



50 YEARS OF SERVICE IN  
GOD'S LIGHT

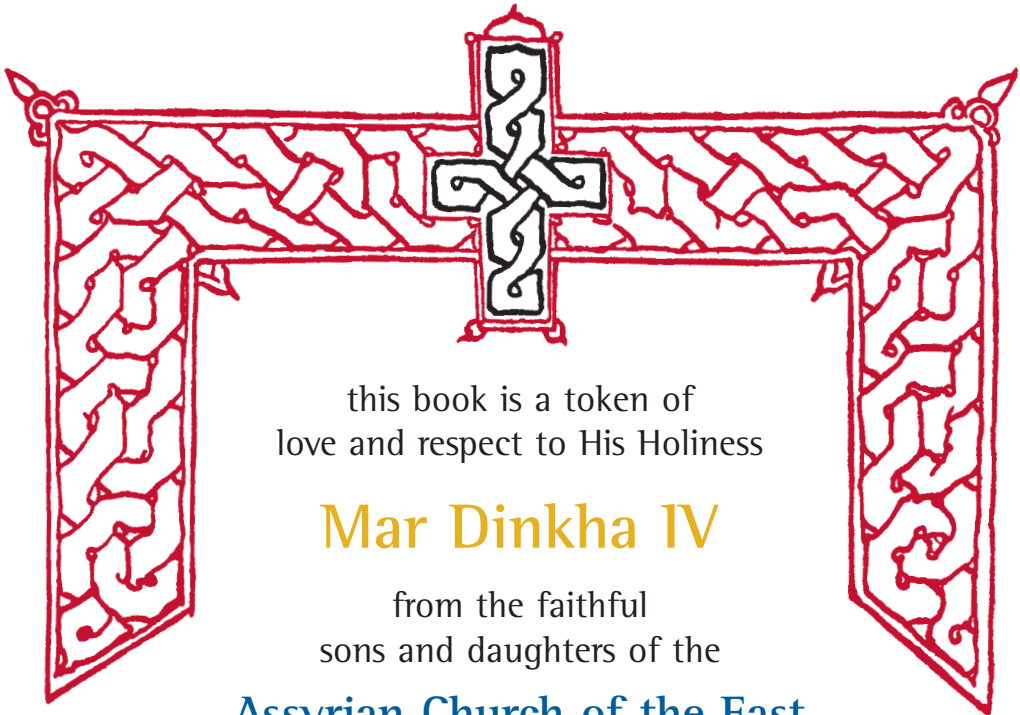
# 50 YEARS OF SERVICE IN GOD'S LIGHT



COMMEMORATIVE IN HONOR OF THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE CONSECRATION OF HIS HOLINESS MAR DINKHA IV  
AS A PRIEST AND THE 31st ANNIVERSARY  
OF HIS CONSECRATION AS  
CATHOLICOS-PATRIARCH  
OF THE EAST







this book is a token of  
love and respect to His Holiness

**Mar Dinkha IV**

from the faithful  
sons and daughters of the

**Assyrian Church of the East**

on the joyful occasion of the celebration of the  
50th anniversary of his consecration as a priest and  
the 31st anniversary of his consecration as

**Catholicos-Patriarch of the East**

with profound gratitude for the many years of your service and  
the innumerable blessings we have received from your hands  
we add our voices to the ancient prayer:

May Christ hear your prayers. May Christ accept your offering.  
May Christ make your high priesthood to shine in the  
Kingdom of Heaven, and may he be well pleased  
with the sacrifice which you offer for yourself,  
and for us, and for the whole world which  
looks for and awaits His grace  
and mercies forever.



His Holiness as a boy



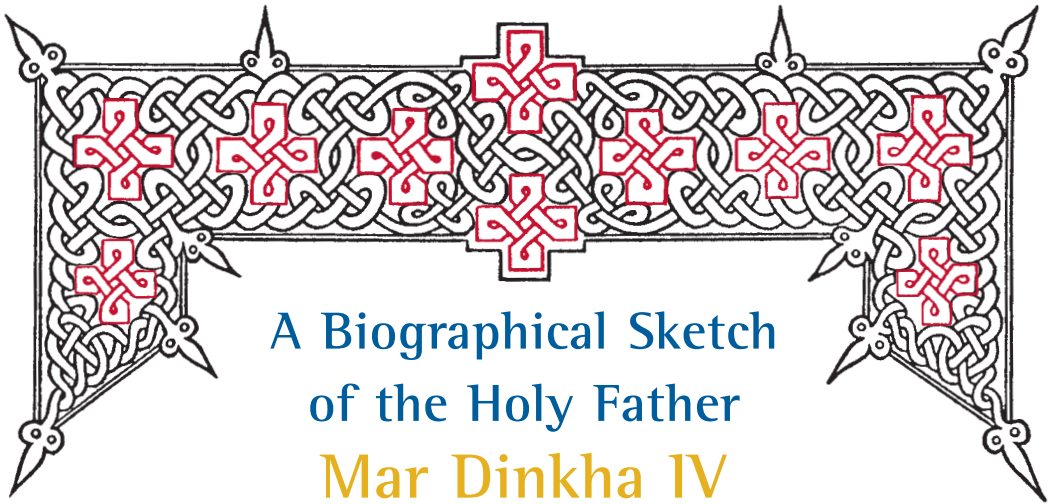
His Holiness as a young man



His Holiness as a deacon



His Holiness as a priest



# A Biographical Sketch of the Holy Father Mar Dinkha IV Catholicos-Patriarch of the East

By Rev. George Toma, D.Min.

The Father of Fathers of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East is presently the 120th successor to the Holy Apostle Peter.

## Introduction

Because His Holiness is well known among the Eastern and Western Churches, it is unnecessary for us to re-introduce him here. The love and the understanding exuding from the person of His Holiness has made him an individual of honor and has caused him to be received with all proper integrity and honor among various religious and secular world personalities.

## The Prophecy of the Patriarchate

His Beatitude Mar Aprem Mookan, the Patriarchal Representative and Metropolitan of Malabar and all-India, as a young priest studying in a New York seminary, was present at one of the festive celebrations which was offered by the parish of Mar Mari in Yonkers, New York, in the year 1967, to honor the visit of His Grace





His Holiness with Patriarch Mar  
Eshai Shimun in Tehran in 1962

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ܠܡܥܢ ܡܪܝܬܝܢ ܕܬܝܪܐܢ ܕܝܬܝܪܐܢ : ١٩٦٢

Mar Dinkha, the Bishop of the Church in Iran. His Beatitude, during the course of his speech, expressed a wish, *“that one day, His Grace Mar Dinkha, would be the next Patriarch of the Church of the East.”* The selection of the Catholicos-Patriarch from one family with nephew succeeding uncle had been eliminated by the decree of the late Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII. He determined that the succeeding patriarch and bishops within the Holy Synod should no longer be elected from among certain families. The election of all the hierarchy should be from among the faithful of the Holy Church. Mar Aprem of India declared in his remarks *“...let us place our hope that the next patriarch which we elect will be this young, wise and enlightened Bishop of Iran.”* This prophetic utterance of His Beatitude was fulfilled and came to pass in the year 1976. The young Bishop of Iran was elected to the awesome office of Catholicos-Patriarch and consecrated to occupy the vacant See of Seleucia-Ctesiphon.









His Holiness with Mar Yosip  
Khnanishu in Tehran

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ܟܚܢܝܫܘ ܒܬܗܪܢ

From the very first day in which Mar Dinkha IV was installed as the Chief Shepherd of the Church of the East, he has untiringly and faithfully proceeded to fulfill his ministry as the Universal Father of the Holy Church. This great responsibility of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV did not prevent him from developing a profound closeness to the faithful regardless of the lands in which they reside. Let us mention here, that while His Holiness was the Bishop of Iran, he made Apostolic visits throughout the Church, meeting with the faithful in India, Iraq, Lebanon, Europe, Canada, Australia, and America. He enjoyed the friendship of these precious, believing and faithful members of the holy flock of our Lord.

His Holiness is privileged with the gift of knowing a great number of the faithful in the Church. His unique ability to recall those whom he has met always amazes the faithful, for he can call them by their names. Therefore, as the story of the Holy Gospel relates: *"...the Good Shepherd knows those who belong to Him, and He calls them by their names, and they recognize his voice and they follow Him."* He is unique for he is the only Patriarch known who is able

to recall details of any family member, from which region they had migrated, and their ancestry or who their forbearers may be. In his role as the Supreme Head of the Holy Church, he has initiated and completed many Apostolic Visits, bringing comfort, healing, encouragement, hope, inspiration and strength to the scattered flock of the Church throughout the world.

His Holiness is very much aware of the historical roots of both the Church of the East and his national ethnic origin. He has a great knowledge of the history, language and culture of the Assyrians and is always ready to address and speak in detail concerning historical events in the Church and the Assyrian Nation. He has gained his profound knowledge by investing his time in reading a great number of books which present a comprehensive study of these particular fields of interest. As to his use of the languages of the world, His Holiness very comfortably communicates with non-Assyrians. He speaks English, Persian, Kurdish, and Arabic with ease.



The Consecration of  
His Holiness as Patriarch

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ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ





The Consecration of Mar Narsai  
as Metropolitan by His Holiness

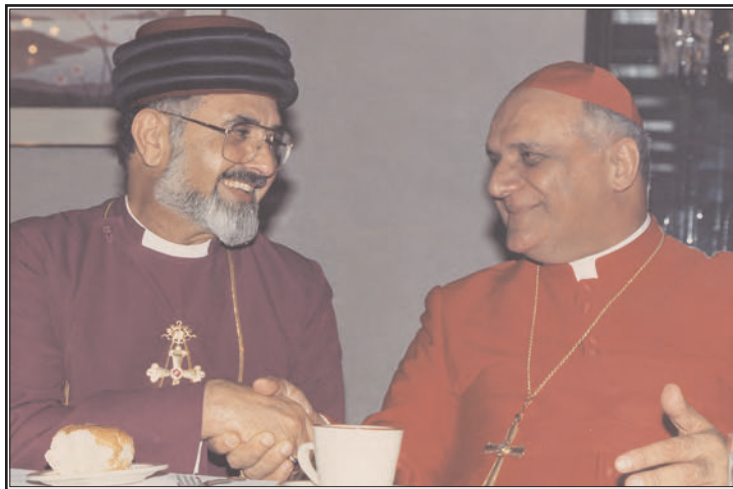
ܡܪܝܢ ܢܪܝܐ ܕܡܬܪܬܢ ܕܡܬܪܬܢ ܕܡܬܪܬܢ  
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In the Holy Synod of the Church, His Holiness demonstrates the equal fairness of democratic practice with regard to the concerns and thoughts of the prelates. As it affects the decisions which the Holy Synod will render, His Holiness requests each prelate to present their thoughts freely, completely and without reservation. It is thus that we can state here that in the future no prelate can say that they did not understand a particular point or position presented to the Holy Synod. His Holiness never acts in haste. He is prudent and very thoughtful before any action is determined.

It is very important for the current and future generations to know the role and the various achievements of our Holy Father. His Holiness has been very active in the field of ecumenical dialogue with our sister Apostolic Churches and Christian bodies. It is through dialogue that His Holiness has been able to build and establish communication between the Apostolic Churches, the Roman See in particular, and other Christian communities. It was through dialogue that His Holiness was able to make known to all Christian communities that The Church of the East confesses the Apostolic and orthodox faith. In November 1994, the

Common Christological Declaration was signed between the Roman See, represented by His Holiness Pope John Paul II, and the Church of the East, represented by His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, in which 1500 years of the obstacles of misunderstanding and separation were removed. A Mixed Committee was established for further exploration and discussions in the matter of dogma. After ten years of study and discussion, the Mixed Committee has produced a document on the Sacramental Life which is now ready to be signed by the hierarchs of the two churches.

His Holiness is concerned about the future generations which will succeed us, who are the older generation. His concern is centered in the need to develop educational programs for the children and the youth. He has a great love for the Church Choir and he has written many hymns which are appropriate for use in the Holy Mass throughout the year. Wherever the faithful of the Church may be located, he is eager to appoint a priest and clergy to serve them in order to build a church and a place of common gathering so that they will not be deprived of the Sacramental Life.



His Holiness with the Late  
Patriarch Mar Raphael Bidawid

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# His Holiness with Patriarch Mar Ignatius Zakka

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Unfortunately, in 1964, a schism developed in the Church in India. Since His Holiness has ascended the Throne of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, he has been successful in leading the Church to reunite under the Apostolic See, thus bringing healing to the body of believers.

His Holiness gives great importance to the necessity of having educated clergy as we enter into the Third Millennium. To achieve this intent and goal, His Holiness established a seminary of the Church in Iraq. His Holiness has sent our clergy, following their educational program in our Iraqi seminary, to institutions of higher learning in Rome and elsewhere to complete their philosophical and theological studies. We now have a number of clergy who are capable of leading the younger generation in the awareness of the profound spiritual truths of the Christian Faith as preserved in the Church of the East.

## The Birth and Upbringing of His Holiness

The great-grandfather of His Holiness, the late Reverend Father Soro, of blessed memory, was known throughout the Holy Church

of the East for his spirituality and Christian humility and piety. He lived in righteousness, adorning his behavior with fasting and perpetual prayer. His life span was over 100 years on this earth. He was born in 1856 in Nochia in the region of the Hakkari Mountains and rested in peace in 1961 in the village of Derbendoke in northern Iraq. This blessed priest of our Lord and God was from the House of Mar Dinkha, the bishop of Urmia, Persia, who received the crown of martyrdom, together with forty Assyrian Christian men, in the year 1915, on top of the hill called “The Hill of the Jews” near the village of Charbash, in the province of Urmia. This bishop was the last bishop from the House of Mar Dinkha until the consecration of Mar Khanania Dinkha in the year 1962.

The late and blessed Andrious, the son of the Reverend Father Benjamin, the issue of the late Reverend Father Soro, took to himself a wife, of blessed memory, the late Pana, the daughter of Kako of blessed memory. The beloved Pana was greatly respected by all who were aware of her simple trusting and great faith. Andrious and Pana lived together in the village of Derbendoke in the parish Mar Quriakos, in the region of Harir. His Holiness was born on 15 September 1935, in the village of Derbendoke. He was baptized and



His Holiness in the Village  
of Derbendoke

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ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ



His Holiness in Mangesh

ܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܐ

confirmed in the Holy Faith by his grandfather, the Reverend Father Benjamin, in the village church of Mar Quriakos. His Holiness was reared in the Diocese of Arbil, where many great leaders and saints of the Church of the East were born and lived, such as Mar Audisho Bar Brikha and Mar Qardagh Sahda.

