

## ܡܬܠܬܐ ܕܝܫܬܐܢ

Satan's Complaint

ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܕܡܕܢ ܕܩܕܝܫ ܕܕܢܐ

ܬܬܐ ܬܬܐ ܕܡܕܢ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ

ܬܬܐ ܬܬܝܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܕܢ ܕܝܫܬܐܢ

*This poem was extracted from Sebastian P. Brock & George A. Kiraz book of Select Poems of Ephrem the Syrian. The original text was scripted in Syriac with English translation; this version is in Aramaic with slight modification to the interpretation of English translation.*

ܕܡܕܢ ܬܬܐ ܕܝܫܬܐܢ ܡܝܝܬܐ

The Evil One said, "I am afraid

ܕܡܕܢ ܕܬܬܐ ܕܡܕܢ ܕܝܫܬܐܢ

of this Jesus, in case he wreck my plans.

ܐܬܐ ܬܬܐ ܕܬܬܐ ܕܬܬܐ ܕܬܬܐ

here I am, thousands of years old

ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܬܬܐ ܕܬܬܐ ܕܬܬܐ

and I have never had a moment free from activity: I have not seen anything in existence

ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ

that I have neglected or let go. And now along comes someone who makes the debauched chaste,

ܬܬܐ ܬܬܐ ܬܬܐ ܬܬܐ ܬܬܐ ܬܬܐ

causing me to lament from now on because he is destroying all I have build up.

ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ

My labors have been many, along with my instructing,

ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ

for I have enshrouded the whole of creation in all kinds of evil."

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**ܡܕܢ:** ܬܬܐ ܬܬܐ ܬܬܐ ܬܬܐ ܬܬܐ

**Refrain:** Blessed is He who has come and laid bare the wiles of the Crafty One.

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ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ

"I have matched my course with the swift

ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ

and out stripped them; I engaged in battle,

ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ

and the multitudinous throng serve as my armor;

ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ

I rejoiced in the throng of the populace for they gave me a little opportunity,

ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ

seeing that the impact of numbers is powerful: with a huge army

ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ ܡܕܢ

I raised up a great mountain of a tower, stretching it up to heaven. [Gen 11:4]

[illegible]

If they could wage war with the height

حَقُّهُ يُوَحِّدُ الْبَيْتَ بِحَذَائِكُمْ هَـ وَحَمْدِهِ

how much more will they defeat [this man] who fights on earth!



خُمیس دوتن مَخ مَدَدِیَس

Collectively, with time and succor

مِنْ خُطْبَةٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ

I wage war with discretion.

عَمَدٌ مَقَامٌ بِحَقِّهِ دَنُوتٌ حَبِيبٌ

The people<sup>1</sup> heard that God was one, [Deut 6:4]

حَبْدُ لِسِّ هَمْدُ دَنْكُتْ هَدْسُ كَبْدُ دَنْكُتْ

they made themselves multitude of gods;

but when they saw the son of God, [Jer 2:28]

ذَٰلِكَ ۚ لَئِنْ رَجَعْتَ ۚ لَآ أَتٰكَ بِبَشٰرٍ مِّنْ دُونِهَا ۚ لَئِنْ رَجَعْتَ ۚ لَآ أَتٰكَ بِبَشٰرٍ مِّنْ دُونِهَا ۚ

Rarely, they rushed to Him - one God, on the pretext of confessing God

سَمْعًا حَفِظَ حَسْمًا مَنَعَ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ

they deny Him and like astray [sheep] they run away from Him

ذُجَلٌ وَصَتٌّ وَفَضَّةٌ

They are perverse on every occasion,

يَسْخَرُونَكَ بِكَ سَخِرَ بِكَ سَخِرَ بِكَ

they will be found to be godless.



