

LITURGICAL THEOLOGY



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Introduction to Liturgy

The English word liturgy comes from the Latin word *Liturgia* which in turn has its origin from the Greek word *leitourgia* (from the Greek verb *leitourgein*). For the Greek people *leitourgia* meant “public work” or “a service in the name of or on behalf of the people”. In the Greek Churches this term was used to designate the public worship, especially the divine liturgy. Once the term is applied to the Christian worship its original meaning as service is retained to certain extent. This term was popularized in the nineteenth century. Before the 20th century this term hardly occurs in the official Church documents. (The other terms in vogue in the Middle Ages: Divine Office or Ecclesiastical Office; From 16th century terms like Ecclesiastical rites or Sacred Rites were preferred.)

1. Etymological Meaning

In the NT the word liturgy is used to mean the celebration of Divine worship and also the proclamation of the Gospel and active charity. (Cf. Lk 1.23; Acts 13.2; Rom15.16,27; 2 Cor 9.12; Phil 2.25,30.) At all

these occasions liturgy is a question of the service of God and neighbour. CCC 1070.

Therefore, Christian liturgy is the service of love. **Liturgy = Service = Love**

The Malayalam word *ârâdhanakramam* does not convey properly the reality of liturgy. The word *kramam* refers to the order to be kept in the celebration and in that sense it suits more for the text of the liturgy. The expression Divine Worship is a substitute for liturgy. However, the notion of service and love lacks here. If the words worship or adoration are taken to mean also service and love, then only they can mean the true reality of liturgy. (If it is adoration that which takes place in liturgy, then it is God who adores men and men adore God only as a response.)

2. Liturgy according to *Mediator Dei*; *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, CCC

a.) “The Sacred Liturgy is the public worship which our Redeemer as the head of the Church renders to the Father, as well as the worship which the community of the faithful renders to its founder and through him to the heavenly Father. In short, it is the public worship rendered by the mystical body of Christ in entirety of its head and members.” (*Mediator Dei*, Para 20, Encyclical of Pope Pius XII, Nov. 20, 1947).

b.) “The liturgy is rightly seen as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. It involves the presentation of man’s sanctification under the guise of signs perceptible by the senses and its accomplishment in ways appropriate to each of these signs. In it full public worship is performed by the mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and his members.” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* - 7, Para 3: in Vatican II Documents)

Through the liturgy Christ, our Redeemer and High Priest continues the work of redemption in, with and through his Church.

Liturgy is for the experience of salvation. In liturgy the Church celebrates above all the paschal mystery by which Christ accomplished the work of salvation. CCC 1067.

“For it is the liturgy through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, “the work of our redemption is accomplished”, and

it is through the liturgy especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the Church. SC 2.

“Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows.” SC 10

“In the earthly liturgy we take part in a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, Minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle. (Rev 21.2; Col 3.1; Heb 8.2) SC 8.

In Christian tradition liturgy means the “participation of the people of God in the Work of God” (Jn 17.4) CCC 1069.

3. Contents of Liturgy

a. Sacraments: Liturgy consists essentially of sacraments among which Eucharistic celebration is the most important one. Eucharist is the sacrament of sacraments.

b. Liturgy of Hours: It is devised to make the whole course of the day and night holy by the praise of God. It is truly the voice of the Bride (Church) addressed to her Bridegroom (Christ). It is the very prayer which Christ himself together with his Body addresses to his Father. In the liturgy of Hours Christ continues his priestly work through his Church. CCC 1174, 1175.

c. Sacramentals: Blessing of persons (eg. blessing of the abbot or abbess of a monastery, the consecration of virgins, the rite of the religious profession, and blessing of certain ministries of the Church - minor orders-); of meals, objects and places (dedication or blessing of the church or an altar, the blessing of holy oils, vessels and vestments, bells etc.)

4. Popular Piety (Devotions)

Expressions of popular piety like adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, veneration of relics, visit to sanctuaries, pilgrimages, processions, the stations of the cross, religious dances, the rosary, medals etc. extend the liturgical life of the Church. They do not replace liturgy. Expressions of piety should harmonize with the liturgical

seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy and in some way derived from it and lead the people to it. Liturgy by its very nature is far superior to any of them. SC 13, 3. CCC 1674, 1675

II. Liturgy as the Work of the Holy Trinity (CCC 1077-1109)

a. Work of the Father

Father is the source and goal of liturgy. He takes the initiative for the liturgy. From the part of the believers liturgy is only a response of participation in the blessings offered by the Father. Liturgy may be seen as the exchange of blessings between the Father and the believers. Father bestows his blessings upon us. From the beginning until the end of time the whole of God's work is a blessing. His blessings include the creation, the Word and the Gift. Thus creation, redemption and ongoing sanctification is the blessing of the Father. Concretely the redemption and sanctification are the main work of God towards the humankind. From the part of man liturgy means acknowledging the work of creation, redemption and sanctification. The Father is acknowledged and adored as the source and end of all the blessings of creation and salvation.

In the Eucharistic liturgy we can find this exchange of the blessings. Father sends His Son and Holy Spirit to the believers. In His Word who became incarnate, died, and rose for us, he fills us with his blessings. Through his Word, he pours into our hearts the Gift that contains all gifts. The believers praise and thank the Father through the prayers (mainly the g'hanta prayers) of the Quddaša. The historical Qurbana that the Father offered to us in Jesus Christ is sacramentally enacted in the Eucharist.

b. Work of Christ

Jesus is re-enacting the work of salvation in the liturgy. Christ makes present his paschal mystery. His paschal mystery transcends the time and participates in the divine eternity. In liturgy Christ makes present this eternal reality of the salvific event. It is through the liturgical space-time that the mystery of Christ is made present. (See the details on liturgical space-time below.)

In liturgy Christ plays a double role. On the one hand he represents the Father and offers the salvation and sanctification in the Spirit. On the other, he remains the head of the Church and hence turns to the

Father along with the community of the faithful. Christ offers himself to the Father. He offers us also along with him. He renders *eucharistia* to the Father on behalf of the Church. In the commemoration of the Paschal mystery Christ is the protagonist.

c. Work of the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit prepares the Church to encounter her Lord. He recalls and makes Christ manifest to the faith of the assembly (CCC 1092). The grace of the Holy Spirit seeks to awaken faith, conversion of heart and adherence to the will of the Father. (CCC 1098) He awakens the memory of the Church and inspires her to thanksgiving and praise. Thus the Holy Spirit is the living memory of the Church. In every liturgical action the Holy Spirit is sent in order to bring us into communion with Christ and so to form his body. The Holy Spirit effects two kinds of sanctification in the liturgy: the sanctification of the mysteries and the sanctification of the assembly. It is through the communion of the mysteries that the Holy Spirit effects sanctification of the assembly. Communion with the Holy Trinity and fraternal communion are inseparably the fruit of the Spirit in the liturgy.

- ♦ How far is this function of the Spirit revealed in the Syriac name Ruha d' Qudsa?

III. Liturgy as the Work of the Church

As the work of Christ liturgy is also an action of his Church. Liturgy makes the Church present and manifests her as the visible sign of the communion in Christ between God and men. Church is made present in the liturgical assembly and especially in the eucharistic assembly. Therefore, it is said: Eucharist makes the Church. It is through celebrating the communion (both vertical and horizontal) that the liturgical assembly is constituting the Church.

Church makes the Eucharist. Liturgy is not a private affair. It is the work of the entire mystical body. Liturgy cannot be privatized.

Leitourgia of the assembly (Vertical dimension): The eucharistia (*Qudasha*) and Qurbana offered to God from the part of the assembly.

Leitourgia of the assembly (Horizontal dimension): Horizontal reconciliation; Qurbana (of oneself) offered to the fellow beings; See also the explanation of the title Mass.

IV. Liturgical Space-time

1. Sacred and Profane

In the history of religions there has always been a distinction between sacred and profane. Man, especially the primitive man, had a feeling of terror before the sacred, before the awe-inspiring mystery (*mysterium tremendum*), the majesty that emanates an overwhelming superiority of power. It is religious fear before the fascinating mystery. R. Otto characterizes all these experiences as *numinous* (in Latin *numen* -God). The numinous presents itself as the “wholly other”, something basically and totally different. It is like nothing human or cosmic. Confronted with it, man realizes his profound nothingness, feels that he is only a creature, or as Abraham said to the Lord, is “but dust and ashes” (Gen 18.27). The recognition of the distinction between the sacred and the profane constitutes the basis of religion.

Man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests itself, shows itself, as something wholly different from the profane. M. Eliade calls this act of manifestation of the sacred as ‘hierophany’. History of religion consists of a great number of theophanies, by manifestations of sacred realities.

2. Sacred Space-time

To the religious man space is not homogeneous. There are certain breaks in the continuity of space, distinguishing the sacred from the profane. He experiences interruptions and breaks in it. A church or temple constitutes a break in the profane space of a city. Some parts of the space are qualitatively different from others. Ex 3.5: “Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” Thus there is the holy or sacred space. It is strong and significant. The religious man finds it as the only real and really existing space. All other space is “not sacred” or “profane”. According to Mircea Eliade, ordinary or profane space is without structure or consistency, and is, therefore, amorphous. Eliade makes another distinction in the conception of space: cosmos and chaos. Cosmos is an inhabited territory, the work of the gods. It is ordered space. But on the other hand the outside territory is chaos, having no order or limits.

For the religious man, time, too, is neither homogeneous nor continuous. There are intervals of sacred time. Just as a church or temple constitutes a break in the profane space of a city, the service celebrated inside it marks a break in the profane duration of time.

The believing man experiences two types of sacred space-time: one is sacred in its origin itself, the other is his own creation. He sees the cosmic phenomena such as stars, planets, solar and lunar eclipses, sunrise, air, fire, water, mountains, stones, trees, etc. as sacred. Sometimes he creates sacred space-time by consecrating ordinary space and time. Sanctuaries, and the time of offerings, feasts, etc. are examples of such consecrated space and time. The enclosure, wall, or circle of stones surrounding a sacred place constitute the most ancient known forms of man-made sanctuaries. The most primitive sacred places, a landscape of stones, water and trees, constituted a microcosm. Sacred place in its primitive form is a microcosm, because it reproduces the natural landscape; because it is a reflection of the whole. The altar and the temple, later developments of the sacred place, are microcosms because they are the centres of the world, because they stand at the very heart of the universe and constitute an *imago mundi*.

3. The Function of Sacred Space-time: Divine-Human Communication.2. The Function of Sacred Spacetime: Divine-Human Communication

Why is there sacred space-time? As regards the sanctuaries, we get an answer from Chaldean cosmogony, which holds that the very creation of humanity was for constructing an abode for the gods. The history of religion tells us that man has always had the desire for an ordered space where communication with the divine is possible. Consecration is cosmicization or creation of a cosmic region which is always in communication with the world of the gods. The sacred establishes order, fixes the limits, and founds the world. With the creation of sacred space-time, this communication with the world of gods is ensured. The most ancient sanctuaries were hypaethral or built with an aperture in the roof - the ‘eye of the dome’ - symbolizing the breakthrough from plane to plane, communication with the transcendent. Sacred space-time thus constitutes the entrance to non-space-time.

4. Space-time of Christian Liturgy: Signs and Symbols of Liturgy

Sacred space, sacred time, sacred persons, sacred objects, sacred words and music, sacred gestures and actions are all symbols which realize the celebration of the paschal mystery and the salvific encounter with Christ. It is through these signs and symbols that Christ accomplishes the work of our redemption

The sacramental celebration is the mystery of Christ celebrated in space and time. A sacramental celebration is woven from signs and symbols. Their meaning is rooted in the work of creation and human culture, specified by the events of Old Testament and fully revealed in the person and work of Christ (CCC 1145). As a social being man needs signs and symbols to communicate with others, through language, gestures, and actions. The same holds true for his relationship with God. (Signs and symbols of creation: candles, water, fire; signs and symbols of human life: washing, anointing, breaking bread; and signs and symbols of the history of salvation (rites of Passover).

The sacraments of the Church do not abolish but purify and integrate all the richness of the signs and symbols of the cosmos and of social life. Further, they fulfil the types and figures of the Old Covenant, they signify and make present the salvation wrought by Christ, and prefigure and anticipate the glory of heaven. In sacramental symbolism the signs effect what they signify. The word sign is the word used in classical theology. Modern anthropologists prefer the term symbol.

- ♦ Christian liturgical space-time is a symbolic whole.

The entire liturgy is made up of the signs and symbols of space-time. Therefore, liturgy may be considered as a symbolic whole. The unity of symbols is much emphasized for a proper liturgical celebration. It is more appropriate to consider the liturgical space-time as a symbolic whole rather than speaking of different symbols in the liturgy.

Liturgy is celebration or commemoration of the paschal mystery of Christ. Participation in it would enable the participant attain salvation. The symbols serve like windows or doors to the saving reality of the salvific event. They make one experience the eternal reality of salvation, here and now. Without properly recognizing the worth of the symbols one cannot practise properly the religion.

- ♦ Liturgical space-time is the paschal mystery of Christ in space-time; Its purpose is sanctification of God and sanctification of man through space-time.

V. Liturgy: Source of Theology and Spirituality

1. Theology of Liturgy and Liturgical Theology

What is theology of liturgy? Is it a scientific understanding of liturgy, dealing with the theological principles governing liturgy? Does it aim at providing liturgy with a theological basis? There has been the tendency to consider liturgy as devoid of theological content, and hence a theology of liturgy would be striving to discover some theological basis for liturgy. Is it the theology which emerges from liturgy, like a babe detaching itself from the womb? Theology of liturgy is neither that which serves as a theological treatment of liturgy nor that which is born from liturgy. It is the theology that is found in the very action of liturgy. Therefore, it is liturgical theology or worshipping theology.

Liturgical theology does not come from liturgy: It arises in and as liturgy. Theology which is liturgical arises in the liturgical structures and does not detach from liturgical rite. Liturgy is theology in action, it is not merely a rubrical resource for the allegedly real theologians to rummage through. Fagerberg pp.14-15). Liturgical action is theological act. It is in this sense that Aidan Kavanagh calls liturgical theology as *theologia prima* and theological reflections on liturgy as *theologia secunda*. (Kavanagh 74-75).

The liturgical rite is the ontological condition for what is itself a genuine theology. (Fagerberg p.14). Encounter with God precedes reflection upon that encounter. Liturgical theology originates and resides in the communal rite. This theology, the one that is liturgical, does not originate and reside in individual minds but is by definition found in the structure of the rite. The only starting point for uncovering liturgical theology is to investigate concrete liturgical rites.

- ♦ **Lex orandi, lex credendi**

This axiom *Lex orandi, lex credendi* means that law of prayer is law of belief. The law of prayer (*lex orandi*) establishes the law of belief (*lex credendi*). Liturgy is the source of the faith. Liturgy is the celebration of the faith. The faith is formally declared and celebrated in liturgy. The Eastern Churches especially look to the liturgy for the

proper formulation of faith. Changes of the formulae in liturgy can change the faith itself.

♦ **Christian spirituality is liturgical spirituality**

Spirituality is living the faith which is celebrated in liturgy. It is a life according to the celebration. It is living the experience of vertical communion in life. Life becomes a 'new liturgical space-time' in which *quddaša* of God (*eucharistia*) and *quddaša* of man (communion with God and fellow beings) are celebrated through the signs and symbols of life. Life becomes the new altar on which the anabatic and katabatic Qurbana are celebrated. Spirituality is a life of horizontal *leitourgia*. It is one of continuous horizontal '*eucharistia*', *quddaša* and *Qurbana*. In fact the spirituality of the Christian is centered on the Eucharist. (SC10; LG 11). Hence it may be called a eucharistic spirituality.

Pauly Maniyattu

Liturgical Time : Theology of the Liturgical Year

Time is something more than the tick tock of a clock. A splash of second cannot disclose the full significance of time. Though time can be measured it transcends any measure. Time is colored by the way we look at it. For one it will mean the daily routine punching of a clock, for another his birthday, anniversary of his beloved ones etc.

The Meaning of Time

In ancient times man lived more closed or attached to the nature and to its cycle of waning and reviving life. For them time was a circular movement which returned to its beginnings. But man as far as concerned as a mortal being his time has an end, a supernatural end which crowns and rewards his earthly life. For this reason it would be better to conceive of time as a spiral movement - circular but going always higher until it brings man to God.

It is Christ who stands at the end of man's past and effectively joins to it the hope of a glorious future. As

one from outside of time, he lived in time, worked in time, died in time, in order to transcend man from time to eternity. Thus Christ sanctified time by living in it, transcending it and made it a medium of sacramental or spiritual regeneration, growth and maturity. Following Jesus through the various seasons of the liturgical year man is gradually caught up into the current of Christ's life and bit by bit transfigured into his likeness.

So in order to celebrate or achieve the real meaning of time in a spiritual manner a system of feasts and cycles had been instituted to bring each season of the year the hollowing grace of Christ the redeemer and in the same way the divine office or liturgy of the hours designed to give each hour of the day it's own consecration and significance.

History: Development of Liturgical Year through the Centuries

First Century: we see two important developments here in this period: special significance of Sunday and participation of first Christians in Jewish feasts imitating Jesus.

Why Sunday? It is the First and eighth day of the week. It is also the Day of resurrection. First one to use the name Sunday was Justin the martyr (165). "On the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in country gather together in one place".

All the post resurrection appearances took place on Sundays

Mk 16,9 Mary Magdalena

Lk 24,13 disciples going to Emmaus

Jn 20,19 appearing to apostles

Jn 26, 26 again to apostles and Thomas on the eighth day

The only non-specified appearance is at Tiberius Jn 21, 1

Second Century: The celebration of the annual feast of pasch was introduced in the church. Also the observance of Paschaltridium - transition from mourning to Easter joy. Later it became the most important feast in the church. But East and West celebrated it on different days.

Third Century: the most important contribution of the third century is the formation of paschal feast, Wednesday Friday fast and

commemoration of martyrs were introduced in this century. One of the most ancient and official document that enumerate all the feasts celebrated is **the Apostolic Constitution (380)**. It presents all Sundays as feast days, fasting on Wednesday and Friday, fourth day's fast of lent, Christmas, Epiphany, Holy Week, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost are listed in it.

Fourth Century: The main developments are: Sunday as the day of rest, forty day's fast before pasch and Easter Day computation by council of Nice 325. The Easter Day was calculated as on the Sunday day following the first full moon after spring equinox (which falls on 21st march in every year. It may vary from March 19 to 21. But 21 is internationally accepted as the day of Equinox or *thulyadinarathradinam*) the day on which sun crosses the equator with equal length of day and night. Calculation of full moon was adopted to pacify the eastern side because they were following the lunar calendar and the west was using solar calendar. The day of full moon in the month of March may vary from 21st March to 18th April. So we can rightly conclude that the day of Easter will occur in between 21st March and 25th April. If the full moon after March 21 falls on April 18, Easter Sunday will be on 25th April (18 plus one week to next Sunday is 25th April)

The theological controversies like Arianism which denied the divinity of Jesus and Holy Spirit paved way for the emergence of feasts like Nativity and Epiphany. Nativity of Jesus was introduced on 25th of December by Pope Liberius in 354. December 25 was the birthday of sun god- the principal deity of the imperial religion. The East began to celebrate the feast of the epiphany of Jesus on 6 January in between 311 and 325.

Fifth and Sixth Centuries: Serious theological disputes on the divine - human aspects of Jesus and Mary led to the biblical calculation of the date of birth of Jesus on December 25 and the establishment of various Marian feasts.

First Liturgical calendar

It is believed that the earliest church calendar was prepared by James and completed by Cyril in Jerusalem in the fourth century. We have the testimony of Egeria a pious woman who made a pilgrimage to the holy land and recorded all the important feasts in her pilgrim travelogue.

We find the following list of feasts in her diary 47.4-5

- 1 the feast of Nativity - Epiphany and the period of nativity - epiphany.
- 2 the feast of Pasch and the period of great fast and Holy Week.
- 3 the feast of resurrection, Ascension and the period of resurrection.
- 4 the feast of Pentecost and the period of apostles.
- 5 the feast of the cross and the period of the cross.
- 6 the feast of Elia and the period of Elia.
- 7 the feast of the dedication of the great church at Jerusalem and the period of dedication.

Date of Christmas

How the calculation is made? It was fixed by counting all the following dates mentioned in the infancy narratives in the gospels:

- 1 Elizabeth was in her 6th month when Mary visited her soon after her she was conceived Jesus Lk 1, 36.
- 2 Zacharias' entry into the temple to burn incense (Lk1, 9) i.e., once in the year on the 10th of the 7th month (Lev16, 29). The 10th of the 7th month (tshri) (September to October) is in October.
- 3 Zachariah went back home after 2, 3 or 7 days (the end of October) + 6 months = the beginning of the month of Nissan (March 25).
- 4 So we can conclude that Mary's conception was on March 25 and if we add 9 months to March 25 we get December 25.

Marian Feasts

All these feasts were originated in the East and gradually they were introduced in the West. After the council of Ephesus (431) Marian feasts like *theotokos against christotokos*, annunciation, assumption (dormition) and nativity were introduced.

Feast of the *Theotokos* (bearer of God): The controversy over the Union of the divinity and humanity of Christ paved the way for fixing the title of Mary as the Mother of God and the celebration of the feast of the *Theotokos* (God bearer) against *Christotokos* (Christ bearer) at the conclusion of the Christmas octave. In the council of Ephesus (431) there was a dispute over the titles of Mary. The titles in use were *Anthropotokos* which means Man bearer and *Theotokos*

which means God Bearer. Mary is both *Theotokos* and *Anthropotokos*—one by relation and the other by nature. God is there in the one whom she conceived and he has taken human nature from her. In order to avoid this ambiguity Nestorius preferred the term bearer of Christ (*Christotokos*). According to him the term Christ indicates both the divine and human natures in one person. He also said that the term *Theotokos* would be a blasphemy because that would mean that Mary gave birth to the Divinity. Theodore of Mopsuestia also preferred the term *Christotokos* against *Theotokos*. He was largely misunderstood in the council of Ephesus and was compelled to resign from his episcopate.

The background of the issue over the title attributed to Mary was the result of the tug of war between two prominent schools of theology namely—the Alexandrian school (Aristotalian) and the Anthiochean School (Platonic). Cyril of Alexandria the opponent of Nestorius had his roots in the Alexandrian School and Nestorius belonged to the Anthiochean School. The controversy during the council of Ephesus (431) led to the deposition of Nestorius on 30th July 435 by the Emperor Thodosius II. All his works were burned to flames and he died around 451 in Egyptian oasis. Later on 11th November 1994 the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East jointly proclaimed the controversies in connection with Nestorianism as a serious misunderstanding. (ActaApostolicaSedis 87, 1995).

Feast of Annunciation: Fixed on March 25 basing on the biblical calculation we have already seen. According to an old tradition the creation of the world, the incarnation and the death of Jesus occurred on this day.

Feast of Dormition or Assumption: This feast is known in the western world as the dormition of Mary (dormitio-sleep) and *shunaya*(migration) in Syriac. Mary who slept in the Lord after her earthly life was migrated, taken into or transferred to heaven by her son. This feast was established with the ancient custom of pilgrimage to the tomb of Mary started with the consecration of a basilica over the tomb on 15th August in the fifth century. In seventh century Pope Sergius declared August 15 as the feast day of the assumption of Mary into heaven. It was Pope Pius 12 defined the assumption of the blessed Mary a dogma of faith on 1st November 1950.

Feast of the Nativity of Mary: It is celebrated on September 8. This feast was established around the middle of the fifth century with the dedication of the basilica in honour of Mary near to the present church of St. Anna in Jerusalem. An eight day fast is observed in Kerala in preparation to this feast. In 9th century Muslims attacked *Kodungalloor*, Christians being supporters of Jews were under treat. Then the Christian women vowed an eight day fast asking Mary's help to safeguard their virginity and life. In memory of this miraculous protection 8 day fast is still observed in Kerala.

Calendars Secular and Religious

Liturgical year or Liturgical calendar makes time sacred throughout the year by commemorating the saving mysteries of Jesus. It differs from year to year basing on the date of Easter. The centre of the liturgical year from the very beginning was the feast of Easter which originated from the feast of *Estore*, an Ancient Greek goddess of light celebrated at the spring equinox on March 21. Early Christians changed this pagan feast to Easter to indicate the great feast of the resurrection of Jesus the true light. The liturgical year or calendar has two different system of operation such as temporal and sanctoral cycles.

A. Temporal: The word temporal comes from the Latin word *tempus* meaning time or season. It celebrates the mysteries of Christ indifferent liturgical seasons. Sunday's are reserved as Lord's Day with an eschatological vision. Oriental churches generally follow the temporal cycle.

B. Sanctoral: The word sanctoral comes from the Latin word *Sanctus* meaning holy or Saint. It celebrates the feasts of saints and martyrs season wise. Here the saints are commemorated every day and the mysteries of Christ are arranged in season wise. The seasons they follow are: the seasons of advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Easter and ordinary time.

Liturgical calendars are adjusted to the secular calendars, which are either based on solar or lunar system of calculation. This difference hinders its universal execution throughout the world. Thus the possibility to have a common calendar remains still a dream! Council fathers discussed this problem in the second Vatican council and expressed

their readiness to have a common calendar basing on three conditions in the appendix of the document *sacrosanctumconcilium*.

1. this calendar should maintain seven days of week system.
2. the first day of the week should be named Sunday.
3. the change of the date of Easter can be approved if all other Christian denominations agree to it.

Different Secular Calendars:

1. Solar Calendars

Solar calendars: a solar day is a period of 24 hours time the earth takes to rotate on its own axis. A solar Year is made up of 365.24 days, the time for the earth to round the sun once.

A. Julian calendar: Julius Caesar in 46 reformed the solar calendar and introduced it in the year 45 B. C. Julian Calendar begins with March and has 12 months, February has 28 days and 29 in every leap year. The actual length of a solar year is 365.242199. Thus every year there is the difference of 11 minutes and 14 seconds which results in every millennium a difference of 7.80 days. Augustus Caesar in 9 B.C. shifted the starting point from March to January.

B. Egyptian calendar: It is a solar calendar consisting of 13 months, 12 months with 30 days and the 13th month with 5 days. A revision of the calendar in every fifth year solves the problem of remaining hours just like in leap year.

C. Gregorian calendar: Pope Gregory 13 (1572-1585) rectified the existing solar calendar. On 24th February 1583 he published a papal bull ordering two important changes ie, the October 5th of the year 1582 should be changed into October 15 and the century years should be omitted from leap years unless it is divisible by 4.00. E.g. the year 1900 is indivisible by 400 cannot be considered as leap year but 2000 was a leap year. It helped to fix the days equal to the actual solar calendar with 365.2522. As a result the difference of a day will occur only after 4500 years only. The calendar in use of today is Gregorian.

2. New calendar: proposed by Belgian astronomer to make a small change in the Gregorian calendar by fixing every century year a leap year. Then the difference of a day will occur only after 30000 years!

3. Lunar Calendars

Lunar month is composed of 29.43 days' time needed for the moon to round the earth. A lunar year is the time for the moon to round the earth 12 times within 354/355 days. Less than 11.24 days to the solar year

A. Jewish calendar: counts days from evening to evening and months from full moon to full moon. It is the combination of 12 months of 12 lunations with 354.3670 days. To cover the difference of 11.25 days a separate month with 33.75 days is added in every three years. There for in the leap year there will be 13 months with 387.75days.

B. kollavarsham: it is a Hindu astronomical calendar originated in AD 825. Some say that it was *UdayaMarthandaVarma* the feudal king of *Venadu* established this calendar. Some others opine that it was began with the *samadhi* year of great Hindu philosopher *AdiShankara*. It has 12 months of 12 lunations and 354 days. In order to adjust the 11.25 days gap they are added to other months after the lunations at appropriate intervals. Thus the month *chingam* has 31 days, *thulam* 30, *Dhanu* 29, *karkkidakam* 32 etc.

Origin of Syro-Malabar calendar

Two Usages: Cathedral Liturgy and Monastic Liturgy

As we know it was only during and after the peace of Constantine church got freedom to develop its theology and liturgical practices. Among the liturgical families and traditions Jerusalem liturgy stands as the mother and cradle of all liturgies with its well-developed system of calendar and other practices. The best example is the diary of Egeria which speaks about the earliest calendar practiced in the Jerusalem church. East Syriac tradition has its roots in the Jerusalem calendar.

A. Cathedral liturgy: liturgy celebrated in the bishop's church or cathedral. Bishop being the head of the church was the main celebrant. IshoYab 3 the patriarch of Kokhe modified a calendar of which we have no prior documental evidences but assume it's indebtedness to Jerusalem liturgy.

B. Monastic liturgy: liturgy practiced in the monasteries under the leadership of the Abbot. It was noted by its length. In the East

Syriac tradition we have two monastic traditions such as upper monastery(*diraAlleita*) on the upper banks of the river Tigris and of the monastery of Beth Abhe. IshoYab 3 had his residence here and he was also a member of the Beth Abhe monastery. When the monks began to migrate to the towns it paved way the adaptation and amalgamation of liturgical traditions.

IshoYab 3 and the Formation of the Calendar

IshoYab 3 (647-657): he was bishop of Mosul and later metropolitan of ArbelandMosul then became the patriarch of Selucia Ctesiphon. His works: 1, Hudra(cycle) for the whole Sunday's, period of great fast, three days fast of the Ninevities.2, a treatise on baptism, 3, Rite of absolution, 4Ordination of monks.

We have no documental evidence to compare his calendar. He might have been influenced by the Jerusalem liturgical practices. He removed all the divergent elements of monastic and cathedral liturgies (the main difference are the commemoration of saints and the scriptural lessons connected with each particular day). He invented a uniform calendar of nine periods having seven weeks each to celebrate the mysteries of Christ and added the feasts of saints and days of fasts to it. His Calendar is known as *hudra* which means cycle and its preface was written by RabbanBrikIsho the Abbot of Bet Kokhe and it is known as Bar Eskapa.

In 1250 the Hudra was revised and all the suspected Nestorian elements were carefully removed from it. Before the 16 th century we followed this same calendar. The three Syriac manuscripts from Malabar: Vatican Syriac 22 which belongs to 1302 AD, Cambridge 00.1.17 of the 1600 and Vatican Syriac 852 are the proofs in this regard. In 1968 began the restoration process with introducing the season wise proper prayers of the Eucharist.

Division of the Calendar

The division of the liturgical year into nine seasons of which the first and the last seasons with four weeks each, and the remaining seven seasons with symbolical seven weeks each are based on the four major feasts of our Lord: Christmas (Dec 25), *denha* (Jan 6) resurrection (March 21 -25th April) and the exhalation of the Cross (Sep14). Even though seven seasons have ideally seven weeks, in

actual practice except for Great Fast, Resurrection and Apostles all other periods are liable to change.

Why Seven Weeks?

According to George of Arbel the seven weeks in a season symbolizes seven important or significant Sundays in the salvation history. Following are the seven Sundays and their symbolic meaning in the history of salvation

No	Sundays	Symbolic Meaning
1	Beginning of Creation (Gen 1,3-5)	Beginning of the world
2	Tent of testimony by Moses (EX 40,17)	The beginning of Law and Sacrifices
3	Annunciation to Mary (Lk 1,26-)	The beginning of God being with us
4	Resurrection (Jn 20,1-)	The beginning of eternal life
5	Resurrection experience of St. Thomas the Apostle (Jn 20,26-)	The beginning of faith in the risen Lord
6	Pentecost (Act 2,1)	The beginning of the Kingdom of the Lord
7	Our own resurrection	The beginning of our entry into eternal life

Feasts of our Lord: feasts are meant for celebrating the saving acts of God in human history. In the Old Testament God appointed several festivals and feast days to retain the memory of the great events and miracles God has done for His people in order to keep them firm in faith. In the New Testament, the purpose is to perpetuate and commemorate the mysteries of Christ. The following are the feasts of our Lord.

1	Nativity	Dec 25
2	Circumcision	Jan 1
3	Baptism of our Lord	Jan 6
4	Presentation in the temple	Feb11
5	Hosanna	

6	Paschal Thursday	
7	Passion Friday	
8	Resurrection Sunday	
9	Ascension	on the sixth Thursday
10	Transfiguration	Aug 6/ forty days before Sep 14
11	Exaltation of the Cross	Sep 14

Marian Feasts: following the same principles of celebrating the feasts of our Lord, the Holy Church honors Bl. Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, who is intimately united with the saving acts of her son in attaining the fruits of redemption with special care and respect. The following are the Marian feasts observed in the Syro-Malabar Tradition.

1	Immaculate Conception	Dec 8
2	Mary mother of God	Second Friday after nativity
3	Annunciation	March 25
4	Mary protectress of crops	May 15
5	Mary of mount Carmel	July 16
6	Nativity of Mary	Sep 8
7	Assumption	August 15
8	All Wednesdays	Throughout the year

Commemorations of saints and Martyrs:

It took place in the third century. The first evidence in this regard comes from Asia Minor with the martyrdom of Polycarp of Smyrna. Martyrs were held in high esteem, as they were the real heroes of faith. Their courage in witnessing faith even at the cost of life made them venerable as confessors of faith. The feasts of saints are known as commemorations. Thorough them we can easily celebrate and commemorate the salvation mysteries of Christ in our day to day life, because their holiness is the ultimate flowering of the baptismal grace united with the paschal mysteries of Christ. In the east Syrian liturgical year, Fridays are generally dedicated to the saints. Since Sundays are the days of our Lord and Fridays commemorating the passion and death of our Lord, it is fitting to

commemorate the saints on Fridays. They have participated in the passion of our Lord by the sacrifice of their lives either through martyrdom or by leading an exemplary life. In our tradition they are commemorated according to the spirit of the liturgical seasons in accordance with their participation in the mysteries of Christ in those seasons.

A. St. Thomas the Apostle: Being the Apostle of India and father in faith of St. Thomas Christians, he is commemorated on four occasions in our liturgy:

No	Commemoration	Date
1	Mar Thoma Sliba (Cross) Day	Dec 18
2	Mar Thoma Friday	Seventh Friday of Denha
3	Mar Thoma Sunday (Puthunjayar)	Second Sunday of resurrection
4	Dukhrana (Martyrdom Day)	July 3

B. Seasonal Commemorations

Season	Commemoration	date
Annunciation and Nativity	Greetings to Mary	Second Friday
Denha	St. John the Baptist	First Friday
	Peter and Paul	Second Friday
	Holy Evangelists	Third Friday
	St. Stephan	Fourth Friday
	The Holy Greek Doctors	Fifth Friday
	The Holy Syrian Doctors	Sixth Friday
	Patron Saint	Seventh Friday
	Forty Martyrs	Eighth Friday
	All the departed	Ninth Friday
Great fast	St. Lazarus	Sixth Friday
Resurrection	All Saints day	First Friday
	Mar Addai	Fifth Friday

Apostles	Friday of Gold	First Friday
	70/72 Disciples	Seventh Friday
Qayta	12 Apostles	First Sunday
	Mar Jacob of Nisibis	First Friday
	Mar Mari	Second Friday
	St. Simoni and her seven sons	Fifth Friday
	Mar Simon Bar Sabbae and other martyrs	Sixth Friday
	St. Qardagh (Persian martyr)	Seventh Friday
Elia; Sliba	Patriarchs	First Friday
	Elia	Last Friday

Days of Fasting

The holy Catholic Church has kept up a system of fasting in order to maintain both the physical and spiritual health of her children. St. Thomas Christians were called “the sons of fasting” by the European missionaries. Fasting was observed from evening to evening. Only one light meal after the sunset was allowed during fast days. Syro-Malabar calendar maintains an alternative system of seasonal fast in the whole year. They are the following:

A. 25 days fast in the period of Annunciation: it is a fast observed as a preparation for Christmas from 1st to 25th of December. The acts of Diamper synod gives witness to this practice among the St. Thomas Christians. It can be considered as an imitation of the period of Great fast. Also it can be the response of the church to the call of John the Baptist (Mk 1,3-4; LK3,8) or an imitation of a monastic practice which gradually adopted by the public.