His Holiness was raised as a Nazarite from the moment of his conception and thus dedicated as a lamb to serve the Holy Church, even before his birth. His beloved mother Pana lived in piety, abstaining from the consumption of animal flesh and engaging in fasting and prayer, while she was with child. Khanania followed the Nazarite vow, in accordance with the example of the Nazarites in the Old Testament such as the prophets, Elijah, Elia, and John the Baptist. He did not drink strong drink, and only consumed vegetarian food. Following the birth of Khanania, another son was born to this blessed family and was given the name of Ezaria at his baptism. God further blessed this pious couple with a beautiful daughter, whom they had named Virginia. Pana passed into the Eternal Presence of our Lord in Tehran in 1968; and Andrious entered into life eternal in San Jose in 1999. Presently the honorable Ezaria is serving the Holy Church as a deacon in the parish of Mar Yosip Khnanisho in San Jose, California.



His Holiness obtained his knowledge of the liturgy, language, faith, and traditions of the Holy Church from his grandfather, the late Reverend Father Benjamin. In 1947, at the age of 12, he was entrusted into the blessed hands of the late Metropolitan Mar Yosip Khnanisho. From that time forward, Mar Yosip became the spiritual guide and teacher to His Holiness. The late Reverend Father Benjamin held the hand of young Khanania and offered him to His Beatitude, saying: *“Your Beatitude, I am now offering to you this young lamb. Rear him as you wish in order to work for the Holy Church. From this moment forward he does not belong to us. He belongs to The Holy Church.”*

After two years of intensive training and teaching by His Beatitude Mar Yosip, Khanania was ready to be ordained into the sacred Diaconate. On 12 September 1949, he was set aside and ordained through the Apostolic laying on of hands by his mentor Mar Yosip. During this time, as he served as a deacon and an assistant to His Beatitude, he unceasingly continued to study the Aramaic



His Holiness at the Zaawa River

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Holy Communion in the  
Village of Semeleh

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ܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ

language, the theology of the Church and its sacred liturgy. At the conclusion of 8 years of studies, His Beatitude Mar Yosip recommended that Deacon Khanania be elevated to the sacred office of a Priest of God. On 15 July 1957, on the commemoration of Mar Quryakos, His Beatitude Mar Yosip laid hands upon Deacon Khanania and conferred upon him the sacred office of Priest. During World War II, the Holy Church lost a great number of clergy. The Holy Church began to be weakened owing to fact that the clergy had been reduced in great number. It was His Beatitude Mar Yosip who realized the great distress caused by the profound need for clergy in the Holy Church. This is the reason that he accepted the young Khanania and trained and ordained him and gave him a great mission which was to go to Iran and work for the benefit of the Church in that country.

In order to fill the need for a bishop for the Church in Iran, His Beatitude Mar Yosip consecrated Reverend Pilipos as Mar Yokhana, bishop for Urmia, and all Iran. But unfortunately, owing to the political difficulties between Iraq and Iran at that time, an entrance

visa was not granted to this new bishop for the church in Iran. For this reason, Mar Yokhana remained in the city of Dianna, and served there as bishop of the diocese of Arbil and Kirkuk. As the political scene improved between Iran and Iraq, and in order for His Beatitude Mar Yosip to fill the vacancy in the Church in Iran, he sent Reverend Khanania to Iran. Thus, step by step, Mar Yosip prepared him for the Holy Episcopacy. When no priest was available in the Church in Iran in 1939, Mr. Ruel Arsanis went to India and was ordained deacon and then priest for the Church in Iran by the Apostolic laying on of hands by His Beatitude the late Mar Awimalik Timotheus, the Metropolitan of India of blessed memory. Reverend Arsanis faithfully served the Holy Church in Iran for a long period of time. The Reverend Father Khanania arrived in Abadan, Iran on 25 December 1957. He joyfully performed the Holy Communion for the faithful in Abadan on 7 January 1958, Christmas Day according to the old calendar. Father Khanania labored untiringly in the field of service for the greater glory of our Lord Jesus Christ in what appeared to be an abandoned Church in Iran.



His Holiness in the Village of Akri

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was elevated and consecrated bishop for the Church in Iran, taking the name of Mar Dinkha. His lordship Mar Dinkha, as bishop, built the parish church of St. Mary the Virgin in the city of Urmia and also another parish church, bearing the Virgin Mother's name. As the faithful of the Church witnessed the outcome of his intensive labors, they stood behind him in full support of all the steps which he took for the progress and success of the Holy Church in Iran.

His Beatitude Mar Yosip, in his congratulatory epistle to Mar Dinkha the newly consecrated Bishop of Iran, wrote and said:

*"...in one meeting with Mar Eshai Shimun, in Tehran, he ordained the Reverend Khanania bishop of Tehran and all Iran, we beseech our Lord and God to grant to him, physical and spiritual health, wisdom, and enlightenment of leadership, in order to lead the faithful flock which has been entrusted to his spiritual paternity. His Beatitude is praying that our worshipful God be with Bishop Mar Dinkha to watch over his flock, to ordain priests and deacons which are needed for the ministry in the vineyard of Christ."*



His Holiness Blessing a Child

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His Holiness with the Choir In Duri

ܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

Mar Yosip, of blessed memory, continues to write in the form of a poem, stating:

*“...Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who came down from Heaven in wonder and put on the humility of humanity, by the Power of the Holy Spirit, from the blessed daughter of David, keep Thy servant Khanania, and make him quiet and humble and a famous leader to watch over the flock with diligence and in all love and joy, Amen.”*

We may ask ourselves, is this not Khanania, the son of Andrious, the son of Father Benjamin? From whom did he receive his wisdom? From whom did he receive the gifts of leadership, humility, great faith, and other divine attributes? All these unique gifts in abundance have been bestowed upon him by the prayers of his mentor, of blessed memory, Mar Yosip Khnanisho.

In 1966, His Lordship Mar Dinkha of Iran, visited the Church in America, and he was well received and loved by the sons and daughters of the Holy Church. In 1967, His Lordship broke ground and placed the corner-stone for the building of the Mar Mari church in Yonkers, New York. In February 1967, His Holiness Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII, Catholicos-Patriarch of the East,

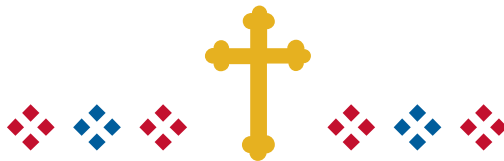


commissioned Mar Dinkha of Iran, accompanied by the Reverend Father Isaac Rehana to embark upon an Apostolic visit to the Church in India. Possessed with full confidence and certainty, Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII knew that Mar Dinkha of Iran was the most capable prelate in the Church to be sent for this particular mission which took place during a critical moment in the history of Church due to the suspension of Mar Toma Darmo which became effective on 10 January 1964. The confidence of the late Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII in the abilities and qualities of Mar Dinkha was well founded and the confirmation of this could be seen when unity in the Church in India was restored twenty-eight years later under the wise leadership of this humble servant of God.

The year of Our Lord 2007 marks the 50th anniversary of the consecration of His Holiness, Mar Dinkha IV, as a priest and the 31st anniversary of his consecration as the Catholicos-Patriarch of the East. The sons and daughters of the Assyrian Church of the East throughout the whole world are deeply grateful to their beloved Patriarch for these many years of unselfish service for their beloved Church and their spiritual welfare.



Consecration of the Mar Narsai Church      ܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ



May your prayer be unto us a high wall and a refuge;  
May your prayer be unto us a censer of reconciliation;  
May your prayer be unto us a supplication to  
Christ our King and our Saviour that  
He may have mercy upon us.





## The Patriarchal Insignia of the Assyrian Church of the East

The Catholicos-Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon is the supreme and universal head of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East, also known down thru history as the *Church of the East*, the *Nestorian Church* and the *Church of Persia*. The primatial see of this most ancient Church is the twin-city Persian royal capital Seleucia-Ctesiphon, modern-day Salman Pak near Baghdad.

The Patriarch of the Assyrian Church is the successor of the blessed apostles St. Peter, who wrote his epistle from Babylon (cf. I Peter 5:13), St. Thomas, who traveled as far as India through Persia, and Ss. Addai and Mari who discipled the ancient Assyrian vassal kingdom of Edessa. It was St. Mari who arrived at Seleucia-Ctesiphon around the year 80 A.D., and founded some 300 convents and churches, and who was later laid to rest at the church he founded in Deir Qoni.



The patriarchal insignia is laid against the background of the rising sun, which denotes the East, the birthplace of Christianity. The mountains and two rivers indicate the remains of ancient Assyria and the rivers Tigris and Euphrates which watered the Garden of Eden. The open book is the Gospel which the missionaries of this most ancient Church preached as far as China by 635 A.D. The ancient Aramaic inscription translates *Our Lord is Risen*, which embodies the summary of the whole of the Gospel message. The pastoral staff symbolizes the fact that the Catholicos-Patriarch is the supreme pastor of the Church of the East, and the two keys surmounting the Cross recall the spiritual authority of binding and loosing given by Our Lord to St. Peter (cf. Matthew 16:19).

The distinctive Cross on the patriarchal insignia is a replica of the Cross incised on the *Nestorian Monument of China*, fashioned in the year 781 A.D., which commemorated the centenary of the mission of the Church of the East to that country. The triple-pointed crown at the very top of the Cross denotes the three *Qnome* of the Blessed Trinity. The nine circles represent the nine orders of the priesthood: reader, sub-deacon, deacon, priest, cor-bishop, archdeacon, bishop, metropolitan and patriarch. The Aramaic inscription in the middle of the Cross is the *Yod-Heh*, which is the biblical representation of the unpronounceable name of God.



Final Benediction in Bidyal

ܬܥܕܬܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ



ܠܒܢ ܕܠܩܨܐܢ ܐܕܡܢ ܕܩܠܝܢ  
ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ ܕܢܨܢ ܕܩܠܝܢ  
ܡܕܢܬܐ ܦܠܕܐܡ ܕܡܢ ܡܕܢܬܐ ܦܠܕܐܡ ܕܡܢܐܡܐ



The father of fathers and shepherd of shepherds  
**His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV**  
The Peter of Our Time and the Paul of Our Days

# ܬܝܚܡܐ ܕܝܥܕܢ ܡܕܡܐ



On the 17th of October they consecrated a shepherd for our Church;

ܬܝܚܡܐ ܕܝܥܕܢ ܡܕܡܐ : ܡܐ ܝܕܝܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܕ ܕܡܐ :

The candle of his life is glowing; his name **Mar Dinkha IV**;

ܩܡ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܕ ܕܡܐ : ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ :

A patriarch consecrated for us; priestly and praised without blemish;

ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ : ܩܝܕܡܐ ܡܡܠܐ : ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ :

All of us bow and bend the knee; his rank greater than a king.

ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ : ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ :

The month of October be blessed; a meek one is consecrated for us;

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Our Patriarch **Mar Dinkha**; may your consecration be blessed;

ܩܝܕܡܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ : ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ :

With honor we welcome you; we ask the Lord to bless you;

ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ : ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ :

In our fast and prayer we remember you; we will never forget you.

ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ : ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ :

In one voice we shall all sing; from our Lord God we shall beseech;

ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ : ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ :

With one fervent heart we shall pray; for our Patriarch we shall say;

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This heavy burden you accepted; God with His strength will help you;

ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ : ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܡܡܠܐ :

He will hold your hand and guide you; with His grace and mercy He will guard you.

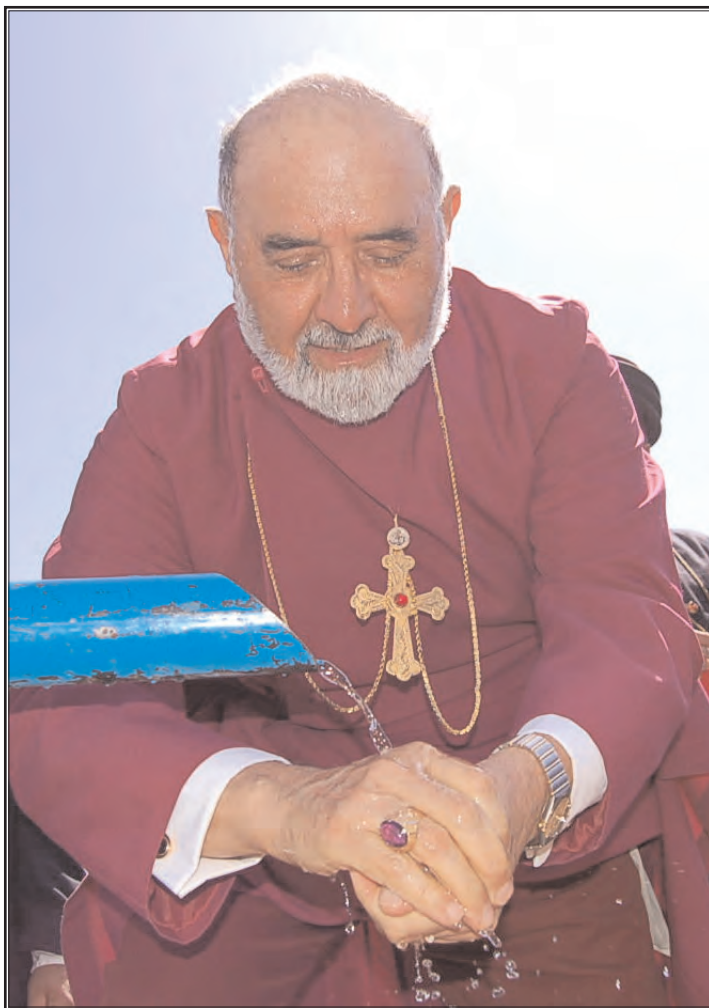
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## The 17th of October

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His Holiness in Bidyal

מבגדא אל תבירא



# An Interview with His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV



By Shamasha Peter Youkhanna and Toma Paul

Shamasha Peter and I nervously walked to the residence of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV. We came to the door and positioned ourselves by order of hierarchy; the Shamasha first and then me as the lay person. Under the outdoor foyer, we made our last preparations; checking that our clothing was in order, that our posture was fit for the meeting to come, and that we had in hand all the questions that the youth of our Church in the U.S. had provided for us. Shamasha pressed the door bell and then we waited anxiously to be greeted.

Father Antwan Latchin, with a welcoming smile, bid us Shlama and we exchanged our terms of endearment and offered each other the customary kiss on both cheeks. Shamasha and I were escorted to the waiting room adjacent to His Holiness's office while he was concluding another meeting. Father Antwan sat and spoke with us for some time, helping calm our nerves and allowing our minds to stay sharp.

It was time to start the interview and we were escorted to the living room of the Patriarchal residence where His Holiness was waiting. He was wearing his red vestments, and like so many of us are accustomed to seeing, greeted us with a warm smile and called us by name. I can't help but quietly smile when I think of the charm and endearing openness that His Holiness greets us in. It is quite humbling to be in the presence of someone who has dedicated his life to the service of mankind for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is our spiritual father, and for those of us whom have lost their fathers, he becomes our surrogate father as well.