اِنَّكُمْ تَخْذَمُونَ مَعَكُمْ دُعِيْتُمْ

For many years I have [existed]

مَنْ يَلْمِزْكُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلْيَعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا يَلْمِزْكُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ مِنْ دِينِكُمْ

and no child I have secretly disdained -

يَكْتُمُ ۝ دَجَّةً ۝ يَمْلِكُ ۝ هَلِكُ

I have been most attentive to children,

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[making sure] that they acquire bad habits from their very birth,

يَذَرُهُمْ يُخْصِمُهُ مِمَّا مَضَىٰ ۚ وَنُفِثَ بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ مَا تَأْتِيكَ بِهِ ۚ

so that their faults might grow as they grew up. There are some stupid fathers

دَکْ مَجِیجْ لِهْ کَوْنَدْ دَوْدِیْ جَنَسَقْ

who do not cause harm to the seed which I have sown in their sons,

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while others, like good farmers,

لَحَضَهُ مَوْقِدٍ مِنْ أَدْحَنَةِ دَبْلُوسَةٍ.

Have uprooted these faults from the minds of their children.



سَكَ بَجَلَةٍ تَضَمُّسَةً

Instead of using a chain, I have bound men

فَحِذْ يَنْتَ فُتَيْلَهُ مَبِّتَهُ

with sloth, and they have sat down idle.

لَيْلِي فُجْبَسَهُ مِنْ جَدِّ هَيْتِي

[Thus] have I deprived their senses from doing anything good:

بُخْبَسَةً مِنْ يَدْتَنْ كَمُوسَةٍ مِنْ سَهْكَكَ

their eyes from reading, their mouths from singing praise,

مُخْبَسَهُ مِنْ مَلَقَتِ لَحْهَكِي سَدْتِي هَنْهَكِي

Their minds from learning. How keen they are for barren and useless tales;

مَنْ خَبَبَ لَحْمَكَا هَوْبَتِ مَلَبَبِ

they are prosperously consumed by empty talk

يُ يَفَكُهُ مَيْكُهُ هَيْتِي

if the word of life be mentioned in their presence,

أَهْ دُسَمَسَتْ أَهْ تَمَعَهُ خَبَبَهُ مِنْ يَلْدَسَتْ

either they will drive it out, or get up and go



حَضْ هَكَّتِي تَكُهُ تَدْتَنْ

How many satans there are in a person,

هَلَبْ دَبْلُ خَلَسَمِ كَيْهْ جَدِّ لَتَتْ

but it is I alone whom every person curses.

أَهْ لَيْتِ يَمَسِي دَتْدَتَنْ دَبْهَسَتْ

A person's anger is [like]

جَدْتِ دَحَلَمِ خَيْسَ لَيْسَ دَبْقِي لَنْقِي مِيْدَمِي

A devil which harasses him daily. Other demons are like

دُمُغِي يَ مِيْدَلِي بَلْ يَمَتْلُ دَبْ يَ مَوَمِي

travelers, if feeble, in anger they will be judged if they slumber

جَدِّ دَبْقِي كَ مِيْمُحَضْ مِنْ أَدْعَتْ

all righteous, will not be uprooted from His Place

سَكَ سَقَمْ هَذَمْ

Instead of emulating the ravening one [satan]

لَجَدْتِ عَبْهْ هَنْكَتِ هَبْ جَدِّ لَتَتْ

every person hates weak and wretched devil!



ܬܫܐ ܠܥܡܩܢ ܒܡܫܚܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ

The snake-charmer along with [the person who] benumbs

ܕܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ

who daily brings snakes into submission;

ܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ

“The one who causes to cease” is inside him boldly resist him

ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ

lust within him, he could not subdue: hidden sin is like the Egyptian cobra.

ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ

when it breathes on him, he gets burnt up.

When he has seceded in hunting “The one who Causes to cease,”

ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ

using his skill, delusion strikes him secretly:

ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ

he lulls the serpent with his incantations,

ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ

but by these same incantations he arouses against himself great wrath.

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ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ

I see my stings, and sat and waited.

ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ

Who else has so stretched out his patience with everyone?

[...]

