

ܡܝܫܬܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ

The Mysteries of the Eucharist

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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.

ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ

You have had it written, Lord, “Open your mouth and I will fill it” [Ps 81:10]

ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ

Look, Your servant’s mouth is open, and his mind as well;

ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ

fill it, Lord, with Your Gift,

ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ

That I may sing Your praise in accordance with Your will.

ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ

Refrain: Make me worthy to approach Your gifts in awe!



ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ

Each, according to the level of his own measure, can tell of You;

ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ

in my boldness I approach the lowest step.

ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ

Your Birth is sealed up within silence -

ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ

what mouth then dares to meditate upon it?



ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ

Your nature is single, but there are many ways of explaining it;

ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ

our descriptions may be exalted, or in moderate terms, or lowly.

ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ

Make me worthy of the lowest part, that I may gather up, as crumbs,

ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ

The gleanings from Your wisdom’s [table (Matt 15:27; Mark 7:28)]



ܡܕܢܬܐ ܕܝܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 Any elevated account of You is hidden with Your Begetter;
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 at Your lesser riches the angels stand amazed,
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 while a small trickle of words describing You, Lord,
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 Provides a flood of homilies for [mortals] below.

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ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 For if the great John cried out and said,
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 “I am not worthy, Lord, of the straps of your sandals” [Mark 1:7]
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 then I should seek refuge, like the sinful woman, [Matt 9:21; Luke 8:47]
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 in the shadow of Your garment, and there begin.

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ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 And as she was affrighted, but took courage because she was healed,
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 so do You heal my fear and fright, and so I may take courage in You.
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 and be conveyed from Your garment to Your own Body,
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 so that I may tell of it according to my ability.

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ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 Your garment, Lord, is a fountain of medicines:
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 in Your visible clothing there dwells a hidden power.
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 Again, a little spittle from Your mouth [John 9:6]
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 Became a great miracle of light, for light was in the clay [it made].

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ܬܟܣܡܥ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܕܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܝܥܬܝܬ

In Your Bread there is hidden the Spirit who is not consumed,

ܬܚܡܕܐ ܥܕܬܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܕܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܝܥܬܝܬ

in Your Wine there dwells the Fire that is not drunk:

ܗܘܐ ܬܟܣܡܥ ܗܘܐ ܕܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܝܥܬܝܬ

the Spirit is in Your Bread, the Fire in Your Wine -

ܐܝܬܐ ܕܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

a manifest wonder, that our lips have received.

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ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

When the Lord came down to earth to mortal men [2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15]

ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

He created them again, a new creation, like the angels,

ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

mingling within them fire and spirit,

ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

So that in a hidden manner they might be of fire and spirit.

❖ ❖ ❖

ܗܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

The Seraph could not touch the fire's coal with his fingers, [Isa 6:6-7]

ܗܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

the coal only just touched Isaiah's mouth:

ܗܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

the [Seraph] did not hold it, [Isaiah] did not consume it,

ܗܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

But us our Lord has allowed to do both!

❖ ❖ ❖

ܗܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

To the spiritual angels food for the body, [Gen 18:8-9]

ܗܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

brought Abraham - they ate. The new miracle

ܗܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

is that our mighty Lord has given to bodily man

ܗܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

Fire and Spirit to eat and to drink.

❖ ❖ ❖

ܡܕܢܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܬܕܠܓܐ ܝܫܐ ܡܝܠܗ

Fire descended in wrath and consumed the sinners; [Gen 19:24; 2 Kgs 1:10-14]

ܡܕܢܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܬܠܝܬܐ ܝܫܐ ܡܕܢܐ

the fire of mercy has now descended and dwelt in the Bread:

ܟܢ ܐܝܢ ܡܕܢܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܕܬܠܝܬܐ

instead of that fire which consumed mankind

ܡܕܢܐ ܬܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܡܕܢܐ ܡܕܢܐ

You have consumed Fire in the Bread - and you have come to life!

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ܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝܐ ܡܕܢܐ ܝܫܐ ܡܝܠܗ

Fire descended and consumed Elijah's sacrifices; [1 kgs 18:38]

ܡܕܢܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܡܕܢܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ

the Fire of mercies has become a living sacrifice for us:

ܡܕܢܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܠܡܕܢܐ

Fire consumed [Elijah's] oblation,

ܡܕܢܐ ܡܕܢܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܕܝܠܗ ܕܝܠܗ

But we, Lord, have consumed Your Fire in Your oblation!