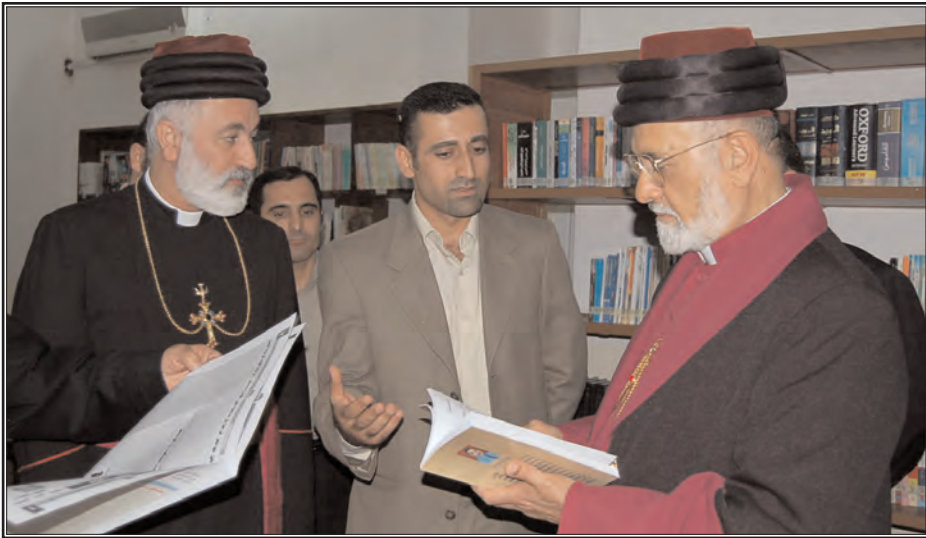
His Holiness joyfully asked what our task was for this evening. You see, we'd been pretty persistent in our attempt to meet with him in order to provide this interview as part of this commemoration memento. Time is something that His Holiness only has sparingly these days. Of course, he did make time for us as he so often does for the sons and daughters of our Church.

We proceeded to explain that this book is a commemoration memento of his dedication, and something that the sons and daughters of our church wanted to give as a small token of appreciation. While Shamasha was explaining the nature of the book to His Holiness I couldn't keep my eyes from wandering. I've been in this room before, but the humbleness in it takes your breath away. It's powerful, yet serene at the same time. The cross used by our Indian brothers and sisters was set beside me on a small table, and as I gazed into it I asked our Lord to give Shamasha and myself the diligence and quick writing skills so that we could capture all that His Holiness would say to us. This is our compiled recollection of the exchange of questions and answers we had with His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch of the East.



His Holiness in Ankawa

ܡܪ ܕܝܢܟܗ ܝܚܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ



His Holiness in Ankawa

ܬܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܝܩܬܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ

Our first question was with regard to the youth and what *His Holiness would like to see the youth of the Assyrian Church of the East achieve in the next 1-5 years.*

His Holiness quickly said that the “youth are very important;” he has instructed the priests to always execute four basic functions of their office: Bible Study, Sunday School, Youth Group, and Choir. Our obligation to the youth is to teach them to become teachers. After we endow them with this knowledge they will go out, and teach their peers. They will increase the community of youth in our church, and our priests will help by attending the bible studies to help increase their knowledge.

“If we don’t have the youth in the church, we might as well close the doors,” said His Holiness. Of these same youth some will one day become deacons, priests, bishops, or Patriarchs. Those youth that choose to be clergy will be educated, having at the very least a Masters degree. Those that pursue a higher education and choose a spiritual life, without the necessity to one day marry; will be groomed for higher offices.



His Holiness has instructed the clergy to hold bible studies in the language that will be understood. If the youth understand best in English, then bible studies should be in English. How else will one learn if they are not taught in a language they understand?

Our next question was specifically about His Holiness. We wanted to know; *“what were some of the moments in the past 50 years which, he found most memorable.”*

He said **“everything he does for the church is memorable.”** His Holiness recalled the history of his family and the 18 men that served the church as bishops before him. The last one was martyred by the Turks in 1915 along with 40 other notables of the Assyrian Nation, all of whom refused to save their lives by renouncing the Christian Faith. He took us through his life, the dedication of his mother, his family, and his upbringing. As a boy he said that **“everything was different for me; even my food was not the same as the rest”**, nor was the way he spent his days. While other children were engaged with the games of their youth, young Khanania spent his time in prayer and lessons with his grandfather.



His Holiness in Bekhal

ܡܠܝܟܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ



His Holiness in Dehreh

ܡܪ ܕܝܢܟܗ ܐܝܬܝܠܝܢ

His Holiness recalled his time in Iran and told a very good story about Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun's visit in 1962. Mar Shimun had come to visit the school established for the youth. It was a three-story primary school with 12 classes. This school was built by many of the same people that were parishioners of the church, and all the school teachers were Assyrian educating some 450 students. The curriculum included classes in Persian, Assyrian and English. The school was so successful that Muslims wanted to send their children there for a better education.

As a testament to the school's success, Bishop Mar Dinkha called a young girl to recite the Lord's Prayer for Mar Shimun. Once done, Mar Shimun complemented this young child on her prayer and said that "in America our youth could not pray in such a fashion." With an endearing chuckle, His Holiness related that he responded to Mar Shimun: "Imagine what one of our own Assyrian children would pray like, as this child was a Muslim!"

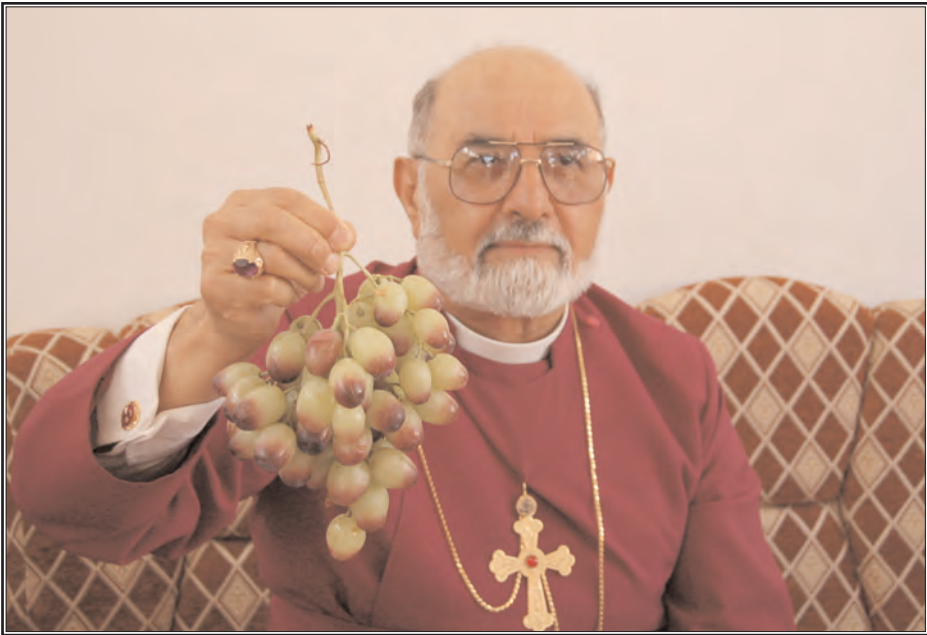
Our next question was a very progressive one, one that our youth certainly thought about. *“One day, American or Western born men may make up a significant portion of the clergy in our Church; what impact can we anticipate by this change?”*

His Holiness said clearly: **“nothing will change in terms of the church canons and our faith.”** Things that will change as a result of westernized priests are things that inherently change with time, such as clothing, and venues for spreading the word. Computers are used now and will be an even greater tool in the future. His Holiness went on to illustrate the great importance of securely preserving the canons and rituals of our faith. At the last supper our Lord Jesus Christ said **“take this bread and eat...”** A small piece of the bread was kept by Mar Youkhanan, which is what we call Malka. This Malka makes the leaven that **“we use to this very day”** In the Holy Qurbana. The Malka was kept until Pentecost, and then distributed to all the Apostles to spread and to keep, **“so that we are always tied to the last supper, until this day.”** His Holiness stressed: **“It will never end. It must stay with the Church of the East”.** This was such a powerful moment for us. 2000 years of church history and His Holiness with all of his love for Christ, and



Holy Communion in Diyana

ܡܫܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܫܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܫܚܝܬܐ



His Holiness in Mayeh

ܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ

our Church explains this truth to us in such a way that it burns inside my mind. It is something I will never take for granted, and will always keep reminding me of the absolute necessity of keeping our faith strong.

At this point, we had spent about an hour with His Holiness and we asked if he needed us to stop so that he can finish his day as it was already past 8:00 PM. His Holiness, with no hesitation, asked us to proceed with our questions. So then, the next question we asked was: *“what is your favorite quote in the Holy Bible and why?”*

“Everything that Christ says is my favorite”, said His Holiness. You will notice that in all his homilies he references Ewangaliyon, the Gospel, specifically. He joyfully proclaimed: “Every time I read it, I am enjoying every word as if I was reading it for the first time”. He enjoys it immensely because “this is how Jesus speaks to us.”



The next question posed to His Holiness was: *“what do you wish your legacy to be, that is, how do you want to be remembered 100 years from now?”*

“This will depend on the people of that time” said His Holiness. “If they believe and enjoy what I had to say, they will remember me.” However, “everything I do, I do not for recognition, but because I enjoy doing something good for the Church. When the sons and daughters of the Assyrian Church of the East are happy, then, I am happy. I enjoy very much all parts of this life. I enjoy the Raza. I enjoy prayer, and teaching. This satisfies me like hunger and thirst are quenched by food and water.”

The hour was getting late, and although we wanted to spend more time, and ask more questions, we needed to let this Man of God rest. His day started early, he had audiences with many people, and he most certainly had many topics on his mind that went beyond what we were discussing. It was time to close the interview with one final question.



His Holiness at the Nisibin School

ܡܠܝܟܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܢܝܒܝܢ



His Holiness in Fishkhabor

ܡܪ ܫܝܡܘܢ ܚܕܝܬܝܬܐ ܒܢܝܡܝܢ

*What do you feel the Church's greatest accomplishment has been in the last 100 years?*

“The Assyrian Church of the East’s survival was only possible due to the fervent faith of our people”. Fasting and Prayer were a daily ritual for our people. “The Malike, or leaders of independent Assyrian tribes, were deeply devoted as proven by their dedication to the morning and evening prayers with the clergy.” They were the secular leaders, but their faith was strong.

“This devoted faith has kept us until this day. If this faith was not there, we would not be here now.” This faith was further proven when after Mar Benyamin Shimun, of blessed memory, was martyred, it was during the time of lent and the people did not break their fast. They may not have been as educated as we are today, through formal schools and institutions of higher learning, but the Faith of Christianity was embedded in them.

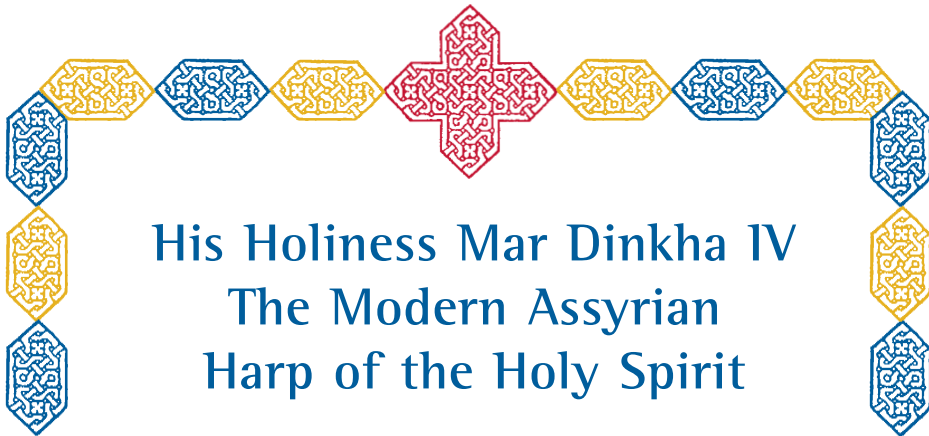
It is for this reason that His Holiness instructs our priests to keep our faith. He said that his advice to our priests is: “If you are liked, you will be believed and when you are believed, you will be respected and when you are respected, people will listen to you”. He continued to explain the advice he gives to the priests so that they may help us keep our faith. While they are different, they are still men. However, as servants of God, they must always be conscious of themselves and their behavior. They must be aware of how they laugh or what they choose to laugh at. They cannot always pursue the same pastimes as laymen. The priesthood must always be kept to high standards so that it will always be respected. Priests are made to fit a certain mold. They are to manage their sadness and show happiness at all times so that the people can come to them for strength.

At this point, we asked to take our leave and we thanked His Holiness for his time and his profound words. We kissed his hand and watched him walk out of the room. With a sigh of relief we realized that we had just experienced a wonderful event that we can’t adequately express in words. We believe that all of you who know His Holiness know of his kind nature. We thank God for having had the opportunity to sit with this great man, our Spiritual Father.



His Holiness in Duri

מבגדא, 15 כסלו



## His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV The Modern Assyrian Harp of the Holy Spirit

*Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth.  
Sing to the Lord, bless His name; proclaim the good news of His  
salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations,  
His wonders among all peoples.*

Psalm 96:1-3

By David G. Malick  
Translations by Shamasha Lawrance Namato  
and Raymond W. David

Among the many wonderful contributions that His Holiness has made to the life of the Assyrian Church and Nation, perhaps the most significant are the beautiful spiritual hymns that he has composed in the modern Assyrian language to adorn our worship services and to teach the faithful about the truths of the Christian Faith and the historic role of the Assyrian people in Salvation history.

It is well known that the literature of the Assyrian Church of the East is rich in metrical poems and hymns. The fact that a large part of the literary production of Mar Aprim the Great, one of the earliest and most important theologians of this Church, consists of poems and hymns testifies to their importance in the spiritual life of the Church. Furthermore, a survey of the 150 writers of the Church listed by Mar Abdisho of Nisibis (d.1318) reveals that 59 or about 40% are said to have composed poems and/or hymns.





It is important to remember that, at any given time, the majority of the people for whom this literature was written experienced it within the context of liturgical services in which hymns and homilies figure prominently. In considering this type of literature, we need to remember that this experience involves both an understanding of the content and literary qualities of the hymns as well as an appreciation of the music to which they are sung. Liturgical services in the Assyrian Church of the East exist to address every indispensable sacramental need required by the Christian Faith and every important life event experienced by the faithful as well as the need to praise and worship God and to teach the faithful about the significant events in salvation history throughout the year. Consequently, the faithful develop a strong emotional attachment to the services, hymns and tunes that permeate their lives.

The use of modern Assyrian hymns in the worship services of the Assyrian Church of the East is related to the larger issue of the use of the vernacular as a replacement for the classical Syriac language in which these services were originally composed and handed down over the centuries. The two known attempts to transform the spoken language of the Assyrians into a written language, first in and around Alqosh at the end of the 16th century and then in Urmia in the middle of the 19th century, both involved the production of a significant amount of hymns in modern Assyrian. However, neither period resulted in a sustained use of the vernacular in the church services. The first successful effort to introduce modern Assyrian into the church services took place in the last quarter of the 20th century and was accomplished via the medium of the collection of hymns that were composed by His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, the present Catholicos-Patriarch of the East.