B. 50 days fast in the period of Great Fast: it is a traditional fast observed by the St. Thomas Christians as an earnest preparation for Easter. Even though only forty days are counted in imitation of Jesus’ fasting for forty days, traditionally fasting is observed for fifty days in the Syro-Malabar Church. Since the day begins in the evening, Holy Saturday evening begins the fiftieth day. Forty days are counted

excluding Holy Week, First Sunday, and Lazarus Saturday (Saturday before Palm Sunday) ($7 \times 7 - 7 - 2 = 40$). In order to give one tenth of the year to the Lord (Gen 28, 22) as fast days to the Lord Sundays and Saturdays, except for Holy Saturday are exempted from counting. But it will limit the actual fast days to 36 ($77 - 14 + 1 = 36$) days. To complete the traditional number of forty we add four days from the holy week (from Monday to Holy Thursday).

C. Three Days fast: it is a fast observed on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, three weeks before the beginning of the period of Great fast. It is connected with the fast observed by the Ninevites in the time of Prophet Jonah and the miraculous healing from a plague between 570 and 581. This fast is also known as “rogation of the Ninevites”.

D. Fifteen Days fast: as a preparation to the feast of assumption an observance of fast for fifteen days was practiced in the Syro-Malabar church. Among the Assyrians it is known as the fast of the virgins for 15 days.

E. Eight Days Fast: it is a traditional fast in preparation for the feast of Nativity of Mary from 1st to 8th September. It is also connected with the miraculous saving of Christians by the intercessions of Mary from the hands of Muslims in 9th century.

F. Wednesday and Friday abstinence: the ground for the abstinence from eating meat on these two week days is found in the canons 3 and 4 of the Didascalia Apostolorum. According to canon 3, it was a Wednesday Jesus revealed to His disciples about His trial, passion, death and resurrection. As a result they became sorrowful. Canon 4 says that this foretelling of the passion narrative was accomplished on the sixth day of the week (Friday). So these days are reserved to commemorate the sufferings of Lord by practicing abstinence from meat.

Liturgical seasons

1. Annunciation and nativity: there should be 4 Sunday's before Christmas so it begins between Nov 27 and Dec 3. Two weeks after nativity are not stable. If Dec 25 falls on Monday or Tuesday there will be only one Sunday between Nativity and *Denha*.

2. *Denha*: begins with the Sunday after Jan 6. If Jan 6 happens to be a Sunday the next Sunday will mark the beginning of the season of *Denha*. The weeks may vary in accordance with the date of Easter. If Easter comes late the season will continue.
3. Great fast: there should be exactly 7 weeks in this season to complete the season of fasting.
4. Resurrection: correct 7 weeks because it is the central point. So it should be perfect with 7 weeks.
5. Apostles: exactly 7 weeks. We need 7 weeks to count the fiftieth day- the Pentecost.
6. *Qayta*: the number of weeks in this season depends on the feast of the exaltation of the Cross. Whenever Easter comes late the sixth and seventh Sundays of *Qayta* are celebrated together. The Sunday that follows this feast should be the first Sunday of Cross and the fourth Sunday of Elia and the Sunday coming before Sep 14 must be the first Sunday of Elia. So this season will never exceed seven Sundays and will be less than seven in those times when Easter comes late.
7. Elia-Cross: In order to count the Sunday that comes after Sep 14 as first Sunday of Cross (the fourth Sunday of Elia) sometimes the second and third Sundays of Elia will be suppressed. Thus practically there will be only five Sundays in this season.
8. Moses: in the same way the period assigns 7 weeks only in principle. Each season gets only four Sundays or fewer in order to assign 4 weeks to the season of the dedication of the Church.
9. Dedication of the Church: there should be four Sundays in this period. It begins four Sundays before the period of annunciation. This period seems to have been formed later taking four Sundays from the season of Moses in order to commemorate the four dedications of the tabernacles in the Old Testament (ex 40, Joshua 18, 1, 1 kings 8 and Ezra 3, 2).

Seasons in Detail:

1. Annunciation - Nativity (Subara-Yalda)

This season presents the mystery of incarnation and calls us to find our salvation in Jesus and to imitate his example of self emptying. In the Eastern tradition it is a period to commemorate the fulfillment

of the word of God. In the Western Tradition it is a period of expectation.

It begins from Sep 27 to Dec 3 and it is comprised of four Sundays (First Sunday: annunciation to Zacharia, and third Sunday: birth of John the Baptist and second Sunday annunciation to Mary and fourth Sunday birth of Jesus from Holy Mary- Mother of God.). If Christmas falls on Monday or Tuesday there will be only one Sunday between Christmas and *Denha*. These are the two Sundays after Christmas: 1 Sunday: visit of Magi and flight to Egypt (Mt: 2:23) and 2nd Sunday: presentation of Jesus in the Temple and finding of Jesus in the temple (Lk: 2, 21-52). These two Sundays are added to complete the infancy narrative. These two Sundays were added by IshoYab 3 in the seventh century.

The Salient features of this season are the following:

1. Twenty Five days fast as a preparation for Christmas: it has a got a long tradition which goes back to the synod of Diamper. It was an imitation of the great fast observed during the season of Lent also it can viewed as a response to the exhortation of John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Lord (Mk:1,3-4, Lk: 3,8) also it has roots in the monastic practice.
2. Immaculate Conception: Anticipating 9 months from Sep 8, we get Dec 8 as the day of the Immaculate Conception of Mary by Anna and it is celebrated from 8th century onwards in Palestine. This feast was celebrated to commemorate the conception of Mary by Anna. On 1661, December 8, Pope Alexander VII declared the feast of Immaculate Conception i.e. Mary was conceived without original sin. On Dec 8, 1854, pope Pius 9 declared Immaculate Conception to be a dogma of the Church. It simply affirms that there is no blemish in the life and soul of the blessed mother, because she is full of Grace Lk: 1, 28).
3. *Mar ThomaSliba Day*: it is the feast of the Veneration of the Miraculous Cross of Mylapore which belongs to 6-8 centuries basing on the Sasanian Pahlavi inscriptions found on the edges of the Cross. It got the name Mar ThomaSliba from the belief that this Cross was stained with the Apostles' blood on July 3. It was discovered on 23 March 1547 while digging the ruins of the church in Mylapore. The devotion to this Cross began when this Cross

started to sweat blood. Thus it was placed on the wall in front of the altar of the basilica. In the year 1558 on December 18 the same miracle lasted for four hours and it continued every year on December 18 up to 1566. As result of the information given by the Portuguese missionaries the Holy See declared December 18 as *Commemoratio Miraculi Petrae S. Thomae Apostoli*.

4. Christmas: until 4-5thcenturies nativity of Jesus and feast of *Denha* were celebrated together on Jan 6. Later the feast of Nativity was celebrated on Dec 25.

In Rome Dec 25 was the feast day of the Sun God - the unconquered one (*Natalissolisinvincti*) since it was the longest day in which the sun reaches the farthest south of equator at the winter solstice. Early Christians used this same day to celebrate the birth of Christ –the Sun of justice (Mal 4:2:3, 20), the true light (jn 1, 9), and the light of the world (Jn 8, 12). Pope Liberius in 354 fixed the feast of Nativity on Dec 25. It is the earliest documental evidence for the celebration of Christmas on Dec 25.

Patristic Tradition: gospels give a specific and definite indication that Christ died and resurrected during a Passover. According John Christ was crucified on 14 of Nissan on the day of slaughtering of lambs. Jesus being a perfect man his life cycle should form a perfect cycle in which death takes place on the anniversary of conception – annunciation - March 25. When 9 months calculated from March 25, we get Dec 25 as the birthday of Jesus. Hypolitus of Rome was the first one to assign Dec 25 as the birthday of Jesus.

Biblical calculation: How the calculation is made? This calculation was made by John Chrysostom (431) in the 5th century.

1. Elizabeth was in her 6th month when Mary visited her soon after her she was conceived Jesus Lk 1, 36.
2. Zacharias' entry into the temple to burn incense (Lk1, 9) i.e., once in the year on the 10th of the 7th month (Lev16, 29) a reckoning from Nissan. The 10th of the 7th month is October
3. Zachariah went back home after 2, 3 or 7 days of October + 6 months = the beginning of the month of Nissan (March 25)
4. So we can conclude that Mary's conception was on March 25 + 9 months =December 25.

5. Ceremony of fire: it was a special ceremony celebrated during *Ramsaon* Dec 25. People will go in procession with lighted candles to the portico of the Church where a fire will be prepared in triangular form with three oil lamps on its corners symbolizing the revelation of the Holy Trinity in the Son. The Celebrant standing in front of the fire facing the Church sings “Glory to God in the highest” three times in loud voice at each corner after lighting each lamp, and the faithful responds “And on earth peace and tranquility and good hope to man”. From 2009 onwards this ceremony is celebrated at the beginning of the midnight Christmas Eucharistic Celebration.
6. Feast of Mary Mother of God: in the East Syrian tradition, Fridays are the days to commemorate the saints. Mary comes first on the second Friday of nativity. Mary occupies a special place in the season of annunciation because by submitting herself totally to God’s plan she became the mother of God or God giver. The prayers of this season address Mary as the mother of God, Second Eve, the Blessed one among women and ever Virgin.
2. **Epiphany (Denha):** the Syriac term *Denha* and the Greek terms *Epipania* and *Theophania* literally mean the rising of the Sun and theologically they mean the divine manifestation of Jesus on the day of Baptism. The origin of the celebration of this feast on Jan 6 is considered to be in the fourth century. In the early centuries nativity of Jesus was celebrated on Jan 6 and later it was transferred to Dec 25. In the oriental tradition, the visit of the Magi is celebrated on the Sunday before Jan 6. Usually this season has seven weeks but it varies in accordance with the date of Easter.

Important features of the season:

RakkuliThirunnal and *pindikuthithirunnal*: A Malabar Christian ritual to commemorate the baptism of Jesus in Jordan River. This is the practice of taking ritual bath in river or in pools on the eve of this feast.

Pindikuthithirunnal is the ritual in which a mature plantain trunk is erected in front of the houses decorated with oil lamps. Children dance around the lighted plantain trunk singing *El Payya* (God is Magnificent).

MoonnuNombu or Three days fast or the rogation of Ninevites: it is a fast observed to commemorate the rogation of the Ninevites in

the time of Jonah (Jon 3, 4-10) on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday three weeks before the beginning of great lent.

Friday Commemorations: All the Fridays in the period of *Denha* are dedicated to those who bore witness to the mystery of revelation. They are:

1	John the Baptist
2	Peter and Paul
3	Holy Evangelists
4	St. Stephan
5	Holy Greek Doctors
6	Holy Syrian Doctors
7	Patron saint of the Church - Mar Thoma Friday
8	Forty Martyrs (Assyria in 346)
9	All the departed Souls

(In any case whether the season of advent has seven weeks or more or less weeks, the last Friday will be dedicated to the souls departed). It reminds us of our responsibility to help all the departed through our prayers, fasting and act of penance and charity during the coming season- season of lent.

3. Great Fast (SawmaRabba): it is a season to imitate the great fast observed by Jesus before beginning His public life (Mt 4,2) by which attain self-purification for our salvation.

Forty days Fast: we have evidences of this practice towards the end of the third century and in the beginning of the fourth century based on Jesus’ fasting in the wilderness. Athanasius of Alexandria (295-373), Cyril of Jerusalem, (386) John Chrysostom (407) make mention of a six week preparation for the *Pasch*. These six weeks were called *Quadragesima* which means forty consecutive days preceding the paschal triduum. In the East, great lent comprises of forty days excluding Holy week, first Sunday and Lazarus Saturday (Saturday before Palm Sunday) (7×7-2 =40). In order to give one tenth of the year as fast days to the Lord (Gen 28, 22) i.e., 36.5 days all Sundays, Saturdays and Holy Saturday are exempted from counted as fast days. Thus we have (7×7-14+ 1) 36 days. We the Syro-Malabarians added four days from the Holy week to complete the

traditional number of forty days. Easter triduum begins on the Holy Thursday evening.

AnpathuNombu or Fifty Days Fast: traditional name of the great fast observed by St. Thomas Christians in Malabar. Since the day begins in the evening, the great fast begins in the Sunday evening (because of practical reasons it begins in the morning of Ash Monday) and ends up with Holy Saturday - the fiftieth day. The following observances are found among the Syro-Malabarians in connection with the great fast:

PetrathaNjayar: the first Sunday of great fast among the Syro-Malabarians is known as *pethrathanjayar*. The Syriac word *pethurtha* means to return or to look back. It calls for a thorough examination of conscience looking back to one's own life to have real repentance and reconciliation. This word might have its roots in the Syriac word *pephortha* which means less tasty food.

PeshaVyazhazcha: on this day after supper the head of the family breaks unleavened bread (INRI *Appam*: -*Iesus Nazarinus Rex Iudeorum* – Jesus of Nazareth King of Jews) marked with the sign of the cross made of the parts from the blessed coconut leaves of Palm Sunday and distribute it among the family members basing on seniority. The bread is eaten with a sweet drink prepared with coconut milk and jaggery. Portions from *Puthenpana* or from the Old Testament regarding Passover is either read or sung to add solemnity to this domestic rite. Non Christians are not given this bread to eat and this sweet milk to drink and no portion of this food is left for next day. If somebody dies in the family the family will not break the bread in that year but they break the bread offered by their neighbors without any form of solemnity.

DukhaVelliyazcha: it is the day to morn over the death of Jesus. On this day after the commemorative reading of passion all will consume a bitter drink as an act of participating in the passion of Christ. In the morning or in the evenings solemn way of the Cross will be arranged. From Holy Thursday evening to Holy Saturday night all keep silence, fast and vigil.

DukhaSaniyazhcha: on this day the Syro-Malabarians venerates the glorious Cross and commemorate the death of Jesus on the Cross.

The blessing of new light, baptismal water and the renewal of baptismal vow are observed along with the Eucharist.

KozhukottaSaniyazhcha: it is the Saturday before Hosanna Sunday. This Sunday is known as Lazarus Sunday in most of the Churches. On this day the Syro-Malabarians prepare sweet rice balls mixed with coconut and spices to commemorate Jesus dining at Lazarus' house. The symbolism of *Kozhukotta* is derived the round shaped bottle of Nard perfume used to anoint the feet of Jesus (Jun 12, 1-11). This act of Mary made her to become the fragrance of Jesus. Such a way after six weeks of self purification the Syro-Malabarians being worthy of becoming the fragrance of Jesus (2 Cor 2, 15) and to give banquet to Jesus at their houses on this day. After supper the head of the family blesses the *kozhukotta* with the sign of the Cross and distribute it among the family members and eat with devotion as if they are dining with Jesus in order to become His fragrance.

Great Fast is the important season of fasting in the liturgical year. The purpose of the fast is to prepare the faithful to enter into the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus spending more time in prayer. It is also the season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. During this season the Church remembers her departed souls.

4. Resurrection (Qyamta): until fourth century, the feast of resurrection was the only feast celebrated in the Church. In the second century the feast of *pasch* was established among Christians. The English word Pasch is derived from the Greek word *Pascha* with its Aramaic form *Pesach* means Passover from slavery of death. Early Christians substituted this feast with the annual feast of resurrection of the Lord, who gave ultimate freedom to humanity by his victory over death and sin. The English word Easter has its origin in the pagan feast of *Estore* an ancient Greek goddess of light celebrated on the spring equinox on March 21. Easter marks the end of Forty days fast. Today Easter is celebrated on the Sunday that follows the full moon after March 21.

In the East Syrian tradition the first week of Easter is known as the week of weeks since it was period of festivities for the newly baptized. At daily Eucharistic celebrations the newly baptized occupied a place of honor in the Church and they wore white garments. So

Byzantines call this week “white Week”. The closing Sunday of the Easter week called “*dominica in Albis*” (white Sunday) by Latins. For the Syro-Malabar Christians it is the New Sunday or Puthunjayar or St. Thomas Sunday.

First Friday: day of Confessors or All saints day

This feast originated during the persecution by the Persian King Sapor 2 (309-379). On Good Friday he killed Mar Simon Bar Sabbae-Catholicos of Selucia Ctesiphone together with many other bishops. Early Christians began to commemorate this Friday as the feast day of Martyrs since Good Friday was the commemoration day of the death of our Lord. Gradually this day became all saints day.

Fifth Sunday: Mar Addai: one of the seventy disciples of Jesus and the disciple of St. Thomas the Apostle is commemorated on this Sunday. St. Thomas consecrated him and sent to Edessa. Together Mar Mari and Mar Aggai he evangelized Edessa. Chaldeans, Assyrians and Syro- Malabrians use the anaphora of Addai and Mari, the oldest Anaphora dates back to the third century.

Sixth Friday: Ascension Day: it falls on the sixth Friday after Easter. The prayers of this day mentions Jesus to be *Malka* = king frequently. It simply means that it is the best day to celebrate the kingship of Jesus.

Sunday Readings		
1	Lk 24,1-12	Resurrection, empty tomb
2	Jn 20,19-31	Appearance to the Ten & St. Thomas
3	Jn 14, 1-14	Jesus-the way, truth and life
4	Jn 16,16-33	Sadness and Gladness
5	Jn 21,1-14	Tiberus appearance
6	Jn 17,1-26	Jesus’ prayer for the disciples
7	Mk 16,9-20	Post-resurrection appearances

5. Apostles (Shlihe): begins with the feast of Pentecost. For Jews it was the feast of harvest and later it came to be known as the feast of tents, tabernacles or booths. For Christians the fiftieth day after resurrection is the day of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the

Apostles. It was the day of theophany and the day of the miracles of tongues and prophesies. Strengthened by the spirit the Apostles went out to preach the gospel. Works of the Holy Spirit and the works done by the Apostles are the central themes of this liturgical season.

Friday commemorations:

1 Friday of Gold: it takes its name from Acts 3, 9 where Peter tells the lame man “*I have no silver and gold but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus, walk*”.

2 seventh Friday: 70/72 Disciples: the number of the disciples vary from gospel to gospel. This feast encourages the missionary spirit of the Church to go and preach the good news to the whole world.

Major Feasts in this Season:

1	First Sunday	Pentecost
2	June 29	Feast of Peter and Paul (Latin tradition) in the east Syrian tradition it is the second Friday of <i>Denha</i> .
3	July 3	Martyrdom of St. Thomas- day of Obligation
4	Second Sunday	Feast of Holy Trinity (Latin feast) in the East Syrian tradition it is celebrated in the season <i>Denha</i> .
5	Second Thursday	Feast of the Blessed Sacrament (Corpus Christi) in the East Syrian tradition it is celebrated on the Paschal Thursday.
6	Third Friday	Feast of the Sacred Heart

6. Summer (Qayta) : The literal meaning of Syriac term *qayta* is summer. It is the time of fruition and harvest. Theologically it is the period of the spiritual fruition of the Church as a result of the works of the Apostles. This is the period of growth in faith, sanctity and love among the members of the Church. Normally this season has 7 weeks but sometimes only six. In order to celebrate the first Sunday of Elia before the feast of the exaltation of the Cross on Sep 14, when Easter comes late, this season will have only six weeks. In such occasions the sixth and seventh Sundays will be celebrated together.

The first Sunday of *Qayta* is the day to commemorate the twelve Apostles. This Sunday comes in between the season of *Shlihe*(Season of the spreading of the Church) and *Qayta*(growth and fruition of the Church). This Sunday is called *Nusardel* in Persian which means *New Year of God*. It means that a new era or year of the Lord is begun with the Apostles.

Feast of Transfiguration: August 6, forty days before September 14, we celebrate the feast of transfiguration. It is considered as the anticipation of the awaiting eschatological glory of Jesus and His disciples in heaven.

Friday Commemorations: these commemorations will help the Church to meditate on the growth of Church in relation to the sacrifice of early martyrs

1	Jacob of Nisibis	(338) Second Bishop of Nisibis, fought against Aryanism
2	Mar Mari	Apostle of Syria and Persia, Disciple of Mar Addai
3	No Particular saints	Dedicated for the memories of local martyrs
4	No Particular saints	Dedicated for the memories of local martyrs
5	Simoni and her seven children	2 Mac 7,1-42
6	Mar Simon Bar Sabbae and other martyrs	Catholicos of Selucia Ctesiphone, Killed on Good Friday in 341
7	St. Qardagh	A Persian Martyr, governor under the King Sapor 2, later killed by him.

7. Elia - Cross (Elia - Sliba): the name of this season is derived from the appearance of Elia and Moses with Jesus at transfiguration (Mt 17, 1-18). Sliba or Cross stands for Jesus because it is the sign of His second coming (Mt 24, 30). Elia and Moses will join Him in the final judgment. Elia will examine the adherence of the people of God towards the prophecies and Moses - obedience to the law.

This season should begin at least on the Sunday before the feast of the Cross on September 14. The fourth Sunday should immediately follow the feast of the Cross. When there is only one Sunday before the feast the second and third Sundays are omitted. Thus the fourth Sunday of Elia will be the first Sunday of Cross. Even though in principle we have seven Sundays in this period we will have only five Sundays in this season. In order to have seven weeks in each season, each season is clubbed with the following season i.e., period of Elia with the period of Cross, Cross with the period of Moses and Moses with that of the dedication of the Church.

Elia 1			
Elia 2			
Elia 3			
Elia 4	Cross 1		
Elia 5	Cross 2		
Elia 6	Cross 3		
Elia 7	Cross 4		
	Cross 5	Moses 1	
	Cross 6	Moses 2	
	Cross 7	Moses 3	
		Moses 4	Dedication of the Church 1
		Moses 5	Dedication of the Church 2
		Moses 6	Dedication of the Church 3
		Moses 7	Dedication of the Church 4

The period of Elia - Cross is a period of fasting in imitation of the fast of Elia for forty days before reaching the mount Horeb (1kings19, 8). The fasting begins on the first Sunday of Elia and ends on the seventh Friday or fourth Cross. This fast is observed as a preparation for the universal judgement where Elia will appear with Christ. This fast is no longer in use among Syro-Malabarians.

Important themes:

1. Return of Elia: the return of Elia before the end of the world was a strong belief of both the Old and New testaments. Eg: Mal 4, 4-6 “behold I will send you Elia before the great and terrible

day...since Elia is not dead” (2 kings2, 11)” he can return as he wish”...in the New Testament people are anxious (Jn 1, 25) “if you are neither Christ nor Elia”? (Mt 16, 4) “some say that you are John the Baptist, others say Elia”...(Mt 27,46-49) “wait let us see whether Elia will come down to save him”! (Mt11, 14) “if you are willing to accept it, he’s the Elia who is to come”.

2. Cross: in the first and second centuries Cross was a rare Christian symbol due to persecutions. Early Christians used it as a seal upon them to cast away demons from them. They made the significance the Cross at every going out and coming in to the houses, before wearing cloths, bath, before and after meals....in all ordinary activities of life. Until the sixth century the empty Cross without the image of Christ was used. Later crucifix appeared in use.

Two backgrounds: winning of Milvian war by Constantine with the sign of the Cross. Basing on a vision he had in the previous night of the most decisive war, the emperor ordered his troop to mark the sign of the Cross using the Greek alphabets chi and Rho which denote Christ. As a result he achieved a remarkable victory and he fixed the Christogram as the official emblem of the Roman Empire.

And finding of the relics of the holy Cross by Queen Elena: the great victory of the Roman Empire in the Milvian battle and the peace of Christianity led to the finding of the Cross by Queen Elena the mother of Constantine on September 13. We have three legends to know more about the finding of the Cross: 1 Protonica legend, 2 Maccarius legend 3 Kuriakose legends.

After the finding of the Cross the feast of the exaltation of the Cross starts from fourth century with the dedication of two Basilicas on Calvary and over the tomb of Christ on September 13. On the next day i, e., September 14 a Cross was raised on Calvary for adoration. Thus this feast began to be celebrated on 14 September for one week.

3. Friday commemorations: first Friday: Patriarchs as the fathers and heads of each particular Church represent Old Testament Patriarchs like Abraham, Jacob and Isaac. Last Friday: Elia- this period calls forth the courage and sincerity of the prophets to be continued in Christian life.

4. Power of the Cross: 1cor1, 17-18. Old Testament types: wood at Mara (Ex 15, 22-25), the rode of Moses (Ex 14, 16), the tree of life in paradise (Gen 3, 22) and bronze serpent (Num 21, 8-9).

8. Moses (Mushe): this season is closely related to the previous season of Elia -Cross. Many prayers of this season are repeated from Elia -Cross season. The proper parts of this season makes no mention of Moses, therefore we can assume that this season might have been named after the presence of Moses together with Elia during the time of transfiguration. This season also deals with the second coming of Christ and gives importance to the power of the Cross by representing Jesus by Cross.

Two important arguments about the position of this season:

1. Moses the last season of the calendar: according to Rucker the period of Moses with seven weeks was the last season of the liturgical year. Later four weeks were separated from it to form the period of the dedication of the Church. This is true with regard to the seventh century liturgical reformation of IshoYab III who gave shape to a four week period of the dedication of the Church.
2. Moses the first season of the calendar: George of Arbel brings forth three arguments to prove this hypothesis. According to him the period of Moses that started in October and continued until the end of November seems to be the first season of the liturgical calendar due to three reasons:-
 - a. Since the civic year in Persia starts in October, the period of Moses which starts in October should be the beginning of the liturgical year. This argument is rejected on condition that the liturgical year which is based on the salvation mysteries of Christ need not go in tune or conformity with the civic year.
 - b. Since the period of Moses commemorate the Old Testament events it should come before the period of annunciation, which deals with the New Testament events directly. It can also be rejected, because the period of Moses gives no indication of any Old Testament event, rather it remains as a continuation of the period of Cross.
 - c. Since the period of Elia-Cross commemorates the end of the world, it should also be the end of the liturgical year and the

following season should be the beginning. But it clear that the second coming of Christ commemorated in the previous year with the power of the Cross is extended or continued in the period of Moses.

Even though the period of Moses is a separate season, theologically and spiritually it is linked and correlated to the previous season of Elia-Cross. This season might have been the last season of the East Syrian calendar before seventh century. The power of the Cross and the necessity of repentance are the central themes of this season. It enables us to stand worthy before the Lord in His second coming.

9. Dedication of the Church (QudashEdta): it has four weeks. The calculation of the starting point of the season is little confusing. If November 1 is a Sunday then this season begins on that day. If it is Monday or Tuesday the season begins on the previous Sunday. If it is Wednesday, Thursday or Friday or Saturday then the season begins on the following Sunday. In other words this period starts before four Sundays of the beginning of the season of annunciation -nativity.

Naming of Sundays: among the four Sundays of this season, the first Sunday is known as *HudatEdta* (renewal of the Church) and the second Sunday is *QudashEdta* (dedication of the Church). Ishoyab 3 separated four weeks from the period of Moses and instituted the four Sundays of dedication of the Church in imitation to the four dedications of the tabernacles in the Old Testament. They are tabernacle dedicated by Moses (Ex 40,1-17), the tabernacle at Shiloh dedicated by the people of Israel (Josh 18,1), the dedication of the temple by Solomon (1 King 8,63) and the tabernacle dedicated by Joshua and Zerubabel (Ezra 3, 1-3).

Readings on Sundays		
1	Mat 16,13-19	Peter's confession of Faith
2	Mat 12,1-21	Disciples plucking wheat, healing on Sabbath
3	Jn 2,12-22	Cleansing of the Temple
4	Mat 22,42-23,22	True Messiah

This period celebrates the final glorification of the Church, founded by the Father, established by the Son and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Church the bride of Christ sanctified and saved by Christ is eagerly waiting for the union with Him. This intimate union is continued through the sacraments, especially through baptism and Eucharist.

We have seen all the nine seasons in the liturgical calendar of the Syro-Malabar church. They all are based on the most important seven events in salvation history such as Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost, Transfiguration, Exaltation of the Cross and the second coming of Christ. All the nine seasons within 50/52 weeks of a year begin on Sundays. The first and last seasons namely Annunciation and dedication of the church have only 4 weeks and the period of Nativity which comes in between Christmas and Epiphany has only one or two weeks depending on the date of Easter. All other seven seasons are given seven weeks each though we do not see exactly seven weeks in the periods of Elia-Cross and Moses, but together with the last season of the dedication of the church they form a cycle of seven weeks. The movable date of Easter and the fixed date of the exaltation of the Cross are the two deciding events for the season wise division of weeks in the liturgical year. It is clear that the East Syrian liturgical calendar has its roots in the fourth century Jerusalem liturgical calendar though we do not have any documents to prove this argument. But the consistency and similarity found in the seventh century reformed East Syrian calendar and the Jerusalem calendar underlines this fact. Observance of the Liturgical year is meant for the sanctification of time and the faithful together with the Church – the bride of Christ. The Holy Church provides ample occasions to practice a perfect Christian life, following meditatively the liturgical seasons of the year through Him, in Him and with Him-our Emmanuel.

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Chapter 3

Formation of Eucharistic Liturgy

“**E**ucharist is the source and summit of Christian life” (LG 11). “Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows” (SC 10). “For it is the liturgy through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, “the work of our redemption is accomplished”, and it is through the liturgy especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the Church” (SC 2).

- ◆ Eucharistic mystery is the source of Church’s life and the pledge of future glory. UR 15.
- ◆ Through the celebration of the Eucharist of the Lord in each of these Churches the Church of God is built up and grows in stature. UR 15.
- ◆ In the most blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church. PO 5.
- ◆ Eucharist is the source and summit of all preaching of the gospel. PO 5.

- ♦ Eucharistic celebration is the centre of the assembly of the faithful over which the priest presides. PO 5.
- ♦ Eucharist is the heart of Church's life and also of the Consecrated life. VC 95.
- ♦ Eucharist is constitutive of Church's being and activity. *Sacramentum Caritatis* 15.

1. The Origin of Christian Eucharistic Liturgy

Christian eucharistic liturgy has its ultimate origin in the Jewish liturgy. Hence a study of the nature of the Jewish liturgy is necessary to understand the Christian liturgy. The primitive Christian liturgy was not an entirely new creation. Christ himself instituted the Eucharist in the context of the Jewish liturgy. The Old Testament was the Bible of Jesus and the Apostles. The religion of the Old Testament was a preparation for the coming of the Messiah. Christianity did not mean a rejection of the Jewish religion but its completion. The Christian liturgy was modelled on the Jewish liturgy.

The Jewish liturgy included the sacrifices in the temple, the services of the Synagogue, and the family or domestic liturgy. The Synagogue service consisted of readings from the Scriptures, the Law of Moses, the Prophets and other books, the singing of Psalms, a sermon, and a number of set prayers. In comparison, the core of the primitive Christian liturgy consisted of two parts, the Synaxis, a Greek word which means a 'meeting', and the Eucharist proper or 'thanksgiving'. The Synaxis was separable from the Eucharist and either could be held without the other. It was only after the fourth century that it became a norm to hold the two services together forming one Eucharistic rite.

The primitive outline of the Christian Synaxis was as follows: 1. Opening Greeting; 2. Lesson (reading from the Scripture); 3. Psalmody; 4. Reading (separated by psalmody); 5. Sermon; 6. Prayers.

The Jewish and Christian Synaxes were almost the same in their forms. The nucleus of the primitive Church was the Jewish converts. They continued to participate in the Synagogue service for some time. When Christians started a separate worship they transferred the same service to their assembly changing the significance and context of some of the prayers in the light of the new faith. "The Synaxis was in

its shape simply a continuation of the Jewish synagogue service of our Lord's time, which was carried straight over into the Christian Church by its Jewish nucleus in the decade after the passion."

As regards the Eucharist proper, Christ's Last Supper with the Apostles was the basic model and the primitive outline of the liturgical celebration. Last Supper was some kind of a religious meal. The important elements of this religious meal were the following: Before the meal proper began, as the participants arrive some 'relishes' and wine might be served to them. These were blessed by each one for himself. According to the Jewish custom no kind of food could be taken without first giving thanks - a "blessing of God" or '*berakah*' for it (*berakah* in Hebrew means blessing or benediction; plural '*berakoth*'). There were fixed formulas for the blessings, for example the *berakah* for wine was "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, eternal King, who created the fruit of the wine".

The meal officially begins when the head of the family or the presiding member of the community has taken the bread which was to be given to the participants and has broken it with the following '*berakah*' or blessing: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth". He then takes a piece himself and gives a piece to each of the persons at the table.

At the end of the meal there was the customary Thanksgiving, three Blessings for the food (*Birkath ha-mazon*, *mazon* means food). On important occasions, to add to the solemnity, a special cup of wine was blessed, known as the "cup of blessing" along with the third *berakah*. This was to be sipped by whoever recited the prayer and handed round to each one present to sip after the Thanksgiving.

According to Jewish commentators, the first *Berakah* is a Blessing for the nourishment received and embraces the whole creation. The second is for the fruits of the promised land; it remembers the Covenant and thus becomes a Blessing for the whole history of salvation. The third *Berakah* is a supplication that the redemptive action of God be continued which finds its ultimate fulfilment in the coming of the Messiah and the final establishment of the Kingdom of God.

On the feast days like the Pasch and other important occasions the last *berakah* was expanded with additional prayers to suit the

occasion. It was in the midst of such a ritual meal with *berakah* that Christ instituted the Eucharist and gave the command “Do this in remembrance of me” or “Do this as my memorial”. The above description will help us to understand some details about the Last Supper and the institution of the blessed sacrament. Louis Bouyer comments: “... we must place what we call today the “words of institution” of the Eucharist back into their own context which is that of the ritual *berakoth* of the Jewish meal, so that we may perceive the sense and the whole import of their expression. The words announcing everything that was to follow in the Last Supper, as preserved for us by Luke, are connected with the preparatory *berakah* over the first cup. The blessing over the body (or the flesh) of Christ is connected with the initial *berakah* of the breaking of bread, and that over the blood of the new covenant with the second and third final *berakoth*. Finally the sentence about the “memorial” corresponds to the feast day interpolations in the third *berakah*.”

We can understand the full meaning and significance of the words of Christ, what he accomplished at the Last Supper only in the context of the *Berakoth*. At this moment Christ fulfilled his messianic role. He completed the Old Covenant and established in its place a New Covenant. The Last Supper prefigured the Paschal Mystery of His passion, death and resurrection. Bouyer continues: “The words of Christ which were to give rise to the Christian Eucharist arise from a whole structure underlying the Gospels, the Jewish liturgy in which they were inserted. If we separate them from it, we misunderstand the whole movement which inspired them. Reciprocally, their exact meaning risks being lost once we no longer perceive all that they accomplish and complete.

