

نَصُّ شِعْرِي

Poetry text



فِي مَدْخَلِ الْحَمْرَاءِ

This beautiful poem is by the Syrian poet Nizaar Qabbaani (1923-1998). In this poem the poet describes his real - or imaginary - visit to al-Hamraa', and through his conversation with his Spanish guide, he tries to muse on the tragic history of Muslim Spain.

From an Islaamic point of view, Nizaar's poems have many objectionable materials. But fortunately, this poem does not have any such material.

I am presenting the poem with its English translation.

In the light of the readers' comments and questions, I shall write the lexical and grammatical notes
 إِنَّ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

abdur rahim



فِي مَدْخَلِ الْحَمْرَاءِ

فِي مَدْخَلِ الْحَمْرَاءِ كَانَ لِقَاؤُنَا
مَا أَطْيَبَ اللَّقْيَا بِلا مِيعَادِي

*At the entrance of al-Hamraa was our meeting.
How sweet is a meeting without an appointment!*

هَلْ أَنْتِ إِسْبَانِيَّةٌ؟ سَأَلْتُهَا
قَالَتْ: وَفِي غَرْنَاطَةِ مِيلَادِي

*'Are you Spanish?', I asked her.
'Yes', she said, 'And in Granada was my birth.'*

غَرْنَاطَةُ! وَصَحَتْ قُرُونٌ سَبْعَةٌ
فِي تَيْنِكَ الْعَيْنَيْنِ... بَعْدَ رُقَادِي

Granada!

*Seven centuries woke up in those eyes
after a long sleep.*

وَأُمِّيَّةٌ .. رَايَاتُهَا مَرْفُوعَةٌ
وَجِيَادُهَا مَوْصُولَةٌ بِجِيَادِي

*And the Omayyads!
Their flags flying high,
and their steeds closely following one another.*

مَا أَغْرَبَ التَّارِيخَ .. كَيْفَ أَعَادَنِي
لِحَفِيدَةٍ سَمْرَاءَ .. مِنْ أَحْفَادِي

*How strange is History!
How it brought me back (to meet)
a brown skinned granddaughter
among my grandchildren.*

وَجْهٌ دِمَشْقِيٌّ .. رَأَيْتُ خِلَالَهُ
أَجْفَانَ بِلْقِيسٍ .. وَجِيدَ سُعَادِي

*A damascene face.
In it, I could catch a glimpse
of the eyelids of a Bilqiis,
and the neck of a Su'aad!*

وَرَأَيْتُ مَنْزِلَنَا الْقَدِيمَ .. وَحُجْرَةً
كَانَتْ بِهَا أُمِّي تَمُدُّ وَسَادِي

*I could see our ancient house
and a room where my mother
used to stretch out my pillow.*

وَدِمَشْقُ.. أَيْنَ تَكُونُ؟ قُلْتُ : تَرَيْنَهَا
فِي شَعْرِكَ الْمُنْسَابِ نَهْرٍ سَوَادِي

'Damascus? Where could it be?' (she asked.)

*'You could see it in your long flowing hair
- a river of darkness', I said.*

فِي وَجْهِكَ الْعَرَبِيِّ، فِي الشَّعْرِ الَّذِي
مَا زَالَ مُخْتَزِنًا شُمُوسَ بِلَادِي

*'In your Arabian face,
in your mouth (and teeth)
Which have preserved to this day
the suns of my land.'*

فِي طِيبِ «جَنَّاتِ الْعَرِيفِ» وَمَائِهَا
فِي الْفُلِّ ، فِي الرِّيحَانِ ، فِي الْكَبَّادِي

' In the perfumes of *Jannat al-"arif* (Generalife)

And in its water

- In the jasmine,

In the sweet basil,

In the citrus plants.

سَارَتْ مَعِيَ وَالشَّعْرُ يَلْهَثُ خَلْفَهَا
كَسَنَابِلٍ تُرِكَتْ بَغَيْرِ حَصَادِي

She walked with me with her tresses panting
And gasping behind her like the ears of corn
left unharvested.

يَتَأَلَّقُ الْقُرْطُ الطَّوِيلُ بِجِيدِهَا
مِثْلَ الشُّمُوعِ بَلِيلَةِ الْمِيلَادِي

Her long earring shining along her neck
Like the candle lights on the Christmas eve.

وَمَشَيْتُ مِثْلَ الطِّفْلِ خَلْفَ دَلِيلَتِي
وَوَرَائِي التَّارِيخُ .. كَوْمٌ رَمَادِي

*I walked like a child behind my guide;
And behind me History - a heap of ashes.*

الزَّخْرَفَاتُ أَكَادُ أَسْمَعُ نَبْضَهَا
وَالزَّرَكَشَاتُ عَلَى السُّقُوفِ تُنَادِي

*I could almost hear the pulse
of the decorative designs,
And the embroidery at the ceiling
calling (me).*

قَالَتْ: هُنَا **الْحَمْرَاءُ** زَهْوٌ جُدُودَنَا
فَأَقْرَأْ عَلَى جُدْرَانِهَا أَمْجَادِي

*'Here is the Alhambra,
a pride of my forefathers', she said.
'Read on its walls my glories.'*

أَمْجَادُهَا! وَمَسَحْتُ جُرْحًا نَازِفًا
وَمَسَحْتُ جُرْحًا ثَانِيًا بِفُؤَادِي

'Her glories!' (I exclaimed)
wiping a bleeding wound,
and another in my heart.

يَا لَيْتَ وَارِثِي الْجَمِيلَةَ أَذْرَكَتْ
أَنَّ الَّذِينَ عَنْتَهُمْ أَجْدَادِي

How I wish my pretty heiress
knew that those whom she meant
are really my forefathers.

عَانَقْتُ فِيهَا عِنْدَمَا وَدَّعْتُهَا
رَجُلًا يُسَمَّى «طَارِقَ بْنِ زِيَادِي»

While bidding her farewell,
I embraced in her person
a man called Taariq ibn Ziyaad.

نزار قباني