### **The Birth of Modern Assyrian Literature**

The earliest evidence that we possess that attests to the existence of a literature in the vernacular of the members of the Assyrian Church



His Holiness with the  
Choir In Bidyal

ܡܕܢܚܐ ܫܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ  
ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ

of the East dates to the end of the 16th century. Within the context of a general revival of educational and literary activities among the inhabitants of the villages of the Nineveh Plains, the first surviving examples of literature in modern Assyrian were created.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps not surprisingly, metrical poems and hymns constitute a large part of the surviving examples. Although this body of literature is not large in comparison with later similar developments that took place in Urmia, it is significant because it was created through the efforts of the people themselves and the content and forms are generally inspired by those of their own classical Syriac literature.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Murre-van den Berg, H. L., 'A Syrian Awakening: Alqosh and Urmia as Centres of Neo-Syriac Writing', René Lavenant, S.J. (ed), Symposium Syriacum VII. (*Orientalia Christiania Analecta* 256), Rome 1998, 499-515 for an excellent survey of the development of this literature in comparison to the later development in Urmia.

<sup>2</sup> Mengozzi, Alessandro, *Israel of Alqosh and Joseph of Telkepe. A Story in a Truthful Language: Religious Poems in Vernacular Syriac (North Iraq, 17th Century)*, Louvain, 2002 (CSCO 590, Scriptorum Syri 231), p. 14.

The development of modern Assyrian literature based on the Urmia dialect some two hundred and forty years later was initiated by the efforts of the missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions starting in 1835. The Assyrians welcomed the American missionaries and cooperated with them in their efforts to learn Assyrian, establish schools, create a written language based on the vernacular, preach the Gospel and print books.<sup>3</sup> Assyrian churches were opened to the missionaries for preaching in modern Assyrian. This preaching often took place following the traditional Assyrian religious services of morning and evening prayers and the Eucharistic Liturgy.

Among the many books that were published by the American Mission press, we find no less than eleven editions of hymnals in modern Assyrian. However, the vast majority of these hymns are simply translations of English language hymns. In the early period of the mission the Americans did print some books in classical Syriac. The very first book that they started to print when their press arrived in 1840 was a liturgical Psalter according to the usage of the Assyrian Church of the East. Perkins, the head of the mission, explicitly states that this book fulfilled an earlier promise to the Assyrian clergy that it would be the first product of their press.<sup>4</sup> The complete text of the New and Old Testaments in Syriac, with

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<sup>3</sup> A good comprehensive modern history of the American Mission to the Assyrians is yet to be written. For the period covering its inception until its transfer from the American Board to the Presbyterian Church, see Anderson, Rufus, *History of the Missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Oriental Churches*, 2 vols., Boston, 1872. For an excellent modern study of the creation of the modern Assyrian literary language, see Murre-van den Berg, Heleen, *From a Spoken to a Written Language: The Introduction and Development of Literary Urmia Aramaic in the Nineteenth Century*, Leiden, 1999. For details about the establishment of the American Mission Press, see Coakley, J. F., 'Edward Breath and the Typography of Syriac', *Harvard Library Bulletin* 6/4 (1995), 41-64.

<sup>4</sup> Perkins, Justin, *A Residence of Eight Years in Persia, among the Nestorian Christians with Notices of the Muhammedans*, Andover, 1843, p. 446.



His Holiness with the  
Choir of Mar Narsai in Dohuk

ܡܪܝܢ ܢܪܝܝܐ ܥܡ ܚܘܪܐ ܡܪ ܢܪܝܐ ܕܡܪ ܢܪܝܐ ܕܕܘܚܘܟ

modern Assyrian translations in parallel columns, soon followed. But beyond these biblical texts, the American mission never printed any other literary work of the Assyrian Church.

As early as 1840, the Assyrians suggested translating the church services into modern Assyrian.<sup>5</sup> But these suggestions were never taken seriously by the Americans. An examination of the attitudes of the Americans towards the literature of the Assyrian Church provides the explanation. The liturgical texts and services of the Assyrians receive both a measure of praise and scorn from the missionaries. Speaking of the Eucharistic Liturgy, Perkins states:

*“Though the whole service was far more simple than the disgusting routine of ceremonies which attend it in the other oriental churches, still, it was but too evident a heartless form.”*<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Perkins, p. 418.

<sup>6</sup> Perkins, p. 187.



The services are often referred to as *mummery*<sup>7</sup> and a *senseless routine of forms* and the prayers as *chattering noise*.<sup>8</sup> And yet, we also find Perkins admitting that “The major part of their liturgy, however, is composed of unexceptionable, excellent matter.”<sup>9</sup> With the advantage of hindsight, it is easy to see that the Americans’ preaching of the Gospel, accompanied by scripture readings and the singing of translated English hymns constitutes a typical Protestant worship service. For many years, these services co-existed with the worship services of the Assyrian Church of the East. However, the apparent desire of the missionaries to replace the age old worship services of the Assyrians with those of their own, translated into modern Assyrian, was unacceptable to the majority of Assyrians.

The Assyrians valued the positive contributions that the Americans had made in the areas of education and in the creation of a written language out of their vernacular. However the complete abandonment of their own literature, traditions and culture was simply too high a price to pay in return for the benefits they had received. The parting of the ways between the Americans and the Assyrians on this matter seems to have had a chilling effect on efforts to incorporate the use of modern Assyrian into the worship services of the Assyrian Church of the East and very little was accomplished in this area until the Patriarchate of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV.

### The Hymns of Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV

In considering the inspiration for the collection of hymns that His Holiness has composed, we are on safe ground when we consider that his beloved teacher and mentor, Mar Yosip Khnanisho, of blessed memory, was a well known writer of hymns in classical Syriac.<sup>10</sup> That they are composed in modern Assyrian is probably

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<sup>7</sup> Perkins, p. 187.

<sup>8</sup> Perkins, p. 243.

<sup>9</sup> Perkins, p. 417.

<sup>10</sup> For two of his hymns, see Michaelian, Alexander, *Liturgy, Hymns and Songs of the Assyrian Church of the East*, Milpitas, 1997, nos. 65 and 77.



His Holiness with the Choir  
of Mar Gewargis in Shores

ܡܪ ܩܘܪܓܝܫ ܥܡ ܚܘܪܐܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪ ܩܘܪܓܝܫ ܒܫܘܪܝܫ

partly to be attributed to the influence of the nineteen years that he served as priest and bishop of the diocese of Iran. These years chiefly coincide with the remarkable flowering of modern Assyrian literature associated with the activities of the *Assyrian Youth Cultural Society*.

Although His Holiness began to compose hymns while he was still bishop of Iran, they were not published or introduced for general use within the Assyrian speaking parishes of the Church until after he became Patriarch. Like Mar Aprim the Great before him, His Holiness introduced the hymns via a program that encouraged the establishment or reinvigoration of choirs in each parish that specifically targeted the involvement of youth and women.

The details of the thirty-two hymns that have been published and are in regular use are given in the appendix. The edition of the texts that has been used for this analysis is that which is contained in the book *Liturgy, Hymns and Songs of the Assyrian Church of the East* (Milpitas, California, 1997). This edition carries the approval and authorization of the Patriarch. It includes the Assyrian texts along

with musical notations for all of the hymns by the famous Assyrian composer Rabi Alexander (Shoora) Michaelian.

Most of the hymns are composed for different occasions that take place within the liturgical year. Seven are for the Feast of the Nativity; one for the Feast of the Epiphany; one for Lent; three for the Feast of Hosanna or Palm Sunday; one for Passion Friday; six for the Feast of the Resurrection; one for the Feast of the Ascension; and seven are suitable for use on ordinary days. One has been composed for use on the occasion of the consecration of priests. All of these hymns are sung while the laity are receiving communion.

Of the remaining hymns, two are *Turgame* which are sung before the reading of the Gospel of the day. One of these is for ordinary days and the other is for the Feast of the Nativity. The remaining two hymns are also used within the main body of the Eucharistic Liturgy.

The hymns are metrical compositions that are composed to be sung to traditional tunes that are used for the ancient hymns of the Assyrian Church of the East. In a few cases, the tunes have been slightly modified to fit the new texts. The tunes, or *qale*, are indicated by the titles of the classical hymns that they are modeled upon. Most of the tunes that are used have only one example of a hymn in the collection. Five have two examples each, one has three examples each and one, **ܐܰܠܰܗܰܝܰܗ ܰܚܰܡܰܕܰܝܰܩ**, has five examples.

A variety of syllabic patterns for the stanzas of the hymns are employed. The most often used patterns are two lines of three four-syllable units per stanza (4+4+4 4+4+4), which is often called *Narsaita* after Mar Narsai, and two lines of two seven-syllable units (7+7 7+7) per stanza which is called *Aprimaita* after Mar Aprim the Great. An example of a hymn that employs a more complex syllabic pattern is number 26 which consists of two lines of one four-syllable unit followed by one five-syllable unit; one line of two eight syllable units and one line of two six-syllable units in each stanza (4+5 4+5 8+8 6+6).



His Holiness with the Choir  
of Mar Mushi in Chalik

ܡܪܝܬܝܡܝܢ ܡܘܨܝܝܐ ܥܡ ܚܘܪܝܬܝܗܘܢ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܝܡܝܢ ܡܘܨܝܝܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܝܐ

Special literary features include the use of alphabetic acrostics in which the first letter of the first word in a stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order. 21 hymns exhibit alphabetic acrostics, 7 of which extend to the full 22 letters of the alphabet. Rhyme is achieved by having the last word of each line or unit in a stanza end in the same syllable. 6 hymns have the lines within each stanza end in the same syllable. 19 hymns have the units within each stanza end in the same syllable.

The language of the hymns is generally simple and direct as befits their popular and devotional purpose. The literary features that are employed enhance the experience of the worshipers and the choice of vocabulary ensures the comprehension of their messages. A closer look at three of these hymns will help to understand their function and appreciate their appeal.

## Turgama

The literal meaning of the word is ‘interpretation’ or ‘translation’. *Turgame* are hymns that are sung before the reading of the Gospel of the day during the Eucharistic Liturgy. Many of them were composed by Mar Abdisho of Nisibis. Forty examples are found in the liturgical book which takes its name from this type of hymn. One is used for ordinary days and the others are for special days, such as the feasts of the Lord, the Sundays in Lent, and certain commemorations of Saints. The *Turgama* that is used for ordinary days serves as an invitation to the believers to listen to the words of God in the reading and places the specific message that they are about to hear into a general framework of salvation through Jesus Christ.

The ceremony that accompanies the reading of the Gospel in the Assyrian Church of the East is elaborate and full of symbolism. With great ceremony, the celebrant takes the Gospel from the altar and holds it up with the Cross of Blessing placed over it. The Gospel and the Cross are the most important symbols of Jesus Christ. The sanctuary represents heaven and the lectern on the *bema*, represents earth. The action of taking the Gospel and the Cross and holding them up, singing Hallelujah; blessing the people and proceeding to the lectern for the reading represents the descent of Jesus from heaven to earth to bring the message of salvation to mankind.

This modern Assyrian *Turgama* for ordinary days retains the opening confession in the Trinity that is found in the Syriac version. This is immediately followed by a traditional Assyrian Church of the East Christological formula. Here ‘Jesus Christ’ stands in place of ‘one person’. The language that is used to describe the Incarnation (“clothed Himself with a body like a human”) is also a favorite metaphor of the writers of the Assyrian Church. The next two stanzas recall the specific historical circumstances of the reception of the Christian faith among the members of the Assyrian Church of the East. ‘Children of the East’ can be seen as a somewhat general but traditional reference that is similar to the word



# ܐܘܕܝܡܢܢ ܕܡܕܪܐ ܝܗܘܝܫܥ ܕܢܚܪܝܢ



We are believers in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit  
Jesus Christ in two natures and two *qnome*



ܐܘܕܝܡܢܢ ܡܕܡܗ ܡܡܝܢ : ܡܡܝܢ ܐܬܬܐ : ܡܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܡܕܝܢ :  
ܡܕܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܕܝܢ ܡܡܝܢ : ܡܡܝܢ ܕܡܡܝܢ ❖

The children of the East believed in Jesus Christ  
The Son of God Who clothed Himself in a human body



ܡܡܝܢ ܡܕܡܝܢ : ܡܕܡܝܢ ܡܡܝܢ : ܡܡܝܢ ܕܡܡܝܢ :  
ܡܕܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܕܝܢ ܡܡܝܢ : ܡܡܝܢ ܕܡܡܝܢ ❖

The Apostles planted a spiritual garden in the city of Edessa  
The children of Assyria rushed and received baptism



ܡܡܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ : ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ :  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ❖

O Christian cleanse your heart from every injustice  
Do penance and draw near to the compassionate Lord



ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ :  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ❖

O children of the Church let us engage in fast and prayer  
And ask the Lord to protect our Assyrian Nation



ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ :  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ❖

Alas for the person who is distant from the love of Christ  
O children of the Church come near to God



ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ :  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ : ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ❖



## Turgama before the Gospel

‘Easterners’ often found in earlier literature of the Church to describe itself. The identification of Assyrians with Edessa represents the true historical understanding of our ancestry. The reality that we are being brought into close contact with our Savior in hearing His words accounts for the plea for repentance via the time honored methods of fasting and prayer and provides the faithful an opportunity to make a special request for the protection of ‘our Assyrian Nation’.

### Comfort, O Lord

The next hymn under consideration is composed along the lines of a funeral *madrasha*. It is sung during the Eucharistic Liturgy while the celebrant is saying the *kushapa* for the departed. A *kushapa* is a supplication said by the celebrant in a low voice. The *kushapa* of the departed is only said when one or more of the departed faithful are being remembered during the service. The prayer cannot be said on any of the seven feasts of the Lord.<sup>11</sup>

While the celebrant is quietly reciting the *kushapa*, the choir sings this hymn. The tune is very sad and is well known to members of the church from its use in the funeral service. The hymn is a beautiful prayer for the living, asking God to relieve their grief and reminding them that while the grave is the ultimate fate for all; there is hope in the resurrection of Christ. Of particular note is the last stanza where we can again see something of the traditional theology of the Assyrian Church of the East which stresses that the real suffering of Jesus on the cross was in His human nature alone.



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<sup>11</sup> Nativity, Epiphany, Resurrection, Pentecost, Ascension, Transfiguration and the Feast of the Cross.