The Apostles did not leave Jerusalem and embark on their preaching mission the day after Pentecost. They must have been together at least for a few years in the Holy City. They must have celebrated together the Eucharist, in imitation of what Christ himself did, with the customary blessings or the *Berakoth*. To quote Bouyer again: “The first formulas of the Christian Eucharist, in imitation of what Christ himself had done, are but Jewish formulas applied by means of a few added words to a new content, which however was already prepared for by them.”

And Gregory Dix remarks: “The Eucharist had already been at the heart of the religion of Christians for twenty years before the first of these New Testament documents was written. It had trained and sanctified apostles and martyrs and scores of thousands of unknown saints for more than a century before the N.T. was collected and canonized as authoritative ‘scripture’, beside and above the old Jewish Scriptures.”

For the first Christians the Eucharist and the meal, *agape*, were combined in a single observance. But how long this practice continued is difficult to determine. As the number of the Christians increased it would have created practical difficulties. Probably it continued for more than a century. St. Paul speaks of the *Agape* in his epistle to the Corinthians.

2. The First Three Centuries

What could have been the shape of the Christian liturgy during the period immediately following the time of the Apostles during the first two or three centuries? In the New Testament there are some references which shed light on the liturgical practice of the Church during the Apostolic period (Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:15-20; I Cor 10:6; 11:23-26 and Acts 2:42.46.47; 20:7, 11:27:35) But more than written documents it was the tradition of the Apostolic Church handed down to succeeding generations that tells us about the meaning of the Eucharistic action and its form. To quote Gregory Dix: “Every local Church had received the rite of the Eucharist - the way of performing it - with its first evangelization. This is important. It means that the living tradition of the liturgy as the heart of its corporate life went back into the very roots of every apostolic Church in a way that its theological tradition about the Eucharist, which was necessarily in large part the product of experience and reflection, could not go back.”

We have a few documentary sources, not many, of the first three centuries to understand the liturgical practice of the early Church:

1. *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, commonly known as *Didache*, written in Hebrew probably at the turn of the first century or early in the second century. On this prayer Bouyer says: “The discovery of a Hebrew original of a eucharistic prayer from the *Didache* emphasizes one final fact that leaves no longer any room for doubting the genesis of the Christian eucharistic prayer from

Jewish prayer. We have a series of particularly valuable texts which form the connecting link between the Jewish and Christian liturgies.”

2. Justin the Martyr, *First Apology*, written about 150 A.D. Justin was a Jew born in Samaria and was converted to Christianity about A.D. 130. Later he went to Rome and wrote his *First Apology* around 150.
3. *The Apostolic Tradition* of St. Hippolytus of Rome, written about the year 215 A.D. It tells about the Roman practice during his time and contains the oldest text of the Canon of the Mass.
4. *The Liturgy of Mar Addai and Mar Mari*, originated in Edessa and was composed in Syriac or Aramaic. In its primitive form it is generally assigned to the second century.

In all the above sources we see that the content of the Eucharistic prayer was the same. They had more or less the same structure or outline. They were of a single pattern, which could be traced to the Apostolic tradition.

3. Fourth Century and After

There existed some fixed Eucharist prayers, as we have seen, of the second and third centuries. But they probably served only as models. The presiding bishop or celebrant was free to make the ‘thanksgiving’ by improvised prayers, within the traditional framework. St. Hippolytus of Rome, at the beginning of the third century writes: “Let the bishop give thanks in the way we indicated earlier. It is not at all necessary that he say the same words that we have used, as if he had to try to repeat them from memory in his thanksgiving to God; rather, let each one pray according to his ability. If one man is able to pray at some length and offer a solemn prayer, well and good. But if another offers a shorter and simpler prayer, let him not be prevented, provided his prayer be sound and orthodox.”

There were no complete liturgies before the fourth century. Gregory Dix writes on the evolution of fixed forms of liturgy: “Liturgical texts were becoming more fixed in the fourth century, but the traditional freedom of phrasing allowed to celebrants ensured a certain elasticity in the prayer at least until well after A.D. 350 in most places.”

The Liturgy of the Church began to grow into the great historic rites or traditions by the fourth century. But it took about five or six more centuries before they developed into full-fledged liturgies. The centers which gave shape to distinct and ancient liturgical traditions were Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, Byzantium and Edessa. Except the last mentioned, the others were prominent cities of the Roman empire, while Edessa was a city in north-eastern Mesopotamia near the frontier between the Roman Empire and Persia. All these became strong centres of Christianity and Church administration and in course of time assumed the title and prerogatives of Patriarchates. With regard to these centers, or the Churches centered round these places, there were several factors that contributed to the growth and development of the liturgy. As Patriarchal Sees they had immense influence over Churches of lesser importance. They became influential centers of Christian learning. They were the home of saintly Fathers of the Church and eminent Christian writers, whose theological reflections on the Eucharist and other mysteries of the faith greatly enriched the liturgy. The different liturgies thus give expression to distinct theological perceptions of the same faith. The diverse cultural and religious background of these centers also made a mark on the respective liturgies. The Churches which did not develop separate liturgies, because of circumstances, accepted those rites that were developing and growing in other Churches which were in some way connected with them. They became the common patrimony and common traditions of all those Churches.

Chapter 4

Roman (Latin) Liturgy

The Holy Mass is the holiest thing we have here on earth, because it is the action of Christ. The main thing in the Mass is not what is read from the Holy Scriptures, even though this is the word of God and should be listened to as such. The main thing in the Mass is neither what the priest preaches in his sermon nor what the people do or sing. The main thing is what Christ does. And what does Christ do in the Holy Mass? He offers himself for us, as he offered himself on the Cross. He sacrifices himself for us. That is why we say that the Mass is the same Sacrifice as that of the Cross renewed in an unbloody manner on the altar. On the altar just on the Cross, Christ offers his body and blood for us. The difference is that on the Cross his body and blood were visible to the eyes of those who were present, while in the Mass they are hidden under the appearances of bread and wine. But they are really present. This is the great fact. In each Mass, Christ is really present and renews the Sacrifice of the Cross.

1. Love for and Faith in the Mass

A man who fails to love the Mass fails to love Christ. To love the Mass is a guarantee for salvation. But to love the Mass does not mean just being present and no more. It means to be present with faith and devotion. It means to take part in the Mass, realizing what it is: the Sacrifice of the Cross renewed on the altar; and realizing that when we go to Mass, we go, as it were, to Calvary. And that we should be present there, like our Blessed Lady beside the Cross, in loving contemplation of Christ who offers himself lovingly for each one of us.

The holy Eucharist is the “mystery of faith.” Without faith, all you would see is bread and wine being offered, no more. Without faith, the most you could see in this is a gesture, a symbol, nothing more. With faith you know that at the moment of the Consecration which is when the priest says, “This is my body,” “This is the cup of my blood” the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ who is then really present as God and as Man sacrificing himself for us on the altar as he sacrificed himself on the cross. If you come to Mass without faith, or with little faith you will easily get distracted and perhaps even bored. What a sad thing to get bored with Christ’s sacrifice! Would we have been bored if we had been present at Calvary? If we hadn’t faith, perhaps we would. Or at least we would have completely failed to understand what the death of that Man nailed to the cross really meant. You will only begin to understand the greatness of the Mass if you have faith. Stir up your faith. And then you will always be amazed at the Mass, you will realize that it is the greatest thing we possess here on earth.

2. The purposes of the Mass

What else should you do, besides having a lot of faith, if you want to attend Holy Mass well? You should identify yourself with Christ. You should remember the Scriptures and have “the same mind” “that he had on the cross (cf. Phil 2:5). The same mind which means the same purposes. What purposes did Jesus have on the cross? What was he concerned about? We can sum up his ends or purposes as four: to give glory to God the Father; to thank him; to make up for the sins of men; and to ask him for graces for us. If each time you go to Mass, you try to live at least one of these four purposes, you will attend Holy Mass well.

- ❖ **The first purpose: adoration:** God is our Creator. He is the Lord of the whole world. We depend on him for everything. He is infinite, eternal, all-powerful. His infinite greatness and goodness ought to fill us with amazement and enthusiasm. When people get enthused about God, they want to praise him, they want to adore him. Jesus Christ, with his humanity, gave perfect glory to God the Father from the cross, and he continues to do so from the altar. If you unite yourself to him, you will be offering a perfect sacrifice of adoration and praise. Pay special attention to the *Gloria* and the *Sanctus*.
- ❖ **The second purpose: to give thanks:** God is infinitely good. And all the good things we have, have come from him: life, family, sanctifying grace, faith, the sacraments, the gift of his Mother... And so many other natural and supernatural gifts. It is good to give thanks. The person who is too proud to say “Thank You” is not only ungrateful but is bound to end up being unhappy. Unite yourself to our Lord in the Mass, giving thanks, and you will see how you also become more optimistic as a result, because you will become more and more convinced of the goodness of God.
- ❖ **The third purpose: to make up for our sins:** Jesus is perfect God and perfect Man. He is all-holy. Therefore he has not and could not have been guilty of any sin. But, as the Holy Scriptures says, he took our sins on himself and made up for them. He did penance for us by dying on the cross. If we want to take part properly in the Holy Mass, we must be sorry for our sins. The person who is not sorry for his sins will never understand or love the Mass, nor will he ever really take part in it. But the person who comes to Mass with real sorrow for his sins, will draw from it great strength to fight against temptations and to realize that, despite his weaknesses, God loves him very much.

The penitential act the “I confess” that we all say together at the start of the Mass does not pardon mortal sins. Forgiveness of mortal sins has to be obtained in the sacrament of penance. It is also important to remember that a person who has committed a mortal sin cannot go to communion unless he goes to confession beforehand. But the penitential act, if it is said well, certainly helps to obtain pardon for present venial sins as well as to stir up new

sorrow for past sins that have already been forgiven. In this way it helps us to purify ourselves and so to take better part in the Holy Mass.

- ❖ **The fourth purpose: petition:** Our God is a merciful and a very generous God. He longs to give. He wants to give us what is absolutely the best, what is the greatest gift imaginable: eternal life and all the help we need to make it ours. God wants to give. But he also wants to be asked: “Ask and you shall receive.” That is why we ask with a prayer for petition. However, it is wise, when asking, to be able to back up our petition with some proof of special merit on our part. This is where we seem to run into a big difficulty. For when we look at ourselves, we see ourselves so full of defects and so lacking in merits that there seems to be no reason why God should ever heed our petitions. That is why we look to the merits of Christ, and to those of our Lady and the saints. That is why, if we are sensible, we unite our prayer to the prayer of Christ.

Christ’s prayer is always effective because it is simply impossible that God the Father should not listen to the prayer of his beloved Son. Jesus prayed for us on the cross. He continues praying for us on the altar. When we pray in the Holy Mass, therefore, and unite our prayers to that of Jesus, we can be sure that our requests will be heard by God the Father.

3. Readings

Holy Scripture is God’s word. God speaks to us in the inspired books, so that we can know what we have to believe and what we have to do, in order to get to heaven. After each reading we say, “Thanks be to God.” Why do we say this? Because it is a wonderful thing that God speaks to us, that he addresses his words to us in these holy books, pointing out to us the way to heaven. It is another marvelous proof of his love for us. That is why we thank him. The Gospel tell us of the life of Jesus Christ, true God and true Man. They tell us of the things he did and the words he spoke during his life here on earth. We stand at attention, as it were in order to listen to the Gospel. This should be a sign to others and a reminder to ourselves that we are ready and determined to put into practice what we are listening to. You will have noticed how, just before the priest begins to read the Gospel, he turns towards the altar or the tabernacle, bows down and

prays. What he is doing is to ask God for grace to be able to proclaim the good news of the Gospel well. At that moment you too would do well to ask for grace to be able to listen to the Gospel joyfully, to understand it and to put it into practice.

4. Creed

This is said on Sundays and the bigger feasts. We declare our faith. Do we really believe in the things we say in the Creed? Of course! But do we realize how big these things are? We believe in God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who is One and Three, who created us, who redeemed us by means of his Son, Jesus Christ, who sanctifies us, giving us a share in his own life by means of grace, through the work of the Holy Spirit and that of the holy Church who forgives us always (always provided we are sorry and ask for his pardon), and who is determined to bring us to heaven. There are some people who live in a closed world, as if they were inside a tunnel. Faith brings us out of the tunnel and let us live in the wonderful world of God. To declare our faith, as we do in the Creed, is something that should fill its with wonder, thanks and joy.

5. Eucharistic Liturgy

We have ended the liturgy of the word. Now we start the eucharistic liturgy in which the main actions of the Mass take place. The eucharistic liturgy is made up of three main parts: the presentation of the gifts, the eucharistic prayer or Canon (with the consecration), and the communion. In the presentation of the gifts (or the offertory) the priest (and we with him) offers the hosts some small particles of unleavened bread and small quantity of wine. What he offers is really very little. We could say that it has practically no value. But, *it should represent us*. If you want to learn to take proper part in the Holy Mass, it is important that you learn to offer yourself and to offer all that is yours in this moment of the Mass. Take our work, our studies, our needs, our struggle, and even our weaknesses. Take all of that and put it on the paten beside the hosts, those small pieces of bread. Put it on the chalice with the wine.

Jesus Christ is going to come to this altar within a few minutes. There are many ways in which he could have chosen to come. But he has wished to come by marvelously turning the bread and the wine into his own body and blood. He has wished to come by means of

transubstantiation, by which something that we offer him, something that is ours, is changed into his body and blood, while of the bread and wine only the appearances remain. The bread and the wine are our gifts, our offering to God. They will be your gift and your offering if you make them yours, if you put yourself there, on the paten with the bread, in the chalice with the wine. If you let yourself get distracted at the moment when the priest is offering the gifts, then the bread and the wine will be other people's gifts, something that other people offer to God. But they won't be your gifts, because you have not offered them, you have not offered yourself with them. Now do you see how important it is not to get distracted at the moment of the offertory?

Presentation of the gifts: We have seen how in the presentation of the gifts, we offer to God a little bread and wine. We have seen too that these offerings ought to represent us. In themselves they are things of little value, but our affection accompanies them. Now think of what is going to happen to these gifts of ours. At the moment of the consecration, God is going to change them into something divine: into himself. From bread and wine they become the body and blood of Jesus Christ, true God and true Man! Up to the moment of the consecration our offering to God has practically no value. From the moment on, it has infinite value! Doesn't this help you see the importance of offering yourself with the bread and the wine so that they represent your day, your life? If you do this you are participating in the Mass, and God will gradually do with your life what he does with the bread and wine. He will gradually turn your life your ordinary everyday life into something with divine value in his eyes. Your life your work, your rest, your sports, your friendships if you associate it closely to the Holy Mass, will be a sanctified life, which means sanctified work, sanctified rest, sanctified sports, sanctified friendships. Unite yourself well to the Holy Mass.

Orate, fratres: We have spoken of how we ought to offer ourselves on the paten with the bread, and in the chalice with the wine. You have probably noticed how the priest, before he offers the chalice, adds a few drops of water to the wine, the wine that will soon be turned into the blood of our Lord. These drops of water which are dissolved in the wine and therefore also turn into the Blood of Christ represent us and all that we offer to God with Christ. Consider what happens next. After offering the bread and wine, the priest turns to

the people and invites them to pray “so that our sacrifice,” he says my sacrifice and yours “may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty,” Don’t pass over this too lightly: the sacrifice of the Mass is Christ’s action, Christ’s sacrifice. But it is also the sacrifice of the priest and of the people. It is your sacrifice if you have made it yours, if you have really put some part of yourself into this sacrifice.

Sanctus: The Preface introduces the Canon which is the central and most solemn part of the Holy Mass. At the end of the Preface we say the Sanctus: “Holy, holy, holy Lord God...” It is like a song or a shout of enthusiasm. Let us think for a moment what our God is like. He is all powerful (he can do anything). He is infinite Love (he loves us as no one else could ever love us). He is all goodness and truth and greatness (he became Man out of love for us; he died on the cross to redeem us; and then he overcame death by rising again).

All of this should fill us with gratitude and joy. And then, like the saints and the angels in heaven, we will grow really enthusiastic about our God, we will want to praise him, and we will repeat the “Holy, holy, holy” with faith and fervor.

Consecration: The most solemn moment of the Holy Mass is the consecration. Up to that moment what is on the altar is bread and wine. From the moment when the priest pronounces the words of the consecration “This is my body”; “This is the cup of my blood” what is in the altar is the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Of the bread and wine nothing remains except the appearances. But, under those appearances, God is really present. All of this is done by the power of God. Jesus Christ is God become Man and he can do anything. He can even change a little bread and wine into his own body and blood so that it can be our offering and sacrifice: and also, if we are fit to receive him, so that it can be our food.

The priest raises the host and the chalice. And we adore. Appearances will not deceive us if we have faith. With the eyes of our body we only see bread. But with the eyes of faith which is how the Christian soul sees we see and recognize our Lord himself. Let us express our faith. You remember those words of Saint Thomas, “My Lord and my God.” Many people repeat them quietly to themselves at the moment of the elevation. Thomas wished to see the glorious

Body of the risen Jesus. Then he proclaimed his divinity. Our Lord said to him, “Thomas, you believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.” Let us proclaim our faith in the real presence of Jesus in the host, relying for proof on his infallible word.

6. Communion Rite

This is the moment of the Mass when we have to be most awake, putting heart and soul into many acts of faith and love and adoration, because Christ is at last on the altar. There is no longer any bread or wine. By the miraculous process of transubstantiation all of it has been changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, God become Man. Our Lord is really present with his humanity and his divinity, offering himself for us on the altar just as he offered himself for us on the cross.

We are on Calvary. This is the “composition of place” that we should make in these moments. Christ is offering himself for us. We too should want to be beside him, like our Lady and Saint John who were beside him and kept him company on Calvary. Let us ask them to help us not to get distracted, to be present with faith, to realize what Jesus is doing as he offers himself on the altar for the whole humanity to adore him, to thank him.

The Mass is never a private action. Even if very few people or only a single person accompanies the priest, the whole Church is present. “Priests fulfill their chief duty in the mystery of the Eucharistic sacrifice. In it the work of our redemption continues to be carried out. For this reason, priests are strongly urged to celebrate Mass every day, for even if the faithful are unable to be present, it is an act of Christ and the Church.” Let us be conscious of this presence of the whole Church which, of course, also includes the angels and the saints. They are present and adoring from the moment of the consecration. If we ask them, they will help us too, to be present in a spirit of reverence and adoration.

The Our Father: The Eucharistic Prayer or Canon is the central part of the Mass. Now the moment for communion is approaching. As we end the Canon we begin our more immediate preparation for communion. And first of all we say the prayer that our Lord himself

taught his disciples: “Taught by him, we dare to call God our Father he is the Almighty who created heaven and earth, and he is a loving Father who waits for us to come back to him again and again, as the story of the prodigal son repeats itself in our lives.” The Our Father contains seven petitions. We would do well to meditate on each one of them as they cover all of our most important needs.

Preparation for Communion: “This is the Lamb of God... Lord, I am not worthy.. We are going to receive our Lord. On this earth, when we receive an important person, we bring out the best lights, music, formal dress. How should we prepare to receive Christ into our soul? Have we ever thought about how we would behave if we could only receive him once in a lifetime?” We are not worthy to have him enter even once into our house, into our poor soul. Yet he is so eager to enter there very often. What we can and ought to do is to ensure that however poor the house of our soul is, it is clean. We cannot receive our Lord with a dirty soul, with a soul dirtied by sin. If we ever stain ourselves with a serious sin, then we have to get cleaned in the sacrament of penance before going to communion. We are not worthy to receive our Lord. But we must never receive him unworthily with a mortal sin on our soul that has not been confessed. It would be like the kiss of Judas. It would mean betraying Christ, striking him, crucifying him all over again.

Communion: “Happy are those who are called to his supper.” “If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man, you will not have life in you.” “Anyone who eats this bread will live forever...” We come to Mass because we have felt ourselves invited to accompany our Lord in his sacrifice while he offers himself for us and to offer ourselves with him. We come to Holy Mass, therefore, to take part in the sacrifice of Christ. When the moment of communion comes, we feel that our Lord continues to invite us. Now he is calling us to his supper where he offers himself to us to be the food of our souls. How hungry we should be to receive him!

The soul needs its nourishment even much more than the body. But we should not forget that while the appetite of the body is generally spontaneous (three or four times a day we *feel* like eating), the appetite of the soul is rather *reflexive* and *voluntary*: it is a consequence of

faith. Stir up your faith in him who is hidden beneath the appearances of bread: “Lord, I recognize you.” Stir up your faith in his promises: “Anyone who eats this bread will live forever.” And your hunger for communion will increase from day to day.

We should be so eager to receive him! Holy Communion is the greatest gift we could be offered. And yet some people are not interested! They could go to communion frequently; but they don’t. And there are others who don’t go to communion because their weaknesses get the better of them. But why don’t they go to confession first, and then to communion? And then they will get *strength*, precisely to resist those weaknesses! But since God not only knows this but loves us, he has given us a source of special strength, of divine strength, in the sacrament. How eager we ought to be to receive them, especially those two which we can receive often, confession and communion.

We should put so much love into how we receive him! Always with faith, and always with love. If you really have faith, if you realize what it is you receive, you will receive him with love, just as it is with love that he comes to you. He comes to you with love, and you *ought* to receive him with love. There is no *obligation* to go to communion frequently. But if you do go to communion, then there is an obligation to receive him with love and affection. It would be such a lack of reverence to receive our Lord in a routine way, without trying to make many acts of faith and of love.

7. Holy Mass: self-giving

In the Mass, Christ offers himself for us. And in Holy Communion he offers himself to us. Think what this offering costs our Lord his whole passion! The Mass asks us also for correspondence and self-giving. If we attend Mass with faith, it will be easier for us to give ourselves to God each day trying to fulfill his commandments with love. And it will also be easier for us to give ourselves generously to other people, in a constant effort to love them, to understand them, to make their lives happier.

Opening prayer, prayer over the gifts, prayer after communion: In the Holy Mass we are praying constantly with Jesus and through Jesus. Remember, for instance, the prayer that we say

before the readings, and those that come after the offertory and the communion. We ask for different things. But what matters most is that we always ask “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” It has been said that the only prayer which reaches heaven with full effect is that of Jesus. Therefore when we pray through him in the Mass, we can be sure that our prayers reach God the Father and that he listens to them.

Mass: presence of God: There are so many other small details in the Mass that we can learn from. One is the fact that time and again throughout the Mass the priest says to the people he wishes them “the Lord be with you,” and the people return him the same wish. Could we wish someone anything better? The Lord is going to be with us during the whole of the Mass, and we should try to be with him. And then he will also be more with us and we more with him during the rest of the day.

Sorrow for one’s sin: The Mass is a sacrifice offered for the forgiveness of sins. We would not have proper dispositions for taking part in the Mass if we were not aware of our sins and *sorry for* them. That is why, as soon as the Mass has begun, the priest invites each one of us to call our sins to mind. And all of us pray together, acknowledging that we have sinned through our own fault in our thoughts and words, in what we have done and failed to do. If you are not sorry for your sins you will never attend Mass well. Think at the moment therefore about your sins and your acts of selfishness, and ask Blessed Mary ever Virgin, and all the angels and saints, to pray for you and help you to be very sorry for those faults of yours which, even if they are not very grave, nevertheless disfigure the soul.

Thanksgiving: Christ offers himself for us in the Holy Mass, and he offers himself to us in Holy Communion. To be present at Mass, and receive Holy Communion, is the greatest thing we can do here on earth. Here, on the altar, we receive the greatest benefits that God gives us on earth. Once Mass has ended it is only logical that we remain for a few minutes giving thanks to our Lord. To leave without giving thanks would be a sign of little consideration or little faith. “The fact that the sacred function... has come to an end, does not dispense him who has communicated from making his thanksgiving. On the

contrary it is most fitting that after he has received Holy Communion and after the Mass is over he should collect his thoughts and, in close union with his Divine Master, pass such time as circumstances allow in devout and salutary conversation with him.”

Those moments, when one has received communion and the Mass has just ended, are the best moments to ask graces and favors from our Lord. He is so eager to give, but at the same time he wants us to ask. “Ask and you shall receive.” Can there be any better moment for asking than when we are united with him, when he is inside us, brought there by his immense love towards each one of us? Don’t waste those moments. Use them to pray for many things, for yourself, for your loved ones, for the Church, for the Pope, for souls everywhere, for the whole world...

Chapter 5

The Syro-Malankara Liturgy

The Syro-Malankara rite is drawn from the same West Syrian tradition as the Maronite Church and the Syriac Catholic church, whereas the Syro-Malabar liturgy is drawn from East Syrian liturgical traditions.

Historical Overview

The Malankara Church The Church “a people brought into unity in the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,” is an extension of the Mystery of the Incarnation and of the Kingdom of God inaugurated by Jesus Christ on earth and brought about by the mission given to the Apostles (Mt 28:18-20), for proclaiming and establishing, among all peoples, the Kingdom of God. While she slowly grows to maturity, the Church longs for the completed Kingdom. The Church through her presence and mission in the world continues this sanctifying ministry which Her Master initiated.

The Apostles and their successors planted the Church of Christ in various places. In divine providence (LG 23), India was blessed to have an apostolic foundation

of the Church, through the evangelisation mission of St Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ St Thomas first landed at Malliankara (Kodungallur), started his mission in Malankara (also known as Malabar), the southern tip of the Indian peninsula. Because of this apostolic tradition, this Church was then known as the Church of St Thomas and the ecclesial community that originated from this apostolic tradition was known as “The St Thomas Christians”, or “Malankara Nazranikal” and the head of the Church was known by the title “Metropolitan of All India.”

The Church of St Thomas in India got rooted in the socio-cultural milieu of India and developed her own ecclesial, liturgical, spiritual and administrative traditions. This was in communion with the Universal Church through her ecclesial communion with the Churches of the Middle EaSt Besides the Metropolitan of all India, there was also a leader of the St Thomas Christians, a priest with the title “Archdeacon of all India” who played a vital role in the day-to-day administration of the Church. This Apostolic Church was in Catholic Communion from the very early centuries. It came in contact with the Syro-Chaldean Church of the Middle East and consequently adopted the East Syrian Liturgy.

In the sixteenth century, this Apostolic Church came into direct relationship with the Western Church through the Portuguese missionaries. The Portuguese extended the Padroado agreement in their evangelization programme over India and wanted to bring the Indian Church of the St Thomas Christians under this jurisdiction. The Church in India which was rooted in the socio-cultural environment and which enjoyed autonomy in internal administration in communion with the Universal Church resisted the unwanted intervention of the Portuguese who brought with them the Western ecclesiastical traditions. The Portuguese missionaries, ignorant of the Oriental traditions of the Indian Church, had the conviction that anything different from the Western Church was schism and heresy. Hence they wanted to latinize the Syrian Christians of India.

In 1599 Archbishop Alexis Menezis convoked a Synod of Diamper (Udayamperoor) and imposed latin practices and ritual traditions on the Apostolic Church of India. This was a blow to the identity of the Indian Church. However, the relation continued till the beginning of

the second half of the seventeenth century. The Church of St Thomas Christians could not withstand any more the denial of her autonomy. The initial resistance slowly gave way to discontentment, which ended up with the revolt in 1653 known as the Koonan Cross Oath. Thus, the one Church of the St Thomas Christians was split into two. A large majority of the broken-away-group hesitated to sever ties with Rome and they remained in communion with Rome, but, under the Latin Hierarchy. This group came to be called the Pazhayakûttukar, while the other was known as Puthenkûttukar. The latter group made several attempts for reunion with Rome safeguarding their autonomy and patrimony. Failing to re-establish communion with Rome, they happened to come in communion with the Jacobite Syrian Church of Antioch. These developments were not acts against the Apostolic See of Rome but against the Portuguese missionaries and their policy of latinization. Even after the communion with the Jacobite See of Antioch, the Malankara Prelates Mar Thomas I (+1670), Mar Thomas II (+1686), Mar Thomas III (+1688), Mar Thomas IV (+1728), Mar Thomas V (+1765), Mar Thomas VI (+1808) and Mar Thomas VII (+1815) one after the other had attempted reunion with the Holy See, but all ended up in failure.

The Puthenkûr community came under the influence of the British missionaries in the 19th century. From 1815 till 1836, the year of the Synod of Mavelikara, the British missionaries propagated Protestant ideology among the Puthenkûttukar. This paved the way to the formation of the Mar Thoma Church under the leadership of Palakunnath Abraham Malpan and Mar Athanasios, who was consecrated Bishop by the Patriarch of Antioch. In order to outdo the reformists Mar Divannasios approached the Patriarch of Antioch. Patriarch Peter III arrived in Malankara and in the Synod of Mulanthuruthy (1876) the Malankara Church had to accept the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch over this Church. Since then, the Malankara Church had contented that the Patriarch's authority was only in spiritual matters.

It was in this contentious context that Patriarch Mar Abdulla who came to Malankara, excommunicated Vattasseril Mar Divannasios in the year 1911. In this turbulent situation Fr P.T. Geevarghese (later Archbishop Mar Ivanios) played a vital role in reinstating the position of the excommunicated Metropolitan and in regaining the self-

governance of the Malankara Church. To ward off the undue interference of Patriarch Abdulla in the administration of the temporalities of the Church, Fr P.T. Geevarghese with the blessing of Vattasseril Mar Divannasios contacted Abded M'siha, the Patriarch of Antioch from whom Mar Abdulla usurped the Patriarchal See of Antioch, and invited him to visit Malankara and to establish a Catholicate here. Accordingly, Patriarch Abded M'siha came to Malankara in 1912 and established the Malankara Catholicate. Thus the Malankara Church in India became an autonomous Church under its head the Catholicos. Moran Mor Baselios Paulos I (1912-1913), the first Catholicos, was called to eternal rest after a short period of five months on 13 May 1913.

After the demise of Catholicos Baselios Paulos I, the See remained vacant until 1925. That was a period of litigations in the Malankara Church and also a period of spiritual renewal. The litigation for Vattippanam (a fixed deposit of money in the name of the Church) and its after-effects in the community was at its zenith. Fr P.T. Geevarghese who loved his Church was moved by the Spirit of God. He realised that only a spiritual awakening of the Church would give a lasting solution to the problems of the Church. He himself took to sanyâsa (Religious Life) and founded the Order of the Imitation of Christ also called Bethany Ashram in the year 1919. The first Ashram was erected at Mundanmala of Ranni Perunad in Kerala. In 1925 he founded the community of the Sanyasins, the Sisters of the Imitation of Christ also called Bethany Madhom. From these two religious communities winds of spiritual fervour and renaissance blew across Malankara. By a decision of the Episcopal Synod, on 30 April 1925 Moran Mor Baselios Geevarghese I was installed as Catholicos. On the following day, the Catholicos consecrated Fr P. T. Geevarghese with the name Geevarghese Mar Ivanios as the Bishop of Bethany.

Malankara Reunion Movement

On 1 November 1926, the Episcopal Synod held at Parumala near Tiruvalla, Kerala, decided to open negotiations again with Rome for communion with the Catholic Church in order to establish peace in Malankara. The Synod authorized Mar Ivanios, the Bishop of Bethany, to make necessary correspondence with Rome regarding communion. He earnestly followed up the mandate of the Synod.

The Second Catholicos expired on 17 December 1928. Moran Mor Baselios Geevarghese II succeeded the late Catholicos. On the day following his installation, he consecrated Mar Theophilos of Bethany and Mar Gregorios of Pampady as Bishops. In the meantime, the civil court's decision on the litigation for Vattipanam was declared in favour of the Malankara Orthodox Church. This was a civil legal backing up for the Malankara Orthodox Church and consequently it stepped out from the endeavours of communion with Rome.

After prolonged negotiations, the plenary session of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches, which met on 4 July 1930, took the final decision on the issue of the communion of the Malankara Church. But only Mar Ivanios the Metropolitan of Bethany and his suffragan Jacob Mar Theophilos stood by the early decision of the Synod. Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos along with Rev. Fr John Kuzhinapurath OIC, Deacon Alexander OIC and Mr Chacko Kilileth made their profession of faith before Bishop Aloysius Maria Benziger OCD of the Diocese of Quilon and entered into full communion with the Catholic Church on 20 September 1930.

Liturgical Seasons

The Liturgical Year The Liturgical Year of the Syro - Malankara Church begins on Qudos Eetho (Sanctification of the Church) Sunday. On that day we remember the establishment and sanctification of the Church. The most important feast of the Liturgical Year is Easter. The date of this feast changes every year according to the fullmoon that comes after the day on which the sun comes on the equator in the spring season, which is called the vernal Equinox. In the Synod of Nicea it was decided to celebrate the feast of Easter on the Sunday that comes after the Passover Moon.

The Seven Seasons of the Liturgical Year are the following :

1. The Season of Annunciation (Suboro)
2. The Season of Yaldo-Denho
3. The Season of the Great Fast
4. The Season of Qyomtho
5. The Season of Pentecost
6. The Season of Transfiguration
7. The Season of Sleebo

Though the Feast of Christ the King and the feast of the Sacred Heart do not belong to the tradition of the Syro Malankara Church the Church generally celebrate them. It celebrates also the Feasts of certain Apostles and Saints on days different from those of the Latin Tradition.

Fasting Days

1. Twenty-Five Days Nombu - 1-25 December
2. Three-Days Nombu or Nineveh Nombu
3. Fifty-Days Nombu or the Great Lent

Besides these three fasts, there are 3 others, which although not binding under law, the Church observed as devotion.

4. Thirteen-Days Nombu (Sleeha Nombu)
5. Fifteen-Days Nombu (Sunoyo Nombu)
6. Eight- Days Nombu

Abstinence on all Fridays and days of the Twenty-Five Days Nombu, the Three-Days Nombu and the Fifty-Days Nombu, the faithful shall abstain from meat. But the 18 days, after the Three-Days Nombu till the commencement of the Great Fast and 50 days between Qyomto and Pentecost are exempted from this abstinence. On days of the Nineveh Fast, first Monday (Shubkono) and all Fridays of the Great Fast and on days from 40th Friday till Qyomto the faithful should also abstain from fish and egg. On Good Friday, besides what is mentioned above.

Sacraments

The Sacraments of the Church can be said to possess a double character, for they are at the same time inward and outward, visible and invisible. They combine in themselves both an outward visible sign with an inward spiritual grace. For example, in the Holy Eucharist, we eat the Body and Blood of Christ, although visibly they appear to be bread and wine. Likewise, in Holy Baptism there is an outward washing with water, but simultaneously an inward cleansing of sins. Thus, we often speak of the Sacraments as being mysteries, for, in the sense outlined above, what we see is not what we believe. Sacraments are founded on the life and teachings of Jesus' earthly life.

