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[AP 79 - Sagdīnan Mār: A unique Syriac chant \(Christological\).](#)

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Call Number	AP 79
Part Number	Part I – Syro Malabar Church
Title	Sagdīnan Mār: A unique Syriac chant (Christological)
Duration	2:05
Place of Recording	
Date of Recording	16 January 2018.
Youtube URL	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1qp8IZmcMU
Video Segment(s)	

Notes

Sagdīnan Mār: A unique Syriac chant (Christological)

Sagdīnan mār Sagdīnan mār lālāhūsākh walnāšūākh d’lāpūlāga

Translation: We adore, my Lord, your inseparable divinity and humanity.

Glossary: Sagdīnan mār (sagdīn + an) = we adore; mār = my Lord; lālāhūsāk (l’ + alahusa + akh) = your divinity; walnāšūākh (w’ + al + nāšūsā + akh) = and your humanity; d’lāpūlāga (d’ + lā +pūlāga) = that which [is] without division.

Note: The hymn is from the night prayers (lelya) for Sundays in Advent and Christmas in the East Syriac tradition. This couplet appears in the [Thesbohtha](#) (“praise”) that contains several verses. Often, this couplet is treated as a separate chant. In this case, the chant appears at the end of Purathunamaskaram (Hours outside the church) at Kaduthuruthy Valiyapalli. It is led by Rev. Dr. Jacob Vellian, a member of the Knanaya community and a scholar of the Syro Malabar liturgy. This video contains one of the two known melodies of this chant. Until further evidence appears, we may presume that these melodies were composed in Kerala; the text of the hymn, the poetic meter and, possibly, the melody were known to the St. Thomas Christian clergy before 1588. The earliest reference to these is in the acrostic hymn in Syriac, written by a Keralite, Fr. Chandi Kadavil, popularly known as “Alexander the Indian” (1588- c. 1673). The title of Fr. Kadavil’s acrostic hymn on the Eucharist contains a reference to the opening words of this chant; Fr. Kadavil wrote the acrostic hymn according to meter and melody of “[Sagdīnan mār.](#)” In this video the same melody is sung three times. In other instances, the same melody is sung three times in three ascending pitch registers. We have one such example in the voice of Rev. Dr. Thomas Kalayil, CMI, which will be posted later.

The text is highly Christological, and deserves further study. It is, in effect, a paraphrasing of the exuberant acclamation of St. Thomas the Apostle of India, when Jesus made a special appearance after resurrection (Jn 20:28). The various takes on the existence of the human and divine natures in Christ caused many divisions in the Church. Given below is the content of one of many email communications

I had on this topic with Dr. Zacharias Thundy. More comments will be posted on the Encyclopedia of Syriac Chants of the Syro Malabar Church (for lack of space here) under “Sagdīnan.” These comments could be the starting point for further research on this chant, for example, for a master’s thesis in theology. Zacharias P. Thundy (October 8, 2017): The hymn was composed during the theological controversies of the time regarding the relationship between the divinity and humanity of Jesus. Without going into details, let me just say that “d’la pulaga” has the meaning of “undivided” referring to the divinity and humanity of Jesus, and not to our act of adoration: “Lord, we worship your undivided humanity and divinity.” It all means Jesus is both human and divine. Complex theology it is. So words like



"sewiana" and "shuprutha" also have highly technical theological meaning. "Shuprutha" could mean "mia phusis" of Cyril or Council of Chalcedon. I do not know of the theological meaning of "shuprutha" in the Syrian context of the time. Maybe the word means the Chalcedonian "mia phusis" or "Miaphysitism holds that in the person of Jesus Christ, Divine nature and Human nature are united (μία, mia - "one" or "unity") in a compound nature ("physis"), the two being united without separation, without mixture, without confusion, and without alteration." Then there is the theology of the Syrian bishop, Theodore of Mopsuestia: Referring to the two natures in Christ, Theodore writes, "When we try to distinguish the natures, we say that the person of the man is complete and that that of the Godhead is complete (T-120, VIII-8)." Furthermore, he notes that indwelling does not imply a change in nature of either the Logos or the indwelt man (T-121, IX-9), and that Christ's human will was maintained through the indwelling (T-118, VII-3). Therefore, according to Theodore, Christ is fully human, possessing both human spirit (or rational soul) and human flesh (T-59.22)." All of this theology has a long tortuous history in the ancient Syriac-speaking world, but it is all reflected darkly in the Syriac hymns. Most of us know little or nothing about it all. We are immensely grateful to Prof. Thundy for sharing his informed insights on this complex issue.

Dr. Joseph J. Palackal, CMI

New York

16 January 2018

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- [AP 91](#) - Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt sings "[Sagdīnan mār](#)"
- [AP 98](#) - Dr. Joseph J. Palackal teaches the choir members, the aramaic chant "Sagdinan Mar"
- [AP 101](#) - [Sagdīnan mār](#). at First communion. Northern Virginia
- [AP 107e](#) - Fr. Thomas Kalayil, CMI on "Sagdinan mar"
- [AP 113](#) - Dr. Thomas Kalayil, CMI, speaks On "Sagdinan Mar," the Christological hymn
- [AP 134](#) - [Sagdinan mar](#)" in Toronto, Canada
- [AP 146](#) - Practice session for bilingual Qurbana at National Convention in Houston, Texas

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