# ܫܚܕ ܕܝܬܝ ܡܕܢܐ



Comfort, O Lord, those who are mournful  
Seated in sorrow because of the death of their beloved one

ܫܚܕ ܕܝܬܝ ܡܕܢܐ : ܕܠܝܒ ܕܩܬܝܠܝܢ ܡܢ :  
ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܬܝܢ ܡܢ ❖

Bitter death has broken the body  
Guarded in the grave until the coming of Christ  
There it awaits the resurrection of the dead  
To be praised for good conduct

ܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ : ܕܩܬܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܐ :  
ܫܚܕ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ : ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ :  
ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ : ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ :  
ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ : ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ❖

Jesus Christ, remove the dark veil  
From the saddened heart of our earthly nature  
Lord accept this offering  
That is offered by your servants O compassionate One

ܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ : ܕܩܬܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܐ :  
ܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ : ܕܩܬܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܐ :  
ܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ : ܕܩܬܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܐ :  
ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ : ܕܩܬܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܐ ❖

Jesus the Savior You sacrificed yourself  
And accepted suffering in your human nature  
And drank the bitter cup of death  
You taught us hope in the resurrection

ܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ : ܕܩܬܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܐ :  
ܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ : ܕܩܬܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܐ :  
ܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ : ܕܩܬܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܐ :  
ܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ : ܕܩܬܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܐ ❖



Comfort, O Lord

## Our Father in Heaven

The final hymn under consideration is sung at the commencement of the rite of fraction and consignation which involves the breaking of the bread and the commingling of the bread and the wine. The rite symbolizes the breaking of the body and the shedding of the blood of Jesus on the cross. Since the purpose of the sacrifice of Christ is the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God, the faithful are called upon to focus on forgiveness and reconciliation in preparation to receiving the sacrament.

The hymn is loosely modeled on the Lord's Prayer in the first three stanzas. The requests of this prayer include guidance to be good Christians, forgiveness of sins and protection. In addition, a prominent place is given to a request for the unity of the Assyrian Nation and concord among its members.

## Summary of Themes

In these hymns, we can see some of the important themes that His Holiness wants the faithful to appreciate and understand. These include:

- ❖ A healthy respect and appreciation for the traditions of the Assyrian Church of the East as exemplified in the use of its distinctive formulas and phrases. Examples of these include the Christological formula, the metaphor of the Incarnation, and the understanding of the real suffering of Christ in His human nature alone. Traditional phrases such as 'fasting and prayer' and the concept of the Cross as a guardian and refuge of the faithful are also to be noted.
- ❖ An appreciation of the specific history of the reception of the Christian faith by the members of the Assyrian Church of the East as a distinct community. The Assyrian Church of the East is part of the universal church, the Body of Christ on earth. But each community, church or nation has a history that stretches back to the apostolic age and even beyond when we consider the story of the Assyrians in the book of Jonah.



ܬܒ ܕܢܥܡܬܐ



ܬܒ ܕܢܥܡܬܐ : ܡܕܒܬ ܢܚܝܐ :  
ܡܫܝܬ ܠܐ ܐܘܪܐ : ܝܩܒ ܡܕܗܒܝܐ ❖

Our Father in heaven Holy in your nature  
Guide us to be good Christians

ܐܡܢ ܡܠܚܡܐ ܝ : ܡܫܝܝܐ ܡܕܚܡܐ ܝ :  
ܢܬܝ ܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܝܚܝܡܐ : ܢܚܡ ܕܡܫܝܬܐ ܡܠܚܡܐ ܝ ❖

May your kingdom come; spread your blessings  
Upon the children of your church; guard them with your righteousness

ܡܠܚܡܐ ܡܢܝܐ ܝ : ܡܠܚܡܐ ܡܠܚܡܐ :  
ܕܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ : ܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ❖

All of us, in one voice, beseech of you  
To forgive our faults and pardon our sins

ܡܠܚܡܐ ܡܕܡܝܬܐ : ܡܠܚܡܐ ܡܕܡܝܬܐ :  
ܡܠܚܡܐ ܡܠܚܡܐ : ܡܠܚܡܐ ܡܠܚܡܐ ❖

Compassionate Jesus, saving Father  
Your mighty cross is a guardian for us

ܡܠܚܡܐ ܡܕܡܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ : ܡܠܚܡܐ ܡܕܡܝܬܐ :  
ܡܠܚܡܐ ܡܕܡܝܬܐ : ܡܠܚܡܐ ܡܕܡܝܬܐ ❖

Have mercy upon the scattered children of Assyria  
In whichever country they are, let them be united

ܡܠܚܡܐ ܡܕܡܝܬܐ : ܡܠܚܡܐ ܡܕܡܝܬܐ :  
ܡܠܚܡܐ ܡܕܡܝܬܐ : ܡܠܚܡܐ ܡܕܡܝܬܐ ❖

Sow love and peace among the children of our nation  
So they unite and distance themselves from division



Our Father in Heaven



The Assyrians, both before and after the Incarnation of Our Lord have played an important role in Salvation history.

- ❖ A deep concern for the current condition of the faithful as a nation. The majority of the present members of the Assyrian Church of the East are ethnically Assyrian. By virtue of the fact that these hymns are written in modern Assyrian, they are intended for the use of that part of the faithful of the church. The tragedies that this nation has experienced in the past and continue to experience cry out for recognition in the prayers of the church.

### Conclusion

The appropriateness of the use of the vernacular in the church services seems self evident. For the Indian and American members of the Church of the East this has already taken place. The Assyrian members have been somewhat behind in this effort because of their reverence for the Syriac language and its literature. The fear of loss of an important heritage, which has been diligently preserved and handed down by our forefathers, and the preoccupation with matters of basic survival have engendered a cautious approach to the introduction of the vernacular.

The body of hymns that His Holiness has composed in modern Assyrian and the program that he employed for their introduction can be seen as a modest, but nonetheless groundbreaking, effort at renewal within the Assyrian Church of the East. They have been successful for a number of reasons. They employ the vernacular, but they are modeled on classical hymns with regard to their metrical composition, tunes and their function within the church services. The themes that are employed touch the hearts of their hearers in a very deep way. Pride in our history and respect for our identity are important to Assyrians. Equally important is the concern and love for our nation and its future. The entirely appropriate desire to pray for the well being of the nation is welcomed by the faithful. In recognition of this effort, His Holiness well deserves the honor of the title of the *Modern Assyrian Harp of the Holy Spirit*.



## Hymns Composed by His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV

1

Title: **ܬܘܪܓܡܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ**  
Turgama before the Gospel on Ordinary Days

Tune: **ܬܘܪܓܡܐ**

Stanzas: Six

Lines: Two per stanza

Meter: Two lines of three four-syllable units per stanza:  
4+4+4 4+4+4

Use: Sung before the reading of the Gospel lection on ordinary days during the Eucharistic Liturgy

## 2

Title: **أَجِدْ يَا مَوْلَى**  
Comfort, O Lord

Tune: **دُخْبُ الْكَلْبِ**

Stanzas: One refrain ('unaya) and three stanzas (bate)

Lines: Two in the refrain and four in each stanza

Meter: Two lines of two five-syllable units in the refrain:  
5+5 5+5; four lines of two five-syllable units in  
each stanza: 5+5 5+5 5+5 5+5

Rhyme: Both lines in the refrain end in the same syllable  
and each line within a stanza ends in the same  
syllable

Use: Sung while the celebrant is saying the Kushapa of  
the Departed during the Eucharistic Liturgy



### 3

Title:	ܬܬܝܢ ܕܒܬܬܝܢ Our Father in Heaven
Tune:	ܕܬܬܝܢ ܕܠܡܝܬܐ
Stanzas:	Six
Lines:	Two per stanza
Meter:	Two lines of two five-syllable units per stanza: 5+5 5+5
Rhyme:	Each line within a stanza ends in the same syllable except for the third and sixth stanzas.
Use:	Sung while the celebrant is saying the Qanona following the Epiclesis and the closing of the sanctuary veil during the Eucharistic Liturgy

### 4

Title:	ܕܠܡܝܬܐ ܕܒܬܬܝܢ ܕܠܡܝܬܐ ܕܠܡܝܬܐ Assyrians of the City of Urhai
Tune:	ܕܠܡܝܬܐ ܕܠܡܝܬܐ
Stanzas:	Twenty-two
Lines:	Two per stanza
Meter:	Two lines of two eight-syllable units per stanza: 8+8 8+8
Acrostic:	First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from ܐ to ܐ
Rhyme:	Last words of each of the four units within a stanza end in the same syllable
Use:	Hymn suitable for any day



## 5

Title:	<p>أَبَتَاءُ جُمِعُوا</p> <p>The Fathers Gathered</p>
Tune:	<p>جَدِّهِمْ كَتَمْنَا</p>
Stanzas:	Ten
Lines:	Five lines per stanza
Meter:	<p>Five lines of two five-syllable units per stanza:</p> <p>5+5 5+5 5+5 5+5 5+5</p>
Acrostic:	<p>First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the</p> <p>alphabet in order from أ to هـ</p>
Rhyme:	<p>Last words of each line within a stanza end in the</p> <p>same syllable</p>
Use:	Hymn suitable for any day

## 6

Title:	<p>أَيْضًا نَحْنُ صِبْيَانُ كَنِيسَتِهِ</p> <p>We Also are the Children of the Church</p>
Tune:	<p>مَعَهُ جَمْعًا</p>
Stanzas:	Ten
Lines:	Four per stanza
Meter:	<p>Four lines of one seven syllable unit followed by</p> <p>one four- syllable unit per stanza:</p> <p>7+4 7+4 7+4 7+4</p>
Acrostic:	<p>First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the</p> <p>alphabet in order from أ to هـ</p>
Rhyme:	<p>Last words of each line within a stanza end in the</p> <p>same syllable</p>
Use:	Hymn suitable for any day



## 7

Title:	ܠܒܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܝܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ We Have Hope and Pride
Tune:	ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ
Stanzas:	Nine
Lines:	One per stanza
Meter:	One line of two eight-syllable units per stanza: 8+8
Acrostic:	First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from ܐ to ܙ
Rhyme:	Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the same syllable
Use:	Hymn suitable for any day

## 8

Title:	ܠܒܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܝܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ We are Christian Children
Tune:	ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ
Stanzas:	Twenty-two
Lines:	Two per stanza
Meter:	Two lines of two seven-syllable units per stanza: 7+7 7+7
Acrostic:	First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from ܐ to ܙ
Rhyme:	Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the same syllable
Use:	Hymn suitable for any day



## 9

Title:	لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ God the Hidden Being
Tune:	لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
Stanzas:	Eleven
Lines:	Four per stanza
Meter:	Four lines of two seven-syllable units per stanza: 7+7 7+7 7+7 7+7
Acrostic:	First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from ل to هـ
Rhyme:	Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the same syllable
Use:	Hymn suitable for any day

## 10

Title:	لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ We Have Hope
Tune:	لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
Stanzas:	Twenty-two
Lines:	Four per stanza
Meter:	Four lines of three four-syllable units per stanza: 4+4+4 4+4+4 4+4+4 4+4+4
Acrostic:	First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from ل to هـ
Rhyme:	Last words of each line within a stanza end in the same syllable
Use:	Hymn suitable for any day

## 11

- Title: **ܐܘܕܡܐ ܡܕܢܐ ܝܗܘܝܬܠܝܕܐ ܕܝܚܝܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ**  
Turgama before the Gospel on the  
Feast of the Nativity
- Tune: **ܐܘܕܡܐ**
- Stanzas: Nine
- Lines: Two per stanza
- Meter: Two lines of three four-syllable units per stanza:  
4+4+4 4+4+4
- Acrostic: First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the  
alphabet in order from ܐ to ܙ
- Rhyme: Last words of each line within a stanza end in the  
same syllable
- Use: Sung before the reading of the Gospel lection on the  
Feast of the Nativity during the Eucharistic Liturgy

## 12

- Title: **ܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܗܘܝܬܠܝܕܐ ܡܕܢܐ ܡܕܢܐ**  
The Feast of the Nativity is Blessed
- Stanzas: Six
- Lines: Two per stanza
- Meter: Two lines of two seven-syllable units per stanza:  
7+7 7+7
- Rhyme: Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the  
same syllable
- Use: Hymn for the Feast of the Nativity



## 13

Title:	يَدْعُوهُ يَدْعُوهُ يَدْعُوهُ Today is the Feast of the Nativity
Tune:	حَلَجْهْ بِصَمَقْ سَمْعَه جُكْ
Stanzas:	Seven
Lines:	Five per stanza
Meter:	Three lines of one seven-syllable unit followed by one five-syllable unit; one line of two five-syllable units; one line of one seven-syllable unit followed by one five-syllable unit per stanza: 7+5 7+5 7+5 5+5 7+5
Use:	Hymn for the Feast of the Nativity

## 14

Title:	نَجْدُكُمُ هُجْدُكُمُ هُكْ سُدْهَكُمُ We Have Hope and Joy
Stanzas:	Ten
Lines:	Two per stanza; the second line being the refrain which is common to all stanzas
Meter:	Two lines of three four-syllable units per stanza: 4+4+4 4+4+4
Refrain:	هَلِّلَهُ : هَلِّلَهُ : هَلِّلَهُ
Acrostic:	First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from ا to هـ
Use:	Hymn for the Feast of the Nativity



## 15

- Title: **ܝܠܚܡܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ**  
Today is the Feast of the Nativity
- Tune: **ܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ**
- Stanzas: Twenty-Two
- Lines: Three per stanza
- Meter: One line of three seven-syllable units; one line of one twelve-syllable unit; and one line (the refrain) of two three-syllable units and one six-syllable unit per stanza: 7+7+7 12 3+3+6
- Refrain: **ܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ : ܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ : ܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ**
- Acrostic: First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from ܐ to ܝ
- Rhyme: Last words of each of the units of the first two lines within a stanza end in the same syllable
- Use: Hymn for the Feast of the Nativity

## 16

- Title: **ܝܠܚܡܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ**  
Jesus Christ the Craftsman
- Tune: **ܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ**
- Stanzas: Twenty-Two
- Lines: Two per stanza
- Meter: Two lines of two seven-syllable units per stanza: 7+7 7+7
- Acrostic: First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from ܐ to ܝ
- Rhyme: Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the same syllable
- Use: Hymn for the Feast of the Nativity



## 17

Title:	<p>إِذْكَرْنَا قَدْرَ</p> <p>God Our Father</p>
Tune:	<p>هَـ حَـ مَدِيحَـ</p>
Stanzas:	Ten
Lines:	One per stanza
Meter:	<p>One line of four five-syllable units per stanza:</p> <p>5+5+5+5</p>
Acrostic:	First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from ا to هـ
Rhyme:	Last words of each line end in the same syllable
Use:	Hymn for the Feast of the Nativity

## 18

Title:	<p>إِذْكَرْنَا قَدْرَ</p> <p>Let's Go to the Church Quickly</p>
Tune:	<p>صَدَقَـ دَافَقَـ دَافَقَـ دَافَقَـ</p>
Stanzas:	Seven
Lines:	Two per stanza
Meter:	<p>Two lines of two six-syllable units per stanza:</p> <p>6+6 6+6</p>
Rhyme:	Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the same syllable
Use:	Hymn for the Feast of the Nativity





## 19

- Title: **يَذْهَبُ يَذْهَبُ يَذْهَبُ يَذْهَبُ**  
Today is the Feast of the Epiphany
- Tune: **يَذْهَبُ يَذْهَبُ**
- Stanzas: Seventeen
- Lines: Two per stanza
- Meter: Two lines of two seven-syllable units per stanza:  
7+7 7+7
- Rhyme: Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the same syllable
- Use: Hymn for the Feast of the Epiphany

