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The *Qudasha* of Mar Theodore – a Critical Study

Abstract

This paper is a critical study of the popular in syro-oriental liturgical tradition anaphora attributed to Mar Theodore of Mopsuestia. The author analyses the structure and content of this liturgical document as well as its theological meaning. The research reveals that this eucharistic prayer is correct from the theological point of view and constitutes a valuable heritage of the Christian eucharological space.

Keywords: Anaphora, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Church of the East, Eucharistic Liturgy, *Qurbana*.

***Qudasha* Teodora z Mopsuestii – studium krytyczne**

Abstrakt

Niniejszy artykuł stanowi krytyczne studium popularnej w syro-orientalnej tradycji liturgicznej anafory Teodora z Mopsuestii. Autor poddaje analizie strukturę i treść rzeczzonego dokumentu liturgicznego oraz podejmuje refleksje dotyczące teologii zawartych w anaforze modlitw. Przeprowadzone badania jasno wskazują, że omawiana modlitwa eucharystyczna jest poprawna z teologicznego punktu widzenia i stanowi cenne dziedzictwo w przestrzeni eucharologii chrześcijańskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: anafora, Teodor z Mopsuestii, Kościół Wschodu, liturgia eucharystyczna, *Qurbana*.

Introduction

A critical study of the structure, content and theology of the *Qudasha* (Anaphora) of Mar Theodore deserves special attention.¹ This *Qudasha* is celebrated from the first Sunday of the period of Annunciation to the Palm Sunday.² Even though the Order of Second *Qudasha* is known under the name of Mar Theodore, the scholars who made scientific studies on this *Qudasha* conclude that it was not written by Mar Theodore.

However, some of the theological views seen in his catechetical homilies are reflected in this *Qudasha*. Although his theological thoughts were viewed with suspicion in the past, the opinion of modern theologians is that they are orthodox in theology and doctrine. The Christological, ecclesiological, pneumatological and Eucharistic ideas in the *Qudasha* of Mar Theodore are very faithful to the teachings of the Sacred Scripture. This *Qudasha* is notable for its Semitic character, biblical usages, and developed theological ideas.³

1. Structure and Content of the *Qudasha* of Mar Theodore

Like the Anaphora of Mar Addai and Mar Mari, the *Qudasha* of Theodore also has four *G'hantha* cycles.⁴ Each cycle consists of four elements, namely, *Kusapa*⁵,

¹ Cf. *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*. 2018. Kochi: Mount St. Thomas; K.A. Paul, George Mookan. 2003. *The Liturgy of the Holy Apostles Addai and Mari together with the liturgies of Mar Theodore and Mar Nestorius and the Order of baptism*. Trissur: Mar Narsai Press Trissur. *Anaphorae of Mar Theodore and Nestorius*. 2005. Kochi: LRC Publications, 3; Jacob Vadakkal. 1989. *The East Syrian Anaphora of Mar Theodore of Mopsuestia*. Kottayam: OIRSI.

² The *Qudasha* of Mar Addai and Mari is celebrated from the liturgical season of Easter to Dedication of the Church and the *Qudasha* of Mar Nestorius is used to celebrate on five days, namely, the feast of Denha, the memorial of St. John the Baptist, the memorial of Greek Fathers, the Wednesday of Nineveh's Fast and Pesaha. Cf. *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 5.

³ Petros Yousif, in his study on the *Qudasha* of Theodore, from its Syriac style, biblical citations from Peshitta and East Syrian liturgical parallels, concludes that the *Qudasha* of Theodore is originally composed in Syriac. Petros Yousif. 1993. *The Anaphora of Theodore: East Syrian; Further Evidence*. In *Eulogema: Studies in Honour of Robert Taft S.J.* Ed. Ephrem Carr, 572–591. Roma: Pontificio Ateneo s. Anselmo.

⁴ According to Yousif, in the East Syrian Church, the anaphora was divided into four sections by the time of Ishoyahb I (589–595). Cf. Petros Yousif. 1983. *The Divine Liturgy according to the Rite of the Assyro-Chaldean Church*. In *The Eucharistic Liturgy in the Christian East*. Ed. Johannes Madey, 215–216. Kottayam: SEERI; Jacob Vadakkal. 2018. *The Structure and Content of the Anaphora of Mar Theodore of Mopsuestia*. In *Formation of Anaphorae: Revisited*. Ed. Peter Kannampuzha, 95–106. Kochi: LRC Publications.