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ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ

Who has ever held in his cupped hand wind? Come and see, [Prov 30:4]

ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ

Solomon, what the Lord of your father has done: [Ps 110:1]

ܕܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ

Against nature, fire and spirit

ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ

[He] has mingled and poured them out in the hands of His disciples.

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ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ

"Who has gathered up water in a veil.?" He asked. [Prov 30:4]

ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ

Here is a Fountain in a veil – Mary's bosom.

ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ

From the cup of salvation, drop of salvation,

ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ

within a veil, Your maidservants receive.

❖❖❖

ܐܬܐ ܡܢ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ
 There is hidden power in the sanctuary's veil,
 ܡܠܚܬܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ
 a power that no mind has ever confined:
 ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ
 it brought down its love, descended and hovered
 ܡܠܚܬܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ
 over this veil on the altar of reconciliation.



ܐܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ
 See, Fire and Spirit are in the womb of her who bore Your,
 ܐܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ
 see, Fire and spirit are in the river¹ in which You were baptized.
 ܡܠܚܬܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ
 Fire and Spirit are in our baptismal font,
 ܡܠܚܬܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ
 In the Bread and Cup are Fire and Holy Spirit.



ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ
 Your Bread slays the greedy one who had made us his bread,
 ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ
 Your Cup destroys death who had swallowed us up;
 ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ
 we have eaten You, Lord, we have drunken You
 ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ
 - not that we will consume You up, but through You we shall have life.



ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ
 The thong of Your sandal is something fearful to the discerning,
 ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ
 the hem of Your cloak is awesome to those who understand,
 ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ
 yet our foolish generation, through its prying into You,
 ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ
 has gone quite mad, drunk with new wine².



ܐܝܬܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܕ ܡܬܢ ܗܝܠ ܫܝܬ

There is wonder in Your footsteps, which walked on the water:

ܒܝܡܢ ܕܢܢ ܥܠܝܕܐ ܫܝܬ ܗܝܬ ܩܠܝܠ

You subjected a great sea beneath Your feet,

ܠܚܝܬܢ ܕܝܠܕ ܕܝܬ ܫܝܬ ܕܢܢ

yet Your very head was subject to just a small river,

ܝܥܠܝܕܐ ܫܝܬ ܕܢܢ ܕܝܠܕ ܫܝܬ ܕܢܢ

In that it bent down and was baptized therein.

❖ ❖ ❖

ܠܚܝܬܢ ܕܝܠܕ ܫܝܬ ܕܢܢ ܕܝܠܕ ܫܝܬ ܕܢܢ

The river resembled John, who baptized in it:

ܕܝܠܕܐ ܫܝܬ ܕܢܢ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܫܝܬ ܕܢܢ

each reflects the other in its smallness;

ܠܚܝܬܢ ܕܝܠܕ ܕܝܠܕ ܕܝܠܕ ܕܝܠܕ

yet to the small river and to the weak servant

ܝܥܠܝܕܐ ܫܝܬ ܕܢܢ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܫܝܬ ܕܢܢ

was the Master of them both subjected!

❖ ❖ ❖

ܐܝܬܢ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܢ ܕܝܠܕ ܕܝܠܕ ܕܝܠܕ ܕܝܠܕ

Look, Lord, my lap is now filled with the crumbs from your [table], (Matt 15:27; Mark 7:28)

ܕܝܠܕܐ ܫܝܬ ܕܢܢ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܫܝܬ ܕܢܢ

there is no more room in the folds [of my garment],

ܠܚܝܬܢ ܕܝܠܕ ܕܝܠܕ ܕܝܠܕ ܕܝܠܕ

so stay Your Gift, as I worship [before You]:

ܕܝܠܕܐ ܫܝܬ ܕܢܢ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܫܝܬ ܕܢܢ

keep it in Your treasure house in readiness to give us on another occasion.

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1. *Fire, in the river: For the tradition of fire appearing in the Jordan at Christ's baptism.*
2. *drunk with new wine: Ephrem is here accusing the Arians of what the disciples had falsely been accused of by the mockers at Pentecost (Acts 2:13)*