## 20

- Title: **يَذْهَبُ يَذْهَبُ يَذْهَبُ يَذْهَبُ**  
This Holy Fast
- Tune: **يَذْهَبُ يَذْهَبُ يَذْهَبُ يَذْهَبُ**
- Stanzas: Nine
- Lines: Two per stanza
- Meter: Two lines of two seven-syllable units per stanza:  
7+7 7+7
- Acrostic: First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from **أ** to **ي**
- Rhyme: Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the same syllable
- Use: Hymn for Lent



## 21

Title:	<p>مُصَيِّم يَحْدِّثْ ١٥ جَدِّتْ</p> <p>Church Shout Hosanna</p>
Tune:	يَحْدِّثْ ١٥ صَكِّ ١٥ دَسْ ١٥ جَدِّتْ
Stanzas:	Twelve
Lines:	One per stanza
Meter:	One line of three seven-syllable units followed by one twelve-syllable unit and one thirteen-syllable refrain per stanza: 7+7+7+12+13
Refrain:	١٥ جَدِّتْ : ١٥ جَدِّتْ : ١٥ جَدِّتْ : كَيَّ جَمْدَه مَيَّ
Rhyme:	Last words of the first three units within a stanza end in the same syllable
Use:	Hymn for the Feast of Hosanna

## 22

Title:	<p>١٥ جَدِّتْ ١٥ سَجَبْ</p> <p>We Have Only (One Hope in Jesus Christ)</p>
Tune:	مَلَكْ ١٥ دَمَلَكْ ١٥
Stanzas:	Twenty-two
Lines:	One per stanza
Meter:	One line of one four-syllable unit followed by one seven-syllable unit, followed by one four-syllable unit, followed by one seven-syllable unit, followed by one four-syllable refrain per stanza: 4+7+4+7+4
Refrain:	١٥ جَدِّتْ ١٥ كَيَّ مَيَّ
Acrostic:	First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from ١ to ٥
Use:	Hymn for the Feast of Hosanna



## 23

- Title: **لَبَّكُورِي ذَوَّ سَبِّ مُصْحَبَةٍ**  
You Have a Meek Spirit
- Tune: **حَلَجَهْ بِمُصْحَبِي مَوَّحَهْ جَلَّ**
- Stanzas: Six
- Lines: Five per stanza
- Meter: Four lines of one seven-syllable unit followed by one five-syllable unit (lines 1,2,3 and 5) and one line of two five-syllable units (line 4) per stanza:  
7+5 7+5 7+5 5+5 7+5
- Acrostic: First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from **ا** to **و**
- Rhyme: Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the same syllable
- Use: Hymn for the Feast of Hosanna

## 24

- Title: **حَذَرَجَاءُ دَسَّعَ مَكَّةَ**  
It is Sad Friday
- Tune: **مَدَّحَ اذْهَبْ اذْهَبْ دَسَّعَ مَكَّةَ**
- Stanzas: One refrain ('unaya) and sixteen stanzas (bate)
- Lines: Two in the refrain and two in each stanza
- Meter: Two lines of two five-syllable units in the refrain and in each stanza: 5+5 5+5
- Rhyme: Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the same syllable
- Use: Hymn for Passion Friday



## 25

Title:	يَدْعُوهُ رَبُّ الْمَوْتَى Today He has Risen from the Grave
Tune:	صَعَتِي دَنَاقِي دَحْدَا دَحْدَا
Stanzas:	Twenty-Two
Lines:	Two per stanza
Meter:	Two lines of two six-syllable units in each stanza: 6+6 6+6
Acrostic:	First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from ا to هـ
Rhyme:	Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the same syllable
Use:	Hymn for the Feast of the Resurrection

## 26

Title:	اَجَبَتْ حَقْدَا They are in the Morning
Tune:	هَ اَجَبَتْ
Stanzas:	Six
Lines:	Five per stanza
Meter:	Two lines of one four-syllable unit followed by one five-syllable unit; one line of two eight syllable units and one line of two six-syllable units in each stanza: 4+5 4+5 8+8 6+6
Acrostic:	First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from ا to هـ
Rhyme:	Last words of each line within a stanza end in the same syllable
Use:	Hymn for the Feast of the Resurrection



## 27

Title:	يَوْمَ الْيَوْمِ الْكَبِيرِ Today is the Great Feast
Tune:	يُحْيِيهِ خَمْدَقْ
Stanzas:	Twelve
Lines:	Two per stanza
Meter:	Two lines of two seven-syllable units per stanza: 7+7 7+7
Rhyme:	Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the same syllable
Use:	Hymn for the Feast of the Resurrection

## 28

Title:	وَمَدِّدْ كُلَّ صَوْتٍ تَكْرٍ Everyone Sing With One Voice
Tune:	يُحْيِيهِ خَمْدَقْ
Stanzas:	Sixteen
Lines:	Two per stanza
Meter:	Two lines of two seven-syllable units per stanza: 7+7 7+7
Rhyme:	Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the same syllable
Use:	Hymn for the Feast of the Resurrection



## 29

Title:	<p>ܐܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܗܝܐ</p> <p>This Day the Assembly Gathered</p>
Tune:	ܐܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܗܝܐ
Stanzas:	Eleven
Lines:	Four per stanza
Meter:	Four lines of three four-syllable units per stanza: 4+4+4 4+4+4 4+4+4 4+4+4
Acrostic:	First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from ܐ to ܟ
Rhyme:	Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the same syllable
Use:	Hymn for the Feast of the Resurrection

## 30

Title:	<p>ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܗܝܐ</p> <p>Be Joyful O Children of the Church</p>
Tune:	ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܗܝܐ ܕܝܗܝܐ ܕܝܗܝܐ
Stanzas:	Eight
Lines:	Two per stanza
Meter:	Two lines of two six-syllable units in each stanza: 6+6 6+6
Rhyme:	Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the same syllable
Use:	Hymn for the Feast of the Resurrection



## 31

Title:	لَمَذْمُ حِكِّ حَسْبِ تَكَا Everyone Say With One Voice
Tune:	لَحِيَّه خَمَقِيَّه
Stanzas:	Ten
Lines:	Two per stanza
Meter:	Two lines of two seven-syllable units per stanza: 7+7 7+7
Acrostic:	First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from ا to هـ
Rhyme:	Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the same syllable
Use:	Hymn for the Feast of the Ascension

## 32

Title:	لَا تَسْأَلْ لَهْوَكَ مَجْلِسِي Let Us Honor this Day
Tune:	لَحِيَّه خَمَقِيَّه
Stanzas:	Fifteen
Lines:	Two per stanza
Meter:	Two lines of two seven-syllable units per stanza: 7+7 7+7
Acrostic:	First word of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from ا to هـ
Rhyme:	Last words of each unit within a stanza end in the same syllable
Use:	Hymn for the consecration of priests



## ܐܒܬܐ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ



ܐܒܬܐ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ.  
ܥܠܝܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ.  
ܬܫܬܐ ܕܕܗܫܐ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ.  
ܬܫܬܐ ܕܕܗܫܐ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ.  
ܬܫܬܐ ܕܕܗܫܐ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ.

The fathers gathered and assembled in the Upper Room  
These Holy Apostles accepted the Gift (of the Holy Spirit)  
They healed the lame, by receiving the Spirit  
With Spiritual Light, they ended darkness  
And to the Seventy-two disciples, they gave authority



ܬܫܬܐ ܕܕܗܫܐ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ.  
ܬܫܬܐ ܕܕܗܫܐ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ.  
ܬܫܬܐ ܕܕܗܫܐ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ.  
ܬܫܬܐ ܕܕܗܫܐ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ.  
ܬܫܬܐ ܕܕܗܫܐ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ.

The meek messengers delivered the Light  
The illustrious Apostles, Thomas and Bartholomew  
Also Addai and Mari of the Seventy-two disciples  
Reached Bet Nahrain, neither bored nor tired,  
For the blessed Ninevites, they established the Church



The Fathers  
Gathered

ܬܫܬܐ ܕܕܗܫܐ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ.  
ܬܫܬܐ ܕܕܗܫܐ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ.  
ܬܫܬܐ ܕܕܗܫܐ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ.  
ܬܫܬܐ ܕܕܗܫܐ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ.  
ܬܫܬܐ ܕܕܗܫܐ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܗܘܢ.

The Almighty of all generations, forgive our sins  
O exalted Lord, have mercy upon our nation  
We beseech You, hear our prayers  
Pour love and peace amongst the children of our Church  
Protect our young men and women



ܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܝ ܥܡܠܐ: ܕܠܗܘܐ ܬܘܫܝܝܫ.  
ܥܬܝܬܐ ܥܒܕܐ: ܕܡܥܬܐ ܡܘܕܝܝܫ.  
ܥܝܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ: ܕܚܕܐ ܡܘܕܝܫ.  
ܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ: ܕܝܬ ܡܘܕܝܫ.  
ܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ: ܕܡܥܬܐ ܡܘܕܝܫ.



A Manifestation from the sky illuminated Assyria  
The people of Nineveh drew near to Christ  
He strengthened the mortal race with the Spirit  
He darkened the hearts of the crucifiers of Christ  
The shameful Judas betrayed his Lord



ܬܕܝܬ ܕܝܬ ܕܝܬ: ܕܡܥܬܐ ܡܘܕܝܫ.  
ܕܝܬ ܥܒܕܐ: ܕܡܥܬܐ ܡܘܕܝܫ.  
ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ: ܕܡܥܬܐ ܡܘܕܝܫ.  
ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ: ܕܡܥܬܐ ܡܘܕܝܫ.  
ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ: ܕܡܥܬܐ ܡܘܕܝܫ.



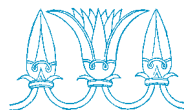
Therefore, they conquered, Satan and death  
Those Ninevites that had repented  
To save humanity from death through sin  
With fast and supplications they held a rogation  
And captured mankind in the net of the Church





ܐܠܚܝܬܐ ܒܠܝܬܐ ܕܩܠܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܪܐܢܐ.  
 ܡܝܬܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.  
 ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.  
 ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.  
 ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.

Our obligation is to work in purity  
 To love our nation with all honesty  
 To persevere in the church faithfully  
 For the great love of the Fashioner of all creatures  
 To the Church Canons, let us be obedient



ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.  
 ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.  
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 ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.

The Righteous One ascended into heaven in glory  
 The Holy Church, the Apostles built  
 Church of the East, the Apostolic Church  
 With purity, the just priests labored  
 For the benefit of the Nation and the Christian Church



ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.  
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 ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.



Great happiness to the spiritual multitudes  
 The ascension of the Son, rejoiced the heavenly beings  
 His Holy Body honored by the prelates  
 The Apostles mourning, and all sorrowful  
 Mount Olive honored with greater dominion



ܐܝܬܢ ܠܡܕܝܫܬܢ: ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܡܫܬܢ.  
 ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܠܡܕܝܬܢ: ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܡܫܬܢ.  
 ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܠܡܕܝܬܢ: ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܡܫܬܢ.  
 ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܠܡܕܝܬܢ: ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܡܫܬܢ.  
 ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܠܡܕܝܬܢ: ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܡܫܬܢ.



Blessed is the merciful and the one who loves his neighbor  
 Who attends the Church and prays  
 Who offers sacrifice and observes the fast  
 Who receives your peace, and cleanses his heart  
 Who forgives his brother, and pardons his offenses



ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܠܡܕܝܬܢ: ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܡܫܬܢ.  
 ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܠܡܕܝܬܢ: ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܡܫܬܢ.  
 ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܠܡܕܝܬܢ: ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܡܫܬܢ.  
 ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܠܡܕܝܬܢ: ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܡܫܬܢ.  
 ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܠܡܕܝܬܢ: ܠܡܕܝܬܢ ܡܫܬܢ.



O Christ, You rose on a holy day  
 A Sunday distinct from the days of sorrow  
 The Church is celebrating, in that day, a hallowing  
 Eating the bread, and drinking the wine  
 Of that Body and Blood, revealing the Truth



# ܐܬܝܪܝܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ



ܐܬܝܪܝܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ:  
ܡܡܝܬܝܐ ܠܠܝܬܝܐ ܬܠܝܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ.  
ܥܝܠܬܐ ܕܗܥܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ:  
ܥܝܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܬܝܠܬܐ ܠܝܕܬܐ ❖

Assyrians of the City of Edessa  
Joyfully greeted the Apostles  
They received the mark of baptism  
In the name of Jesus, they built the Church



ܬܝܠܬܐ ܠܝܕܬܐ ܬܝܝܒܝܬܐ:  
ܠܡܐ ܬܢܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܝܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ.  
ܡܝܬܬܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ ܠܡܐ ܡܝܬܬܐ:  
ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܬܝܠܬܐ ❖

They built the Church with glory  
Those builders of missions  
They invited guests to this celebration  
None like it in all of creation



ܠܡܐ ܬܝܠܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܬܐ:  
ܕܡܝܬܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܬܐ.  
ܕܡܝܬܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܬܐ:  
ܬܝܠܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ❖

In all of creation, the Light has reached  
Satan is cut off from hope  
The Arbelite is happy and joyful  
In Jesus Christ, the accepted sacrifice



Assyrians of the City of Edessa

ܕܝܥܢܐ ܕܝܕܢܐ ܩܒܠܕܢܐ:  
ܬܚܢܢܐ ܫܡܥܢܐ ܕܝܕܢܐ.  
ܡܝܠܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ ܕܫܢܢܐ:  
ܬܒܝܕܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܐܬܐ ܢܝܕܢܐ.



The accepted sacrifice is corporal  
With Adam's nature and qnuma  
And the Word from the Father is Spiritual  
In One Person of the Nazarene



ܐܬܐ ܢܝܕܢܐ ܡܬܬܐ ܡܪܕܝܬܐ:  
ܕܝܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܬܐ ܫܡܝܬܐ ܩܠܡܐ.  
ܝܫܬܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܠܡܝܬܐ ܡܫܬܬܐ:  
ܕܫܡܝܬܐ ܠܡܝܬܐ ܫܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ.



That Nazarene, the exalted Lord  
Rose from the tomb and renewed our image  
We are waiting for the resurrection day  
To see Jesus together with peace



ܫܡܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ ܡܫܬܐ ܡܫܬܐ:  
ܐܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ.  
ܡܫܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܡܫܬܐ ܡܫܬܐ:  
ܕܝܬܐ ܡܫܬܐ ܡܫܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ.



With Him peace and delight  
In the kingdom without ending  
Be partakers with the righteous  
Those believers that sowed peace



ܡܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ:  
ܡܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ.  
ܡܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ:  
ܡܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܐ.