- ❖ **Baptism** - the Baptism of Our Lord
- ❖ **Chrismation** - the Descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost
- ❖ **Confession** - the various accounts of individuals repenting and receiving forgiveness
- ❖ **The Eucharist** - the Mystical Supper and accounts of the “breaking of the bread” in Acts, etc
- ❖ **Holy Unction** - various healings performed by Christ Himself
- ❖ **Ordination** - the call of the disciples
- ❖ **Marriage** - the Wedding Feast at Cana

In most of the Sacraments, the Holy Church takes things that are material, e.g., bread, wine, water, and oil, and make them vehicles of the Holy Spirit, in imitation of our Lord’s Incarnation, when, as the Second Person of the Trinity, He took material flesh and made it a vehicle of the Holy Spirit. We also note here another characteristic of the Sacraments, in that they are personal. That is, the grace of God is given to every Christian individually. Therefore, in most of the Sacraments, the Priest pronounces the Christian name of each person as the Sacrament is administered. Thus, for example, at the Holy Eucharist, when giving Holy Communion, the Priest says, the Servant (or Handmaid) of God [Name] partakes....

Customarily, the Antiochian Church speak of Seven Sacraments, although it must be noted that this was not fixed until about the 17th Century. The Fathers themselves disagreed as to the actual number some said two, some six, some ten, and there were even those who said seven, but differed among themselves as to what constituted that seven. Many other sacramental acts, such as the Blessing of Waters at Theophany, the Monastic Tonsure, the Burial Service, and the Blessing of any object, for example, possess the same criteria as the earlier definition of sacrament. In any case, the number seven has no absolute dogmatic significance in Antiochian theology, but is used only for teaching convenience.

Syro-Malankara Qurbano

The Holy Qurbano, as the liturgy of the Syro-Malankara church is called, focuses a great deal on ritual, gesture and symbols. Chant is

an important part of the liturgy, deeply integral to the liturgy, not simply an optional frame for it. “Malankara liturgy is soaked in music. What takes the worshipper to the zenith of a mystical experience in the Malankara liturgy is its musicality. In other words, one can say that musicality makes the Malankara liturgy mystical.” Incense, bells and rich vestments also convey a sense of mystery.

A Malankara Church in its original architecture is divided mainly into *Madbaho* (the most holy place where there is the altar), *Quaestrumo* (the place of the choir which symbolizes heaven where the angels sing the glory of God) and *Hyklo* (the worshipping community, the people of God). This structure indicates that the temple of God is the earthly heaven and it is a meeting point of heaven and earth. The veil separates the *Madbaho* (the Holy of Holies) from the *Hyklo* (the place of the holy gathering)... The veil itself is the symbol of mystery. It represents the unapproachable and the incomprehensible stature of God.

The liturgy is celebrated today in local languages of the believers, such as Malayalam or English. The hymns that are used in the Malankara liturgy are either the original Syrian hymns or their translations and the tunes are ‘Syrian tunes.’

The Service Book of the Holy Qurbano states: “For Malankara Syrian Catholics, as with all Eastern Catholics, Christian spirituality is ecclesial in nature and is deeply rooted in the liturgy.... In the course of her history, the Malankara Church inherited this beautiful and profound liturgy from the West Syrian bishops who arrived in India following the unfortunate separation of 1653, and brought this ancient, theologically-rich, and beautiful liturgical tradition into the Catholic communion in 1930 with the Reunion of Archbishop Mar Ivanios. It is a liturgy rich in symbols, symbolic gestures and symbolic language. It is an ancient and apostolic liturgy. It is also the liturgy unique to an ecclesia sui iuris (autonomous Church) in the Universal Church with a long history. The liturgical and spiritual patrimony of the Malankara Catholic Church is that of the Antiochene Rite, though its celebration is uniquely Indian.”

At Syro-Malankara liturgies, men and women generally separate into different sides of the church, a practice in keeping with many

other aspects of Indian life. Shoes are left outside of church during Mass.

The Qurbano consists of four parts:

- ◆ An introductory rite, the *Thuyobo*, during which the curtain to the sanctuary remains closed, and the priest enters to prepare himself and the altar with prayers;
- ◆ The *Thulmodo*, or Service of the Word, when the veil of the sanctuary is open;
- ◆ The *Anaphora*, of Service of the Sacrifice, when the sanctuary veil is also open;

The concluding prayers, during which the sanctuary veil is closed.

Chapter 6

Liturgical Space

The liturgical space in the East Syriac tradition is arranged to meet the liturgical and theological needs of the Holy Qurbana. The church building is generally divided into three parts: on the eastern end the sanctuary, on the western end the haykla (nave) and qestroma between the sanctuary and the haykla.

1. Sanctuary (Madbaha)

The sanctuary area is divided into three chambers: the middle chamber is the sanctuary proper; the northern chamber is diaqonikon (sacristy) and the southern chamber is the baptistery. The sanctuary proper is also called “qanke”. The sanctuary is separated from the rest of the church through a stone-wall or a curtain. In the ancient East Syrian churches there were actually two stone walls (or screens), one separating the madbaha from the haykla (nave), and another separating the ‘holy of holies’ from the rest of the sanctuary. Example for this may be seen today in the Al-Tahira church in Mosul, Iraq. The tradition of having two veils or screens is

also seen in the Antiochene (West Syrian), Coptic and Armenian traditions.

St. Ephrem compares the function of the sanctuary veil to the hiding of the glory of the inner tabernacle of Paradise. The veils have an important function in the cosmic symbolism. They mark the boundary between the heavenly and earthly space. The Anonymous Author, the 10th or 11th century East Syrian commentator, sees the veils of the sanctuary as the figure of the firmament separating earth from heaven. According to *Liber Patrum*, the East Syrian canonical work (13th or 14th century), the opening of the veils and the bringing out of the cross is like the removing of the firmament on the day of resurrection when Christ appears.

The iconostasis in the Byzantine tradition is the architectural parallel to the Syrian veil. It is a wooden screen separating the sanctuary from the rest of the church. There are three doors for the iconostasis. Even though it is originally known as *templon*, it is called iconostasis because of the presence of the icons. There are the icons of Christ, Mary and saints on the iconostasis. According to Pavel Florensky, iconostasis is the boundary between the visible and invisible worlds. It is not normally perceived as an obstacle to vision so much as an opening or bridge to the invisible worship of heaven in which the worshippers are taking part.

Among the commentators the general consensus is that the sanctuary represents heaven. Pseudo-George of Arbel points out this symbolism. According to him, the 'holy of holies' is in the place of heaven. John of Dara speaks of the 'holy of holies' in the sanctuary as a "spiritual mountain". Thus keeping in mind the Old Testament symbolism of the sacred mountain as the abode of God, John of Dara highlights the significance of the sanctuary as the place of God, namely the heaven.

The sanctuary of the West Syrian churches at the time of John Chrysostom was already identified as 'heaven', not simply in the context of a comprehensive symbolic conception but through imitative elements: orientation, the closure of the vault, the dome supporting canopy (ciborium) over the altar, and the chancel curtains, which when drawn aside after the epiclesis "allow the heavens to open and the hosts of angels to come forth."

In the early Byzantine tradition the dome of the sanctuary had the purpose of symbolizing heaven. In the Hagia Sophia the shallow-arched dome - an image of heaven that seems to float above the circle of windows- turns the entire place of worship into a hierarchically ordered cosmos whose character is determined by heaven, and shows church's liturgy to be an imitative or even a direct participation in the heavenly liturgy of the angels." However, in Maximus Confessor's interpretation of the church, it is the sanctuary (bema) which symbolizes both the vault of heaven and the supersensible heaven. The sanctuary (bema) is the place where Christ is enthroned with his twelve apostles. But the sanctuary also represents the second coming, when Christ will appear on his throne of glory to judge the world.

Altar

In the East Syrian tradition, the altar is the throne of God, the tomb of the Lord, and the table of communion. Narsai considers the altar also as a symbol of the throne of the Great and Glorious, upon which He will be seen of watchers and men in the day of His revelation. Theodore considers altar as the symbol of the tomb of the Lord and the 'holy communion-table.'

According to Patriarch Germanus of Byzantine tradition, the altar stands for the grave, and the ciborium for the hill of Calvary which in fact was a short distance from the tomb. But in a kind of symbolic shorthand one and the same spot represents the crucifixion, the burial, and the resurrection. Thus the altar at the same time represents the table of the Last Supper. The altar is also throne of God, on which he sits in his Cherubim-drawn chariot.

In the Syrian traditions there have been attempts of identifying Christ with the altar. Ephrem considers Christ as the *madbaha qusta*, the true altar. In the West Syrian tradition the symbolism of the altar gives great emphasis to the view that the altar symbolizes Christ. Moses Bar Kephah deals at length with this symbolism. George, the bishop of Arabs, says that the altar also represents Jesus.

a. Haykla (Nave)

Haykla or nave is the symbolic space of the earthly Church, that is of those members who are still in the pilgrimage to the heavenly Church. The Syriac word *haykla* means temple or palace. In Maximus

the Confessor's explanation of the church building the nave was a symbol of the lower regions of the world. Correspondingly in the explanation of the liturgy the actions of the synaxis that are performed in the naos are a symbol of the salvific operations that take place on earth; the rites performed in the sanctuary, on the other hand, represent events in heaven.

The Anonymous Author of East Syrian tradition speaks of haykla as the symbol of the whole earth. Thomas of Marga considers the haykla (church) as the symbol of the earthly Jerusalem which is upon earth.

The East Syrian haykla takes into consideration the theological principle of the communion of saints. The people of God consists of the living and the departed ones. Adjoined to the haykla there is a space called *beth sahde* (House of the Martyrs) where relics of the martyrs are kept. The vicinity of *beth sahde* to the space of the faithful helps them in various ways. First of all it provides the spatial possibility for due veneration of the saints. Secondly the vicinity of the saints and martyrs is a great witness and continuous inspiration to the Christian faithful.

b. Bema (Ambo)

Ambo or bema was part of the Christian liturgical space already from the fourth century. Ambo was an elevated platform for reading or preaching. The ambo was a focal point of early Christian liturgy, proper to the proclamation of the Word of God, the declamations of the deacons, and occasionally the teaching of the bishop." The canon 15 of the Synod of Mar Isaac at Seleucia-Ctesiphon (410) prescribed the proclamation of the karezutha and reading of the gospel by the archdeacon from the bema.

In the East Syrian tradition ambo was known as bema. Bema is an elevated platform in the centre of the haykla, with chairs for the bishop and the presbyters, a small altar with the cross, Gospel, and candles. The bema or ambo was in the middle of the nave in the ancient West Syrian and Byzantine traditions. We have abundant archeological evidence for the central bema in the West Syrian tradition. Later bema came to be merged with *gestroma*, the space close to the sanctuary. In the ancient Byzantine tradition ambo was in the middle

of nave. At present it is situated at the Western end of soleas, a liturgical space parallel to the *gestroma*.

Louis Bouyer considers the East Syrian bema as the result of the steady influence of the Jewish synagogue. "Therefore, it is not surprising that the old Syrian church appears as a Christianized version of a Jewish synagogue. Using, as contemporary synagogues, the basilica type of building, they appropriate it to worship in a similar way. We have, as in the synagogue, the office of readings and prayers everywhere performed on a bema, which regularly occupies the centre of the nave." According to Bouyer, the seat of the bishop on the bema replaced the seat of Moses on the Jewish bema.

The Anonymous Author gives a detailed description of the symbolism of the East Syrian bema:

The bema, which is in the middle of the temple, represents Jerusalem, which is in the middle of the world. The altar, however, which is in the middle of the bema, implies the place of Golgotha. The seat of the bishop is the place of the High Priest, the son of Aaron. The priest was sitting before their sanctuary, that is, towards whole of Jerusalem and towards the East. The place of the lectors (*bet qaroye*) is on the right and on the left; from the one the Prophets, from the other the Apostle and the gospel are read.

The bema found among the ruins of an ancient monastic church (probably of the 6th century) discovered near Sulaimania in Iraq agrees well with the description of the Anonymous Author. We can see the throne of the bishop on the Western end of the bema. The low semi circular wall provides for the seating of the clergy. Another significant element is the pathway (*šqaqona*) between the bema and the sanctuary.

A decisive characteristic of the Syrian bema is its position in the middle of the haykla. The centre symbolism, an idea very much familiar to the ancient religions, had undoubtedly influenced the central bema. Jerusalem is the centre of earth according to the ancient tradition. The bema, being the symbol of Jerusalem, thus becomes the centre of the earth. The centre of the earth is considered in the history of religions as the symbolic space of communication. Jerusalem, being the symbolic centre of world, is the place of divine communication.

Jerusalem was historically the venue of the divine communication par excellence, through Jesus. Therefore, the centre symbolism of bema in relation to Jerusalem suits well to the liturgical function of communication. Another element which favours the centre-symbolism of the bema is Golgotha. The Anonymous Author considers the altar which is in the middle of the bema as Golgotha. The early Christian tradition speaks of Golgotha as the centre of the world. The commentators of the East Syrian liturgy consider the liturgy of the bema as the celebration of the public ministry of Jesus which climaxed on the cross. The interpretations of Gabriel Qatraya, Abraham Bar Lipah, Yohannan Bar Zo'bi, and the Anonymous Author reveal that the liturgy at the East Syrian bema symbolizes more the passion and death of the Lord. The name Golgotha for the altar of the bema refers to this symbolism. When Jesus was sent into the world, he was in the midst of the people (Jn 1:14; Acts 2:22). The liturgy (leiturgia = service) of the Word was among the people. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1.14). The liturgical celebration of the public ministry of Jesus becomes significant and symbolically very meaningful when the celebration takes place on the bema which is literally in the midst of the people.

In the Greek tradition the ambo recalls the empty tomb of the Lord, from which he was raised. The ambo represents the shape of the stone of the holy tomb on which the angel sat after moving it and from which there close to the entrance, he announced the Lord's resurrection to the myrrh-bearing women. That remains as a "sign" from which the "the angel of the resurrection, the deacon, continuously proclaims the gospel of our resurrection. The deacon who carries out his functions during the major part of the liturgy on the ambo, is like the angel who proclaimed the message of resurrection.

2. Sqaqona

Sqaqona is the low walled pathway between madbaha and bema in the East Syrian tradition. Šqaqona serves as the processional path. Thus it is the way to heaven or the ladder that connects both heaven and earth. The Anonymous Author calls it the way of the truth; and the way to heaven. East Syrian liturgy makes full use of this 'way' between heaven and earth'. Thus the coming down of God and the

going up of man is beautifully enacted in the liturgy through the processions along the sqaqona.

3. Qestroma

Qestroma is the place of the ministers and choir. Symbolically it represents the primordial Paradise which was a meeting point both of heaven and earth. According to the Anonymous Author, the *qestroma* is in the place of Paradise.

4. Baptistery

The East Syrian baptistery is situated close to the madbaha. Baptistery is the chamber at the southern side of the madbaha. The intimate relation between baptism and Eucharist is highlighted by this nearness. When one is born as the child of God, he needs to be immediately nourished by the divine food. And hence the baptistery is placed very close to the sanctuary. The relation between baptism and Eucharist is explained by Pseudo-George of Arbel:

From baptism we may begin, from that we enter to the mysteries. When we come directly to the church to enter, we enter by the southern side, and thus we directly receive baptism and go to the mysteries which are at Jerusalem, so these lead us into Paradise which is the *qestroma* and from Paradise we enter into heaven.

In the West Syrian tradition the baptismal font is outside the sanctuary, near the southern wall. With regard to the baptismal font, ancient traditions of both East and West agree on representing the tomb in which, immersed to die together with Christ, the baptized re-emerges resurrected together with Him by the work of the Spirit of the Father.

5. Symbolism of the East

Symbolic significance of the 'East' in the liturgy has been a common heritage of the entire Christianity. *Didascalia Apostolorum* insists on prayer towards the East.

The Apostles, therefore, constituted: pray towards the East, because "as the lightning which lightens from the East, and is seen even to the West, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be", that by this shall we know and understand that He appears from the East suddenly.

The East was considered the symbolic abode of God: Indeed, it is required that you pray toward the East, as knowing that which is written: "Give glory to God, who rides upon the heaven of heavens toward the East".

The Anonymous Author summarizes the importance of the East as follows: Towards that we adore and contemplate, just as towards the superior place, the place of life, the place of the saints, the place from where we were expelled, the place from where rises the sun, from where we have the origin, the place praised by the Lord God through the prophets.

Abdišo of Nisibis deals with the eschatological significance of facing the East as follows: This rule is, therefore, profitable in two ways; first, because it stirs up the remembrance of the end, and of the judgment to come, and which checks us from doing evil things; and, secondly, so that we may remember our old home, from which we were driven out on account of our sins, namely, Paradise, which is situated in the East, and thereby we are led to take refuge in repentance... And when our Lord ascended up to heaven, His face was turned towards the West, significant of His coming at the resurrection, and the disciples who were before Him, and looking at Him ascending, worshipped Him towards the East...

The decoration of the eastern wall of the sanctuary was in accordance with the symbolism of the East. Therefore, eschatological characteristics dominated such decorations. The cross on the Eastern wall naturally has a special eschatological meaning. Besides symbolising the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, this cross also symbolizes Christ in his second coming. This cross evokes in the believers a prayer similar to the '*Maranatha*' of the early Christians.

Facing East in prayer is the sign of the eschatological readiness to welcome the Lord. Thus it is a waiting position. Facing East is also the sign of a community making procession towards the heavenly East. Thus it is a typical posture of the Christian liturgical assembly, which is in fact journeying towards the heavenly Jerusalem (SC 8).

The Liturgy that St. Thomas Introduced in India

St. Thomas, the Apostle came to India, Kodungallur, according to tradition, in 52 A.D. What must have been the form of the liturgy he celebrated when he came? Did the Apostle introduce a liturgy in his own way, possibly adapting it to local conditions?

The existence of Aramaic speaking people, as were the Jews, on North Western India during pre-Christian period has been proved by the discovery there of Ashoka's edicts (3rd century B.C.) in Aramaic. The first discovery of an Aramaic edict of Ashoka was in 1914-15 in Taxila. Another Aramaic inscription was found in Laghman in Afghanistan in 1968. Commenting on these findings of Aramaic edicts B.N. Mukherjee writes: Aramaic received an official status in the North-Western section of the Indian sub-continent and its border lands. On the Eastern Coast were Mylapore (Calamina) where St. Thomas was martyred, and Arikamedu, trading centers where too the Jews had probably settled down.

It is reasonable to think that St. Thomas visited these Jewish colonies in India and first preached the Gospel to his fellow Jews, and that many among them were converted to Christ and acknowledged Him as the long awaited Messiah. Tradition also holds that Jews were the first to embrace Christianity in India. Naturally, according to Christ's injunction the Apostles were first to go to the Jews of the Dispersion (Mt 10:5-6).

Among the Jewish settlers Thomas must have celebrated the Synagogue liturgy as all the Apostles and the first Christians did at Jerusalem. As already noted, it consisted of readings from the Old Testament, singing of Psalms, a sermon and a number of set prayers.

As regards the Eucharist, "the breaking of bread," Thomas must have acted in the same manner as Christ did at the Last Supper and as Thomas along with the other Apostles and the Jewish nucleus of the new Church celebrated his memorial in Jerusalem. He must have pronounced the *Berakoth*, the Blessings of the Jewish ritual meal.

The language among the Jewish converts could have been only Aramaic, their spoken language. They had ready at hand the Old Testament, partly in Aramaic and partly in Hebrew, which he would have readily used. During the time of Christ, Aramaic (Syriac) was the ordinary language of Palestine. The Jews who came to India from Palestine and neighboring places must have been speaking the same language. The Latin Handbook to the Bible says: "The Aramaic language is closely related to Hebrew. Used for diplomacy as early as Sennacherib's time (705-681 B.C.), it became the official language of the Persian Empire after about 550 B.C. The Book of Daniel contains passages in Aramaic. In New Testament times Aramaic, rather than Hebrew, was the ordinary language of Palestine. It is still spoken today by the villagers of Malloula in Syria."

When some leaders of the Thomas Christians wrote in 1578 to Pope Gregory XIII, they were only echoing the traditional belief of their ancestors: "Our prayers are in the Syriac or Chaldaic language which was handed down to us by our Lord St. Thomas, and we and our predecessors have been taught this language."

Thomas Christians and Contact with Churches Outside

St. Thomas Christians in India were not isolated from the followers of Christ in other countries. We have reasons to think that there were constant contacts between Christian believers in India and the middle Eastern countries. This had necessarily an impact on their liturgical life. Both the groups must have met in the name of Christ, prayed and "broken the bread" together.

The relation with Edessa is of particular interest. Edessa was a stronghold of Christianity and a famous centre of Christian studies from the early times. The *Acts of Thomas* was written at Edessa or some place in Upper Mesopotamia, likely at the beginning of the third century. It tells the story of the Apostle as known to the Edessans. The holy relics of St. Thomas were transferred to Edessa from Mylapore, probably in the second century, as a result of the close relationship between the Christian communities in India and Edessa. The hymns of St. Ephrem (306-373) in praise of St. Thomas throw light on the transfer of the relics from Mylapore to Edessa. As a result of these contacts whatever developments were made in the liturgy were shared mutually.

The primitive form of the Eucharistic prayer of Mar Addai and Mari was, as noted above, written probably at the end of the second century. It must have been in use more or less in the same form long before it was written down, possibly from early second century. It is also significant that it was composed in Syriac or Aramaic. This Anaphora is very similar to the *Berakoth* of the Jewish meal-liturgy.

What I.H. Dalmais writes on this ancient Anaphora and the origins of the East Syriac or Syro-Mesopotamian liturgy is very pertinent. He says: "The first centuries in which this liturgy was celebrated are distinguishable as early as the end of the second century at Nisibis and Edessa (Urfa), whose Aramaic dialect, known as Syriac, was to become the common cultural and liturgical language of Christian communities throughout Asia ... Eucharistic Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari may go back in its essential lines to the third century; it is very close in form to the Jewish *berakoth* for blessings at table."

We may conclude that this Anaphora, still in its primitive form, came into use among the Thomas Christians in the second century itself.

1. History of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana¹

a. East Syriac Qurbana: Common Heritage of three Ecclesial Traditions

The Church of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar shared the East Syriac liturgical tradition from the early centuries. The only liturgy known to them till the 16th century was the East Syriac liturgy. The Thomas Christians of Malabar had strong relation with the Church of Mesopotamia, especially with regard to the liturgy, theology, spirituality and ecclesiastical discipline. The following reasons accounted for their relationship with the Mesopotamian (Persian) Church.²

- ♦ *Common Apostolic origin:* The Church of Thomas Christians and the Church of Mesopotamia claim St. Thomas as their Apostle. This common apostolic origin made the relation between these Churches spontaneous.
- ♦ *Linguistic Affinity:* Aramaic language, the official language of the Mesopotamian Church, was known to the Christians of Malabar. The knowledge of Aramaic which was the language of liturgy accounted for the adoption of the East Syriac liturgy by the Malabar Christians.
- ♦ *Geographical Vicinity*
- ♦ *Commercial relations*
- ♦ *Racial affinity*

The continuous relation between these two ecclesial traditions paved the way for the borrowal of the liturgical tradition by the Thomas Christians. It does not mean that the liturgy of Malabar was a copy of the Mesopotamian liturgy. Thomas Christians made adaptations to the East Syriac liturgy which they had borrowed from Mesopotamia. We find many Indian elements incorporated into the liturgy of the Church in Malabar. The liturgical architecture resembling the architecture of the temples; the 'puqdanakon' in the beginning of the Qurbana; the rite of prostration on the bema are all examples of such adaptations made in the Qurbana. Thus we may identify a Malabar Qurbana which is in many respects different from the Chaldean Qurbana and Assyrian Qurbana. Thus there are three versions of the Eucharist in the East Syriac tradition: Assyrian, Chaldean and Malabar. However, there is remarkable similarity in the basic structure of all these three versions of the East Syriac Qurbana.

The Thomas Christians made many serious changes with regard to the sacraments of marriage and the anointing of the sick. The sacramentals like the rites related to initiation and death have numerous typical Indian elements which are shared by both Hindus and Christians.

b. Qurbana in Malabar before the Synod of Diamper

The Thomas Christians esteemed their liturgy which in its most primitive form was of the Apostolic times. The petition sent to Pope Gregory XIII in 1578 by some of the leading native Christians has the expression: "... and that our liturgical prayers are in the Syriac (Chaldaic) language transmitted to us by our Father St. Thomas." This makes clear that the St. Thomas Christians never thought of their liturgy as a foreign liturgy.

The witnesses of the Western missionaries shed light on the manner of the celebration of the liturgy in Malabar before the Synod of Diamper.

Thomas Christians had great veneration to the Cross. Penteado wrote to the King of Portugal in 1516/18: "They have crosses in their churches on the altars as well as engravings, but no images. They are astonished to hear that we have images and they see it."³ Mathew Dias, a latinized Thomas Christian priest, wrote to the King of Portugal in 1550 that the bishops who came from Babylon ordained priests without giving them permission to celebrate the Eucharist. Dionysio, a Portuguese writer, said that the priests did not baptize or say Mass except now and then. The bishops reserved to themselves the privilege of celebrating the Eucharist.⁴ This observation may be properly understood only in the historical context of the Thomas Christians. All the priests from a parish were coming together for the Qurbana on Sundays and feast days. From among them only one priest was celebrating the Qurbana. Thus it is possible that a particular priest got the chance of celebrating the Qurbana very rarely. The fact that the bishops celebrated the Qurbana was quite in tune with the ancient universal Christian practice that the bishop officiated the eucharistic celebration when he was present in a eucharistic celebration.

Missionaries give testimony on the great veneration shown by the faithful to the sacred space: "At the entrance of the church they used

to wash again their feet ... Entering the church, they made a profound bow of respect, the head touching the floor, first to the cross in the center, then to the chapel of the baptismal font and lastly to the place where the bread was prepared and the Holy Eucharist was preserved.”⁵

A. Monserrate wrote in 1579 that the priests could not say Mass without a deacon, although the former bishop (Mar Joseph) gave permission for a layman to serve the Mass. The Mass was celebrated on the altar with a Cross facing the celebrant.

Eucharistic Bread: Most of the accounts agree that fermented bread was used for the celebration of the Eucharist. According to Penteado, it was wheat bread mixed with salt and olive oil. According to Melchior Carneiro, the Qurbana could not be celebrated without a certain oil which they mixed with wheat flour and the Christians say that Nestorius was condemned by the Pope for having stolen this oil from Rome. They consecrated bread made of this oil and wheat flour and with Portuguese olive oil.⁶ M. Barreto wrote in 1561 that the priest consecrated fermented bread mixed with a certain oil, which they believed was consecrated by our Lord Himself. Monserrate gives the following description on the bread:

“Previously they had many rites in the Mass, which they call Qurbana, meaning oblation; because they make a round loaf of rice with a ball in the middle, I do not know whether of the same material or of wheat flour; I do not know whether only this ball is consecrated or the whole loaf; the case is this that the celebrant consumes the ball and the loaf is distributed to the people, in which even if the ball is of wheat flour, an intolerable error is committed because the people think that they are receiving communion.”⁷

Eucharistic Wine: As regards the wine used, it was prepared from dried grapes by putting them in water and then pressing juice from them.⁸ According to Joseph the Indian, dried grapes or raisins came from Catay (China). According to Barbosa, raisins came from Mecca and Ormuz. Monserrate was of opinion that owing to the large quantity of water used in the process of making wine, the consecration was invalid. F. Soledade says that the Franciscans corrected the abominable error of consecrating the sacrosanct Body

and Blood of Christ in cakes of rice and wine of palms. But apart from the statement of Soledade all agree that wine was made of dried grapes.

The Communion of the faithful was under both species. Penteado gives the following description on Communion:

When the priest has finished communicating, he comes with the ministers (without whom he cannot celebrate), one of whom carrying the divided Sacrament, while the other bearing the chalice, and stands in the middle of the ministers near the door of the sanctuary. First the men approach the celebrant to receive Communion. Each communicant approaches with his arms crossed on the chest, the right arm over the left. The celebrant taking the Sacrament places it in the right palm of the recipient and he places it in his mouth, then he moves to the right and communicates the Blood applying his mouth to the rim of the chalice. After the men, the women do likewise.⁹

M. Carneiro considered the Thomas Christian practice of receiving Communion under both species as an erroneous practice. According to Monserrate, the Mass ended with a Gospel which was read by the priest facing people. In the Mass there was only one ‘elevation’, of the Host, the chalice never being elevated. At the elevation all the people rose and bowed their heads down to the floor and said in silence that they are not worthy to see it.¹⁰

Incense: The liturgy was never celebrated without incense. The inner and outer parts of the chalice, paten and other holy things were incensed. The congregation assembled in the church was also saluted with the incense.¹¹

Vestments: Vestments used for the Qurbana was a large piece of cloth in the form of an amice and over it a stole, which they called *Orario*.¹²

c. Restoration of the Syro-Malabar Liturgy

The Catholic Church in the modern times has realized the need of rediscovering the true worth of the liturgical and theological traditions of the Churches of the East. There has been a renewed esteem for the Eastern Churches and their liturgical, theological, and spiritual

heritage. The Universal Church became more and more conscious of the need of preserving and fostering the Eastern heritage. The Church encourages the study of the liturgies and theologies of the Eastern Churches. The concern of the Universal Church in fostering the Eastern heritage is evident from the important teachings of the Holy See in the modern times.

The encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, “*Orientalium Dignitas*” in 1894 speaks of the “legitimately approved variety of Eastern liturgy and discipline as a brilliant ornament for all the Church.”

The official attitude of the Church in the past two centuries with regard to the restoration and promotion of the Eastern liturgies was manifested in the Vatican II documents like *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* (OE) and *Unitatis Redintegratio* (UR). These documents emphatically brought to light the concern of the Church for the eastern liturgical traditions. The Vatican II decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) tells all the faithful to “realise that it is of supreme importance to understand, venerate and foster the exceedingly rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches in order faithfully to preserve the fullness of Christian tradition and to bring about reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christians.” (UR 15).

In 1934 the Syro-Malabar bishops submitted the Syriac translation of the Roman Pontifical, for approbation from Rome. Pope Pius XI rejected the request for approbation and said:

“Latinism ought not to be encouraged among Orientals; the Holy See does not wish to latinise, but to catholicise. Let a commission be nominated with the task of revising the most ancient Pontifical (of the Church) which could be printed part by part.”¹⁵

In 1938 Pope Pius XI wrote on the general attitude of the Roman Pontiffs with regard to the restoration of the Oriental liturgies.

“If anybody, induced by a sense of false unity and without understanding sufficiently the genius of oriental matters, tried to corrupt their Rites or reduce them to that of the Latin Church, the Roman Pontiffs, our predecessors, have objected it with all their power and without sparing any effort.”¹⁶

Pope Pius XI had already set up on Dec. 5, 1931 a permanent liturgical Commission attached to the Congregation for the Eastern Churches to restore all deformed Oriental liturgies. While Cardinal Tisserant was the Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, he visited Malabar in 1953 and then spoke to all the Syro-Malabar bishops on the need of restoring the liturgy. On March 10, 1954 the Congregation nominated a Committee to do the work of the restoration of the Malabar liturgy. The president of the Committee was Fr. A. Raes SJ and the members were Fr. Cyril Keroloveskiji and Fr. Placid J. Podipara CMI.

The Congregation informed all Syro-Malabar bishops on May 6, 1954 about the nomination of this Committee, calling their attention to the need and reasons for restoring their liturgy, and inviting them to co-operate with the Holy See in this most important matter. But the bishops did not appear to have taken any pain to execute this instruction of the Congregation.

The Committee finished its work on the text of the Qurbana and its accessories, and submitted it to the Congregation. The Congregation, after having studied the matter, printed it as a Fascicle I containing 1. The text of the restored Qurbana 2. *Ordo Celebrationis*... or the rubrics and directions for celebrating the Qurbana in various forms. 3. Notes regarding the interior of the church, vestments, and so on 4. The scheme and substance of the *propria* and the hymns of the Sundays and Feast Days.

The Congregation sent the whole thing to the Syro-Malabar bishops for suggestion. They sent their suggestions. Again in 1956 the Congregation asked further suggestions from the Syro-Malabar bishops personally through Fr. Placid J. Podipara. All of them gave their suggestions once again. The Congregation sought further suggestions from other experts in this field. All these suggestions were printed as Fascicle II. Both these Fascicles were distributed to the Cardinals who compose the Plenary of the Congregation for Eastern Churches. After having studied the matter, they met together, discussed the whole thing and submitted it together with their own suggestions to the Holy Father. Pope Pius XII studied it again with his own experts and then approved it on 26 June, 1957. Thus, with Papal approbation the following liturgical books of the Syro-Malabar Church were printed.

1. *Taksa d- Qudasa*: the text of the Qurbana in Syriac, printed at Alwaye in 1960.
2. *Ordo Celebrationis "Qudasa" iuxta usum Ecclesiae Syro-Malabarensis*: the rubrics and directions for celebrating the Qurbana in various forms, together with the notes regarding the interior of the church, the vestments, calendar etc., printed in Rome in 1959.
3. *Supplementum Mysteriorum sive Proprium Missarum de tempore et de Sanctis iuxta Ritum Ecclesiae Syro-Malabarensis*: The Changing prayers, hymns and readings of Sundays and the Feast days in the liturgical year, printed in Rome in 1960.

A partial Malayalam translation was published from Alwaye in 1962. The restored Qurbana was promulgated on 3 July, 1962. However, due to the lack of proper catechesis among clergy and the lay faithful there was strong reaction against the restored Taksa. It was considered as a thorough going back to the Chaldean tradition. A new text with many accommodations was drafted and got approved as an experimental taksa in 1968. The Congregation, though it approved the 1968 Taksa *ad experimentum*, was not happy with the 1968 Taksa. According to the Congregation, this Taksa differed considerably from the text prepared by the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. The restored Raza text was approved by Rome on 8 Nov. 1985 and was inaugurated on 8 Feb., 1986 by Pope John Paul II at Kottayam. Pope John Paul II celebrated the restored Raza, the most solemn for the Qurbana, in connection with the beatification of Fr. Kuriakose Chavara and Sr. Alphonsa.

There were still protests against the restored Raza, from which the solemn and simple forms were to be drawn. A new text with many modifications was submitted and got approved in 1989. It was ruled that there should not be any further change in the Taksa in five years.

The Synodal Commission for liturgy has moved forward with successful restoration work. *Propria* (proper prayers) for all seasons was prepared and published on an experimental basis. The translation and editing of the anaphoras of Mar Theodore and Mar Nestorius is in progress. Besides the restoration work of Qurbana, the Taksa of

Sacraments, and the Pontifical were promulgated. The Liturgical Research Centre at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkannad has organized numerous seminars on liturgy, giving proper orientation with regard to the liturgical restoration.

Commentaries on East Syriac Qurbana

Theodore of Mopsuestia (+428): Theodore of Mopsuestia, known to the Syriac world as the Interpreter of Scriptures, wrote a commentary on the Qurbana of the Antiochene tradition.¹⁷ However, the Qurbana commented on by Theodore is very similar to the East Syriac Qurbana in the structure and theology. Therefore, Theodore's interpretation has great significance with regard to the understanding of the East Syriac Qurbana. Since Theodore was writing his commentary in view of the newly initiated Christians (neophytes), he did not comment on the rite of introduction and the liturgy of the Word which were already familiar to them as catechumens. Theodore's commentary contributed very much to the development of the theology of Eucharist in the East Syriac tradition.