[a line is lost]

ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ

I sat beside the long-suffering and gradually bewitched him

ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ

until he was reduced to despair. As for the person who shrinks from sin,

ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ

habit subdued him: little by little I wore him down

ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ

until he too came under [my] yoke;

ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܢܐ

once he had come and got used to it he did not want to leave it.

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I perceived and saw that the long-suffering person

שׁוֹמֵר מִכָּל דְּבַר חַיִּים

is someone who can subdue everything.

בְּתוֹכָם דְּוָחַם לְדָוִד בְּדֹם

When I conquered him, Adam was only one,

וְדָפַעְתִּי בְּדֹם מִלְכִּי וְחָבֵה לִּי חֲתָנִי מִסְּתָנִי

so I left him until he had fathered children and I looked for some other work:

דָּלַל יִיחָדָה בִּי יִיחָדָה שָׁמַיְתִי דְּבַחַת מִלְכִּי

so that idleness might not have experience of me I started counting the sand of the sea,

דְּדָוִם נִכְדָּה בִּי מִדְּבַחַת מִלְכִּי דְּבַחַת מִלְכִּי

to make myself patient and to test my memory, to see if I could cope

לְכַתְּבָה דְּבַחַת מִלְכִּי

with humanity once they had multiplied.

בְּדֹם מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי

Before they had done so I had tried them in my things.

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דְּדָוִם מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי

The servants of the Evil One disputed with him,

וְדָוִם מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי

Refuting his word with their rejoinders:

דָּוִם מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי

“Behold for Elisha who brought a dead person back to life,

וְדָוִם מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי

who overcame Death in the upper room, reviving the widow’s son; [2 Kgs 4:10,34-35]

וְדָוִם מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי

he is now subdued in Sheol”. Because the Evil One was very quick-witted

דְּדָוִם מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי

he refuted their words by means of their own words:

דְּדָוִם מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי

How can Elisha be defeated,

דָּוִם מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי

Seeing that he has, in Sheol itself, brought the dead back to life by mean of his bones? [2 Kgs 13:21]

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וְדָוִם מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי

If Elisha, who was insignificant,

דָּוִם מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי מִלְכִּי

Had such great power in Sheol,

דָּלָה אִם יִחְיֶה מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים  
 If he could restore life of one dead man there,  
 חַיִּים כִּד מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים  
 how many dead will the death of the mighty Jesus restore to life?  
 מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים  
 You should learn from this how much greater this Jesus was,  
 מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים  
 my friends, he has cunningly deceived you  
 מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים  
 and you are not capable to comprehend  
 דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים  
 his greatness comparing him merely to the prophets.

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מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים  
 Your consolation are of little help  
 מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים  
 said the Evil One to his followers,  
 מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים  
 Because He restored Lazarus from Death  
 מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים  
 How can death contain Him  
 and if Death does conquer him [John 11:44]  
 מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים  
 it is because he willingly subjects himself - and if he subjects himself to it willingly,  
 מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים  
 Then you should fear<sup>2</sup> him all the more, for he will not die to no purpose.  
 מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים  
 He will be the cause of great horror to us,  
 מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים  
 For when he dies he will enter in and bring Adam to life.

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מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים  
 Death peered out from inside his cavern,  
 מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים  
 astonished to see our Lord crucified.  
 מֵתָא דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים דְּחַיִּים  
 Where are you now, said the Restoral of Life

זָנֵה יִיטוֹ לֵב מִיְחֻלָּה סָלָה תִשְׁמַע לְקוֹלִי

Will you be food for me in place of the tasty Lazarus, [John 11:44]

דָּתִי בְּכַחֲמֵי עֲדָבִיל תִּפְסֵם מִדָּתִי מִיָּדָה יִיטוֹ

whose taste I still have in my mouth? Let Jairus's daughter come and see [Luke 8:55]

אֵתָּה וּמִבְּלֵי דָתִי דְּזִדְמֻלָּה סָלָה תֵּן

this cross of yours; let the widow's son gaze upon you. [Luke 7:15]

תִּשְׁמַע צִדְסָה לֵב לֵאדָם

A wood snatched Adam for me, [Gen 2:17; 3:6]

תִּזְבֵּחַ אֵלֶּה יִלְכֻּדֵּי דִצְדָס לֵב לֵחַד דָּוִיד

blessed is the cross which has snatched the son of David for me!