⁵ The Syriac word 'Kusapa' (ܕܘܫܦܐ) means, an earnest prayer, supplication, entreaty, intercession etc. Cf. Jeane Payne Smith. 1903. *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 212. It is the private prayer of the celebrant recited in a low voice before each *G'hantha*.

prayer request, *G'hantha*⁶ and *Qanona*. The basic structure embraces also the ‘*ordo communis*’ – the prayers common to the three *Qudashas*, such as exhortation of the deacon, exchange of peace, Diptychs *etc.*

In the entrance prayer (*gigla*)⁷, the celebrant glorifies God (*suvha lak*) for the salvific acts. God finds the lost, gathers the dispersed, brings back the wayward to the knowledge of the truth. Further, the celebrant thanks God for selecting him as a distinctive member of the Church to offer the sacrifice. The last part of this prayer says that the *Qurbana* is “the commemoration (*dukrana*) of the passion, death, burial and resurrection of Your beloved Son”.

The first *Kusapa* begins with addressing God as our Lord and our God (*maran valahan*).⁸ It is a supplication to God not to regard the sinfulness of the celebrant and accept the sacrifice. The Church, which carries the multitude of sins done by the faithful, asks pardon for the evil deeds of the people. She requests to blot out the scars of their sins and sanctify the sacrifice. In the last part of the *Kusapa*, the celebrant implores to find out grace and mercy before God and to make himself worthy to sing praises with the host of angels. Thus it serves as a preparation to begin the sacrifice proper.

1.1. First *G'hantha*

The first *G'hantha* begins with an anamnesis of the great things in the Economy of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God is addressed as Almighty (*ahidkol*), Lord (*marya*) powerful (*hayalsana*). The identity of God is an incomprehensible and inexpressible mystery. He is the Lord of all who did great, incomprehensible and exalted things for the humanity. The human intellect can neither grasp it fully nor depict it fully. He who accomplished the wonderful and awesome dispensation is a glorious king (*malka mshabha*).

Then the *G'hantha* explicates the economy of Christ; His incarnation and paschal mystery. Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son (*ihidaya*). The biblical basis of it is John 3:16 where Jesus is called as the only begotten Son of God. By the

⁶ The Syriac word ‘G’hantha’ (ܓܚܢܬܐ) means, inclination, bowing etc. It is a prayer of inclining, said by the priest with bent head and low voice = *oratio secreta* (Lat.) Cf. Payne Smith. 1903. *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 62.

⁷ The entrance prayer in the *Qudasha* of Mar Theodore, known as *Gigla* is the first *G'hantha* prayer of the *Qudasha* of Mar Nestorius. The Syriac word ‘Gigla’ (ܓܝܓܠܐ) means ‘wheel of carriage, circle, cycle etc. Cf. Payne Smith. 1903. *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 68; *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 42; Francis Pittappillil. 2020. *Liturgy: Vicharangalum Darsanagalum*. Changanacherry: HIRS, 80.

⁸ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 17.

mystery of birth, passion, death and resurrection, Jesus accomplished the wonderful (*thmihtha*) and awesome (*d'hiltha*) dispensation (*madbranutha*). St. Paul exhorts “to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ (Eph 1:10). By the incarnation of the Son, God restored the new life (*Hudasa d'hayye*) and the pledge of the Holy Spirit (*rahvona d'ruha d'qudsha*) in our hearts. Knowledge of the mysteries (*idatha d'raze*) and the gift of divine dispensation are the fruits of the new life. By the incarnation of Jesus, humanity is renewed and has regained the new life and became a new creature (2 Cor 5:17). The second divine gift is the pledge of the Holy Spirit which is given to us (2 Cor 5:5). The third divine gift is the knowledge of the mysteries by the human beings who are really unworthy. The grace of God is very active to make a man worthy to receive the knowledge of the mysteries which are glorious (*svihe*), holy (*qandisha*) and divine (*alahaya*).