Narsai of Nisibis (399-502): Narsai was the founder of the theological School of Nisibis. Four of his homilies on Baptism and Eucharist were translated by R.H. Connolly. One of these, the Homily XVII, titled the "Exposition of the Mysteries" is on the Celebration of the East Syriac Qurbana.¹⁸ There are different views on the authorship of this homily. According to Sebastian Brock, this homily is not of Narsai, but of an author of the 6th century. However, R.H. Connolly strongly argued in favour of the authorship of Narsai. The author is commenting on the Qurbana only from the rite of the dismissal of the unworthy. Hence, as in the case of the commentary of Theodore, it might have intended only the neophytes. This homily has much similarity to the 5th catechetical homily of Cyril of Jerusalem.

Gabriel Qatraya (6/7th century): Gabriel was a teacher at the theological school in Seleucia-Ctesiphon. He was the teacher of Patriarch Hananisho (+700). Gabriel comments on the East Syriac Qurbana from the beginning.¹⁹ Gabriel's commentary on the Qurbana, probably written in the year 650, is the most ancient commentary on the whole of East Syriac Qurbana.

Abraham Qatraya Bar Lipah (7th cent.): Abraham was a contemporary of Gabriel Qatraya. He makes a summary of the

commentary of Gabriel Qatraya, however, gives his own personal comments in between.

Commentary of the Anonymous Author of 9/10 century (George of Arbel): According to Assemani, this anonymous commentary was written by George, the bishop of Arbel of the 10th century. According to Van Unnik, this commentary is the work of Elias bar Kanus (+787), who became the bishop of Kaskar. It makes mention of the liturgical renovations made by Timothy I (780-823). This commentary speaks of the bema in the middle of haykla. It speaks also of the šqaqona, the passage connecting sanctuary and bema. This commentary gives detailed treatment of even small elements in the Qurbana. Hence it is of great significance in understanding the East Syriac Qurbana.

John of Mosul: John of Mosul's Commentary on the Qurbana is found in the work Shaphiruth Dubbare, written by him in 1225. It speaks on the spiritual disposition demanded of the believers participating in the Qurbana.

John Bar Zo'bi (+1235): John comments on all parts of the Qurbana, following the model of Abraham bar Lipah.²⁰

Abdišo of Nisibis (+1318): Abdišo wrote a small commentary on the Qurbana in his book on the Ecclesiastical Laws. His commentary on the Qurbana is much similar to that of Abraham bar Lipah.

Timothy II (14th cent.): Timothy speaks on the Mystery of Eucharist in his book Seven Causes of the Mysteries. His commentary is in the model of the commentary of Abaraham Bar Lipah.²¹

Besides these commentaries there are other sources dealing with the East Syriac Qurbana. The Letter to Jacob the bishop of Dara written by Išoyahb I (587-596) gives answers to some questions asked on the parts beginning with anaphora to the Communion. Išoyahb IV gives a treatise on the Qurbana in the form of Questions and answers. The writings of some of the West Syrian authors like George, bishop of Arabs (+724), Moses bar Kepha (+903) and Dionysius bar Salibi (+1171) are also of use in understanding the East Syriac Qurbana.

Most of the studies on the East Syriac Qurbana have been based on the commentaries of Narsai, Gabriel Qatraya and the Anonymous

Author. For the later commentaries except that of the Anonymous Author, the commentary of Gabriel Qatraya served as the basis.

2. Important Manuscripts of the East Syriac Qurbana²²

1. Mar Esaya Hudra (10th cent. From the Chaldean Library, Mosul). It is the manuscript of the Qurbana with the three anaphoras. It contains the oldest known manuscript of the anaphora of Addai and Mari.
2. Diarbekir 57 (1240 AD)
3. Mardin 22 (1287)
4. Camb. Add. 246 B (15th cent.)
5. Diarbekir 48 (15th cent.)
6. Mardin 19 (15th cent.)
7. Chald Patr 333 (15th cent.)
8. Brit Mus Or 5750 (15th cent.)
9. Berlin 38 (1496)
10. Chald Patr 36 (15/16 cent.)
11. Vat. Syr. 66 (16th cent.. by Mar Joseph, bishop in Malabar)
12. Vat. Syr. 42 (1603)

Manuscripts after 16th cent are included in the Jezira-Alqosh category. The most ancient of these (including Vat. Syr. 42 (1603) were written down at Jezira in South Turkey. When the Patriarchs shifted their residence to Alqosh, the center of making the manuscripts also moved to Alqosh.

There are good number of manuscripts of the East Syriac Qurbana in the National Library of Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

e.g. Bibliothèque Nationale 84 (1745)

Bibliothèque Nationale 88 (17th cent.)

Bibliothèque Nationale 89 (1689)

(Bibliothèque Nationale 90, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 283, 313)

3. Old Printed Taksas of East Syriac Qurbana²³

a. Chaldean Taksas

1767: Printed at Rome

1773: Second edition with some modifications

1876: Urmiah Taksa (by Lazarist Priests)

1890: Taksa by Anglican Priests

1901: Taksa by Dominican Fathers at Mosul

1906: Urmiah Taksa (Similar to Roman Taksa)

1928: Kelaita Taksa (by Kelaita, a Nestorian Deacon)

1936: Taksa by Sulaiman Zaig (Similar to that of 1901)

b. Malabar Taksas

1774: Rome (The Simple mass of Roz with some modifications.)

1844: Reprint of 1774 Taksa

Later various editions of the same were published.

Endnotes

- ¹ On the history of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana see T. Mannoorampampil, *Syro-Malabar Qurbanayude Charitra Paschattalam* (Mal.), Kottayam 1986.
- ² T. Mannoorampampil, *Syro-Malabar Qurbanayude Charitra Paschattalam* (Mal.), Kottayam 1986, 29-35.
- ³ M. Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, Vol.1, Bangalore 1984, 195.
- ⁴ Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, 200.
- ⁵ V. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana: The Eucharistic Celebration of the Chaldeo-Indian Church*, Kottayam 1998, 113.
- ⁶ Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 115.
- ⁷ Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 115.

- ⁸ Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, 200-201.
- ⁹ Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 117-118.
- ¹⁰ Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 116-118.
- ¹¹ F. Kanichikattil, *To Restore or to Reform: A Critical Study on Current Liturgical Renewal in the Syro-Malabar Church in India*, Bangalore 1992, 5.
- ¹² Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 114.
- ¹³ The list of the changes made in the Qurbana is given in P. Pallath, *The Eucharistic Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians and the Synod of Diamper*, Kottayam 2008, 86-90.
- ¹⁴ G. Thadikkatt, *Liturgical Identity of the Mar Toma Nazrani Church*, Kottayam 2004, 80-111.
- ¹⁵ Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 121.
- ¹⁶ Motu Proprio, *Sancta Dei Ecclesia*, in AAS 3 (April 25, 1938) 154.
- ¹⁷ *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Lord's Prayer and on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist*, A. Mingana, ed. & trans., WS 6, Cambridge 1933. T. Mannoorampampil, *Syro-Malabar Qurbana Oru Padanam* (Mal.), Vol. 1., Kottayam 1990, 2nd ed. 1999, 13-14.
- ¹⁸ "Homily (XVII): An Exposition of the Mysteries", in *Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, R.H. Connolly, trans., *Text and Studies VIII*, Cambridge 1909. T. Mannoorampampil, *Syro-Malabar Qurbana Oru Padanam* (Mal.), Vol. 1., Kottayam 1990, 2nd ed. 1999, 14.
- ¹⁹ Gabriel Qatraya, "Interpretation of the Offices", P. Podipara, trans., in G. Vavanikunnel, ed., *Homilies and Interpretations on the Holy Qurbana*, Changanacherry 1977.
- ²⁰ Commentary of Yohannan Bar Zo'bi: See *Explanation of the Divine Mysteries*, T. Mannoorampampil, trans., OIRSI, Kottayam 1992.
- ²¹ Timothy II, The Mystery of the Eucharist in Jose Kochupampil, The Mystery of the Eucharist: Syriac Critical Text, Translation and Studies of the Chapter "On the Mysteries of the Body and Blood" from the Book of the Seven Causes of the Mysteries of the Church by Catholicos-Patriarch Timothy II (1318-1332), Excerpt of Doctoral Dissertation, PIO, Rome 2000.
- ²² T. Mannoorampampil, *Syro-Malabar Qurbana Oru Padanam* (Mal.), Vol. 1., Kottayam 1990, 2nd ed. 1999, 24-26.
- ²³ T. Mannoorampampil, *Syro-Malabar Qurbana Oru Padanam* (Mal.), Vol. 1., Kottayam 1990, 2nd ed. 1999, 27-31.

Chapter 8

Syro-Malabar Qurbana Explained

The term Qurban means offering meaning Gift; Offering meaning the action of offering (Qurawa). Qurbana is to be seen more as an action than as a gift. “The Eucharist draws us into Jesus’ act of self-oblation. More than just statically receiving the incarnate *Logos*, we enter into the very dynamic of his self-giving.” (*Sacramentum Caritatis* 11).

Rite of Introduction (ENARXIS)

1. Procession from sanctuary to bema

In the ancient times Qurbana began with the procession of the celebrant from sanctuary to bema. At that time the anthem of the sanctuary (*onitha d qanke*) was sung. The veil of the sanctuary was opened. There was the veneration of the cross during the *onitha d qanke*. Later *Lakhu mara* and incensation were added. The faithful waiting for the celebrant began to recite the *marmitha* (psalms). Still later (9th cent.) Lord’s prayer was added. ‘Glory to God’ and *puqdanakon* are still

later elements. At present the procession is anticipated to the very beginning of Qurbana. But *onitha d qanke*, veneration of the cross, opening the veil, *Lakhu mara*, and incensation remain in their original place.

The procession from sanctuary to bema symbolises the coming down of the Lord from heaven to Jerusalem. Therefore, it commemorates the mystery of incarnation and the manifestation of the Lord.

2. Puqdanakon-puqdaneh damšiha (Your command-Command of Messiah): It reminds the assembly of the Command of Christ as the *raison d’être* of this celebration. The present restored Taksa has given this interpretation, especially in the poetic rendering of Puqdanakon. Puqdanakon also reflects the custom of St. Thomas Christians of asking the permission of the assembly before any social function. The priest celebrates the Qurbana on behalf of the people. Qurbana is of the community of the faithful.

3. Glory to God: It reminds us of the nativity of Christ. We are led to the beginning of the New Testament history of salvation. We join the angels in glorifying God. Eucharistic liturgy is basically ‘Qudaša’ of God and Qudaša’ of man. Liturgy from our part is glorification or sanctification (Qudaša in the anabatic dimension) of God. In the East Syriac Qurbana there are various occasions when the assembly joins the heavenly choir in glorifying God.

Since during the recital of *marmitha* we are commemorating the OT waiting for the Christ, the commemoration during ‘Glory to God’, may be considered a simple commemoration of the entire mystery of incarnation.

4. Lord’s Prayer

In the Gospels there are two traditions of Lord’s prayer: Mt: 6: 9-13, Lk: 11: 2-4. It was introduced in the Qurbana with the *qanona* by Patriarch Timothy I (780-816). He ordered that all liturgical celebrations begin and end with this prayer. According to Isho-Barnun (820- 824) the services of the Church that are not begun and concluded with the prayer taught by Christ, are imperfect and defective. Narsai, referring to the liturgical use of the Lord’s Prayer says: “...and with it do they complete all the rites (or mysteries) of the Holy Church. This, it is

said, is that which includes all prayer, and without it no prayer is concluded.” Mar Abdisho speaking of the Lord’s Prayer before the Huttama says that this prayer contains and comprehends all prayers.

Lord’s Prayer in the Qurbana has three parts: the prayer as such and then before and after the qanona. The qanona is borrowed from *Sanctus*. (Ref. Is 6: 2-3; Rev 8:1-8). It is a combination of the OT prayer and NT prayer. This qanona insists on the first petition of the ‘Our Father’, extending the glorification of God, begun with the Gloria- the solemn beginning of Qurbana.

Doxology

It comes from the Greek word ‘doxa’ meaning glory. Its function is praise and glorification of God. The doxology “For Yours is the Kingdom, the Power and Glory, for ever and ever” was added to the Lord’s Prayer from very ancient time. In A.D. 390 St. John Chrysostom explains it in one of his homilies. Christian Liturgy has taken doxologies from the Jewish Liturgy, (e.g. Gen 14:20; I Sam 25:39; IChr 16: 27-28; I Chr 29: 10-13). The doxology of Lord’s Prayer is patterned after the doxology found at the end of Jewish morning and evening prayer, (Cfr. also I Chr 29: 10-13). Didache 8:2 (of I cent.) and Apostolic Constitution (IV cent.) 7:24 contain this doxology, but without the word ‘Kingdom’. The present form is first found in the 2nd cent. writings of Tatian.

5. Let us pray peace be with us.

It is the first diaconal proclamation. Deacon was a must for the ancient East Syrian Qurbana. It was not permitted to celebrate the Qurbana without a deacon. The deacon leads the eucharistic assembly, as a member and leader of the assembly. He gives to the assembly necessary guidelines and admonitions. Theodore of Mopsuestia speaks of the functions of the deacon as follows:

“The ceremonies that are to be performed by all those present are made known by the proclamation of the deacon, who orders and reminds everyone of the statutory acts that are to be performed and accomplished by those who are assembled in the church of God.”

The deacons assist the priest in the ministry of the sacred mysteries. Through his ministry in the liturgy the deacon manifests Christ, the servant. (Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons,

1998: No. 32) He collaborates with the priest in the important liturgical actions like “processions, readings, preparation rites, washing, incense, preparation of Mysteries, peace giving and communion. The deacons prepare the assembly for the prayer, asking the people to have proper disposition of prayer. In liturgy deacons are symbols of angels. (First deacon is called Gabriel and the second deacon is called Michael.)

When the deacon says, “Let us pray peace be with us” - he announces that there follows an official priestly prayer- slotha- for the community and he exhorts the congregation to participate in it consciously and personalise it.

Christ has become ‘peace’ for us through His salvific work. St.Paul says, “For He is our peace, Who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility.” (Eph 2:14). Narsai speaks of Christ as our peace.

Deacon means to say- let Jesus Christ, our peace be with us, and through His help let the following prayer lead us to real peace.

6. Prayer before Marmitha

There are three prayers : 1. Sundays and ordinary feast days. 2. the feasts of Our Lord (maranaya) and other important feasts. 3. ferial days. (Regarding some prayers there are special ones for the commemoration of saints (dukрана) and the commemoration of the dead).

As regards the prayer before marmitha that of Sunday is the most ancient one. The prayer for maranaya was introduced in the 12th cent. during the patriarchate of Elia III Abuholim. The prayer for the ferial days is given in the order of the pre sanctified liturgy. In this order it is called ‘Gazza Prayer’.

In the first prayer the priest is seeking the divine assistance on behalf of the community for strength in order to celebrate the sacred mysteries and to administer them in the most fitting manner.

The expression “sacred mysteries” entered the Christian liturgy from the mystery religions. From the fourth century onwards there was the trend of taking expressions of the language of the pagan religions. “Mystery” in general refers to the whole salvific economy, whereas in the concrete sense mystery or mysteries refer to the sacred body and precious blood of Christ. (From the very beginning of

anaphora [quddasha] the bread and wine are called mysteries.) The interpreters and commentators refer to these general and particular understandings. The Qurbana as such is called Raza in the sense of the celebration of the paschal mystery.

The second prayer is an elaboration of the first one, the third one is a glorification of God.

7. Marmitha

Literally it means elevation. It means 'exaltation' too. One marmitha contains ideally of three psalms. The marmitha of Qurbana is parallel with that of Ramsa. East Syrian liturgical Psalter with the addition of the canticles of Moses and Isaiah is grouped in to sixty marmithas (marmyathas). A group of three marmyatha is called hullala and there are 20 hullale.

The influence of Jewish synagogal liturgy on the Christian liturgy is the reason for the use of Psalms in Qurbana. Moreover Jesus had given the example of praying Psalms (e.g. Mt 26: 30; 27: 46; Lk 23: 46). In the East Syrian Liturgy the following marmyatha are prayed:

1. On Sundays from Subara and Denha, and Qyamta- Ps 96, 97, 98 (marmitha 38).
2. On Sundays of Great Lent and Apostles - Ps 144, 145, 146 (marmitha 56).
3. On Sundays of seasons after Qyamta - Ps 46, 47, 48 (marmitha 18).
4. Sundays of Qudas- edta (Pallikudasa) - Ps. 147 ; 148 ; 149; 150 (marmitha 57).

As Pseudo George of Arbel says Marmitha had the practical purpose of filling the time of waiting for Bishop's entry. According to G. Qatraya eucharistic liturgy begins with the marmitha. Marmitha represents the OT phase of the history of salvation. As OT phase was the preparation for the NT phase of salvation the recital of marmitha serves as a preparation for the celebration of the NT mysteries fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

The concluding part of marmitha has the 'aqqapta-unnaya', Gloria patri and the Alleluia. Aqqapta literally means a rejoinder. In the present Qurbana: "I will praise you in the stately Church." The first verse is called aqqapta and the second verse is called unnaya. Aqqapta- unnaya

is also known as 'suhlappa' meaning change or variation. 'Suhlappa has a different tone from that of marmitha. Aqqapta had the practical purpose of signalling the entry of the bishop into the sanctuary.

8. Prayer before Onitha d' Qanke

Altar is called the 'throne of God', 'throne of majesty', 'seat of God's excellence', the awesome bema of the power of God's love'. It is the place where God's glory dwells. The fact that our liturgy is related to the liturgy of heaven is expressed. Both the heavenly and the earthly choirs join the liturgy, praising and thanking God. The expression 'kneel' might be alluding to the fact that those in the sanctuary knelt and worshipped God before the beginning of the procession.

The relationship between God and the liturgical assembly is expressed through the words- "Your People", "The sheep of your pasture". They show the covenantal relationship between God and the faithful.

9. Onitha d' Qanke and Veneration of the Cross

Originally the onitha was sung during the procession to the bema. Now in the Syro-Malabar Raza onitha is chanted even though there is no procession at that time. Usually there are two sections in the onitha d' qanke. The first one recalls the mystery celebrated during the liturgical year (or that day); the second one most frequently is about the cross, evidently because the procession is with the cross and the onitha is for its veneration or for enthronement on bema.

Gabriel Qatraya and the Anonymous Author do not speak about the veneration of the cross. Therefore it is of later origin. The rite of kissing the cross has been traced to the practice of the kissing of the cross in the hand of the bishop during procession to bema. However, it seems that kissing of cross was introduced to bring out the importance of the mystery of the cross and not the importance of the celebrant or the bishop.

The anthem announces symbolically the manifestation of the Lord. According to Pseudo George of Arbel, the signifies the descent of the Word from heaven and the union with the flesh, and Christ's coming

to Jerusalem to fulfil His dispensation. Qatraya sees in this anthem the mystery of the praises of the heavenly congregation seeing the manifestation of the Trinity during the baptism of Jesus; he gives also an alternative symbolic meaning of the praise that John the Baptist offered saying: "This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world".

10. Blessing of Incense

This incensation may be in the place of initial incensation in all liturgical traditions for the purpose of the purification of the holy places. The prayer projects the two major goals of this incensation, namely, the glorification of the Trinity and the remission of the debts of the sheep of the flock.

Qatraya interprets the symbolism of incense as the mystery of the future sweetness which Our Lord promised to those who believe in Him and keeps His commandments.

11. Prayer before Lakhu Mara

Prayer on Sundays and feast days: As Israelites were waiting at the foot of the Mount Sinai for the coming of Yahweh (Ex 29: 27), so the liturgical assembly waits for the manifestation of Our Lord from the sanctuary. Liturgical assembly is represented as waiting to welcome the Lord in His second coming. The love of the Lord and the light of His faith make us ready to receive Him in His manifestation from heaven. We are given a clear picture of the Church. She is the bride of Christ, crowned in glory, full of every help and blessing. The thanksgiving and praising of God are made (and to be made) in the Church.

12. Lakhu Mara

Lakhu Mara is a very ancient liturgical element of Qurbana. It is supposed to be written by Patriarch Simon Bar Saba (A.D. 323-341). This prayer was taken up into Qurbana from the Ramsa. In Ramsa when the procession reaches Bema, the deacons incense the whole Church. The hymn 'Lakhu Mara' sung by the assembly accompanied the incensation.

In the Qurbana it is the anthem accompanying the procession from the sanctuary to bema. It is the song of welcoming Christ who is

coming down to bema. Lakhu Mara is a typical resurrection hymn of the East Syrian liturgy. It celebrates Christ as the source of resurrection. (It is also known as the song of Adam in the Chaldean tradition.) According to G. Qatraya, this hymn symbolises the faith of the Apostles confessed by St. Peter. The Anonymous Author sees in the hymn the manifestation of Christ, especially at His baptism. The drawing of veil during Lakhu Mara symbolises the opening of heaven at the time of Jesus' baptism.

The veil emphasises the sacredness of the sanctuary. Separating the sanctuary from the other space of the church and veiling it, is nothing but showing respect to the sanctuary where God's glory dwells. The veil does not shut the sacred before us, rather emphasising the *sacred* space, it serves as a door to the sacred. (Ref. Instruction for Applying the liturgical prescriptions of CCEO).

In the epistle to the Hebrews (10: 19-20) we find the notion that Christ Himself is the veil separating the sacred space. However, this veil is not one of separation but serves as a door to the sacred. The way to heaven is opened through the curtain which is Christ's flesh itself.

The Slotha after Lakhu Mara is almost identical with the hymn. The prayer is concluded with the conviction that the congregation is dutybound to thank, adore and glorify Christ.

Liturgy of the Word

Features of the East Syrian Liturgy of the Word

Liturgy of the Word is seen more as the service of salvation accomplished by the Word of God among the people. The Bema, which according to the East Syrian tradition is among the people, is suitable for the liturgy of Word which commemorates Christ's ministry among the people. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1.14). Teaching is only one among the elements of the Liturgy of Word. The Liturgy of Word commemorates the entire paschal mystery of Christ.

The liturgy of the Word or synaxis has its model in the Jewish morning liturgy of the synagogue. The Jewish morning prayer contained prayers of blessing, 'Shema' (blessing prayer and Deut 6: 4-9, 11:13-21 Num 15:37-41), Readings from Law, Prophets, Psalms,

Commentary of reading or Midrash, blessings and praises. All the elements of the Jewish Synagogal liturgy except “shema” were taken into the Christian liturgy of the Word.

The East Syrian liturgy of Word may be seen as a series of Karozuthas. (For explanation see the class notes.)

Structure and Theology of the Liturgy of the Word in the Syro-Malabar Qurbana

The main elements of the Liturgy of the Word in the Syro-Malabar Qurbana are the *trisagion*, scriptural lessons, chants in between the readings, *turgame* (homilistic interpretations), homily, *karozutha*, and blessing.

The ancient form of the liturgy of Word consists in scriptural lessons, interlectionary psalms, prayer for catechumens and for sinners and may be for other categories, and the faithful, each prayer terminating with a special blessing in the form of imposition of hands, and each category being dismissed, except the faithful who evidently assist to the mysteries. By the middle of the 6th cent. trisagion and sacerdotal prayers before lessons were introduced and the interlectionary psalms were reduced to a few verses. By the end of the 6th cent. a series of prayers were fused together into blessings and dismissal, and Gospel reading received prominence. There evolved Gospel processions, incense, etc., and later kissing of the Gospel by all present. By the 13th cent. the Apostle and the Gospel were introduced by turgame.

a. Trisagion

It literally means “three (times) holy”. Tradition considers this as the anthem of angels. The literary origin of the trisagion may be found in the vision of Isaiah 6:3. Its usage was established at the time of Išo Yahb I (582/3-595/6). It is possible that it was brought into East Syrian liturgy by Mar Aba, in one of his travels (540-552). According to Gabriel Qatraya and Abraham Bar Lipah this was added to liturgy in 436 A.D. during the reign of emperor Theodotus. It was chanted by the Chalcedon Fathers (451). Antiochene liturgy has the addition “crucified for us”. According to Išo Yahb I, Qatraya and Bar Lipah this expression was added to trisagion during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Anastasius.

It could have been a processional hymn. It is chanted in the Syrian and Byzantine rites after the procession with the Sacred Scripture; Coptic and Ethiopian liturgies have it after the epistle reading; Armenians have it during the gospel procession. In the East Syrian Qurbana it could have been inserted as a third processional anthem, probably during the incensing.

This prayer is simply addressed to God without any specification as to the Trinity or Christ. Just as the Rite of Introduction of Qurbana begins with the praising of angels, it is fitting to begin the liturgy of the Word with the praises of angels. It is an introduction inviting people to have good dispositions in front of the holy, strong and immortal God who will soon speak through the readings which recall the action of He who is the living God.

G.Qatraya says: “This qanona is praise and glorification of the divine Nature, one in its essence and three in its persons. It proclaims the immutability of the divine nature and the distinction among the persons of the Holy Trinity, and the indivisible unity of the Transcendent Being.”

b. OT Readings

The prayer after the trisagion serves as an introduction to the OT readings (*Qeryane*). The East Syrian Qurbana has two readings from OT: from the Law and from Prophets. The fact of having two lessons of the OT as in Judaism remained only in the East Syrian rite. Like in the synagogue lessons, psalms and prayers are inserted in the East Syrian Qurbana.

The readings are generally taken according to the calendar of the monastic tradition (developed in the monastery of Mar Gabriel and Mar Abraham situated on the bank of Tigris, north west of Mosul.) However, there was another calendar according to the Cathedral of Koche. It seems that up to the 16th cent. the cathedral calendar was followed in Malabar. The manuscript of the Koche calendar copied at Kodungalloor in A.D. 1301 (Vat. Syr. Codex 22) testifies this.

OT readings are read by those ministers with Karoya order. According to Ishoyahb III, OT readings are done by Karoya and *Apostle* by deacon and gospel by the priest.

The reading of OT represents the first phase of the divine dispensation which is in the order of preparation and of symbols (Law and the Prophets). With regard to the symbolism of OT readings Qatraya says: “The Law and the Prophets that are read signify the arguments which our Lord put forward from Moses and from all the Prophets to confirm his teaching as he said to the Jews: ‘Search the Scriptures from which you preach the eternal life and it is they that bear witness to me.’ Our Lord was adducing many proofs in confirmation of his teachings. Because of this the Law and the Prophets are read first.” (Cf. Jn 5.39; Lk 24.25-27)

The formula of request for the blessing: Bless, O my Lord. The blessing is requested to the Lord, and not to the priest. Hence the translation Guru is not correct. The priest is only an instrument for that blessing.

c. Suraya

Suraya literally means ‘beginning’. It is the hymn sung after the OT readings. It is at the place of the interlectionary psalms in the Synagogal liturgy. Authors like Qatraya, Bar Lipah and Bar Zo’bi call it the Estayona (standing) before the epistle. Thus Suraya is related to the Apostle reading. Mar Abdišo calls it Suraya of the Šliha. However, authors like Pseudo George of Arbel and Timothy II relate this to the OT readings. If we analyse the content it seems that the hymn is actually related neither to the OT nor to the NT reading. It seems rather as an intermediary element giving the meaning of the celebration according to the liturgical year season, or feast.

d. Prayer before the *Apostle*

There are two prayers: For Sundays and Feast days, and for other days. First one is a prayer as preparation for hearing the Word. The second one deals generally with Dispensation.

e. Turgama before Apostle

Turgama means interpretation or explanation. In the East Syrian liturgy it is a homilic exhortation before the Scriptural lessons. It introduces the reading and exhorts the faithful to hear fruitfully the reading. Most of the turgame were written in between 12th -14th centuries- mostly by Mar Abdišo or his contemporary Khamis.

f. Apostle

The epistle or Apostle is read by the first deacon- Gabriel. Traditionally epistle was taken only from Paul. That is why it is called Šliha. In Syriac it is called Engartta - a term denoting the epistle written by the Apostles only. The reading of the epistle symbolizes the preaching of John the Baptist announcing the coming of the Lord. It is read by a deacon, and not by a priest because, as Qatraya says, “John was in the order of deacon before our Saviour and not in the order of priest in the NT.”

g. Blessing of Incense

The incense is for the forgiveness of sins as in the case of Mary who poured fragrant ointment on the Lord’s head. Traditionally, as the Anonymous Author testifies the altar, cross, gospel, deacons, people all were incensed. According to Qatraya the incense here is the mystery of the sweetness of the words of our Lord.

h. Zumara

Zumara, the Halleluiah chant expresses the joy at the coming of the Christ represented by Gospel. Generally it is taken from the Psalms. According to Qatraya it is the mystery of the praises of the disciples and of the children who were crying and saying Hosanna to the Son of David.

i. Onitha d’Evangelion, Turgama and Procession of Gospel and Gospel Reading

Gospel is kept on the altar. It was the custom for all Churches in the West and East for the first 900 years to keep the gospel on the altar. Since altar is the throne of God it is the most suitable place for the Gospel. According to the present structure of the rite, the celebrant with the archdeacon and other ministers go up to the altar. There follows the veneration of the gospel, kissing it, accompanied by the onitha d’evangelion. The onitha is followed by a turgama sung by the deacons. Thereafter comes the solemn procession with gospel to the bema, however without a processional hymn. (The ideal thing would be to have the procession accompanied by the onitha d’evangelion.) According to the Chaldean tradition the onitha d’evangelion is the hymn accompanying the Gospel procession. It was sung only in the

period between ascension and the Dedication of the Church when the Divine Office and the Liturgy of the Word were celebrated outside the Church, in the beth slotha. The first onitha accompanied the procession of Gospel to beth slotha whereas the second onitha (after the gospel) accompanied the procession back. Even in Malabar traditionally this was the processional hymn. In the tradition there was the veneration of the gospel at the end of the procession on the bema. The onitha accompanied the veneration too. Once bema disappeared the procession became extinct. However the veneration of the gospel was continued doing it within the Madbaha, accompanied by the onitha.

The turgama is a general introduction to the gospel to be read. The turgama in the Taksa is a praise of the gospel and an extolling of the fruits of the word of God which the assembly is about to hear.

The procession of the gospel with the cross gives the reading of the gospel an interpretation which goes beyond the purpose of instruction through the Word. Qatraya views this second procession as a preparation for the passion. It is the solemn entry into Jerusalem. Qatraya says: "The cross is the mystery of the body which was crucified and the gospel is the mystery of the soul in which there is reasonableness. The gospel goes out with the solemnity with which our Lord entered Jerusalem riding on an ass." The reading is the mystery of all the words which our Lord said before he suffered. According to the Anonymous Author "the introit of the gospel from the sanctuary is the advent of our Lord from heaven into Jerusalem, and its reading is the doctrine and dispensation of that one after baptism. The descent of the gospel from the place of the lectors and its placing on the altar of the bema symbolize the crucifixion. Qatraya speaks of the procession back to the sanctuary as the passion procession. The removal of the cross with the gospel from the throne signifies the mystery of the arrest of Jesus and journey to the place of the crucifixion. The priest carrying the gospel stands for John the Evangelist. The deacon who carries the cross represents Simon of Cyrene who carried the cross for Jesus. The erection of the cross at the sanctuary door is the mystery of crucifixion. The separation of the gospel from the cross and its replacement on the other side is the mystery of the separation of Christ's soul from his body and its entry into Paradise. According to the Anonymous Author, the procession of

the gospel and cross back to the sanctuary symbolizes the ascension, the solemn entry of the Lord into heaven. Thus according to the commentators the gospel processions between the sanctuary and bema, together with the rites in connection with the reading, celebrate the central mysteries of the Christ event, the incarnation, the earthly ministry, the teaching of the Lord, the passion, death, resurrection and ascension.

j. Homily

Chaldeans call it karozutha (proclamation). According to Mar Abdišo it is the explanation of the gospel verses. Qatraya and Bar Lipah call it as the turgama after gospel. Pseudo-George of Arbel calls it *amorutha* meaning preaching.

Homily was an essential part of liturgy from ancient time onwards. Jesus himself preached in the synagogue after the reading of Sacred Scripture. Lk 4:16-30. We find Paul preaching after the reading in Synagogue. Acts 13:16-47. Thus the Christian practice of homily was directly due to the influence of Synagogal liturgy.

k. Karozutha

The Synagogal liturgy ended with a prayer called *shemoneh Esrah*, parallel to karozutha. Justin the Martyr (2nd cent.) testifies to the existence of litanical prayers in the liturgy. Originally the karozutha might have been for the catechumens. When there were catechumens there was the karozutha for them and then the blessing and dismissal. But later when the catechumens were not in the church a karozutha for the faithful took its place. The blessing prayer was made suitable for the faithful. Another possibility is that there was a karozutha for the catechumens before the dismissal and another one for the faithful after the dismissal. It is so in the Byzantine liturgy.

In the East Syrian tradition there are three sets of litanical prayers. The first one called *ba'utha* is composed of short intentions for the peace, the country, the climate, the Church etc. To each of which the people answer "Have mercy on us, O Lord". The second one called *karozutha* is a longer one with developed intentions explaining in a concrete way the mission of each category for which we pray. To each intention the congregation answers 'Amen'. This *karozutha* is given at present only in the Ramša of Sunday of the Great Lent. The

third is called 'Angel of Peace' litany. It begins asking the protection of the angel of peace and of mercy and then it continues praying for peace, love, forgiveness of sins and God's mercy. The people answer to these short intentions "From you, O Lord". In the present Syro-Malabar Raza there are only the first *karozutha* and the *ba'utha*. At the end of the *karozutha* and *ba'utha* there is a *slotha* recited by the celebrant, extending his hands. Extending hands in Christian liturgy symbolizes the cross. While praying as a mediator between God and the people of God it is an apt posture, like that of Moses. (Ex 17.11).

I. Prayer of Syameeda

The catechumens could not participate in the liturgy of the faithful, that is the liturgy of the sanctuary. Therefore, as a preparation for the liturgy of sanctuary they were sent out. They had a special blessing before the dismissal. The *syameeda* (imposition of hands) now found in the *taksa* was originally meant for those who were sent out. But when there were no more catechumens in the liturgical celebration, the blessing was made into a blessing of the faithful. Though the prayer is known as prayer of imposition of hands, the priest does not bless with the hands, rather he also bows down to receive the blessing. As the prayer itself suggests the assembly looks forward to God's blessing through his right hand (prayer on ferial days).

Preparation for the Qudasa (ANAPHORA)

The Syro-Malabar Qurbana has numerous rites as part of the preparation for the *Qudasa*. On the one hand there is material preparation such as preparing the altar with cross and gospel and preparing the mysteries and placing them on the altar. On the other, there is the spiritual preparation made through the dismissals, prostrations on the bema, lavabo, Creed, *karozutha*, and entrance procession with prostrations.

