out of adoration for Thy beauty, and yearning for Thy presence, and longing for Thy love, and in ardently seeking to extol Thy glory, to be drawn unto Thy heaven, and to be drowned in the sea of devotion unto Thee.

Among these was this youth, comely and sweet, he whom Thou didst call 'Alí the Less<sup>1</sup> in the kingdom of names, he whom Thou hast made, in the kingdom of attributes, to be 'Alí the Great.<sup>2</sup> For he, O my Lord, when he did drink from the cup of bestowals at the hands of the cupbearer of Thy grace, became drunken with the red wine of love for Thee, and there rose, over the horizon of his heart, the bright rays of knowing Thee. Then was he enraptured with the wine of desire for Thee, and out of longing for Thee he sped to the martyr's field, and following Thy path, he quit the bridal chamber on his wedding night, he left his cushioned ease and joy for a place of affliction and pain, and from his rank of honour and esteem was cast down to the depths of humiliation and abasement.

And then, at the decree of the worst among Thy creatures, did he redden his smooth and delicate cheek with the blush of his spilled-out blood, and with his life-blood dyed his clustered locks. Then did he exchange the fine embroidered garment, put on for his wedding night, for clothing dark with gouts of blood, and laid himself down in the bed of the scorned and despised, down in the dust of misery and loss, in exchange for his safe couch of bliss. This he did in his yearning for Thy realm, the all-glorious, and Thine Abhá Company. Then they rent his breast that had rejoiced in the tokens of Thy love, and they ripped at his heart, flaming with desire for Thee; and on Thy path, they shot their arrows of hate at his fair, open bosom and, because of his love for Thee, with their cruel blade struck off the noble head.

Then they set his head on the point of their tyrant's lance, and they carried it to his tender-hearted and grievously wronged mother and to his honourable, his sorrowing bride. And to terrify their hearts and threaten them with more—so as to make them waver in their faith and cause their feet to stumble on Thy highway of truth, Thy path that runneth straight—they flung it into the courtyard of their spacious home.

Praise be unto Thee, O my Lord, that Thou didst keep their hearts firmly grounded in Thy love. They took that noble head and set it down outside the house, returning that precious substance to the merciless among Thy creatures, and told them: "God forbid! The head that we have offered up on the path of God, we will not take back. We will not ask for it again, the hidden gem, the treasured and well-guarded pearl that we have given up in love for God. O, may this comely head but vanish under the galloping horses' hooves! May the steeds of the obdurate trample it to dust!"

O my Lord! Make Thou this martyr a hero of Thy Kingdom, make him a mighty pillar in Thy supernal realms, a blazing star in Thy resplendent heaven.

—'Abdu'l-Bahá

1 'Alí-Aṣghar. ←

2 'Alí-Akbar ←

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