Then the prayer leads us to the economy of the Holy Spirit. The grace (*thaibutha*) of the Holy Spirit enables us to approach (*negrov*), to accomplish (*negmor*), to receive (*mesav*) and to be united (*meshtavthapu*) with the holy mysteries.⁹ The priest approaches and accomplishes the celebration of the holy mysteries. The faithful receive the holy mysteries and become united with the body and blood of Christ. Here the *G'hantha* prayer also mentions about the grace (*thaibutha*) of the Holy Spirit. Such expression is first seen in the *Qudasha* of Mar Theodore. The grace of the Holy Spirit sanctifies the holy offerings and transforms them into the body and blood of Christ. The *G'hantha* is concluded with a *Qanona* which offers praise (*suvha*), honour (*iqara*), thanksgiving (*thauditha*), and worship (*segdtha*) to the Holy Trinity.¹⁰ The elements of the exchange of peace, diptychs and the *karozutha* of the deacon are the ‘*Ordo communis*’ to all the three *Qudashas*.

1.2. The prefatory dialogue

The prefatory dialogue includes *Qanona*, and three acclamations and responses. The *Qanona* is taken from Pauline salutation (2 Cor 13:13-14). It signifies that the will of the Father to redeem the people is accomplished by the consent of the Son to the Incarnation and its fulfilment by the descent of the Holy Spirit.¹¹ From the time

⁹ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 19; *Sleehanmarude Kudhasakramam*. 2003. Trissur: Mar Narsai Press, 110; *Anaphorae of Mar Theodore and Nestorius*. 2005. Kochi: LRC Publications, 3.

¹⁰ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 19.

¹¹ Francis Pittappillil. 2011. *Celebration of the Holy Mysteries*. Kottayam: Oriental Institute of Religious Studies India, 220.

of Theodore, the salutation is seen in the liturgy.¹² For Theodore, the Pauline salutation expresses a great honour to the Trinitarian persons. Interpreting the Pauline salutation in a Trinitarian dimension, Narsai says that the grace of Christ gives us confidence, the love of the Father opens the door of mercy in the day of His coming and the communion of the Holy Spirit sanctifies and purges the people from the filth of their offences.¹³

On the feast days, the celebrant lifting up his hands continues to pray, “Let your minds be on high, in the awesome place of glory when the Cherubim incessantly flap their wings and the Seraphim unceasingly and melodiously chant holy, holy, holy”.¹⁴ Our Lord Jesus came to fulfil the divine dispensation in order to lift up the people aloft. “Let us lift up our hearts as well as our hands to God in heaven” (Lam 3:1) and “seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God” (Colo 3:1) are the biblical basis of this priestly salutation.

The next exhortation of the celebrant is the following: “The living, wholesome, bloodless and acceptable *Qurbana* of the first fruit of our race is being offered everywhere to God, the Lord of all, for all the creation”.¹⁵ It classifies the essential differences between the Old Testament and New Testament offerings. The Psalmist says: “Sacrifice and offering you do not desire” (Ps 40:6). The Old Testament sacrifices were not pleasing to God. Then the Son of God offered himself and it was acceptable to God, the Father (Heb 10:10). Even though the *Qurbana* which is being offered at the altar is bloodless, it is really the sacramental representation of the bloody sacrifice of Jesus at Calvary.

1.3. Second *G’hantha*

Second *G’hantha* is primarily addressed to God, the Father and depicts the salvific acts of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. The prayer says that it is proper to

¹² Theodore of Mopsuestia. 1933. *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Lord’s prayer and on the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist*. Ed. Alphons Mingana, 98–99. Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons.

¹³ Narsai. 1909. *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai: Translated into English with an Introduction*. Ed. Richard Hugh Connolly, 11. Cambridge: University Press.

¹⁴ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 22.

¹⁵ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 22. This exhortation shows that the *Qurbana* is living (ܩܘܪܒܢܐ) and reasonable (ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ), the unslain (ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ) and acceptable (ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ) sacrifice to God. The expression ‘reasonable and bloodless sacrifice’ conveys an idea of sacrificial worship in the Eucharist. This worship is nothing but the sacrifice of thanksgiving offered in the Eucharist. Thus, Eucharistic celebration is essentially a spiritual sacrifice or a sacrifice of praise. Cf. Johnson Chittilappilly. 1999. *Mdabbramutha: The Divine Dispensation of our Lord in the Holy Qurbana of the East Syrian Tradition*. Kottayam: OIRSI, 341.

confess (*maudha*) adore (*sagedh*) holy name of God. For us, the name of God signifies Messiah, who has given the name that is above every name (Phil 2:9).