Material Preparation

a. Preparing the Altar with Cross and Gospel

The presence of cross and gospel symbolizing the presence of the Lord was considered inevitable during the Qudaša. Gabriel Qatraya and IšoYahb IV speak about the necessity of placing them on the altar during the Qudaša. In the Syro-Malabar Raza, at the end of the liturgy of the Word, there is a special rite of the deacons carrying the

cross and gospel to the altar. In the other forms of Qurbana the cross is carried back to the altar immediately after the reading.

b. Preparation of the Mysteries

East Syrian tradition, both in Mesopotamia and Malabar, had special rite for preparing the eucharistic bread. It is preserved now only by the Assyrian Church of the East (Nestorians).

Prayers of incensing the chalice and paten: The mention of the 'chalice of Aaron' and the 'paten of Aaron' shows the relation of the NT priesthood and NT sacrifice with the OT priesthood and OT sacrifice. The OT priesthood and sacrifice are the types of the NT priesthood and sacrifice.

Mixing of Wine and Water

According to Timothy II wine is mixed with water because everywhere it is done like that. The mixed wine is more useful and less harmless. Water is symbolic of the human nature, as signified by the water gushed out from the side of our Lord.

Although Gospels do not expressly mention this mixing of water and wine, the Eastern anaphoras of St. Basil, St. Mark, Nestorius, Chrysostom, and St. James have the mingling of wine in the account of institution.

Anaphora of Basil: The words over chalice: "He mixed the wine and water, gave thanks and blessed it, sanctified it, and gave it to his holy disciples". Anaphora of St. James: "In like manner the cup also, after they had supped, He mingled of wine and of water,"

We have numerous texts supporting the use of wine mingled with water. Irenaeus says: "The mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God and becomes the Eucharist of the body and blood of Christ." The old Egyptian offertory prayer: "...that this bread may become indeed thy holy body, and the mixture in this cup indeed thy precious blood." While referring to the Last Supper Theodore says: (Our Lord) chose, therefore, very fittingly bread as food, and the cup - which consists of wine mixed with water - as drink."

In the East the wine and the water made to represent the divine and human nature in Christ. In the Eastern liturgies, water forms a

goodly portion of the contents of the chalice. Among Syrian Jacobites it has been the practice from olden times to add an equal quantity of water to wine. East Syrian tradition would permit even up to three fourth water. In the West too, the Synod Tribur (895) required that the chalice contain two thirds wine and one third water. In the 13th cent. it was considered sufficient to insist that more wine be taken than water.

The Church has a theologically rich explanation for the mixing of water with the wine. Just as the wine receives the water in itself, so has Christ taken to himself us and our sins. Therefore, the mixing of water with the wine symbolises the intimate union of faithful with him to whom they have bound themselves in faith, and this union is so firm that nothing can sever it, just as the water can no longer be separated from the wine.” Cyprian Says: “When some one offers only wine, then the blood of Christ begins to exist without us; but when it is only water, then the people begin to exist without Christ.” The symbolism of blood and water coming out from Christ’s side was already prevalent in the Church as early as the time of St. Ambrose. Ambrose makes an additional reference to the water which came from the rock that was Christ. Dionysius Bar Salibi: “Why do we mix wine and water in the chalice, and not (offer) wine alone? We say, because blood and water flowed –and not blood alone- from Our Lord’s side, when it was pierced with a lance.” Moses Bar Kepha “Why we mingle the cup of wine and of water, and not of wine only? Because blood and water flowed from the side of our Lord when he was pierced with a spear, and not blood only; for with that blood water was also mingled, as John the evangelist has said: “There flowed from him blood and water.” Wine and water are mixed in the sacristy in equal quantities, then it was poured into the chalice. Some Jacobite books provide for a further quantity of water to be added to the mixture in the chalice with the monophysite formula: “Unite, Lord, God, this water with this wine as thou didst unite thy godhead with our manhood”.

In the foreground there was always the symbolism of Christ’s union with his Church. This was intensified by the statement in Rev 17:15, that in water the peoples are represented. According to middles Ages’ theological reflections, the commingling of the water shows pointedly that in the Mass not only Christ is offered up, but the Church too. The Council of Trent explicitly defended the practice and

threatened its rejection with an anathema. The Trullan Synod expressly condemned the custom of using unmixed wine in the Eucharist.

The Armenians eliminated the admixture of water as early as the sixth century, at any rate surely before 632. In 632 Emperor Heraclitus induced them to follow the custom of mixing water with wine. Jacob of Edessa reproached the Armenians: “Therefore they agree with the Jews in offering unleavened bread and unmixed wine.”

The Armenians used unmixed wine in order to remove from the eucharistic food of immortality any hint of corruption and death. Byzantines regarded the celebration of the Eucharist with unmixed wine as an “imperfect proclamation of the mysteries.”

Proleptic language

One of the most important issues pertaining to the preparation of the mysteries in the East Syrian tradition is the proleptic language used in liturgy. In the preparation at beth gazze, there are expressions like Body of Christ, and Blood of Christ. Similar expression is found also in the Onitha d raze of the First Sunday of Subbara, which is given in the taksa for the ordinary days. These expressions prompt us to think that the mysteries are already changed and are the real Body and Blood. How should we understand these expressions in the pre-anaphora? While analysing this text it may not be fair to examine these expressions as independent ones, found only in the East Syrian liturgy. There are other liturgies having similar expressions.

The invariable prayers at the offertory of the host and chalice in the present Roman missal (which are tenth-eleventh century Gallican intrusions into the original Roman offertory) speak of the unconsecrated bread and wine as ‘this immaculate victim’ and ‘the cup of salvation’, precisely as the Roman canon speaks of them after consecration.

The gifts presented by the faithful were carried by the deacons in a receptacle known as the “tower”, from its shape, which was inspired by the structure that covered the burial place of Christ in the basilica of Anastasis in Jerusalem.

The marks of veneration given to the gifts suggest a procession of the Blessed Sacraments, even with such words as “*mysterium dominici corporis*” (Mystery of the Lord’s body).

The Explanation of the Old Gallican liturgy even says that the Body of Christ is carried and His Blood offered. The gifts were already being looked upon, by anticipation, as what they would become through the consecration.

The word Host is used to mean the wafers used in liturgy. Host comes from Hostia, the sacrificial victim, referring first of all to Christ who had become for us a hostia, sacrificial lamb. Byzantines call the piece of bread selected in the proskomide and destined for consecration as “Lamb”. The Copts call the host “Lamb”. Syrians call the eucharistic bread Bukhra “ the first born”.

Even though the general trend of the liturgies is to see everything in the sacred time, which does not care about the chronological time, the use of the proleptic language in the East Syrian tradition is with a specific purpose. Its central concern is the commemoration of the paschal mystery of Christ. Analysing the commentaries on the East Syrian liturgy, it becomes clear that the pre-anaphora, too, has enormous concern for the celebration of the paschal mystery.

While talking about the offering, Apostolic Tradition connects it to the commemoration: “ Mindful of His death and Resurrection we offer you the bread and the Cup” “Doing therefore the anamnesis of his death and resurrection we offer to thee bread and the cup making Eucharist to thee because thou hast made us worthy to stand before thee and minister as priests to thee.”

The Byzantine Great Entrance and the Cherubicon are parallel to the East Syrian transfer of the Mysteries and onitha d’ raze. The text of the Cherubicon causes some problem. “Let us, who here mystically present the cherubim in singing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-giving Trinity, let us now lay aside every earthly care.”

Maximus Confessor speaks of the Great Entrance as the “entrance of the holy mysteries.” Nicolas Cabasilas (14 cent.) interprets the Great Entrance and the many accompanying manifestations of reverence by the people that were already customary in his day as referring to the sacramental offering of the sacrifice. The phrase “to receive the King of All” is usually taken to mean “to welcome Christ entering now in the procession under the symbols of bread and wine” According to Taft, “the chant does not refer only to the procession,

but is an introduction to the whole Eucharistic action from anaphora to communion. It instructs the faithful that they who are about to sing thrice holy hymn of the Cherubicon (the sanctus of the anaphora) must lay aside all worldly care (sursum corda) to prepare to receive Christ (in communion).”

Theodore finds still other reasons why he may use the proleptic language. Wine symbolizes blood. Theodore cites the following texts from the Sacred Scripture to mention this symbolism. “He gave him to drink the blood of grapes” (Deut 32:14) “He shall wash his garments in wine and his clothes in the blood of grapes.” (Gen 49:11) Narsai says: “The altar is a symbol of our Lord’s tomb, without doubt; and the bread and wine are the body of our Lord which was embalmed and buried.”

“The bread on the paten and the wine in the cup are a symbol of His death. A symbol of His death these (the deacons) bear upon their hands; and when they have set it on the altar and covered it they typify His burial.” Bar Zo’bi seems to offer a reasonable solution to the problem. He says: “Till the descent of the Holy Spirit the bread and wine are the symbol.”

The observations of the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Churches on “The Order of the Holy mass of the Syro-Malabar Church 1981” says: “Liturgical texts that use “Body and Blood” to refer to the gifts before consecration, are not thereby advancing a theological thesis. This sort of language is common in the pre-anaphora and throughout the Christian East.”

The Antiochene liturgy during the arrangement of the bread has this: “He was led as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb so he opened not his mouth in his humiliation.”

The different liturgies call the eucharistic mysteries as sacred body and sacred blood. But they do not mean that they are already ‘body and blood.’ They are called like that either because they are somehow related to the paschal mystery or because of their sacrificial characteristics. The proleptic language in the East Syrian Qurbana shows that since during the preparation, transfer and the placing of the mysteries, we commemorate the passion and death of Christ, the mysteries of bread and wine symbolise the body and blood of Christ

c. Transfer of Mysteries and Onitha d' Raze

The transfer of Mysteries is a liturgical action in the eucharistic liturgy, which had already evolved into a rite of great splendour and symbolic significance by the time of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Narsai. The transfer of Mysteries had originally been nothing but the simple placing of Mysteries on the altar, an action devoid of any ritual significance.

The commentators speak of the symbolism of the rite of the transfer of Mysteries and of placing them on the altar. Theodore considers the transfer of Mysteries like the passion procession. Christ is being led to his passion by the invisible host of ministry represented by the deacons. The placing of the Mysteries on the altar represents the placing of Christ in the sepulcher. The linens spread on the altar by the deacons represent the burial clothes of our Lord. Homage is shown to the body lying on the altar by the deacons standing on both sides. Once the Mysteries are on the altar, the reference is to the burial and consequent guarding by the deacons as angels. Theodore, however, is not truly concerned about the re-enactment of the history as such. In the celebration of the Eucharist, an event that transcends ordinary time, there is no question of the repetition of the history. A remarkable example for this is the role attributed to the deacons who lead Christ to passion. They represent the heavenly host and not the Jews. Narsai has almost the same interpretation of Theodore with regard to the transfer of Mysteries, seeing it as a passion procession. The veil over the Mysteries signifies the tomb stone.

The anthem sung during the transfer of Mysteries is the 'onitha d'raze (anthem of the mysteries). It is parallel to the *Cherubicon*, and *Hagiology*, the anthems of the Great Entrance of Byzantine and Armenian liturgies, and to the *antiphona ad offertorium* of the Roman liturgy. The Armenian *Hagiology* is similar in content to the variable part of East Syrian 'onitha d'raze, of the first Sunday of Annunciation. Theodore and Narsai do not mention the anthem. From Gabriel Qatraya onwards the commentators and the manuscripts of the liturgical texts prescribe the 'onitha d'raze at the transfer of Mysteries. According to the commentators and manuscripts, this 'onitha is to be sung thrice. Twice with Psalm verses and the third time with 'Glory be to the Father'. Now the first two are variable.

According to Qatraya, this 'onitha is the mystery of the ineffable praises the holy angels and the souls of the Just offered at the hour when they entered into Paradise with the soul of our Lord. However, following the interpretation of Theodore, Qatraya interprets the 'onitha also as the mystery of the praises of the angels and of men at the hour of the suffering of our Lord when they saw the earth shaken. According to the Anonymous this anthem commemorates the mysteries of the death and resurrection of the Lord.

Prayer of the Placing of the Mysteries on the Altar

The mysteries are placed on the altar by the archdeacon. The placing is done with the glorification of the Blessed Trinity. This prayer suggests that the celebration of the Qurbana is principally concerned with the commemoration of the paschal mystery of Christ. Following the interpretation of the ancient commentaries of the Qurbana we may find in the prayer and the raising of the mysteries during the prayer the symbolism of Lord's the death on the cross.

"May Christ accept..": Christ is the offerer, offering and recipient. Since Christ is the mediator between God and the Church this expression is meaningful. (cf. *Mediator Dei* 20).

d. Is it the Offertory?

The gestures and the prayer of the transfer of mysteries and their placing on the altar would suggest that it is the rite of offertory. However, in the East Syrian Qurbana this rite is not the offertory. The real offertory is during the anaphora (Qudaša). Therefore, it is inappropriate to sing songs of offertory instead of the 'onitha d'raze. In the Latin liturgy the parallel rite was known as the offertory. But insisting on the fact that the Eucharistic prayer is the occasion of offering, the title 'offertory' is corrected as 'preparation of the Gifts'.

Spiritual Preparation

The following are the elements of the spiritual preparation for the Qudaša: Dismissal of the Unworthy, Prostrations on the bema, Lavabo, Prayer at the door of the sanctuary, Creed, Karozutha of the deacon, Procession of Entry into Sanctuary with Prayer, Veneration of the Altar.

a. Dismissal of the Unworthy

The taksa speaks of three groups of people as dismissed: the non-baptized, the non-signed and those who do not receive the mysteries. The sign of life meant according to Narsai and Timothy II, the sign with which the penitent was signed and admitted again into the eucharistic community. It seems that Qatraya and Anonymous Author meant by this the pre-baptismal anointing. Here the expression 'listeners' meant the catechumens or unworthy who were asked to go out to the courtyard (narthex) and to watch the outer door of the church.

The dismissal rite aims not only at the catechumens. Those who are unworthy of the Eucharist (e.g. those who are in the situation of grave sins and without repentance; those who will not and cannot receive communion) are intended in the dismissal rite. Dismissal rite is part of spiritual preparation. The liturgical assembly prepares itself as the community of the baptized and signed, those worthy to partake of the mysteries. It is not enough that the unworthy people go out, those who remain have to prepare themselves by purifying their hearts.

b. Prostrations on the Bema

The rite of prostrations on the bema as it now exists in the Syro-Malabar rite has no parallel elsewhere. However some of the elements of this rite are found in the other East Syrian traditions also. Qatraya speaks about the deacons going out of sanctuary to salute the priests coming down from the bema. The Anonymous Author speaks of the salutations of deacons and the prostrations of the priests. The present rite might have become prevalent in the Malabar liturgy only from the 15th cent.

The rite of prostrations and salutations is historically related to the *accessus ad altare* for the consecration. The priest selected to consecrate was saluted by the deacons; from the part of the priest he expresses his humility and unworthiness to consecrate. The prostrations are gestures expressing the unworthiness, and the deep respect towards the altar and the sense of the *mysterium tremendum*. The *onitha* sung at this time makes explicit reference to *accessus ad altare* and consecration through the invoking of the Holy Spirit. The present gesture of the celebrant blessing the veil may be a

substitute of the original blessing given to the people. The *onitha* seems to suggest that consecration is being rehearsed. The *onitha* reminds the priest of his holy duty at the altar, namely the consecration.

c. Lavabo

According to Theodore, it is washing away of the remembrance of trespasses. Qatraya sees the washing of the hands by the priests as a sign of interior purification.

d. Prayer at the Door of the Sanctuary

The prayer declares the true disposition required for the entry into sanctuary. Purity of heart is an essential condition. True faith is a must for celebrating the Qurbana, which is a spiritual and rational sacrifice.

e. Creed

When the priests are already in the sanctuary, they profess the faith before anything else. Narsai says: "At the time of the mysteries her children thunder forth with their faith, reciting it with mouth and heart without doubting." According to Abdišo, he who does not have the true faith is unworthy of the mysteries. The sanctuary being the symbol of heaven, it is quite relevant theologically that the profession of faith comes at the entry into the sanctuary. It is the faith that enables the entry into heaven. The East Syrian tradition has the Creed without the addition of *filioque*.

f. Procession of Entry and Veneration of the Altar by the Celebrant and Karozutha of the Deacon

The formal entry into the sanctuary is made by a procession with a prayer and bowing down three times. The prayer before the Creed contains the request for the worthiness to enter the holy of holies. The karozutha of the deacon at the time of the procession reminds that the liturgical assembly, when it gathers around the altar, finds itself in close relationship with all other members of the Church, living and dead. The charity of the liturgical assembly is not restricted to the time and space of a particular celebration. The congregation is requested to remember in prayer the Fathers, priests, deacons and all

the departed faithful of the Church. When the priest reaches the altar he makes prostrations before the altar. The prostrations before the altar is well attested from Narsai onwards. Narsai says: "Like Jacob he worships three times and three; and then he draws near to kiss the tomb of our Lord". According to him the prostrations are due to the special frame of mind of the chosen priest. The priest who is to officiate stands reverently, with great fear and trembling.

Qudasa (Anaphora)

1. Meaning of Qudasa and Parallel Terms

Different terms for the central part of the Eucharistic liturgy: Eucharistic Prayer (Latin tradition), Anaphora (Greek tradition), Qudaša (Syriac tradition), Qurbana (Syriac tradition), Canon (Latin tradition).

Anaphora is a Greek word meaning offering, coming from the verb *anaphero* (I carry up, I offer up (in sacrifice)- I offer up (to God on High). Anaphora is the Greek name for the Eucharistic prayer of the Holy Mass (Holy Qurbana). The oldest name for this prayer is *eucharistia* (thanksgiving). The word Eucharist comes from the Greek word 'eucharistein' which means thanksgiving. It is because of the predominance of the themes of praise and thanksgiving that the whole anaphora prayer is called as Eucharistic prayer. The eucharistic sacrifice is a sacrifice or offering of praise and thanksgiving. It may rightly be called as anaphora or Qurbana of Eucharist. Roman term for anaphora many centuries was canon. In the *Ordo Messae* (Roman Missal, 1969) the title 'Eucharistic Prayer' is used.

The Syriac term Qurbana meaning 'offering' corresponds to the Greek term anaphora. However, the preferred term for eucharistic prayer in the Syriac tradition is Qudaša. Thus the East Syrian Eucharistic prayers are called First Qudaša (Qudaša of Mar Addai and Mar Mari = AM), Second Qudaša (Qudaša of Mar Theodore), and Third Qudaša (Qudaša of Mar Nestorius). The word Qudaša means sanctification or consecration. The term Qudaša has both anabatic and katabatic dimensions. In the anabatic dimension it refers to sanctification or benediction of God (Praise and thanks rendered to God). In the katabatic dimension it means the sanctification of mysteries, and that of the assembly. In the sense of benediction the

Eucharistic prayer has intimate relation to the Jewish prayer of blessing. Thus we find the ancient Christian anaphoras as adaptations of the Birkat-ha-mazon.

We can find models of the primitive Christian anaphoras or eucharistic prayers in the eucharistic liturgies of Didache, the Eucharist described by Justin the Martyr, description of Eucharist in the Acts of Judas Thomas, the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus and AM. The eucharistic prayer of Didache may be called the oldest eucharistic prayer in the Christian tradition. It surely originated in the atmosphere of Jewish worship, and specifically in the world of Jewish blessings for community meals. According to T.J. Talley, "it does not appear improbable that Didache (Ch 10) is, or is meant to seem, a careful adaptation of the Birkat-ha-mazon to the requirements of the Lord's supper, which has become *zebah todah*: the eucharistic sacrifice."

The Apology of Justin (2nd cent.) shows how the Christian Eucharist is a benediction. Justin gives the following description of the anaphora: "Then bread and a cup of wine mixed with water are brought to him who presides over the brethren. He takes them and offers prayers glorifying the Father of the universe through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and he utters a lengthy Eucharist because the Father has judged us worthy of these Mysteries. When the prayers and Eucharist are finished, all the people present give their assent with an "Amen". Amen in Hebrew means "so be it" (Apology I.65). In the apology of Justin we have the first example of the word "Eucharist", being used not simply for the prayer of thanksgiving but also for the bread over which prayer of thanksgiving has been said.

2. Jewish Berakah and OT Foundation of Christian Eucharistia

Berakah or benediction is the basic ingredient of Jewish worship. These benedictions are utterances of gratitude for God's goodness, for the privilege of partaking of the gifts of God, and experiencing his many mercies. They are also acts of admiration, praise and thanksgiving by which a Jew blessed God for some particular marvel. These blessings recur in all parts of Jewish worship both private and public.

Two requirements for every benediction were that it should mention the name of God and that it should confess the kingship of God. So the introductory words were formulated thus: "praised art thou, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe". Benedictions usually began

with a formula of praise, “praised art thou”, followed by the motive for this praise which was an anamnesis of the “*mirabilia Dei*” - the wonderful works of God. Every benediction concluded with a final doxology. Thus all benedictions consisted of these three elements: benediction or praise, anamnesis, and doxology.

The prayers of benedictions are taken into the Christian Eucharist and rewritten in terms of the new covenant. The best example and witness of this fact is the prayers of Didache and AM. In AM too the prayers begin with the praise of God the creator. AM is composed of different berakah and each one concludes with a doxology.

Since eucharistic prayers bear all the characteristic marks of the Jewish prayers of blessings (berakah) J.P. Audet qualifies these benedictions as the true parent of Christian eucharistia.

Distant roots of the Christian anaphora may be found in the literary genre of Old Testament called *todah* (thanksgiving offering) explained in Neh 9:6-37). This *todah* would be a confession, in the sense of a creed, an admission of failure or a complaint, composed of a celebratory commemorative part (an anamnesis) and petitionary part (an epiclesis). God’s great acts on behalf of God’s people are recalled, and this people now ask that God accomplish for them a specific request. Inserted into one of the parts is a pertinent scriptural passage, an embolism, that has to do with God’s promise. In the Christian anaphora, this embolism would be the institution narrative.

3. AM and Jewish Prayers

We can see clear parallelism between AM and the *Shema*, the Jewish synagogal prayer. *Shema* was enclosed in a framework of three benedictions. (Cf. Dt 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Num 15:37-41). *Shema* is practically a profession of faith and the basic assertion of the Jewish Law. The recitation of it was preceded by two benedictions and followed by one benediction. The first section of anaphora leading up to *sanctus* is closely related to the first benediction preceding *Shema*. This aspect of praise associates men with angels who praise God without end. The *post- sanctus* part of AM is centered on the redemption in Christ. So too the second and third benedictions of *Shema* have respectively elevation and redemption or salvation as their themes. Besides these parallelisms in general themes, AM and

these benedictions have several similar expressions. It is clear that AM has borrowed much of its content and expression from the benediction of *Shema*.

AM has borrowed many of its expressions from *Tefillah*, a series of benedictions and short prayers of petition. It includes the major elements of praise, thanksgiving, confession and petition. This prayer is also known as *Amidah* - prayer recited standing. The first three benedictions of Tefillah are very similar to the opening part of eucharistic prayer till the sanctus.

L.Bouyer says that AM and the Apostolic Tradition directly follow the pattern of Birkat-ha-mazon, the benedictions recited after the Jewish meals. These benedictions contain the general themes of praise, thanksgiving and supplication.

The Jewish Christians who once used to recite the benediction of Birkat-ha-Mazon and Tefillah as well as Shema should have taken elements from all these prayers as they gathered together for eucharistic celebrations.

To the fundamental themes of Birkat-ha-mazon (praise, anamnesis and supplication) elements were added from the benediction of Shema and Tefillah to form AM. For its content and structure, AM is equally indebted to these Jewish prayers.

4. Important Ancient Anaphoras

1. Anaphora mentioned in Didache
2. Anaphora mentioned in the Apology of Justin the Martyr
3. Anaphora given in *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus
4. Anaphora given in *Apostolic Constitutions* VII. 25-26.
5. Anaphora of Addai and Mari
6. Third Anaphora of St. Peter (Sharaar) of Maronites
7. Egyptian anaphora of Serapion
8. Alexandrian Anaphora of St. Mark
9. Anaphora of St. James
10. Anaphora of St. Basil
11. Anaphora of St. John Chrysostom
12. Roman Canon

5. East Syrian Qudašas (Anaphoras)

East Syrian Qurbana has three Qudasas: Qudasa of Addai and Mari (AM), Qudasa of Theodore (AT), Qudasa of Nestorius (AN). It was Mar Aba I (540-552) who introduced the Qudasas of Mar Theodore and Mar Nestorius into the East Syrian liturgy. Traditionally there were more Qudasas. The *Chronicle of Seert* witnesses to a Qudasa attributed to Mar Ephrem. Assemani testifies to a Qudaša attributed to Mar Barsauma. Ibn at Tayyib (11th cent) speaks of an Qudaša of Chrysostom used in East Syrian Church. A Qudasa is ascribed to Diodore of Tarsus according to the evidence from the decrees of the Synod of Diamper. Mar Iso Yahb III (650-659) has reduced the number of Qudasas to three - AM, AT and AN and he fixed the seasons of their celebrations.

AM- Celebrated from Qyamta to Qudas Etta.

AT- Celebrated from Subara to Sunday of Hosanna

AN- five times in the year: on Denha, on Friday of John Baptist, on Memorial day of the Greek Doctors, Wednesday of the Bautha (rogation) of Ninevites and Pesaha Thursday.

Among the three Qudasas the most ancient one is AM. According to Louis Bouyer, “everything leads us to believe that this prayer is the most ancient Christian eucharistic composition to which we can have access today. Most scholars consider AM to have originated in the third century. The original title of AM is “Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari”. Here the term Apostles may refer to the fact of the dedication of the anaphora to the Apostles. Though not composed by Addai and Mari, the anaphora of the Apostles might have been handed down to the Churches of Mesopotamian and Persian traditions by Addai and Mari, the Apostles of Edessa and Persia.

6. Structure and Theology of AM

By the time of Iso Yahb I (+595) the AM is generally divided into four gehanta cycles, each of which consisting of kusapa, “pray brothers” formula, gehanta, and qanona. G^hanta is the prayer of inclination recited in low voice, stretching out the hands and inclining the head.

a. First G^hanta Cycle

In the present structure the prayer request and kušapa are found before the anaphora proper. Originally the prayer request was addressed to the fellow priests. According to Narsai, the priest asks the deacons to pray for him. In the present Syro-Malabar Qurbana the prayer request is addressed to the congregation. The response of the assembly points to the need of priest’s life becoming a life according to the Qurbana. The Qurbana has to become a reality in the life of the priest. He should become one fulfilling the will of God, as Jesus fulfilled the will of the Father. The response to the prayer requests in the third and fourth g^hanta cycles points to the eschatological fulfillment of the priestly existence of the priest.

The kusapa is a devotional prayer of the celebrant, recited in low voice. The kušapas in the Qudasa are of later origin and hence they are not explained by the commentators. Kusapa expresses the unworthiness of the priest and the assembly for the celebration of the mysteries. Confessing his own sinfulness and that of the assembly the priest prays to God for the worthiness to celebrate the mysteries. The Kusapa prayers insist on the essential relation between the celebration of liturgy and a life of holiness. The Kusapa of the first g^hanta cycle expresses the eschatological dimension of the Qurbana.

The first gehanta is a preparatory prayer for offering the sacrifice. There is thanksgiving for the abundant graces that God has showered on us. This gehanta is common to the first and third Qudasas. The priest thanks God and asks for his help to minister the holy mysteries. Usually the gehanta is recited bowing and with stretched out hands and in low voice. However, according to Narsai, the first gehanta is said without stretched hands as the celebrant has not yet received the confidence. The gehanta is concluded with a qanona. Here it is a doxology to the Trinity. Qanona is usually said with a loud voice.

b. Salutation and Exchange of Peace

The peace is depicted as the peace of Christ. It is the same biblical formula (peace be with you) as used by the Lord (Jn 20:19). It signifies the purification of the hearts of the Eucharistic assembly from hatred and enmity and the reconciliation before the offering, according to the Lord’s command (Mt 5:23-24).

For Theodore, it is the profession of mutual concord and love and a reminder of reconciliation with the neighbour if there is enmity with him. According to Narsai, “it behoves him that gives peace to his brother in the church to wash his heart from all hatred and anger and lust.”

The exchange of peace as a sign of reconciliation and respect was in existence even from Old Testament times onwards. For the Jews it was a courteous preliminary to any ceremonial meal. Thus it might have been observed in the earliest Eucharistic celebrations of the apostolic period also. St. Paul speaks of the kiss of peace as a sign of communion (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20).

According to Justin and Hippolytus (*Ap. Tradition*) the kiss of peace is before the placing of the gifts on the altar. In the Eastern Churches the exchange of peace was done after the placing of gifts on the altar as a preparation for the Eucharistic prayer. In the African Church and Roman Church its position is shifted to before the Communion.

In the response of the assembly “with you and your spirit”, the expression “your spirit” refers to the Spirit whom the celebrant has received at his ordination.

In Malabar the rite of the exchange of peace has been very significant. The giving of *kaikasturi* was an important element of reconciliation. There has been the practice of giving *kaikasturi* at the beginning and end of the liturgy of hours.

c. Diphtychs

The ancient tradition of both Western and Eastern Churches testifies to the existence of diptychs (reading out the name of the living and dead) in the liturgies. Diphtychs is the list of the names of the dead and the living who are to be specially remembered in liturgy. (Diphtichon = wooden tablet). There were two such wooden tablets. Deacon used to read the tablets on Sundays and feast days. The recital of the names of the offerers in the Eucharist in Spain is testified by the 29th canon of the council of Elvira (305-306 AD). Similar practice was in vogue in Rome too. Pope Innocent I (401-417) advocated the recitation of the names in the canon rather than before the preface. Prayer Book of Serapion testifies to the recital of the names of the dead at

the prayers of intercession after the Institution Narrative. We find use of diptychs in the Churches of Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria and Antioch in the 4th cent.

The East Syrian Church called the diptychs ‘the Book of the living’ or ‘the Book of life’ in the early period and later ‘the Book of the Living and the Dead’. They were read in the Qurbana formerly by the celebrant himself and now by the deacon (or one of the priests). At present the Chaldeans and the Syro-Malabarians recite the last part of the diptychs only, beginning with “And for all the Catholicos (Patriarch..).

The diptychs makes it clear that the merit of the Eucharist is not only for the living, but also for the dead. Narsai says: “the dead and the living the Church commemorates in that hour, that she may declare that the living and the dead are profited by the oblation.”

d. Karozutha (Diaconal admonition)

After the recital of the diptychs, the deacon makes an admonition to the faithful to instill a proper disposition of prayer and reverence before the respectful mysteries that are going to be celebrated. Deacon invites the attention of the assembly to one of the most important dispositions required during the Qurbana, especially during the Qudaša. We ought to raise our minds and hearts to heaven. While making the commemoration of the mysteries and rendering praise and thanks to God on account of these mysteries, we have to transcend our terrestrial manner of perceiving the reality. The mysteries may be experienced only if we find ourselves in the heavenly communion. In fact, the assembly has very little to say during the Qudasa. The assembly is asked to meditate over the mysteries accompanying the prayers of the priest in a silent manner. Thus the invitation of the deacon is to join the heavenly liturgy by means of contemplating the mystery celebrated.

e. Kusapa and Unveiling the Mysteries

During the Karozutha of the deacon the priest says a kusapa supplicating the divine assistance to make him worthy to offer the sacrifice. The commentators do not speak about this kusapa. Having

finished the kušapa, the celebrant lifts up the sosapa from the mysteries and folds it around them. Narsai testifies to this uncovering of the mysteries. But according to him it does not symbolise the resurrection. However, Timothy II and Mar Abdiso interpret this rite as symbolising the removal of the tombstone of Lord's tomb.

f. Incensing

The incense is blessed in the name of Trinity. The prayer at the incensing shows that it is for the glorification of God and for the remission of the sins of the flock. Theodore and Narsai do not mention it. Qatraya, Abraham Bar Lipah, Bar Zo'bi comment on the incensing. For Qatraya, the incensing at this moment refers to the mystery of the sweetness of perfume with which the body of Jesus was embalmed. According to Chaldean, Kelaita, Jesira-Alqosh manuscripts after the incensing the celebrant was blessed with incense.

g. Preface Dialogue

Pauline Salutation: The initial blessing is based on the Pauline Salutation found in 2 Cor 13:13. The earliest witness to the dialogue prayer of the anaphora is the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, reflecting the Roman tradition. It runs as "the Lord be with you" by the celebrant and the response of the people as "And with your spirit". This simple form was used in Egyptian tradition also. According to Robert Taft, the original form of greeting was "Peace to you/all" in the Eastern Churches except Egyptian and perhaps East Syrian traditions.

The East Syrians introduced the Trinitarian form of greeting, most probably under the influence of Mar Theodore. They changed the Pauline salutation form by substituting 'you' with 'us' and adding 'now and always and for ever'. Originally (as we find in the commentaries of Theodore and Narsai) the greeting was a blessing on the people and now it is a blessing of the mysteries.

The preface dialogue as a whole has a model in the invitation to thank God, in the Jewish prayer, Birkat-ha-mazon. The head of the family says as an invitation: "Let us thank God, our Lord."

Let your minds be on high: It is an exhortation to be attentive in the Eucharistic prayer. We have to understand the prayers and gestures

not in their physical sense, rather they have to be understood in spiritual sense. The symbolic meaning should become the criterion for our understanding of the anaphora. Theodore explains that we should elevate our minds to heaven because the glorified Christ is in heaven. It is an invitation to join the heavenly liturgy.

Apostolic Tradition and Latin liturgy have the expression 'hearts' instead of minds. Theodore and Narsai use "minds". In the East Syrian tradition 'mind' came into use perhaps by influence of Theodore. Raising the arms is symbolic of raising heart to God. The expression points out the necessary relation of our liturgy with the heavenly liturgy.

Towards you, God of Abraham, and Isaac: This is a Jewish formula. Among the commentators the response to the invitation "to lift up your minds" varies. In Theodore, it is: "To thee, O Lord". Narsai: "Unto Thee Lord, are our minds uplifted, the God of Abraham and Issaac and Jacob, the glorious King".

The Qurbana is offered to God, the Lord of all: In Theodore the admonition of the priest is: "Let us thank the Lord". But Narsai, Anonymous Author, Bar Zo'bi, and Abdišo have formulae similar to the present text. Macomber concludes that the original formula might have been: "Let us give thanks and adore and glorify the God, the Lord of all". The offering of the sacred mysteries, that is the Qurbana, is that which we offer to God. The prayer of the East Syriac Qurbana means that what we offer to God is not just praise and thanksgiving, but the mysteries of the body and blood of Christ and along with them the prayers of praise and thanksgiving. The East Syrian expression, according to Timothy II, of the Eucharistia It is similar to the admonition in *Apostolic Tradition* is in opposition to old pagan offerings. The oblation is offered to God, not to idols, nor to an angel (opposed to material offering).

It is right and just: Theodore gives this explanation: "In this they confess that we certainly ought to do it for two reasons: because of the greatness of God, who granted us things such as these, and in order to show that it is right on the part of those who were granted such benefits not to be ungrateful to the one by whom they were vouchsafed unto them." The answer of the people may explain the first words of the following g^ehanta.