Sowed peace and deep love  
Which they received from the infallible Jesus  
Those Apostles with zealous mind  
They preached the miraculous vision





The miraculous vision that is beautiful  
Was engraved in the heart of the Church  
On the wooden cross Jesus was tied  
For our humanity, Good and Glorified



Good and Glorified and Just Lord  
Pour out your mercies at this time  
To our unjustly oppressed multitude  
Have mercy on them, O Judge



O Judge, You are Compassionate  
Be a Helper to our Church and Nation  
We have neither strength nor power  
Nor shelter for a long time



For a long time, scattered in the world  
This tribe, Righteous One  
Abandoned and run from country to country  
Thinking the turbulence had ended

[illegible]

۱. سبڈا سبڈا ۵۰۰۰ جاناں :  
 ۲. سبڈا سبڈا ۵۰۰۰ جاناں :  
 ۳. سبڈا سبڈا ۵۰۰۰ جاناں :  
 ۴. سبڈا سبڈا ۵۰۰۰ جاناں :



۱. دینا ۲. آہ مخففنا:  
 کجی، ۱۵۰۲۵، ۵۵۵ مخففنا.  
 کہ کہ بنک ۵۵۵ کہ کہ کہ:  
 ۵۵۵ کہ کہ کہ کہ کہ کہ



**هَلْ يَدْرُسُ جَدِيدٌ تَوْبَةً:**  
**لَمْ يَجِبْ لِي وَدَعْنِي.**  
**مَنْ هَذَا كُنْتُ عَجَبًا مَحْذُومًا:**  
**خُذِ حَسْبَكَ كَفٌّ وَدَعْنِي ❖**





Turbulence had ended from the land  
Still and silent in every city  
We are waiting for His illumination  
Good hope from the Savior

ܕܩܝܡ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ:  
ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܝܬܝܠܡܐ.  
ܕܝܗܘܕܐ ܡܡܝܬ ܕܩܝܡ ܕܥܡܪܐ:  
ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ



ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ:  
ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ:  
ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ:  
ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ

From the savior Jesus Christ  
With a joyful heart, we ask  
For peace and prolonged tranquility  
For our Church and Nation progressively



ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ:  
ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ:  
ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ:  
ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ

Progressively, children of the East  
Let us submit to Jesus Christ  
In one true faithful Church  
In the faith the apostle preached



ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ:  
ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ:  
ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ:  
ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ



The apostle preached for this cause  
In the baptism of the Holy Spirit  
Every Ninevite encompassed in the Church  
The Judaic tribe bewildered





The bewildered tribe and the drawn sword  
As Bar Mattai (Jonah) journeyed to Nineveh  
Beloved Jesus, Lord and Head  
Is chosen as Head of the kingdom

ܒܬܝܒܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܐ:  
ܒܬܝܒܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܐ.  
ܒܬܝܒܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܐ:  
ܕܡܬܝܠܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܐ:



Chosen from a virgin bosom  
Through the Spirit, the body taken  
From the nature and qnuma of our weak race  
In one person, the rational image

ܕܡܬܝܠܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܐ:  
ܕܡܬܝܠܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܐ.  
ܕܡܬܝܠܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܐ:  
ܕܡܬܝܠܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܐ:



Rational image, pure in mind  
A crown placed on the King of kings  
Body and soul adorned in spirit  
The cup of death, taken on the cross

ܕܡܬܝܠܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܐ:  
ܕܡܬܝܠܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܐ.  
ܕܡܬܝܠܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܐ:  
ܕܡܬܝܠܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܐ:



On the cross, Jesus is crucified  
The apostle witnessed and Matthew wrote  
We believe, O, Beloved One  
As a seed is freshly planted

ܕܡܬܝܠܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܐ:  
ܕܡܬܝܠܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܐ.  
ܕܡܬܝܠܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܐ:  
ܕܡܬܝܠܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܐ:







Freshly planted, never in denial  
Compassionate friend, good, and loved  
Thinking that Lazar is asleep  
In the tomb, still and asleep

ܕܒܚܕܐ ܡܪܝܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܐ ܗܕܒܬܐ:  
ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ:  
ܗܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ:  
ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ:



Still and asleep, undeniably  
Resurrected by the Godhead  
The news reached the city of Edessa  
Good hope to the crowned kingdom

ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ:  
ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ:  
ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ:  
ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ:



The crowned kingdom, in faith  
Abgar received baptism  
So a kingdom was built  
A Spiritual Kingdom for humanity

ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ:  
ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ:  
ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ ܕܡܫܟܐ:  
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# The Assyrian Church of the East a Panoramic View of a Glorious History

By Cor-Bishop David Royel, STD



## Apostolic Origins and Beginnings

The beginnings of the Assyrian Church are to be found in the very first decades of the apostolic era. With the revelation of the Son of God in the flesh, the salvific message of the Gospel was open to all peoples of diverse tongues and cultures. The Gospel writer St. Luke records in the book of Acts the events of the growth, and spread of the Christian Gospel in the Holy City and abroad, to the outer limits of the Roman Empire.

We read in the Acts 2 the wondrous happenings surrounding the Pentecost feast celebrated at Jerusalem by our Lord's disciples. The promise of the Holy Spirit given to disciples before Jesus was taken up to the Father gave hope to the fledgling Christian community at Jerusalem (cf. John 16:13; Acts 1:4). This promise was fulfilled on the day of the Jewish feast of the Pentecost, which took place at Jerusalem 50 days after the Lord's Resurrection. Luke records:

And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitudes came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another. Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea and Cappodocia in Pontus, and Asia... (Acts 2:5-9)



Among those who had gone up to Jerusalem in order to be present in the Holy City for the Pentecost feast, there were Jews from Mesopotamia. Those who received the Gospel on the day of Pentecost early on spread it among the Assyrians who were dwelling in Mesopotamia: "...then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day they were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

Another ancient tradition recorded in the Gospel of Matthew tells of the wise men who had come from the East; certain Magi who had followed the star which led them to the Holy Child in Bethlehem. The evangelist Matthew tells us: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying: 'Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him,' (Matthew 2:1-2). According to the tradition of the Fathers of the Church, such as St. John Chrysostom (d. 407) these wise men were Persians who had come from the East searching for the Child born under the star, thus following the ancient tradition of their prophet Zoroaster.

### The Spread of the Gospel to Mesopotamia

Missionaries from the Holy City of Jerusalem came to preach the Gospel among the Jews in the Diaspora present in Mesopotamia and the Persian Empire. The Acts of the Apostles only records the first Christian missions *within* the limits of the Roman Empire. Therefore, it is the holy tradition of the Assyrian Church, coupled with historical evidence, that records the spread of the Gospel *outside* of the limits of the Roman Empire, namely within the Persian Empire; the second superpower of its day.

Since the fall of the Assyrian Empire in 612 B.C., the Assyrians spread far and wide across Mesopotamia. The fact that the remnant of the ancient Assyrians spoke the Aramaic language in the day of Christ, which was the very language of Christ himself and the



*lingua franca* of the East, ensured that the Gospel found fertile ground in Mesopotamia. So it was that in the first decades of the Christian era the Apostle Mar Addai (St. Addai), who is equated sometimes with the *Thaddeus* of the Twelve, was sent by St. Thomas the Apostle to the city of Edessa (Osrhoene), which was dependent upon the Roman Caesar and acted as a buffer-zone between Rome and Persia.

The missionary work of Addai came about through a promise given by our Lord to its vassal king Abgar the Black. According to the annals of Church history, recorded by the great historian Eusebius of Caesarea, Abgar had sent emissaries to Jerusalem asking that Jesus, the good healer whom he had heard about, would come and cure him from his illness. Abgar's *Letter to Jesus* reads:

“Abgar Ukkama [the Black], the Toparch, to Jesus the good Savior who has appeared in the district of Jerusalem, greeting. I have heard concerning you, and your cures, how they are accomplished by you without drugs and herbs. For, as the story goes, you make the blind recover their sight, the lame walk, and you cleanse lepers, and cast out unclean sprits and demons, and you cure those who are tortured by long disease, and you raise dead men. And when I heard all these things concerning you, and I decided that it is one of the two, either that you are God, and came down from heaven to do these things, or are the Son of God for doing these things. For this reason I write to beg you to listen to me, and to heal the suffering which I have...”

Our Lord replies to the king through the emissary whom Abgar had sent to Jerusalem to meet with Jesus by the name of Hannan:

“Blessed are you who did believe in me not having seen me, for it is written concerning me that those who have seen me will not believe in me, and that those who have not seen me will believe, and live. Now concerning what you wrote to me, to come to you, I must first complete here all which I was sent, and after thus completing it be taken up to him who

sent me, and when I have been taken up, I will send to you one of my disciples to heal your suffering and give life to you and those with you.”

Thus, the apostle Addai was sent to Edessa about 3 years after the Resurrection and preached the Gospel not only to the Jewish inhabitants of the city, but the divine Message was also received by citizens who were descendents of the ancient Assyrians. Hannan, the emissary of King Abgar, had brought back with him an image of the Lord known as the *Image of Edessa* which was miraculously composed.

Another early tradition of the Church attributes the evangelization of the Assyrians to the missionary activity of the apostles in the region of Adiabene, modern day Arbil, in northern Iraq. This area, in essence the whole strip of land between the mighty Tigris and Euphrates rivers mentioned in Genesis, was called *Assyria* by the famous Greek topographer Strabo of Amasia (64 BC-23 AD) in his famous work of the year 20 AD - the *Geographica*. He mentions Assyria, and the Parthian Persia east of Asia ‘whose eastern provinces touched the borders of India.’ Here was a thriving Jewish community that early on received the Gospel message from apostles sent to Edessa from Jerusalem. Almost a century following Strabo, the Roman emperor Trajan conquered Mesopotamia in 115, thus making it a Roman province, calling it *Assyria*.

The other major missionary activity that took place by the end of the first Christian century centered on the royal twin cities of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. The city was founded by one of the generals of Alexander the Great, Seleucus I Nicator in the fourth century BC. Later it became the winter residence of the Persian emperors sometime after 129 BC. According to the document, the *Acts of Mari*, St. Thaddeus (Addai) had sent his disciple Mari from Edessa to preach to the inhabitants of the royal cities. By the end of the first Christian century, according to ecclesiastical tradition, St. Mari had founded over 300 convents, and churches in Seleucia-Ctesiphon and he was buried in the church of Deir Qunni.





Consecration of the Church  
of Mar Narsai

ܡܪܝܢ ܢܪܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ



In essence the presence of Jews in the thriving cities of Edessa, Nisibis and Adiabene, connected by the Silk Road, provided fertile ground for the planting of the seed of the Christian Gospel. In these regions, not only were there communities of Jews dispersed throughout Mesopotamia since the Babylonian Exile (589-539 BC), but the descendents of the ancient Assyrians who inhabited Mesopotamia for millennia, having adopted the Aramaic language, were ardent to receive the preaching of the apostles who came to proclaim the revelation of the Son of God.

### Ecclesiastical Organization and Expansion

The Assyrian Church of the East began to grow at an enormous pace. By the year 325, the episcopacy of the Assyrian Church, also known as the *Church of Persia* since it was the only Christian Church within the Persian Empire, was organized by Papa, the bishop of the royal cities of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. In 410, the first recorded synod of the Persian bishops took place under the presidency of the Catholicos Mar Isaac. It was at this council that the Creed and canons of the Councils of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381) were received by the Assyrian Church. The Church was by now distributed in all parts and major cities of Mesopotamia. It was still within the limits of the Persian Empire. It enjoyed close ecclesiastical ties with the see of Antioch, which was the nearest, major Christian see existing within the Roman Empire.

As early as the middle of the fourth century, contacts were made with the Christians in southern India who were evangelized by St. Thomas the Apostle. Thomas is said to have arrived in southern India around the year 52 AD and to have been martyred there in 72 AD. He was buried at Mylapore, but his relics were transferred to Edessa sometime in the first half of the third century. His commemoration on July 3 recalls the transfer of his relics from Mylapore to Edessa. His relics are now in the cathedral at Ortona, Italy.



In 345 AD the bishop Thomas Knanay, along with some 70 families, migrated from Edessa to southern India, thus settling there and strengthening the Christian community by effecting contact between the Church of the East and the Indian Christians. Later contacts with Byzantium at the turn of the seventh century further helped to expand this Church. After the Council of Ephesus (431), when Nestorius, the patriarch of Constantinople, was condemned for his views on the unity of the Godhead and the humanity in Christ, the Church of the East was branded as *Nestorian* on account of its refusal to anathematize the Nestorius.

The missionary zeal of the Assyrian Church was kindled in the early part of the seventh century. In the year 635 AD, the first group of missionaries was sent from Persia to China. The Assyrian monks followed the famed Silk Road, which led them to the China of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD). The centennial of the first Christian mission to China was commemorated in a stele erected in the year 781 during the patriarchate of Mar Khanisho. This famous Nestorian stele was discovered at Sian-Fu (near Peking) at the turn of the 20th century. The Church of the East also sent missions to Japan, Tibet, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and reached almost all of eastern Asia before the end of the ninth century.

The Church enjoyed alternate periods of rest and persecution after the move of the caliphate to Baghdad from Damascus in 752 AD. In around 780, the seat of the patriarch moved to Baghdad, the new capital of the Islamic empire, from Seleucia-Ctesiphon. The monks and clergy of the Assyrian Church served the royal court in the capacities of the court physicians, and scribes. Many Greek works of philosophy, science and medicine were translated into Syriac and thence into Arabic by scholars of the Church of the East. These works later were translated from Arabic into Latin and found their way again to the West which had lost them during the dark ages.

Before the end of the first Christian millennium, the Church of the East counted some 25 metropolitan sees and over 300 episcopal sees in all of the Near and Far East. The Church enjoyed a Catholicity





Consecration of the Church  
of Mar Gewargis

ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪ ܕܝܘܢܐ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪ ܕܝܘܢܐ

in which Assyrians, Turks, Mongols, Uigurs, Arabs, Indians, and Chinese were members of this glorious institution. With the capture of Baghdad in 1258 by Hulagu Khan, and the end of the Arab Muslim caliphate, the Christians of the royal city, and the East in general enjoyed a period of rest and calm from persecution. The Christians hailed the entrance of the troops of Hulagu, and his devoutly Christian wife Tokuz Khatoun in the former capital of the caliphate as the dawn of a new age for Christendom. This royal couple was seen as the new *Constantine and Helen* for the Christians living under Mongol rule. Countless monks, priests, and deacons were to be found among the Mongol Christians, not to mention the tens of episcopal and metropolitan sees. In fact, in 1281, a Mongol monk by the name of Yahwalaha (*God has given*) was elected to the highest ecclesiastical office of the Assyrian Church.

### A Period of Survival and Decline

The Church entered into a period of decline around the year 1400 with the persecutions and massacres of the Assyrian Christians of Iraq, Iran and Turkey by the Mongol warlord Timur Lang. Upon capturing the capital of Baghdad in 1399, he began a campaign of murder and decimation of the Christian population of the region. Records tell of the massacre of hundreds of thousands of people: young and old, men and women. This caused the great majority of the Assyrian Christian populace to flee to the northern parts of Mesopotamia, in particular the region of modern day northern Iraq, to find refuge among the mountains of the area. Nonetheless, theologians of the Church of the East continued their ecclesiastical and theological contributions. Among such theologians were Mar Abdisho, Metropolitan of Nisibis (d. 1318) and Patriarch Timothy II (d. ca. 1332).

Christianity already flourished among the Assyrians of northern Mesopotamia long before the persecutions of Timur Lang. Already by the early fourth century monasticism was well established among the inhabitants of this region. In addition, churches were

effected among the Assyrians by saints which are till this very day venerated in this Church. In the Hakkari region of southeastern Turkey were to be found centuries old churches, and it was here that the Christian Assyrians, for many others of them adopted other religions, found refuge.