All the creatures are bound to praise the name of God for He is the creator and Lord of all. The prayer says: “For you alone are the Lord and creator of all things visible and invisible”.¹⁶ St. Paul says: “for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible” (Colo 1:16). But the *G’hantha* says that God not created the things but also put an order for heaven and earth and all that is in them through Christ.

Before describing the role of Christ in the economy of salvation, the second *G’hantha* narrates the nature of Jesus Christ as the Only begotten Son, the word of God (Jn 1:1), the light of the glory of God, the splendour from God, and the image of God’s being (Heb 1:3). The essence of God is revealed in Jesus. To see Jesus is equal to the seeing of God (Jn 14:9). Jesus, the light of the glory of God enlightens the human hearts.

The *G’hantha* prayer proceeds to describe the functions of the Holy Spirit, which is the spirit of the truth (*ruha d’shrara*) (Jn 14:17). The actions of the Holy Spirit are to empower and sanctify all the creatures. The last part of this *G’hantha* says that the angels are praising the holiness of God continually. The *G’hantha* concludes saying: “thousands upon thousands of holy angles incessantly praising Your holy name with great joy”.¹⁷

1.4. The *Sanctus*

The hymn of angels begins with a *Qanona*: “praising you with a loud voice unceasingly, they proclaim in one voice”. The hymn is a combination of the vision of Is. 6:3 and Mt 21:9. It visualises the divine economy which was initiated in the Old Testament, realized in the New Testament and which will be fulfilled in the future.¹⁸ The angelic hymn shows that the earthly community joins with the heavenly beings in the worship of the Godhead. Thus heaven becomes the heaven of the earth, and the earth becomes the earth of heaven. Theodore, who mentions this hymn in his commentary says that the doctrine of Trinity was revealed at the time when God was proclaimed in three persons.¹⁹ Narsai also gives a Trinitarian

¹⁶ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 24.

¹⁷ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 24. Book of Daniel says, “A thousand thousands stand before Him and ten thousand ministers unto Him” (Dan 7:10).

¹⁸ Chittilappilly. 1999. *Mdabbranutha*, 191; Pittappillil. 2011. *Celebration of the Holy Mysteries*, 228.

¹⁹ Theodore of Mopsuestia. 1933. *Commentary*, 100–101.

interpretation to this hymn stating that the crying of holy three times signifies the revelation of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the triune nature of God.²⁰ The author of the Anonymous Commentary of the ninth century (Ps. George of Arbel) connects the first part of this hymn with the heavenly worship. According to him, during this hymn the heavenly community and the earthly community becomes one unit to render glory to the adorable and glorious name.²¹ The second part of the hymn namely, ‘Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna to the Son of David’ is taken from the Gospel passage regarding the entry of Jesus to Jerusalem (Mt 21:9). The biblical basis of the third part of this hymn, i.e., ‘Blessed is who comes and comes again’ is from the book of Revelation (Rev 1:4; 4:8).

1.5. Third *G’hantha*

The third *G’hantha* cycle comprises *Kusapa*, prayer request, *G’hantha* with Institution Narrative and Anamnesis and *Qanona* of which we explore the content of the *G’hantha* with Institution Narrative in detail.

The third *G’hantha* starts with the confession of the holiness (*qandesh*) of each persons of the Trinity. The word truth (*sharirtha*) is repeated several times, for God is attributed as the Father of Truth (*Ava d’shrara*). The nature of God itself is truth and all His actions are of truth (Ex 34:6; Ps 111:7). Jesus, the only begotten (*ihidaya*) of God is the embodiment of the truth. The attributes given to the Holy Spirit are also noticeable. His nature is uncreated (*d’la aveed*) and divine and he is the author of all things. His name (*shma*) and abode (*msharye*) is holy. The first part of the *G’hantha* concludes with rendering the praise, honour and thanksgiving to the Holy Trinity.²²

In the second part, the community praises God for all the ineffable grace bestowed upon the human kind. The first grace of God towards the humanity is the creation of man from nothingness (*min la mentam*). God, the source of all knowledge, bestowed freedom (*herutha*) and intelligence (*yadusanitha*) to the human beings. He always protects and nurtures the life of them.