The preface dialogue taken as a whole reveals the character of the Christian sacrifice. Its symbolic meaning has to be a real experience for the liturgical assembly. In the place of the Old Testament offering it is a spiritual offering, a pure sacrifice. Mind and heart of the worshipper, that is the entire personality of the worshipper, are to be offered in this pure sacrifice. Opposed to the pagan sacrifices, it is offered to God, the God who revealed himself to Patriarchs, the king of Israel, the one who liberated Israel.

h. Second G^ehanta Cycle

Kusapa: The second Kusapa in AM asks for the confidence in order to offer sacrifice in purity, and prays that God gives the faithful mutual love and love for all others too. The Kusapa of AT is the same. But in that of AN, the priest confesses his sins and his unworthiness and begs that the mysteries be for the good of the Church and of the world and for the remission of sins.

G^ehanta: The second g^ehanta is a praise, thanksgiving and worship of the Trinity, commemorating the creation of visible and invisible beings. This gehanta refers to the worship of God the Trinity by the creatures and heavenly hosts. The praise of divine name is an East Syrian specialty, related to the Jewish tradition.

After mentioning the heavenly liturgy the celebrant recites the qanona, crying and praising without ceasing and calling one another and saying.

i. Sanctus

The *sanctus* is the response of the assembly to qanona of the celebrant. The sanctus, without the addition of Hosanna and *benedictus* is commented by Theodore, Narsai, the Anonymous Author, Bar Zo'bi and Abdiso.

This prayer is found both in the Jewish and Christian liturgies, even though there are some differences as regards the text of the prayer. In the Jewish prayers the recitation of 'Holy' was called 'Qedushah' and in Christian liturgy, with its additions it became the sanctus. Many of the liturgiologists consider Qedushah as the antecedent of the Christian sanctus. Christians took it over from the Jewish liturgy and incorporated it in eucharistic prayers. Qedushah was a prayer in which the community of Israel used to proclaim the

holiness of God together with the heavenly hosts. The Qedushah of Synagogue liturgy was a combination of Is 6 and Ex 3:12. A third part was added later as a climax of this proclamation of God's holiness. It was taken from the Psalms. "The Lord will reign for ever your God, Ozion from age to age. Alleluia" (Ps 146:10). Many scholars consider Qedushaha Yotser (Qedushah of the early morning service) as the most likely source of the sanctus.

"Hosanna to the son of David" is a differentiating element of the sanctus in the East Syrian and Mozarabic liturgies. In AM the sanctus comes between the introductory part of praise of God in second gehanta and the prayer of thanksgiving for redemption in the third gehanta. The preceding and succeeding parts are intimately related to the sanctus as its focus of attention. The introductory praise affirms that the name of God is worthy of praise and thanksgiving. It is followed by an explanation of the glorification of the name of God by the heavenly hosts. According to the Jewish theology, the recitation of the sanctus unites the earthly community to the heavenly one.

j. Third gehanta cycle

Kusapa: The kusapa of the third g^ehanta is influenced by Is 6. First, it continues the theme of sanctus on the Trinity, then the priest acknowledges how impure he himself and the people are and how awful is the place where he stays, and he asks for the purifying and sanctifying grace of God.

Prayer Request: The celebrant asks the prayer of the assembly for the completion of the Qurbana by him. The response of the people reveals that the Qurbana is offered by the priest on his behalf, on behalf of the people and on behalf of the whole world.

Third Gehanta: It consists of a glorification of God with the angelic hymn and a thanksgiving for the incarnation and the salvation. The present structure of the third G^ehanta is a modified one, inserting the Institution Narrative (IN).

Original structure: "And with these heavenly hosts we give Thee thanks O My lord..."

We also your weak, frail and miserable servants, because you have done us great favours.... etc". Originally, it seems that, there was no IN. Later it was introduced. The Chaldeans have it with an

introductory g^hanta borrowed from AN. In the Syro-Malabar Qurbana the IN is introduced by a part of AN.

In almost all Qudasas, the post sanctus part remembers the economy of salvation in detail. Generally it includes a thanksgiving for the advent of Christ, for his incarnation, passion, death and resurrection and ascension. The third g^hanta in AM is a thanksgiving for the effects of redemption, especially immortality and forgiveness of sins without enumerating the historical events of salvation history.

k. Institution Narrative: The Institution Narrative which has been considered a very important part of the Eucharistic celebration is absent in early Manuscripts of AM. Its absence has raised many problems. Scholars are of different views concerning it. There are some who are of opinion that this anaphora originally contained no IN. While some try to prove an early existence of the words of institution which might have been lost through textual modification. Another probability suggested is that the institution narrative was recited by heart, but not written down due to “*disciplina arcani*” the desire of the early Christians to protect the sacred words from profanation. But there seems to be no convincing argument or historical evidence to admit the early existence of an Institution Narrative in AM. Today there is a general consensus among the scholars that there was originally no IN in AM.

The fact of the possible absence of IN in AM forces us to inquire about the place of the IN in the early Eucharistic liturgies. According to the scholars the IN took on a fixed form in the early Church, due to liturgical use and that in turn influenced the formation of the accounts of Lord’s Supper. But there is no sufficient proof for the existence of IN as part of early eucharistic prayers. “The evidence of liturgies compels the conclusion that before the second century the Eucharist itself did not necessarily contain such formula or even a reference to the last supper.” According to John F. Baldovin, the vast majority of prayers that precede the fourth century have no account of the words of Jesus at the Last Supper. These prayers include the *Didache*; the East Syrian Anaphora of Addai and Mari; the Egyptian Papyrus, Strasbourg Gk 254; *Apostolic Constitutions* VII.25-26; the *Acts of John* 85, 86, 109, 110; and the *Acts of Thomas* 27, 49, 50, 133, 158. Even the fourth century prayers described by Cyril of Jerusalem

(*Mystagogical Catechesis* 5) and Theodore of Mopsuestia (*Baptismal Homily* 4-5) arguably contain no institution narrative (“Eucharistic Prayer”, in *New SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, 194).

But some scholars are of opinion that the words of institution were part of Eucharistic liturgy even from the early first century. The liturgical text of *Didache* contains a scheme of eucharistic celebration in which the IN does not form part of the eucharistic prayers but is inserted just before the Communion. Then the words “this is my body” and “this is my blood” could be the ‘words of Communion’ and not the ‘words of consecration’. This is in accordance with the procedure at the last supper where Christ first gave thanks over the bread and wine and distributed them saying, “This is my body” etc.

In Apostolic Tradition we find for the first time the IN included as part of eucharistic prayer. According to Gregory Dix the IN was gradually incorporated into eucharistic prayers in order to emphasise that the Church always acts in accordance with the command of Christ, and that this is the source of our belief in the eucharistic celebration. The insertion of the IN would have seen at first only a reminder to the community of the full meaning of the rite. Narration of Institution was not part of the eucharistic prayers as long as the meaning of the rite as ‘memorial’ was clearly understood and taken for granted.

Chaldeans inserted the IN after the first verse of third g^hanta. The addition of IN is made along with part of a Christological prayer from AN. The beginning of the g^hanta is changed. In Malabar tradition we find the IN before Fraction and after the epiclesis. The Taksas of Roz, Diamper, 1774, 1844, 1912 (Puthenpally), 1928 give IN before Fraction and the prayer ‘Glory to your holy name’. The expression “I am the living bread which came down from heaven” (Jn 6:15) may have prompted the insertion of IN in this place.

Mar Joseph is considered to have made the insertion of IN in Malabar liturgy. Vat Syr Codex 66 (written by Mar Joseph) has IN on folio 101. There is a note saying that it should be recited first before the Pauline salutation, i.e., before the litany of repentance.

In Theodore’s commentary IN is found after fraction. The early Malabar practice (as reflected in Vat Syr codex 66) of saying the IN

on the broken bread has the biblical basis. This is my body which is broken for you (1 Cor 11:24).

Blessing of the Mysteries during IN: Blessing signifies sanctification of mysteries. It is done with the sign of cross. It associates the bread and wine to the crucifixion.

l. Admonition of Deacon

After the qanona the deacon admonishes the assembly: “Pray in your minds, peace be with us”. This is witnessed by Narsai, the Anonymous Author and Abdišo. The admonition continues to say that our liturgy is one with the heavenly liturgy in which the seraphim glorify and sing praises in loud unending hymns to the Body that is prepared and the chalice that is mixed.

m. Fourth Gehanta Cycle

Kusapa: The kusapa before the fourth gehanta serves as the intercessory part of the eucharistic celebration. In this kušapa it is prayed that the sacrifice be accepted for the Church, the Fathers, the martyrs and for the need of the people, for the priest himself and for the congregation that it may be worthy of Communion. The concluding part of the kusapa retains the original characteristic of the kusapa.

Fourth Gehanta: The gehanta makes memorial of the Fathers: “through the memorial of the Body and Blood of your Christ...as you have taught us.” And then it prays for peace in the world. There is also a missionary prayer, that men may know God who sent Christ who came and taught us the sanctity of the saints and of the Church. According to S. Jammo, in this gehanta we can find a probable insertion of the reference to the institution of Eucharist: “..as you have taught us.”, “...have received by tradition the example which is from you”.

The fourth G’hanta has a complicated structure since so many patch works were done in it. Here we have combination of both *Uhdana* and *Dukhrana*. We pray, in the first part of this prayer to God for *Dukhrana* of Mary and all the just and righteous fathers who had become pleased before God through their *Uhdana* of the ‘divine mystery of the passion, the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord’. In the second part prayer is submitted for the sanctification of the faithful who attend this divine liturgy in the same manner of

‘...prophets, and the apostles, martyrs and the confessors, the doctors and the bishops...’ who already got sanctified through the mystery of Jesus Christ. In the third part along with a formal declaration of the Uhdana of Christ, we pray for the sanctification of the mysteries and of the assembly. The Holy Spirit is invoked to sanctify the mysteries and the assembly.

Anamnesis: In the anamnesis we make the commemoration of the paschal mystery of Christ. It also stresses the act of celebration. “And we also.....” It is a reference to a preceding part of the remembrance of the just Fathers who were pleasing before God, and the apostles, martyrs and confessors who were all a connecting link in the transmission of this tradition or example to us from Christ. The righteous Fathers have found great favour in the presence of God through the commemoration of the Body and Blood of Christ. Now we are making a similar commemoration. Therefore we look forward to finding favour in the presence of God. Indeed it is the logical hope of the eucharistic assembly. It is on account of this hope that the assembly proceeds to the epiclesis. The priest prays to God for the descent of the Holy Spirit for the sanctification of the assembly effected through the mysteries which are to be sanctified by the Spirit. Thus the epiclesis comes as a theological conclusion of the fourth gehanta.

Epiclesis

Epiclesis is the theological conclusion of the fourth gehanta. The first part of the gehanta presents to the memory of God the righteous Fathers who were pleased before God through the commemoration of the mysteries of the body and blood. Today the liturgical assembly does make a commemoration of the body and blood of Christ. Hence they have the right to be pleased before God, as in the case of the righteous fathers. The Holy Spirit is invoked upon the mysteries and on the assembly for their sanctification. The commemoration of the body and blood makes the assembly worthy of being sanctified by the Spirit. Epiclesis is incorporated into the last gehanta in all the three Qudasas. It is addressed to God the Father that he may send the Spirit who blesses, sanctifies (changes) the offerings with the effect that they may be for the remission of sins etc. In AM, the priest prays that the Spirit bless and sanctify the offering, that it may be for the

remission of sins, the hope of Resurrection and the new life, where we raise up praise eternally. AT says: “May the grace of Holy Spirit come upon us and upon the offering”, and then it asks for the sanctification and the change of the *oblata* in the name of Trinity that they may be for the pardon of those who communicate, for the Resurrection’s hope, the salvation of soul and body, and the eternal life where we praise God without end. AN says “May the grace of Holy Spirit dwell...in this sacrifice to sanctify it, that the bread become the body of Christ... that they may be for the same effects...” According to commentators, the epiclesis typifies the Resurrection of Christ. Narsai says: “The Spirit descends upon the oblation without change (of place), and causes the power of his Godhead to dwell in the bread and wine and completes the mystery of our Lord’s Resurrection from the dead”. Qatraya says that the epiclesis is the mystery of the return of His (Christ’s) soul into His body and of his resurrection from the dead. For, the priest mystically vivifies the body by the work of Spirit”.

The admonition of Deacon is to prepare the assembly for the epiclesis. Narsai, Qatraya, Abraham Bar Lipah, Anonymous Author, Bar Zo’bi and Mar Abdisho comment on this.

The qanona is a doxology to the divine name. The mysteries are signed during this qanona. Narsai witnesses to the qanona and the signing of the mysteries: “... the adorable mysteries are being accomplished by the descent of the Spirit. He signs now not because the mysteries have need of signing, but to teach by the last sign that they are accomplished. The resurrection of the Son the priest symbolises by the completion of the mysteries”. Ishoyahb IV says (19th Qanona) : “no consecration is completed before the epiclesis, but through the epiclesis it is consecrated... And the signing after the epiclesis is only a supplement of the moment of consecration.”

Preparation for Communion

The preparation for communion consists mainly of the rite of forgiveness (*Husaya*) and the rite of fraction and consignation. It seems that it was formerly an independent rite, which was later inserted into Qurbana. As in the case of baptism, marriage and ordination services, rite of penance is celebrated within the context of the holy

Eucharist. Pardon from God, reconciliation with the Church and admission to the holy Eucharist are inseparable elements in the penitential discipline of the early Church. Although the early Church instituted an independent system of the public penance, the reconciliation of the sinner took place in connection with the celebration of Eucharist.

There existed in the East Syrian tradition two rites of *husaya*. There was a general rite of *husaya*, imparting a general absolution within the Qurbana to those who were admitted to participate in it. There was also a special rite of *husaya* which imparted individual absolution to those who committed grave sins (eg. Apostasy, adultery, fornication, homicide, breaking of fast etc.). The special rite of *husaya* also was administered within the Qurbana on certain days. At the end of this special rite of *husaya* the sign of the cross was made on the forehead of the penitent. This is the sign of life mentioned in the rite of the dismissal of unworthy. The general rite of *husaya* is for the general absolution for all the people as a preparation to the Communion; the public sinners of adultery, homicide, apostasy etc. required an individual absolution using a different formula of *husaya*, separate from the general absolution within the same eucharistic celebration. As regards the place of the special rite of *husaya* in Qurbana there were three possibilities according to manuscripts.

1. Immediately after “Holy to the Holies” and before the “Praise the living God.”
2. After the Communion of the priest and deacons, and before the Communion of faithful.
3. After the Communion of faithful

Holy Saturday was the pre-eminent day for the rite of *husaya*.

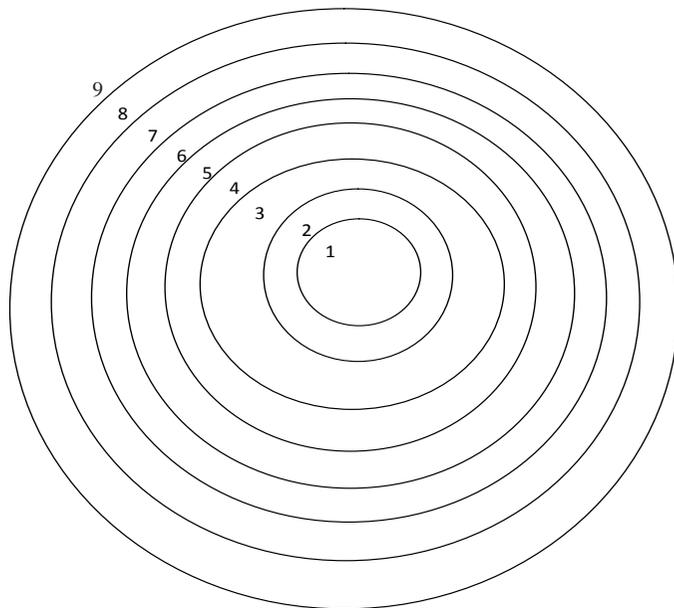
The present Syro-Malabar Qurbana has the general rite of *husaya*. There are two parts for this general rite of *husaya*: one before and another after the fraction and consignation. They constitute actually one single penitential service.

The first part of the general rite of *husaya* comprises the sacerdotal prayer ‘O Christ, peace’, Ps 51 or 123, and incensing. The second part consists of the *karozutha* of fraternal charity, *kušapa* by the priest and the prayer of absolution.

1. First Part of the Rite of Husaya

a. Sacerdotal Prayer: The prayer ‘O Christ, peace’ is first mentioned in Qurbana by Mar Abdišo (+1318). It is inspired by Eph 1:10, and Col 1:20. It is addressed to Christ who brought peace to the whole world through the reconciliatory sacrifice, that He may establish the same peace in our turmoiled world. The prayer points to Christ as the means of cosmic reconciliation. This prayer manifests that the horizontal communion (communion with our fellow beings) is the inevitable other side of the vertical communion (communion with God). The horizontal communion envisaged of the Eucharistic communion is one stretched to the whole universe (four corners of the world) and to the heavenly beings.

Extent of the horizontal dimension of Eucharistic Communion



1. Communion within the Eucharistic assembly: inner core of the communion
2. Communion within the individual Church
3. Communion with other Catholic Churches

4. Communion with non Catholic Churches
5. Communion with non Christian religions
6. Communion with human beings without religion
7. Communion with all the living creatures (plants, animals etc)
8. Communion with the entire universe
9. Communion with the heavenly beings

b. Psalms: The penitential Psalms 51 and 123 first appeared in Ms Berlin 38 (15th cent..). Most of the manuscripts of (of Alqosh type, Diamper Taksa, Vat. Syr. Codex 66 and Propaganda editions), place them immediately after the anaphora, but the later editors locate them after the prayer to Christ.

They evoke by their very nature compunction of heart. It is due to the penitential spirit of Ps 51 that it is used also in the Maronite incense service and in the new “*Ordo Penitentiae*” of the Latin Rite. The psalmist aspires to and invokes the Spirit of God to create in him a humble and contrite heart so as to reach so pure a state “as white as snow”. Though Ps 123 in itself reflects the oppression of Israel in slavery, it reveals in this particular context the mental afflictions of a contrite heart. In Qurbana both are penitential psalms for the personal sanctification.

c. Incensing: This rite is not witnessed by the commentators up to the time of Anonymous Author. The first witness to this prayer is Mar Abdisho. He says that it figures at this point the mixture of myrrh and the aloe which Nicodemus offered. This rite originated as an immediate preparation for fraction. (According to Theodore the priest passes immediately from the intercession to the rite of fraction.)

Since the time of Moses incensing has been regarded by the Jews as propitiatory sacrifice. This Jewish concept of incensing as an atonement sacrifice was already accepted in the predominantly Semitic Churches. Some propitiatory effect is attributed to the incense almost in every liturgy. The Coptic liturgy has developed in addition to a rite within the Qurbana, a special service outside with sacramental validity.

Gouvea tells us that the Malabarians had a rite of burning incensing on Sundays instead of the confession before the Holy Communion. “Confession was resented in the whole Christendom in Malabar. In the place of confession on Sundays they put fire in

the middle of the church and the fire would be sprinkled with plenty of incense. All those who came into the church venerated it with arms, crossed on their breasts, saying that the smoke of that fire would remit all their sins.”

2. Rite of Approach

Immediately before the anaphora the priest expresses his unworthiness to approach the altar for the Qudasa. There is a solemn approach to the altar (*accessus ad altare*) for the celebration of the mysteries. Similarly the priest expresses his unworthiness to approach the mysteries for fraction and consignation, and for communion. Reciting the prayer “Bless us O Lord, May the mercy of your grace draw us near to...”, the expresses the unworthiness of himself and the assembly for the fraction and consignation and for the communion. Through this prayer the priest asks for the worthiness for administering the mysteries. Lifting up of hands shows the unworthiness of the celebrant and the assembly for fraction and consignation. In the Chaldean and Assyrian rites the celebrant recites this prayer thrice and each time kisses the altar: first the middle of the altar, then right side and then left side.

3. Elevation

There is the rite of elevating the Bukhra before the fraction. This is found in almost all liturgies. Formerly there was the custom of kissing the Bukhra and putting it on the eyes as do the communicants (now in the Assyrian tradition) receiving the Host in crossed hands. After kissing the altar the celebrant bows before the sacred mysteries in adoration. After the prayer of elevation there is the symbolic kissing of the Bukhra, as an expression of adoration.

4. Fraction and Consignation

There is an onitha by the people during the fraction and consignation. The onitha has three parts: The first part reminds us of the promise of Jesus about Qurbana. The second part emphasises the relation of earthly liturgy to the heavenly liturgy. The heavenly hosts watch the priest who does the fraction. The third part deals with the power of Qurbana to remit sins. Prayer is made for the forgiveness of sins.

In the early Christianity the eucharistic celebration was called breaking of the bread. The fraction originally came from the practical

necessity of distribution. At present it has the symbolic meaning of the passion of Christ. The rite of fraction seems to be a rite distinct from the practical purpose of distribution. Fraction is followed by consignation and joining of pieces. Formerly there was the rite of piercing (by the right thumb) the Bukhra in the place signed with holy Blood to symbolize wound in Christ’s side. The formula of fraction is mentioned by the Anonymous Author. Consignation is first mentioned by Theodore: “And with the bread he (the priest) makes the sign of the cross over the blood, and with the blood over the bread and he unites and joins them together, in order to reveal to all that although these elements are two, they are nevertheless one in power, and are the remembrance of the death and the passion that affected the body of Our Lord.” Narsai also speaks of this rite. He emphasizes the symbolism of their unity of Being. According to Qatraya the rejoining of the body and blood is “the mystery of the return of His soul into his body and of his resurrection from the dead. For, the priest mystically vivifies the body by the work of the Spirit.”

The unfolding of the veil is also symbolizing resurrection. The broken pieces of the Bukhra are placed on the paten cross-wise such a way that the one below has its broken end facing the chalice and the one above has its broken end facing the priest. This shows the relation of the body to blood and the relation of Qurbana to the priest.

The rite of fraction and consignation enables a more profound participation in the death and resurrection of the Lord. The Eucharist has to help the participants to have share in the sacrifice of the Lord. This participation is all the more true about the celebrant. The broken end of the body facing the priest reminds the priest of the grave need of the priest to identify himself with the body and blood of the Lord and thus to have a profound participation in the death and resurrection of the Lord. *Scaramentum Caritatis* (Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Benedict XVI) insists on understanding our participation in the Eucharist as participation in the death of the Lord. “The Eucharist draws us into Jesus’ act of self-oblation. More than just statically receiving the incarnate *Logos*, we enter into the very dynamic of his self-giving.” (*Scaramentum Caritatis* 11).

Signing the cross from above is a sign of life. Formerly it was done with holy blood. It may be a symbol of the dropping of blood from the cross.

5. Second Part of the Rite of Husaya: It is an immediate preparation for the worthy reception of the Holy Communion and is oriented towards the due recitation of “Our Father”. It dates back at least to the fifth century.

a. Pauline Salutation

The second part of the rite of husaya begins with the blessing by the priest with the Pauline salutation. Priest makes the sign of the cross on himself such a way that it becomes also a blessing for the people.

b. Diaconal Proclamation and Karozutha of Fraternal Charity
The diaconal proclamation is aimed at creating a proper disposition in the participants for the worthy reception of the Holy Communion through the cleansing of their hearts of all sins. The prayer and its commentaries insist on repentance for sins and a firm resolution not to sin again, request for God’s mercy and pardon, and the readiness to forgive one’s offences as a precondition to obtain pardon for his sins.

The admonition of deacon is followed by the litany for forgiveness. The dialogue itself is a petition to God for remission of sins proposing to him their amity between themselves. Narsai presents it in the form of a continuous prayer of the assembly in response to the lengthy diaconal exhortation. This prayer in the form of a litany has its origin in the Church of Antioch in the fourth century. According to tradition, it is Ishoyahb III who introduced it in its present form in the East Syrian liturgy. This prayer is a humble acknowledgement that all are sinners. Explaining the theological profundity of this prayer Anonymous Author says that it points to the universality of sin and the indispensable necessity of pardon for all.

According to Mar Abdisho this karozutha is a form of general confession in which each one confesses his sins: “This, ‘O Lord, pardon the sins and offences of thy servants’” shows that no man is without sins and that every servile prevaricator needs remission; and previous to the reception of the Eucharist we make here before God the confession of sins before man and we promise that we will not sin again that we may be able to approach the Body and Blood of Christ with purity of heart.”

The reference to the passion and resurrection of the Lord in the lengthy diaconal exhortation makes it clear that the holy Communion, which is participation in the body and blood of Christ is nothing but participation in the death and resurrection of the Lord.

c. Kusapa of the Priest

The priest prays to the merciful God who has delivered us from the power of darkness, to keep us worthy to receive the gift of Eucharist in all purity and holiness.

d. Prayer of Absolution

After the karozutha the priest recites the words of absolution. The importance attached to this prayer is obvious from the fact that it is also recited in secret and designated as g’hanta in many documents. In the early tradition a sacramental power (the remission of sins) was attributed to this prayer.

Communion

1. Our Father

The introductory prayer said in a loud voice, asks to stand with purity and confidence before God in order to recite the Lord’s prayer. Narsai gives the meaning of the introductory prayer. It is asking God to sanctify us: “make us worthy to stand before him without blemish and call him, all of us, with confidence, Abba, our Father.” The prayer for the maranaya feasts is called qanona. In the West Syrian liturgy Lord’s prayer is given before the prayer for the forgiveness of sins as a preparation for it. But according to East Syrian tradition it is the prayer of the reconciled ones. Qatraya gives the reason why we say it at this moment. “Because we figure the mystery of the death and resurrection by which we become the sons of God, fittingly we call God ‘our Father’ now as our Lord as said: “You be not called father on earth; as the blessed Paul said (...) ‘we call God the Father, Abba, our Father’”.

Timothy II sees it rather in the sense of the preparation for communion. This prayer of the priest that follows the Lord’s Prayer is embolism. Almost all liturgies have after the Lord’s prayer the embolism saying, “and lead us not into temptation”. By the 5th and 6th centuries embolism was used in the Eastern and Western liturgies.

2. Greeting of Peace

The 'peace' before communion is a very ancient practice in liturgies. St. Augustine speaks about it. According to Qatraya this greeting symbolizes the salutation of the Lord after his resurrection to the women and the disciples. Moses bar Kepha considers this as the gesture of reconciliation and freedom from all worries before the communion.

3. The Holy Things to the Holy (Sancta Sanctis)

The Eucharist fits to the holy ones, whom baptism has sanctified. Qatraya says that "only those who have been sanctified for some time may communicate. This is the reason why only the baptized ones partake of it, those who have received the first fruits of the Holy Spirit in the second birth..." This expression points to the ancient practice of reserving the Qurbana only to the Christians, that is, initiated ones only. Later this formula acquired the meaning that the priest warns that the Holy Thing (the Qurbana) fits only the holy persons (the communicants). The congregation answers him with humility saying that only God Trinity is really holy to whom the Eucharist fits in sanctity and dignity since it is celestial.

This acclamation is found in various liturgical rites. Some traditions speak of "sancta" (holy things). The ancient east Syrian tradition had the expression sanctum (holy thing). Now we have sancta. 'O Lord' is a Malabar addition.

4. D'hilat

On the important feasts of our Lord after the response to *sancta sanctis* the veil is drawn and the choir in the sanctuary and the gestroma chant alternately the hymn beginning with 'D'hilat' (terrible art thou). The D'hilat has a fixed part and the variable part. The fixed part commemorates the resurrection of the Lord and the variable part commemorates the mystery of the feast of the day. D'hilat may be considered as a solemn preparation for the reception of the Communion. Since the holy Communion is participation in the death and resurrection of the Lord, commemoration of the mystery of Christ, especially the resurrection during the D'hilat is very relevant in the Qurbana. According to Qatraya singing of the D'hilat is the mystery

of the praises and ineffable glorification by which all the heavenly hosts praise for the dispensation effected by Christ.

5. Acclamation of the deacon: "Glorify the living God" by the deacon is a signal to begin the unaya d'bema.

6. Onitha d'bema

Onitha d'bema which is in fact an anthem of communion has two parts: unaya d'bema and bathe d'unaya. Unaya d'bema is a refrain chanted or supposed to be chanted during the communion of the clergy, while its stanzas are chanted during the communion of the people. It is variable and usually it is in honour of the Eucharist.

7. Communion of the celebrant

Communion of the celebrant and clergy: According to East Syrian tradition, the celebrating priest himself receives Communion first. The Assyrians have given up this tradition and among them now the celebrant and the clergy receive Communion after the people and after the final blessing at the time of the ablutions. Theodore says: "The priest who is offering the sacrifice draws nigh first and partakes of it." Narsai: "Then the priest himself first receives the sacrament, that he may teach the people that even the priest himself stands in need of mercy."

An important feature of the communion of the celebrant in the East Syrian tradition is that he does not receive communion alone. There should be near him another priest or at least a deacon to give communion. The Anonymous Author speaks of this practice and compares it to the mediation of salvation. As salvation is mediated to us by our Lord, so the priest must receive it from another. This custom declares that we encounter the Lord and receive him through the mediation of our fellow beings.

8. Onitha d' bathe

Before the communion of the people the celebrant blesses them. This blessing is followed by the acclamation of the deacon called onitha d'bathe. It is the invitation given by the deacon to the assembly, to come for communion. It is a variable prayer.

9. Communion of the Faithful

The commentators give great importance to the communion procession. According to Narsai, the procession is a symbol of the meeting of two Churches, the earthly, and the heavenly. The Anonymous Author views the coming of the priest from sanctuary to distribute communion as symbolizing Christ descending from heaven to Jerusalem. According to Bar Zo'bi the distribution of communion is the symbol of the manifestation of the risen Lord to those who believed in him. For the faithful, this procession is the time of encounter with the risen Lord. In Narsai's vision, such an encounter is realized in participating in the death and resurrection of the Lord. Receiving communion in hands (in the form of cross) symbolizes participation in the death and resurrection of the Lord.

In the East Syrian tradition the people purify their hands in incense and receive the communion in crossed hands, press the Host to their eyes, kiss it and communicate themselves. The faithful communicates directly from the chalice. (Now only the Assyrians preserve this tradition.). In the Assyrian tradition the communion of the celebrant and clergy is after *huttama*.

Rite of Conclusion (Rite of Thanksgiving)

1. Ablution

Ablution is done at a place other than the altar (i.e. at the *beth gazza*) because of the reverence to the altar. There are three prayers accompanying the rite of ablution. Assyrians do it after the *huttama*. The title of the prayer is "Of the Ordering of the Mysteries." All the three prayers speak of the result of holy communion, like pardon of debt, and the forgiveness of sins, and confidence before God, praising God along with the thief in the Paradise and with the company of the just.

2. Tesbohta

After the communion the assembly chants a *tesbohta*. Narsai has mentioned it. The *tesbohta* of Sundays is attributed to St. Ephrem in the *Kelaita-Darmo* text, that of the feasts of the Lord to Mar Yazdin and that of commemorations, departed and week-days to Mar Timothy Patriarch. The prayer for the Maranaya feasts deals extensively with the fruits of the communion, especially the sanctifying work of the Eucharist on the entire person.

3. Thanksgiving by the Deacon

The diaconal acclamation following the *tesbohta* admonishes the assembly to give thanks to God who by the grace of the Holy Spirit has made us worthy to approach the holy altar and to partake of the mysteries. The response of the people to Deacon's admonition summarises in a very short formula the central content of the Eucharistic prayers. "Praise be to him for his ineffable gift."

4. Thanksgiving Prayers of the Celebrant

There are two sacerdotal prayers of thanksgiving. Narsai mentions explicitly the thanksgiving said by the celebrant. The second prayer must have been felt as a benediction in the time of the Anonymous Author while the people hearing it prostrated themselves. The first prayer for ferial days is a praise and thanksgiving to the Trinity; the second is an eulogia to Christ who gives pardon through his mysteries.

5. Lord's Prayer

The thanksgiving prayers are followed by the Lord's prayer with *qanona* as in the beginning of *Qurbana*. It is according to the ancient tradition of the Church to begin and end every service with the Lord's prayer.

6. Huttama

The final blessing is said at the sanctuary door (a little to the right of the sanctuary door). It is a blessing symbolizing the blessing of Christ seated on the right side of the Father. It blesses the people and asks for God's favours. Literally it means sealing. Hence it may be seen as a covenantal sealing prayer. Formerly the blessing was imparted by the bishop or the celebrant with a hand-cross kissed by the people. For Narsai, it symbolizes the blessing which is about to work in us, the eternal salvation. For *Qatraya* it is the commemoration of that blessing with which our Lord blessed his Apostles at the time when he was taken up to heaven.

7. Eulogia

Ancient tradition had the practice of giving to the people the non consecrated *purshana* remaining on the *beth gazza* after the final blessing. The Anonymous Author makes mention of this practice.

Brightman (Urmiah text) gives this rubric: “The people kiss the cross in the priest’s hands (after the final blessing) and the eulogia, which was baked along with the bukhri is distributed by one of the priests or deacons standing at the nave entrance of the baptistery. During the distribution is said the prayer of Mary (and of other saints).” Only the Assyrians preserve this rite.

8. Farewell to the Altar by the Priest

The priest selected to consecrate the mysteries is now bidding farewell to the altar after the celebration. He is in fact rendering praise and thanks to God, through the symbolic homage shown to the altar. This prayer clearly explains the significance of the altar. Altar is addressed as the sepulcher of the Lord. It is praised as the altar of forgiveness. Priest’s readiness to enter the heavenly sanctuary is expressed in his words “I know not whether I shall come again and offer another sacrifice upon you.” The Eucharistic celebration, which is in fact an anticipation of the heavenly liturgy (SC 8), prepares the believer to participate in the heavenly liturgy. This eschatological concern of the Eucharist is expressed in the words of the priest. The prayer of farewell to the altar is an adapted form of the farewell to the altar in the Maronite rite. It was added for the first time in the Malabar Qurbana in the Taksa printed in Rome in 1774.

Chapter 9

Eastern Theology of Eucharist

The Eucharistic celebration in the East Syriac tradition is also called ‘raza. The term ‘raza refers to underline the fact that the Eucharist is the celebration of the mystery of Christ. According to St. Ephrem, in Eucharist we partake in the entire historical and eternal reality of Christ. Eucharist is nothing less than the entire eschatological mystery of Christ taking place here and now in history. Since the term ‘raza is concerned about the celebration or commemoration of the mystery, it is closely associated with the term ‘anamnesis’ (commemoration or memorial). The Syriac terms for memorial are ‘uhdana and dukhrana. ‘Uhdana of the paschal mystery is the central concern of the liturgy. The commentators too share the same concern.

