

Chapter Summary

Ch. 1: My Beloved is Mine, and I am His

Our life is characterized by loving the Lord and our relationship with Him. Jesus Christ is our Beloved, and we are His children who abide in Him through love, faith, and perseverance.

Ch. 2: I am My Beloved's, and His Desire is Toward Me

The action of the Lord's desire towards us is made manifest in our service. Pope Shenouda confirms that our service can strengthen one's love for the Lord beyond limit.

Ch. 3: Your Name is Ointment Poured Forth

The Name of the Lord is like sweet aroma which imbues one with hope and the beauty of the Lord. Our spiritual lives depend solely upon the Love of the Lord, whose Name alone is our strong tower of safety and joy.

Ch. 4: Draw Me Away! We Will Run After You

Agapic love exemplifies the Christian faith and permeates its believers. They do not run alone toward our Lord, but pull along with them the multitudes to be filled with our Lord's love, hope, peace and unutterable joy.

Ch. 5: Tell Me, O Whom I Love, Where You Feed Your Flock

In this chapter, we encounter the soul's search for the Lord's ways. The soul is searching for its Beloved, trying to grasp for Jesus through all its journeys in life.

Ch. 6: I Sought Him, But I Did Not Find Him

Our spiritual lives are not all about the pleasures that we will enjoy in the presence of the Lord, but also about times where we feel neglected, when we search and do not find the Lord. This "dark night of the soul" is examined and portrayed through this virgin's quest for her Beloved, who embraces Him after many failures and struggles.

Ch. 7: By Night on My Bed, I Sought the One I Love (Part I)

This first contemplation focuses on the soul who, though in sin and laziness, still yearns for the Lord. Love remains in the sinful soul and Jesus Christ still calls upon it, even in its night season.

Ch. 8: By Night on My Bed, I Sought the One I Love (Part II)

The soul's inability to see the Lord moves many to feel abandoned and lose hope, yet the Lord's presence saturates all of our lives. This feeling of abandonment may fill many with despair, but understanding this period of the soul's journey enlightens one with hope.

Ch. 9: By Night on My Bed, I Sought the One I Love (Part III)

The virgin's journey toward and with her Beloved is a type of blueprint of every soul's relationship with Jesus Christ. This virgin overcomes the obstacles of sin and despair and tirelessly seeks after her Beloved, who is her True Shepherd and source of life.

Ch. 10: I Sleep, But My Heart is Awake

One's failures may overwhelm the believer, yet the Lord always gazes upon His Children and sees life and vitality. Here again hope directs the reader to reevaluate weaknesses and recognize grace.

Ch. 11: I am Black and Beautiful, O Daughters of Jerusalem (Part I)

The human soul may view itself as deficient and altogether inadequate, yet it is truly beautiful in its state of repentance and resiliency against the loss of faith. The soul, regardless of how fallen it is observed to be, is very worthy and precious to God.

Ch. 12: I am Black and Beautiful, O Daughters of Jerusalem (Part II)

The very act of being virtuous, following our Christian traditions, or the everyday trials of life may appear bleak, yet they are filled with the beauty and strength of our faith. The various tribulations that may confront the believer, and the whole of humanity, may appear in "black" while indeed they are "beautiful".

Ch. 13: I am Black and Beautiful, O Daughters of Jerusalem (Part III)

The soul may go through fire and be burned, only to come out shining as the sun and radiantly beautiful before the Lord. Experiences may tan the soul, darken it by tribulation, crucify it upon Golgotha, and yet it emerges victorious and beautiful through Resurrection.

Ch. 14: Who is This Coming Out of the Wilderness

Only those faithful souls who lean upon their Beloved can survive the wilderness in which we live. Trusting in the Lord challenges every believer, and only those who can truly rest in the Lord may emerge from this world victorious and joyful.

Ch. 15: I Have Compared You, My Love, to My Filly Among Pharaoh's Chariots

The Lord looks upon His children and seeks those who lead a victorious and unshakable life in faith. We are destined to wrestle and wage wars against evil and sin in our life, and strength, might and valor in Christianity has always reflected the heroes of our belief.

Ch. 16: Behold, You are Fair, My Love! Behold, You are Fair! You Have Dove's Eyes

God bears witness and acknowledges that the human soul reflects beauty, peace and purity. Seeking after the Lord and His perspective on both ourselves and life in general are what the children of our Beloved should pursue and rest upon.

Ch. 17: The Voice of My Beloved! Behold, He Comes

As St. John the Baptist leapt in the womb, so do the hearts of those who see the Lord, waiting upon His arrival in their lives. Though man ought to distinguish the Lord's voice from others, not every man is capable of doing so; yet it remains the virgin soul's responsibility to search for and recognize Jesus Christ's Word.

Ch. 18: Behold, He Comes

The final comfort of every soul rests in their Beloved's return. It is this hope that fills the resilient believer with solace and joy. The true believer can see their Beloved coming, even from afar and over the many mountains laid before them.