The third *G’hantha* unveils the mystery of the incarnation of Christ, making use of the Pauline account of the self-emptying of Jesus (Phil 2:6-7). It says, “For us and for our salvation, the only Begotten, God the Word, who is the image of God,

²⁰ Narsai. 1909. *The Liturgical Homilies*, 13.

²¹ *Anonymi Autoris Expositio Officiorum Ecclesiae Georgio Arbelensi vulgo adscripta II*. 1954. Ed. Richard Hugh Connolly, 55, 58. Louvain: Imprimerie Orientalis; Pittappillil. 2011. *Celebration of the Holy Mysteries*, 229.

²² *Sleehanmarude Kudhasakramam*. 2003, 123; Vadakkal. 1989. *The East Syrian Anaphora*, 122.

did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself and took the likeness of a servant; he descended from heaven, put on our humanity, a mortal body and a rational, intelligent and immortal soul, from the holy virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit".²³ It is clear from this *G'hantha* that the incarnation of the Son of God is by putting on the human nature. Jesus accomplishes the divine dispensation (*m'daranutha*) through his incarnation.

The account of the institution of the eucharist at the Last Supper (Mt 26:26, 1 Cor 11:23) is also a part of this *G'hantha*. Jesus gave his body (*pagra*) and blood (*dma*) for the salvation of the world. The blood is shed is the new covenant (*diyatheke hadtha*). Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant (Heb 8:7-13). The Institution Narrative is followed by an anamnesis of the command of Jesus at the Last Supper to the disciples: "Do this in memory of me until I come again" (Lk 22:19). By the celebration of the Holy Mysteries, the commandment of Jesus is continued in the Church without any interruption. The third *G'hantha* concludes with a doxology to the Holy Trinity, the signing of the mysteries and the 'Amen' of the community.²⁴

1.6. Fourth G'hantha

The fourth *G'hantha* cycle is comprised of *Kusapa*, prayer request, *G'hantha*, Epiclesis and admonition of the deacon and the *Qanona* of which we discuss the content of the *G'hantha* in detail. The *G'hantha* which has three parts begins with the praise and thanksgiving for the grace of salvation. The infinite mercy of God is the only reason which reunites man with God. It discusses the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit who renews the whole earth (Ps 104:30; Rom 15:16). It also refers to the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of the sanctification and communion of the worshipping community. The human beings thank God for the great salvation (*purqana ranba*) brought by Jesus Christ, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29). The prayer says: "We proclaim before you our immense gratitude for the great salvation brought to us all through your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ".²⁵

The second part contains a chain of intercessions for the acceptance of the sacrifice by the Holy Trinity. It clarifies that the petitions are offered 'with a contrite heart and humble spirit'. The intensity of the fervour of the supplication is expressed in the words "we beseech you and supplicate you". It intercedes for the

²³ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 28.

²⁴ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 30; Vadakkal. 2018. *The Structure and Content*, 103.

²⁵ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 31.

peace (*slama*) and tranquillity (*shaina*) of the Church. She should be protected from all types of controversies and divisions. The communion of the faithful is the external expression of peace in the Church. The *G'hantha* remembers and prays for the bishops, priests and deacons whose service of the truth (*thesmestha d'shrara*) before God may be with sanctity.

The third part is a supplication for all the members of the Church, celebrant, fruits of the earth and favourable weather, the whole of mankind and the departed ones. It supplicates God that the members of the Church may worship in true faith and in virtuous and noble deeds. Those who departed from this world in true faith have to attain the eternal bliss. The *G'hantha* remembers not only the faithful but also for all the humankind that they know the eternal truth and worship the true Godhead. The prayer of intercession ends with a prayer for the acceptance of the Eucharist: “Lord our God, accept from us in your mercy this sacrifice of praise (Ps 50:4) and the intelligent fruit of our lips” (Heb 13:15).²⁶

1.7. The Epiclesis

The Epiclesis in this *Qudasha* is longer and theologically richer than the epiclesis in the *Qudasha* of Mar Addai and Mar Mari, the oriental gem. The epiclesis of the *Qudashas* of Mar Theodore and Mar Nestorius begins with the invocation “Lord, our God, may the grace of the Holy Spirit descend upon us and upon this *Qurbana*”²⁷ (*mar thaibutha d'ruha d'qudsha*). Here the emphasis is given to the grace of the Holy Spirit which blesses, sanctifies and seals the bread and the cup and completes it to be the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The intensity of the mode of presence of the grace of the Holy Spirit is expressed by the words upon them.