By the mid 15th century the patriarchate had become hereditary, being handed down from uncle to nephew. The majority of the metropolitan and episcopal sees also became hereditary. This caused a split in the Assyrian Church in the year 1552 when three bishops and the abbot of the Rabban Hurmizd monastery in Alqosh applied to Rome for help in consecrating a rival patriarch. The abbot, John Sulaqa, reached Rome in 1553 and was ordained patriarch by Pope Julius III. After having created a schism in the Assyrian Church, the rival patriarch came back to Mesopotamia, now styled the patriarch of the *Chaldeans*, a term used by Europeans to refer to Aramaic and previously used for the members of the Church of the East in Cyprus who were forced to join Rome in 1445 AD. From this point on, the missionary activity of the Latin West increased among the followers of the Church of the East in Mesopotamia, as well the adherents of the Assyrian Church in southern India. By 1680, there were two patriarchs of the Church of the East, those of the Mar Elia line at Alqosh and the Mar Shimun line at Qudshanis, Turkey.

### The Modern Day Assyrians

Since the establishment of the Church of the East patriarchate at Qudshanis, the mountain Assyrians of Turkey and those of the plain of Urmia owed their allegiance to Mar Shimun. The patriarchal cathedral of Mar Shalita was completed in 1689 AD, and about a dozen bishops, and metropolitans were in communion with this patriarch. Meanwhile, the Mar Elia line of Alqosh ruled the Assyrians of the Nineveh plain and its environs. By 1830, the old Mar Elia line of Alqosh became entirely Catholic, and the sole independent patriarchate was ruled by the Mar Shimun dynasty.



With the advent of the First World War in 1914, the Assyrian Church and Nation suffered greatly at the hands of the Muslim powers of the day. In 1918, the Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Benjamin Shimun XIX (1887-1918) was martyred by the Kurdish chief Ismail Agha (Simko), and the Assyrians were left at the mercy of the Ottoman Turks and their Kurdish neighbors. With the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire, the Assyrians were left without a homeland of their own and the promises of the Western superpowers for an independent Assyrian state were forgotten and left unfulfilled. In 1920, the majority of the Assyrians were moved to the Baquba refugee camp near Baghdad from Urmia, Iran. Tens of thousands lost their lives along the way to Baquba from 1918 to 1920 as a result of massacre and disease.

Eventually, the Assyrian people were able to recover themselves after the creation of the independent state of Iraq, however, without any claim to the land and home of their ancient ancestors. Later, in 1933 another wave of atrocities were perpetrated against the Assyrians of Iraq, this time on the part of the Iraqi monarchy. A group of Assyrians were forced to take refuge in the then French colony of Syria. A confrontation with Iraqi forces caused the death of some thousands of Assyrians. Those that crossed over were settled along the Khabour River. Today there are some 33 Assyrian villages along both banks of the Khabour River.

The Assyrians in the United States at this time were quite sparse, and numbered a few thousand in the whole country. The late Mar Eshai Shumun XXIII (1908-1975), patriarch of the Assyrian Church, was exiled along with the patriarchal family after the 1933 massacre and were settled for a time on the island of Cyprus by the British. The patriarch then moved to the United States, settling first in Chicago in 1940. From then on, the seat of the Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church would remain in the Diaspora.

The early 1970's and 1990's, after the first Gulf War, saw a great wave of migration of Assyrians from Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon and Turkey. These migrations included the establishment of a large





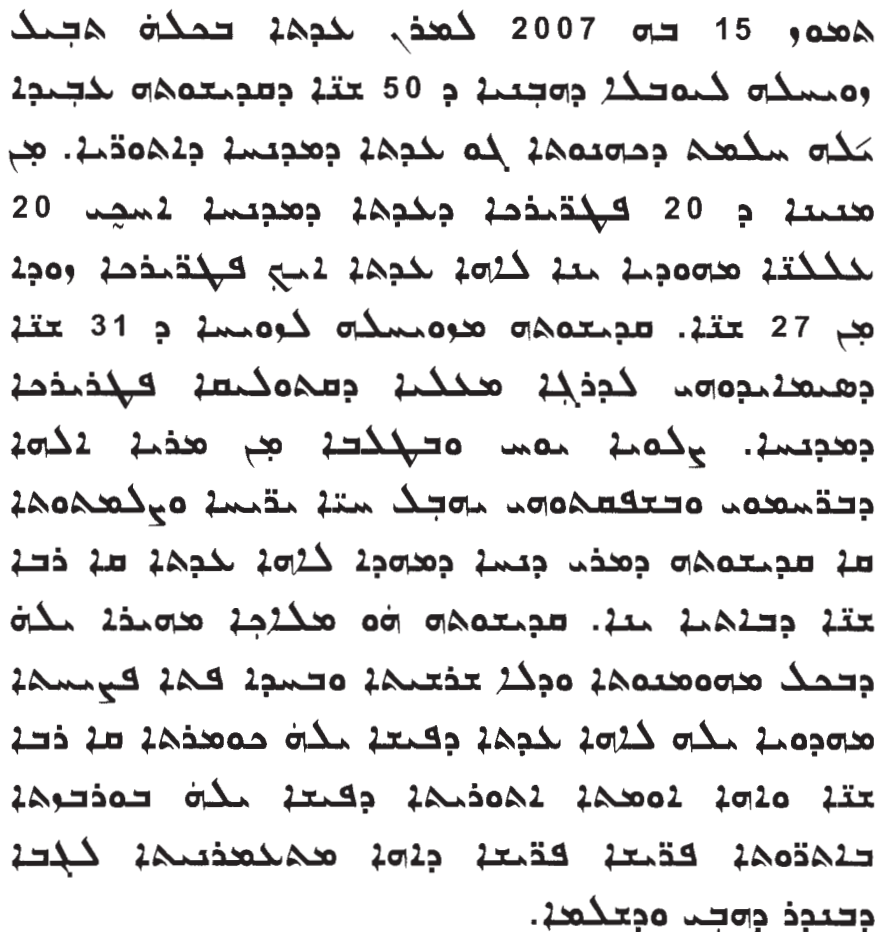
Assyrian Diaspora predominantly in the United States, and in the various countries of Europe and in Australia. Outside the homeland, churches and cultural institutions were established during this period. Various parishes were organized into dioceses, and Episcopal sees were established in the West for the first time. These communities continue to grow in number and affluence.

In 1975, the patriarchal see became vacant with the death of Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII. The Assyrian bishops gathered in London in 1976 and elected Mar Dinkha, the bishop of Iran, to the patriarchal throne. The new patriarch became Mar Dinkha IV. The new patriarch made immediate contact with Assyrians living in the countries of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Lebanon soon after his election. The patriarchal see was moved to Chicago in 1980 where it remains today.

The Assyrian Church and Nation is a thriving community found in all the major cities of North America, numbering some 300,000. Assyrians have also settled in Europe and Australia. Thus, the great majority of the Assyrians are to be found in the Diaspora rather than in their ancestral homeland of Mesopotamia in modern day Iraq. Centuries of persecution, and forced migration have decimated the once-numerous populace, however the community continues to preserve its ancient history and heritage.

Today, the descendents of the ancient Assyrians who populated the *Cradle of Civilization* are found all over the globe. In the U.S., they have proved to be an integral part of the patchwork of nationalities and ethnic groups of which this great nation is comprised. The struggle for their nationalistic, cultural, and religious rights in their homeland continues. Notwithstanding continued persecution and discrimination in their homelands, the Assyrians are hopeful for a brighter and fairer future. The *flickering light* shall indeed never be extinguished!





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Worshipping the Holy Gospel

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מִבְּרֵאשִׁית אֶתְּחִיל  
מִזֶּה מִזֶּה תִּזְכָּק



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His Holiness with the Late Pope John Paul II



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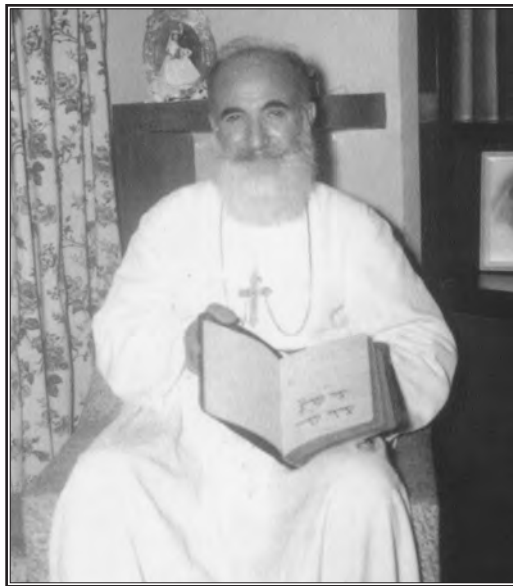
His Holiness as a Priest in Iran      مہدیساتھسائیں دے ہونے کے لیے دعا گو ہے۔

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His Holiness in a Village in Urmi      ܡܚܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܘܬܗ ܒܩܪܝܐ ܒܘܪܡܝܐ





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مذہب، مہم





Սրբապետ Կարոս Կոնյան և Սրբապետ Կարոս Կոնյան:

His Holiness with Mar Yosip in Iran

Սրբապետ Կարոս Կոնյան և Սրբապետ Կարոս Կոնյան:  
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— ୧୮୩ —

[illegible]

**מבטא שאלה מבדלה דגוש בזה בגשג**

## His Holiness at the Nuhdra School in Dohuk



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## His Holiness in India

מִבְּרֵאשִׁית וְעַד הַיּוֹם







[illegible]

מתנת שנת חסד, 2 25 ת 1957, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 8



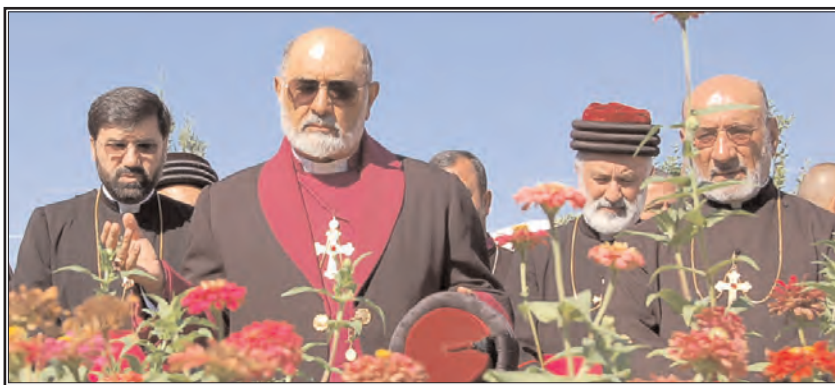
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## 50th Anniversary Celebration in Chicago





ചിന്തയെ പരമമായ ആനന്ദമായി

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## His Holiness in Semeleh

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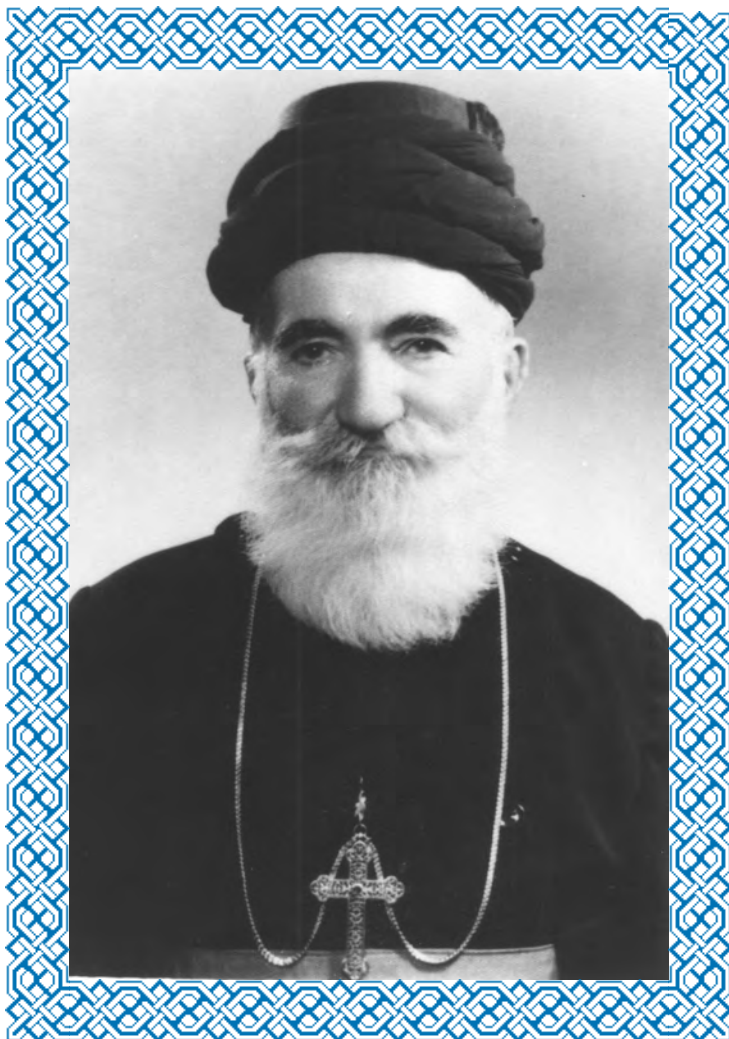
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His Holiness in the Church in Bebeydi





مذہبِ اہل حق



[illegible]

Գրեթէ Երեսնամեակէ յետոյ Երեւանի Եպիսկոպոսական  
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His Holiness with Mar Yosip in Tehran







[illegible]

مذہب اسلام کی تعلیم کے لئے

## His Holiness as Bishop of Iran







50th Anniversary Celebration in Chicago

50th Anniversary Celebration in Chicago







مَوَدَّ دِيسْ لَئِهْ دَئْ : حَمْدُ سَيِّدِ هُجْرَتِ حَقِّ  
 مَوَدَّ دِيسْ اِهْ دِجِئْ : دِجِئِ لَحْمِ دِهْمِ عِلْبِئِ  
 عِلْبِئِ لَئِ مَوَدَّ : دِجِئِ دِجِئِ دِجِئِ  
 اِهْ مَوَدَّ تِئِ لَئِ : دِجِئِ لَئِ دِجِئِ



מַחֲבֵט חַיִּים הַחַיִּים

חַיִּים חַיִּים הַחַיִּים



חַיִּים דְּבִיבִי לִבְיָדָה דְּמִתְּלָה דְּשִׁיבָה  
דְּמִתְּלָה דְּשִׁיבָה דְּמִתְּלָה דְּשִׁיבָה  
דְּמִתְּלָה דְּשִׁיבָה דְּמִתְּלָה דְּשִׁיבָה  
דְּמִתְּלָה דְּשִׁיבָה דְּמִתְּלָה דְּשִׁיבָה  
דְּמִתְּלָה דְּשִׁיבָה דְּמִתְּלָה דְּשִׁיבָה



מנהג בתי אבות  
במקדש החדש