Eucharist as the ‘Uhdana of the Raza of God and Dukhrana of the Raza of the Church

The liturgical texts and the commentaries explain the mysteries commemorated: the mysteries of the death and resurrection of our Lord. “...rejoicing and glorifying,

commemorating and celebrating this great awesome, holy, vivifying and divine mystery of the passion, the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” According to Theodore, we celebrate the death of our Lord through the awe-inspiring service of the mysteries. This commemoration has its foundation in the command of the Lord. The phrase in the anaphora “as we have been commanded” confirms this. In Theodore’s vision the commemoration of the death of Christ and the communion of his body and blood constitute the core of the Eucharist as instructed by Christ. Narsai points to this commemoration when he speaks of the celebration of the mysteries. The Church commemorates the Lord’s death and resurrection by the mysteries. She depicts the glorious mysteries mystically. According to Qatraya, the time of the celebration of the mysteries is the type of that hour in which our Lord gave this mystery to the disciples. He says: “Now the priest approaches to figure the type of resurrection through the recital of the holy words with his mouth and by the signing (blessing) of the cross in his hand.” The Quddaša with the three bows and recitation of the holy words of oblation is the mystery of the three days during which the humanity of our Lord was under the power of death.

The Institution Narrative in the anaphoras forms part of this commemoration of the passion, death and resurrection. In the narration of the commemoration it is natural that Theodore and Narsai also inserted the Institution Narrative. Narsai has it in such a lengthy narration of the economy that much is said about the public ministry of Jesus. Nevertheless, none of them speaks of Institution Narrative as an inevitable element of the commemoration. Similar to this is the strange situation in the commentaries of Qatraya and Bar Zo‘bi. Both of them attribute a consecratory function to the narration of the words of Jesus, equal to that of epiclesis. However, such an attribution occurs while commenting on the rite of the access to the sanctuary and altar. In the commentary on the anaphora, no special mention is made of the IN, while there is an explicit comment on the epiclesis.

The whole eucharistic celebration may be seen as a series of repeated commemorations of the paschal mystery of Christ. Such a concern seems to be prominent in the commentaries too. Therefore, while commenting on the epiclesis, which according to the Eastern liturgies, is a significant prayer with regard to the change of the

mysteries, commentators like Narsai, Gabriel Qatraya and Yohannan Bar Zo‘bi enthusiastically talk about the commemoration of the mystery of resurrection.

The reality of the repeated commemoration of the paschal mystery is the characteristic of the Christian liturgy. St. Paul speaks about this repeated commemoration: “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” (1 Cor 11.26). Within a celebration of the East Syriac Eucharist we may see consecutive repetitions of the memorial of the paschal mystery. In fact the ‘Glory to God in the highest’ at the very beginning of the celebration may be considered as a summary expression for the entire Christ event. It is very often considered the commemoration of the nativity of Christ, especially because of the angelic hymn. However, for the East Syrian celebration the rite of introduction has a steady pattern of commemoration. It includes the commemoration of the Old Testament waiting for the coming of the Messiah and also the coming of the Messiah. In the earlier tradition the descent of Christ symbolized by the procession from sanctuary to bema was at the time of the onitha d’ qanke. The *marmitha* (set of three psalms) recited before the onitha d’ qanke represents the mystery of the OT phase of the waiting for the Lord. Therefore, it may not be easy to think of the ‘Glory to God’ before the *marmitha* as just commemorating the nativity of Christ.

As we have seen above the whole liturgy of the Word may be seen as commemorating the entire mystery of the passion, death and resurrection. Thus the rite of introduction and the liturgy of Word together commemorate the entire mystery of Christ.

The preparation for the Quddaša (anaphora) has a full commemoration of the paschal mystery. According to the commentators, the preparation of the mysteries on the beth gazzas and their transfer to the altar along with the onitha d’ raze, placing on the altar and covering with veil (sosapa) and finally removing the veil, symbolize the passion, death and resurrection. Then the Quddaša (anaphora) has a full commemoration of the paschal mystery. Thus epiclesis, the culmination of the Quddaša commemorates the resurrection. Again the rite of fraction and consignation repeats the commemoration of the passion, death and resurrection. Once again

the whole paschal mystery is commemorated. According to Narsai, receiving Communion in hands (in the form of the Cross) symbolizes participation the death and resurrection of the Lord.

The commemoration of the paschal mystery being the primary concern, the East Syriac liturgy as a whole is not much concerned about the when and how of the change of the mysteries, a question extremely significant to the scholastic theologians.

An important feature of the liturgical commemoration is that it is the commemoration of the entire mystical body, and hence of the head and the members. Christ and his paschal mystery are commemorated along with the church, his body, now formed in the eucharistic celebration. Here members of the earthly and heavenly Church are remembered. The priest, therefore, makes special remembrance of the “this people who look for and await your mercies” and “all the departed and who have been severed and have gone forth from among us”. The liturgy has various occasions making the ‘dukhrana’ of the living and departed members of the Church. The dyptics containing such a detailed dukhrana, therefore, has a significant place within the anaphora where the paschal mystery of the Lord is commemorated. The dukhrana of the Mother of Christ, and other saints are all such a way inevitable in the liturgy. The commemoration (*dukhrana*) of the Fathers and the Just, seen in the fourth g’hanta, and the commemoration of the hierarchy and all categories of the members of the Church in the kušapa before the fourth g’hanta, therefore, very well agree with the commemoration (*uhdana*) of the paschal mystery of the Lord. The *’raza* of the Lord is nothing but our *’raza*. Here we are reminded of the beautiful words of St. Augustine: “So if you yourselves be the body of Christ and his members, then on the eucharistic table lies your own mystery.” The *’uhdana* of the paschal mystery involves the *dukhrana* of the mystery of the entire body of Christ.

The intercessions in the eucharistic liturgy are to be understood in the context of the memorial of the paschal mystery. The intercessions have an important place in the eucharistic prayers of the Church. Even though it is not found in the primitive prayers, later all the anaphoras began to give a remarkable place to it. We find intercession in the liturgies commented on by Theodore and Narsai. Theodore

does not give the content of the intercession in detail. He simply stated that the priest offers supplication on behalf of all those, for whom by regulation mention is always to be made in the Church, and also for the dead. In Narsai there is a lengthy commemoration of the members of the Church, living and dead, just and the sinners, and even of the “heathens, gainsayers, and those in error”. This commemoration is found in close relation with the commemoration of the Lord’s passion, death and resurrection. In AM (Mar Ešaya text), too, a similar commemoration, and intercession for peace and for all the Church are found in relation to the commemoration of the mystery of Christ. AM and AT have the intercession in the kušapa before the fourth g’hanta and in the fourth g’hanta. The intercessions are found in AN in the fifth kusapa and the fifth g’hanta.

Now there is a growing tendency of including intercessory prayers of strictly personal nature. As Alexander Schmemmann remarks, such prayers will be the cause for “an utterly individualistic and utilitarian understanding of Church worship”. The individuals of the Church are to be seen in the body of the Church and their lives with all joys and worries are to be seen in the mystery of Christ. The appellation Raza tells us that the eucharistic celebration is an invitation to place ourselves in the body of Christ and see our lives as part of the mystery of the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord.

Eucharist as the Qudasa of God and Qudasa of man

One of the most preferred titles of the Eucharist in the East Syriac tradition is Qudaša. The Syriac term Qudasa means sanctification, consecration, or hallowing. This term is used to denote the eucharistic celebration as a whole, the anaphora of the Eucharist, sacraments and even some sacramentals like the consecration of the church and altar. East Syriac commentators like Narsai, and Gabriel Qatraya prefer to use the term Qudasa emphasising the aspect of the eucharistic prayer as an action. The term Qudasa as it is employed in the East Syriac liturgy has both the anabatic (ascending) and katabatic (descending) dimensions. In the anabatic dimension this term is much similar to the term *eucharistia*. It means the sanctification or hallowing of God. Therefore, it is mainly praise (tesbohta) and thanksgiving (tawditha).

1. Qudasa of God (Eucharistia)

The earliest form of the anaphora of the Church is praise and thanksgiving to God the creator and the redeemer. Justin sees the content of the *eucharistia* as thanksgiving for creation and redemption. This could have been the normal content of the eucharistic prayer in the second century. As Jungmann says, the eucharistic prayer was the thanksgiving prayer, the *eucharistia* over the gifts of bread and wine. Emphasising the thanksgiving aspect, the apologists of the second century spoke of the Eucharist as though it were solely a matter of prayer. The third century East Syriac document the *Acts of Thomas* witnesses to such a simple Eucharist. It is practically a eucharistic prayer in which praises and thanksgivings are found in the primitive form.

The East Syriac anaphoras frequently use terms like *sabbah* (to praise), *tesbohta* (praise, glorification), *awdi* (to confess), *tawditha* (thanksgiving). The frequent occurrence of these terms points to the general character of the anaphoras as prayers of praise and thanksgiving. Having analysed the primitive structure of AM, E.C. Ratcliff says that it is a pure and simple *eucharistia*. We find an address of praise to the name of the creator and redeemer, a thanksgiving for what has been done for man, and finally praise and thanksgiving for the redemptive death and resurrection of Christ. However, this final thanksgiving is characterized by the commemoration of the Lord's death and resurrection. This commemoration is accomplished not only in words, but also in act, imitating Christ's own actions. Thanksgiving prayer is said over bread and wine, and the bread and wine thus blessed are eaten and drunk. The other two East Syriac anaphoras, those of Theodore and Nestorius, also place thanksgiving at the heart of the eucharistic action.

Theodore emphasises the aspect of thanksgiving in his commentary on Eucharist. The anaphora contains praise and glorification of the visible creatures and invisible hosts. There is commemoration of the economy accomplished in Christ. Thanks are rendered on account of this economy. Narsai, too, underlines the importance of the praise and glorification of the Divinity. According to him, the important elements of Eucharist are seen in the action of Christ at the Last Supper, namely thanksgiving and blessing over the bread and wine.

Claiming to be citing the tradition from Theodore, Narsai puts in the mouth of Jesus such a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. The importance attached to the thanksgiving for redemption is clear from the long narration of the ministry of Christ.

The Qudasa as eucharistia is seen all throughout the East Syriac eucharistic liturgy. In all instances the eucharistia is one joined with the praises of the heavenly choir. The liturgy begins with the sanctification of God along with the angelic choir. The praise "Glory to God in the highest" is repeated thrice, the repetition being a symbol of the unceasing praise of the heavenly liturgy. The Lord's Prayer has a special form in which a sanctification, called qanona, is added in the beginning and end. It serves as an extension of the first petition of the Lord's Prayer, that is, "hallowed be your name." The prayer before Lakhu Mara and the Lakhu Mara are classical formulation of the praise and thanksgiving. The prayer before Lakhu Mara is as follows:

"For every help and grace that you have given us, for which we can never repay you enough, may we thank you and glorify you unceasingly in your Church, crowned like a spouse and full of all help and blessing, for you are the Lord and Creator of all, for ever."

In the hymn Lakhu Mara, the glorification is indeed a profound confession of faith. "Lord of All, we praise you; Jesus Christ, we glorify you; for you are the quickener of our bodies and the gracious saviour of our souls." Jesus Christ is praised as the source of our resurrection. He is the one who shall transform us all and the entire cosmos, the one who shall be our Lord in the heavenly life too.

Trisagion is again praises added to the praises of the heavenly hosts as in the vision of Is 6.3. A similar concern for the sanctification of God is seen in the Onitha d' raze of the first Sunday of Annunciation. Here this praise is against the background of the commemoration of the passion and death of the Lord. The second g'hanta, sanctus, and the third kušapa are all intense forms eucharistia, joined with the heavenly hosts. Deacon's karožutha after the third g'hanta and the onitha during fraction and consignation contain prayers of praise and thanksgiving on account of the divine mysteries. The tešbohta after the rite of communion expresses a strong hope of the liturgical assembly

praising and thanking God in the kingdom of heaven. Thus it becomes an anticipation of the eucharistia in the heavenly liturgy.

In the East Syriac liturgy the eucharistia (Quddaša) has the following characteristics:

It is an eucharistia in the model of the Jewish Berakah. According to Sarhad Jammo, the anaphora of the Addai and Mari (AM) contains the eucharistia which reflects the same basic structure of Birkat Ha-Mazon in its paschal context. Therefore, the praise and thanksgiving in the anaphora has the similar function of the praise and thanksgiving during the Jewish paschal meal. In order to understand the true characteristic of the Christian eucharistia we have to view it in the context of the biblical memorial.

If the eucharistia in AM is closely related to the Birkat Ha-Mazon, then a similar experience of the salvation is envisaged of the one praying that eucharistia. It is an eucharistia by a community which already experiences the salvation. The true ground for the thanksgiving is not some great deed of God in the past, but his saving work in the present. In fact this characteristic makes the eucharistia a real leitourgia of God. In the liturgy the people are indeed participating in the salvific work of God. Their glorification of God is nothing but “the making present of salvation in the sacramental form”.

The Jewish Berakah also had an eschatological dimension. The past experience was the guarantee and assurance for the present experience which was in fact the anticipation of a final future experience of salvation. No Israelite could recite the Berakah during the Passover meal without being assured of an eschatological messianic work of salvation. Thus the eucharistia becomes a meeting point of the past, present and future.

The Christian eucharistia has the same theological pattern of the Jewish Berakah. The convergence of the past, present and future is very significant in the East Syriac liturgy. The eschatological emphasis is evident in the epiclesis of the East Syriac anaphoras. In the epiclesis of AM, for example, it is said that the sanctification of the mysteries is intended for the “great hope of resurrection from the dead and new life in the kingdom of heaven with all those who have found favour in your presence.”

The East Syriac Qudasa is the eucharistia rendered by the Church experiencing salvation here and now, anticipating the eschatological fulfilment of that salvation and joining the heavenly hosts in the eternal praise of God.

2. Qudasa of the Mysteries and of the Assembly

The term Qudasa, in the katabatic dimension means sanctification or consecration, of the mysteries and of the assembly. This sanctification primarily refers to the change of bread and wine into body and blood of Christ. Then it means the sanctification of the assembly. The sanctification is attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit. In the Syriac tradition, the Holy Spirit is the *Ruha d-Qudša* or the Spirit of sanctity. Thus the Spirit is specially remembered as the one who causes the sanctification. To understand the relevance of the sanctification in the East Syrian Qurbana it is enough to see the epiclesis of the anaphoras, and the commentaries on them.

The epiclesis is one of the most ancient elements of the eucharistic prayers in the East Syriac tradition. A good example may be cited from the *Acts of Thomas*:

And he began to say: “Come gift of the Exalted; come, perfect mercy; come Holy Spirit;...come and communicate with us in this Eucharist which we celebrate, and in this offering that we offer, and in this commemoration which we make.” And he made the sign of the Cross upon the bread, and began to give (it).

Even though this resembles the classical epicletic prayers of the Church, no invocation is made for the change the offering. Rather, the Holy Spirit is invoked to communicate with the assembly in the offering. The reference to communication brings this epiclesis close to the epiclesis of AM (Anaphora of Addai and Mari). The epiclesis of AM seems to be an explanation and expansion of the formula of the *Acts*. Epiclesis of AM is the following:

O my Lord, may your Holy Spirit come down...and dwell in this Qurbana of your servants and bless it and sanctify it that it may be to us, O My Lord, unto the pardon of debts, remission of sins and the great hope of resurrection from the dead and new life in the kingdom of heaven with all those who have found favour in your presence.

The *Acts* mark the contrast between our action and the action of the Spirit. The communication of the Spirit gives new dimension to our thanksgiving, offering and commemoration. By the invocation of the Holy Spirit they attain a divine dimension. The *Acts* see the eucharistic liturgy as an encounter of persons involved in different actions: On the part of the assembly the liturgical action is to celebrate the Eucharist through praise and thanksgiving, offer the sacrifice and make commemoration of salvation events accomplished in Jesus Christ. On the part of God it is to communicate through Christ and Holy Spirit. This divine communication is effected in Communion.

In AM there is clear mention of the sanctification of the offering. However, the sanctification of the offering is oriented to the sanctification of the assembly. It envisages a participation in the divine dispensation. The ultimate goal is the resurrection and life in the kingdom of heaven. This is to be realized by the remission of sins. The epiclesis in the Anaphora of Theodore (AT) elaborates and clarifies the theme as in AM. However, the invocation is made first for the assembly. Thus the sanctification of the assembly is more emphasised than in AM. In AM there is no explicit mention of the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood. AM puts all these in the expression of “the sanctification of the offering”. As regards the sanctification of the offering and that of the assembly, the epiclesis of the Anaphora of Nestorius (AN) is similar to that of AT. But AN adds a new factor in the sanctification of the assembly, namely the aspect of becoming one in love and peace; one body and one spirit, as envisaged by the Christian vocation.

These two types of the sanctification are explained in the commentaries. According to Theodore the priest prays to the Holy Spirit to come upon the bread and wine so that they may become the body and blood; and to come upon all those present so that they may be knit into one body by Communion. As in AN, Theodore stresses the unity of the liturgical assembly. According to Theodore, receiving a kind of anointing by the Holy Spirit, the elements of bread and wine become immortal, incorruptible, impassible, and immutable by nature, as the body of our Lord was after resurrection. By the Quddaša, the offering passes into a new state of existence, transcending the space-time. In Theodore’s view the body and blood are realities in space-time, but with the properties of non-space-time. Comparing the body

and blood after the epiclesis to the resurrected body of our Lord, he states that the epiclesis is the celebration of the resurrection. For those who partake of this sanctified body and blood, they acquire the power of spiritual and immortal nourishment.

Narsai also speaks of the sanctification of both the offering and the assembly. Like Theodore, he gives only a second place to the sanctification of the assembly. The goal of the coming of the Spirit upon the congregation is preparation for the Communion. He sees the epiclesis as the celebration of the resurrection. What is particular to Narsai in his commentary is his stress on the two types of celebrants: the priest and the Holy Spirit. The priest indeed consecrates. “...the dread Mysteries, lo, are being consecrated by the hands of the priest...” (*Homily XVII. 10*). The sign of the cross made over the mysteries by the priest shows his important role in the consecration (*Homily XVII. 18*). However, he is only a medium of the consecration. The real celebrant is the Holy Spirit. “The Spirit comes down at the request of the priest, be he never so great a sinner, and celebrates the mysteries by the mediation of the priest whom he has consecrated” (*Homily XVII. 21*). “To this effect the priest gives thanks before God, and he raises his voice at the end of his prayer to make it audible to the people. He makes his voice heard, and with his hand he signs the Mysteries that are set (on the altar).”

While speaking of the sanctification of the offering, Gabriel Qatraya does not speak of the sanctification of the assembly. He emphasises the celebration of the resurrection in the epiclesis. According to Qatraya and Yohannan Bar Zo’bi, the whole anaphora, namely the eucharistic action is a celebration of the resurrection. According to them the cross, the gospel and the icon of our Lord which stand in the place of the person of our Lord are necessary for the consecration of the mysteries.

Quddasa, both in the ascending and descending dimensions have gestures along with the words. In the anaphoras, we find the signing (rusma) of the mysteries. Narsai speaks about these blessings (*Homily XVII. 22*). The first one is with the Pauline blessing. Iso’yahb IV mentions this signing. He forbids adding new paghra (body, here meaning bread) to those already on the paten after the first signing during the Pauline blessing. Narsai sees it as a blessing of the people (*Homily XVII. 11*). The second signing is after the anamnesis. The

third signing is after epiclesis. AM in its present version has signings of the mysteries during the Institution Narrative (IN) also. Through the blessing, the praise and thanksgiving is sealed by the sign of the cross. The consecratory role of the sign of the cross is based on its importance in emphasising the act of glorifying and thanksgiving for the mysteries of the economy in which the cross is of great importance.

The fact that there is an inseparable relation between the anabatic and katabatic dimensions of Qudaša is evident in the qanonas of the g'hanta prayers. During the qanona of the first g'hanta of AM, the priest blesses himself while reciting the doxology. Priest has to bless himself (make a sign of cross over himself) such a way that it becomes a blessing for the people too. A similar blessing is made while reciting a doxology in the embolism of Lord's Prayer before Communion. In the qanona of the third g'hanta and the qanona of the epiclesis the mysteries are blessed during the doxology. The blessing of the mysteries is in view of the sanctification of the people. Thus indirectly this gesture of blessing becomes a sign of the blessing of the people. The blessing of the persons and the mysteries during the sanctification of God thus makes it clear that the anabatic Qudaša cannot be thought of as distinct from the katabatic Qudasa.

The emphasis on the sanctification of the assembly is remarkable in the East Syriac liturgy. The eucharistic celebration, according to the East Syriac tradition, ought to be a Qudasa for the Christian assembly. Qudasa as eucharistia finds its true meaning in the Qudaša of the assembly. The sanctification of the assembly as the goal of the celebration is all the more strong in the epiclesis of AM. This epiclesis is recognized as a communion epiclesis. The stress is on the change of the assembly. The sanctification of the mysteries is presented as a means for the sanctification of the assembly. Perhaps, due to the influence of the Latin theology, the Malayalam translation for the Syro-Malabar Church has reduced the primary importance given to the sanctification of the assembly. According to the Malayalam text, the invocation of the Spirit is made for two things. First for the sanctification of the mysteries, then for the sanctification of the assembly, both having equal importance. The original text means that the sanctification of the mysteries should become the means for the sanctification of the assembly. Such an intrinsic relation between these two types of sanctification is ignored in the Malayalam translation.

According to St. Ephrem, Eucharist transforms man and enables him to reach Paradise. Man is enabled to fly over the clouds and reach Paradise. "Whoever eats of the bread of the Heavenly One will become heavenly without doubt."

In the Western traditions the eucharistia or the Qudasa is often isolated from the sanctification of the assembly. There is a tendency to reduce the liturgical community to a cultic community, praising and thanking the Lord, however, not much concerned about the personal sanctification. Believers are happy about the eucharistia, which they are ready to continue even outside the eucharistic celebration itself.

From the Middle Ages onwards there has been an exaggerated emphasis on the change of the mysteries. With the encouragement of the scholastic theologians the change of the mysteries became the central point of attraction. Great theologians of the Middle Ages tried to explain the mystery of the Eucharist in terms of the Aristotelian philosophy. The question of the real presence of the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament became so vital that for many believers this real presence was the goal of the entire eucharistic celebration. According to them, the priest through his words of divine guarantee works out the miracle of bringing down the Lord of the universe to the simple and humble table of the church! Thus the eucharistic celebration becomes an invitation to the assembly to witness the greatest miracle possible on earth.

One should not ignore the tremendous amount of work done by the scholastic theologians to convince 'scientifically' the Christian believers in the Middle Ages of the real change occurring in the bread and wine. However, amidst the over enthusiasm to emphasise the change of bread and wine into Body and Blood, the question of the change of the human persons was rather ignored.

a. Celebration of Forgiveness from God

The East Syriac celebration of the Qurbana emphatically declares the power of the Eucharist to forgive sins. There are numerous prayers in the Qurbana for the forgiveness of sins. The prayer of epiclesis makes it clear that the Eucharist aims at the remission of sins. (*Raza*, 45). The Holy Spirit is invoked to sanctify the offering "that it may be to us unto pardon of debts, remission of sins and the great hope of

resurrection from the dead and new life in the kingdom.” The altar is considered the propitiatory altar (*Raza*, 8, 62), the mysteries are for the remission of sins, the incense is for the forgiveness of sins (*Raza*, 10,17), the Eucharist is given for communion with the acclamation that it is for the forgiveness of sins (*Raza*, 57). The Qurbana contains a rite of the absolution of sins, called the rite of husaya. According to traditional understanding, venial sins are forgiven during this rite within the Qurbana. There is a special rite of husaya for the penitents who have committed grave sins. Absolution is given for such sins during the special rite of husaya within the Qurbana. The separation of the rite of reconciliation from the Eucharist has done much damage to the notion of forgiveness of sins within Qurbana.

b. ‘Medicine of Life’ for the Remission of Sins. 5.2.1. ‘Medicine of Life’ for the Remission of Sins

An important characteristic of Communion is reconciliation and the remission of sins. The East Syriac Qurbana emphasises this effect of the reception of Communion. The epiclesis (*Raza*,45), the prayer of elevation (*Raza*, 47), the formula of receiving Communion by the priest, the deacons and the faithful (*Raza*, 54-56), the tešbohta on ferial days (*Raza*, 58), the thanksgiving prayer of the celebrant (*Raza*, 59-60), and the huttama (*Raza*, 61) give clear expression to the notion of the forgiveness of sins through Communion. The *Acts of Thomas* has the formula of giving Communion which stresses the aspect of the remission of sins. “Let it be unto thee for the remission of transgressions and sins and for the everlasting resurrection.” Theodore says: The Communion of the holy Sacrament will, without doubt, grant us the remission of trespasses of this kind, since our Lord plainly said: “This is my body which is broken for you for the remission of sins, and this is my blood which is shed for you for the remission of sins (Mt 26.26-28; I Cor 11.24-26)...”

The Syriac Fathers spoke of the eucharistic bread as the medicine of life (*Sam hayye*). According to Ephrem, by Lord’s blessing the bread became the medicine of life during the Last Supper. It is because of His hidden presence in the eucharistic body that the Eucharist becomes the Medicine of life. And therefore, Eucharist also becomes a treasury of healings as His physical body. The invisible power (Fire and Spirit) that dwells in His physical and eucharistic body is the source of this healing. Ephrem sees the Holy Spirit hidden in the

Eucharist. Through the life-giving presence of Christ, Eucharistic offering cleanses the participants from all stains of sin and gives life to the mortals.

Stressing the aspect of reconciliation Narsai calls Communion the banquet of the ‘returning son’. It is the banquet offered by the Father at the return of his children through baptism. Narsai also compares it to the banquet prepared by the father of the prodigal son, at the return of the son. The Fathers and commentators depict Eucharist as the medicine of life stressing the aspect of reconciliation. Sin is the most important factor that stands in the way of immortal life. Once sins are removed, the immortality of life is ensured. The Eucharist is the medicine of life in the sense that it ensures immortal life, curing man of sin which hinders the attainment of immortal life. The idea of the Eucharist as the medicine of life is commonplace in Fathers. Narsai presents the healing through this medicine as that which purifies from the debts, and forgives the debts and offences. The expression ‘medicine of life’ denoting the Eucharist and Christ alike is a favourite of Ephrem. We can find several examples for this expression denoting the Eucharist in Ephrem’s writings.

c. Sanctification leading to Sawtaputha

The sanctification of the assembly effected by the Holy Spirit in fact leads to šawtaputha (communion). Qurbana lays great stress on the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the šawtaputha. Repeated exhortations on the need of fraternal communion reveal the concern for the horizontal dimension of sawtaputha. This horizontal šawtaputha is one extended to the entire cosmos. Establishment of the šawtaputha in the model of the Trinitarian šawtaputha is the important goal of the East Syriac Qurbana. The whole eucharistic liturgy is oriented towards the Communion.

Being a personal encounter with the risen Lord in the liturgy, Communion is a profoundly meaningful action of liturgy. 5.2.2. Food of the Heavenly Spacetime Gabriel Qatraya describes the eucharistic communion in the following words: “Whenever we take them in our hands, we ought to think as that we embrace and kiss our Saviour and that we mix His body with our body and mingle His blood with our blood.” According to him, Communion in the mysteries indicates the communion which we will have with Christ in the coming world.

3. Eucharist as Qurbana

It is characteristic of the Syriac traditions to speak about the eucharistic celebration as Qurbana (offering). The East Syriac liturgy has many prayers clearly speaking of the Eucharist as offering. The emphasis on this aspect accounts for the common appellation 'Qurbana' for the eucharistic celebration as a whole. There are many instances in the anaphora where the notion of eucharistic offering is evident. The prefatory dialogue clearly expresses the idea of offering. The g'hantas, the kusapa of intercession, the prayer request of the celebrant and the response, and the epiclesis of AM and AT contains explicit reference to Eucharist as Qurbana.

Theodore comments on the offering of the Eucharist:

He offers a sacrifice for the community, and a reverential fear, which embraces both himself and us all, is cast upon him on account of what has happened, namely that our Lord suffered for us all a death, the remembrance of which is about to be performed in the present sacrifice.

The main object of the sacrifice or the offering is the mystery of the passion and death of Christ. The important characteristic of the eucharistic celebration, according to Theodore, is explicit from the following words:

...we commemorate the death of our Lord through this awe-inspiring service, and receive the immortal and spiritual food of the body and blood of our Lord, for the sake of which, when our Lord was about to draw nigh unto His passion, He instructed His disciples that all of us who believe in Christ had to receive them and perform them through these (elements), and in this way to commemorate by stages the death of Christ our Lord, and to obtain therefrom an ineffable nourishment.

The commemoration prepares the setting of the sacrifice of the death of Christ. Theodore shows here the real purpose of the Qurbana. "It is indeed offered so that by the coming of the Holy Spirit it should become that which it is said to be: the body and the blood of Christ."

In the XVII homily, Narsai treats well the idea of Eucharist as Qurbana. His views on the eucharistic offering are clear from the expressions used to describe the eucharistic action. "Mysteries are

offered (*Homily XVII. 2,3,7*); "The priest now offers the mystery of the redemption of our life, full of awe and covered with fear and great dread" (*Homily XVII. 7*); The people pray after the diptychs: "...receive Lord, this oblation which Thy servant has offered" (*Homily XVII. 10*); "The acceptable and pure oblation is offered to the Lord..." (*Homily XVII. 12*); "the living sacrifice that is being offered..." (*Homily XVII. 18*); "On behalf of all is the living sacrifice sacrificed..." (*Homily XVII. 20*). The offering is nothing but the mystery of redemption. In this respect Narsai, too, thinks with Theodore that the offering is the sacrifice of death of Christ. On the IN, Qatraya says that they are the holy words of the oblation of the offering. Thus Qatraya also sees a necessary connection between the offering and the commemoration of death and resurrection.

The appellation 'Qurbana' is understood in various levels of meaning. It has anabatic and katabatic dimensions. Katabatic dimension refers to the Qurbana or offering made by God towards us. The eucharistic celebration begins with a katabatic Qurbana, that is the Qurbana of the Father. The initial procession from sanctuary to bema symbolizes the sending of the Son by the Father. Thus it commemorates the mystery of incarnation. In fact it is the commemoration of the offering of the Son made by the Father. During the Gospel procession from sanctuary to bema the katabatic offering of the Son by the Father is again commemorated. The Communion procession is the culmination of the katabatic offering in the liturgy. The Father offers his only Son to us in the mysteries of the body and blood.

In the anabatic dimension there are different types of Qurbana. The offering of the mysteries, the body and blood of Christ, is the central offering in the eucharistic celebration. Along with this offering there is also the offering of the mystery of passion and death. The offering of the mystery of Christ is accomplished through the offering of the mysteries, the body and blood. Since our own mystery is made one with the mystery of Christ in the Qurbana, we too become objects of offering along with the body and blood of Christ. There is also the offering of the eucharistia in the Qurbana. In the pattern of the Old Testament tradition of the sacrifice of praise (Todah), the East Syriac anaphora is also a sacrifice of praise.

4. Eucharist as the Heavenly Banquet Anticipated

Eucharistic liturgy is a celebration of the earthly choir together with the heavenly choir. The earthly and heavenly Churches come together in praising and thanking God. There are numerous elements in the liturgy showing us that liturgy is truly the meeting of the earthly and the heavenly. The initial 'Glory to God in the highest', the canon of the Lord's prayer, the *trisagion*, 'onitha d' raze, sanctus, the diaconal admonition before the fourth *kušapa* in AM, and 'onitha of fraction, are all examples of liturgical elements illustrating the joining of the earthly choir with the heavenly hosts (Is 6.3) in praising God. Praise and thanksgiving in the anaphoras are joined to that of the heavenly assembly. It is clear in the expression: "And with these heavenly hosts we give you thanks, O Lord, and we bless God the Word." Ephrem in his *Commentary on Diatessaron* explains: "We have eaten Christ's body in place of the fruit of the Tree of Paradise, and his altar has taken the place of the Garden of Eden for us; the curse has been washed away by his innocent blood and in the hope of the resurrection we await the life that is to come, and indeed we already walk in this new life, in that we already have a pledge of it"

While rendering praise to God, the Church is anticipating her joy in the heavenly marriage feast. The tenth century Anonymous Author of the *Exposition of the Offices* interprets the *sanctus* as the praise of the earthly Church joining the heavenly Church:

"...but in that manner today we, angels and men, become a single holy Church, and in Christ we have been made one flock; as the heavenly apostle says, he wished that we too may be brought together in harmony, and thus like the watchers [angels] we may praise him with their praises."

...This means, heaven and earth have been already made one Church; neither heaven is heaven nor earth is earth because the time and space composite have been dissolved; for heaven is the heaven of earth and earth is the earth of heaven. Certainly, unless there was (might be) a heaven above, there might not be an earth below, and unless there was an earth below, there might not be a heaven above. Now that those above and those below are brought into a single Church, there is neither 'above' nor 'below'. And yet, God appeared on earth, and our nature ascended into heaven; and when God descended to

us, earth became heaven; and when the Son of our race was elevated, heaven became earth. Wherefore heaven and earth have become one, and there is neither heaven nor earth; and we were already constituted with the spiritual ones. It is their predication itself- 'holy', that we recite as being perfected through resurrection.

Eucharistic Communion is the pledge of eternal life. There are numerous prayers in the Qurbana stressing the effect of Communion as immortality. The epiclesis (*Raza*, 45), the 'onitha during the fraction and consignation (*Raza*, 47-48), the prayers accompanying the consignation (*Raza*, 48-49), the *karozutha* of fraternal charity (*Raza*, 50-51), the formula of receiving Communion (*Raza*, 54,56), the *tešbohta*, the thanksgiving prayers and the *huttama* (*Raza*, 57-62) show Eucharist as the food of immortality.

The eucharistic Communion is the symbolic food of the immortal life initiated by baptism. According to Theodore, the symbolic birth in baptism necessitates the symbolic nourishment through eucharistic Communion. Ephrem in his *Commentary on Diatessaron* explains: "We have eaten Christ's body in place of the fruit of the Tree of Paradise, and his altar has taken the place of the Garden of Eden for us; the curse has been washed away by his innocent blood and in the hope of the resurrection we await the life that is to come, and indeed we already walk in this new life, in that we already have a pledge of it." Narsai observes: "His mystical birth takes place in a manner spiritual; and according to his birth is the nourishment also that is prepared for him." The grace of Holy Spirit feeds us through the holy sacrament. Theodore discusses at length the theme of the Eucharist as the food of immortality. The expression 'bread of life' stresses this aspect of the eucharistic Communion. It enables us to transcend the space-time and attain the immortal and imperishable existence, by hope. Ephrem says: "Whoever eats of the bread of the Heavenly One will become heavenly without doubt." Qatraya speaks of Communion as the guarantee of our future immortality. Communion in the holy sacrament is the pledge of eternal life. It is the symbol of the eternal communion after resurrection, the foretaste of the heavenly happiness. In Narsai's vision, Communion for the baptized is the imitation of the heavenly life. The *karozutha* which precedes Communion points to the new state of existence that we attain through Communion.

Eucharistic Communion helps us to transcend the earthly space-time and enables us to participate in the heavenly space-time. Participation in the eucharistic banquet is a symbolical participation in the heavenly banquet of the Kingdom- *pathura d-malkutha*. Ephrem thinks that one receiving Communion is like an eagle, which flies to meet the Lord in the very clouds. Eating of the living bread, one is able to transcend the limitations of space-time and reach as far as Paradise. The Anonymous Author, too, thinks that with the Communion the faithful enter into the new space-time of the Kingdom. The joy and thankfulness on account of this are evident in the proclamation of the deacon following Communion.

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