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קִמְחֵי קָאֵס אֵתָּה מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה

Death opened its mouth and said,

לֵב עֲמִיד אֵתָּה לֵב דָּה תֵּן מִיְחֻלָּה

Have you not heard of son of Mary,

דִּמְחֵי דִיזָד מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה מִן חַל

of Moses, how he excelled, from all, in his greatness,

אֵתָּה מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה דִּיזָד מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה

How he was God, and workman of God by slaying the firstborn (Egyptian) and saving the firstborn (Hebrew), [Exod 4:16; 7:1; 12:29]

חַל מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה מִן חַל לִימֻד מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה

how he held back the slaughter from living? [Num 16:48; Deut 34:5]

yet I went up with the same Moses to the mountain

מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה לֵב דִּיזָד מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה

and God – blessed be his honor – handed him over to me in person<sup>3</sup> [Ezek 3:12; Deut 34:5]

דִּיזָד מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה מִן חַל

However great one of Adam's sons becomes,

אֵתָּה מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה מִן חַל מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה

he will return at dust to dust, for he comes from the earth [Gen 3:19; 2:7]

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אֵתָּה מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה מִן חַל

Satan came along with his soldiers

דִּיזָד מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה מִן חַל

to look at our Lord lying in Sheol

מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה מִן חַל מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה

and to rejoice with Death, his fellow counselor,

מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה מִן חַל מִיָּדָה מִיְחֻלָּה מִן חַל

But he saw him all gloomy and bewailing the dead who, at the Firstborns' cry,

ܣܒܗ ܘܥܦܫܗ ܡܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܟ ܬܡ ܬܒܬ ܕܥܬܒܢ ܫܥܐ

Had come to life and departed from Sheol.

Cause the Evil One was a prophet [Matt 27:50,52]

ܠܥܡܥܐ ܠܫܬܝܬ ܕܬܐ ܕܗܝܝܬ ܕܥ ܩܕ ܕܝܥܬܫܐ

Death, his relative, You have not lost as much as you have gained:

ܡܕܢ ܕܒܥܡܕ ܠܝܗ ܡܝܬܐ

as long as Jesus is in your grasp

ܠܒܬܐ ܕܝܬܝܢ ܕܐ ܕܫܒܗ ܘܕܫܒܐ

everyone who has lived and is living will come into your hands.

❖❖❖

ܦܬܐ ܠܝܝܫܘܥ ܕܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ

Open up, so that we can see him and jeer at him;

ܝܬܝܢ ܘܡܕܒܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ

ask and hear him, "Where is your power"

ܕܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܡܕܒܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ

Cause already three days have passed,

ܘܡܕܒܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܡܕܒܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ

we say to him, You, who are three days dead,<sup>4</sup>

raised up Lazarus, four days dead; [John 11:39]

ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ

raise yourself now! Death duly opened up the gates of Sheol

ܘܡܕܒܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ

- and out from it shone the radiance of our Lord's face!

ܘܡܕܒܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ

Like the men of Sodom, they were all smitten [Gen 19:11]

ܡܕܢ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ

they groped, and petitioned for the gate of Sheol to be vanished from them

❖❖❖

1. People: i.e., the Jews. For Ephrem's polemic against the Jews.
2. fear ܡܕܢ: The two manuscripts have ܕܝܬܐ, but the longer form of the imperative is required by the meter.
3. handed him over to me in person: Ephrem seems to refer to traditions about Moses's death and burial that underlay Jude 9 and are found in different forms in the late midrash Petirat Moshe.