The intensity and modus operandi of the grace of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and the cup are expressed by the words “may He dwell (*shra*) and rest (*angen*) upon this bread and upon this cup and may He bless (*barek*), sanctify (*qandesh*) and seal (*hatem*) them”.²⁸ It is with the prayer of the epiclesis that the bread and the cup are transformed into the body and blood of Christ. The pardon of debts, the great hope of resurrection from the dead, the salvation of body and soul, eternal life and glory of the rejoicing in the kingdom of heaven and in the things already prepared and which do not pass away are fruits which the communicants in the body and blood

²⁶ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 36; Vadakkal. 1989. *The East Syrian Anaphora*, 127.

²⁷ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 37.

²⁸ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 37; *Sleehanmarude Kudhasakramam*. 2003, 135.

of Christ are going to receive.²⁹ The second *Qudasha* concludes with a doxology to the Trinity, the signing of the mysteries and the ‘Amen’ of the assembly.

2. Theological Importance of the Second *Qudasha*

We realize that the development of East Syrian theology is truly reflected in the *Qudasha* of Mar Theodore. A lot of invaluable Christological, pneumatological, ecclesiological and eschatological concepts are found in the prayers of the second *Qudasha*. The inclusion of the themes like ‘equality of the three persons in the Holy Trinity’, ‘total emptiness in the Incarnation’, ‘Christ as the head of the Church’, ‘Self-offering of Jesus Christ’, Holy Spirit, Sacrifice of reconciliation, Institution Narrative etc., reveal the theological richness of the developed *Qudasha*. We will try to explore the theological nuances inherent in the prayers of the *Qudasha* of Mar Theodore.

2.1. Christological richness

The second *Qudasha* is enriched with profound and fully developed Christological titles and themes. The entrance prayer in this *Qudasha* defines *Qurbana* as “the living, holy and acceptable sacrifice, the commemoration of the passion, death, burial and resurrection of your beloved Son”.³⁰ The prayer clarifies that *Qurbana* is the commemoration and celebration of the paschal mysteries of Jesus. He has completed all the salvific mysteries.

The main titles given to Jesus in the first *G’hantha* are ‘the Only Begotten Son’ and ‘Our Lord Jesus Christ’. Another title for Christ used in the *Qudasha* of Mar Theodore is ‘the image of God’. It means that Christ is the image of the Father who is divine. Such Christological titles affirm the divine and human natures of Christ. Thus the *Qudasha* of Theodore affirms the Eastern theological thinking that the divine and human natures are united in the person of Christ. The prayers in this *Qudasha* reflect the Gospel teaching that Jesus is fully human and fully divine. The prefatory dialogue has also a Christological perspective in its outlook. Here the title given to Jesus is ‘the first fruit of human race’. The *Qurbana* is commemoration of the living, wholesome, bloodless and acceptable sacrifice of Jesus who offered

²⁹ Vadakkal. 1989. *The East Syrian Anaphora*, 170.

³⁰ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 17.

Himself at Calvary. He reconciled (*sayen*) the heavenly and earthly beings by his bloodshed in the cross.

The second *G'hantha* prayer is purely Christological in content. “Through your only begotten Son, God the Word, the light of your glory and splendour from you and the image of your Being”.³¹ The various titles such as ‘Only Begotten Son’ (*ihidaya*), ‘God the Word’ (*Alaha Meltha*)³², ‘light’ (*nuhra*), ‘splendour’ (*semha*), ‘image’ (*salma*)³³ of God are used to designate Jesus. The title ‘Only Begotten Son’ (*ihidaya*)³⁴ shows the unique sonship of our Lord from the Father (Jn 1:14; 3:16; Heb 11:17). The origin of Jesus as the only begotten Son consists in this eternal begetting by His father (Jn 5:18). Such titles describe the human and divine natures of Jesus and the unity between God, the Father and Jesus, the Son who are one in essence.

The third *G'hantha* is fully Christological since it describes the mystery of the incarnation of Jesus and the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. Regarding the incarnation of Jesus, it describes, “the Only Begotten, God, the Word, who is the image of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself and took the likeness of a servant; he descended from heaven, put on our humanity...”.³⁵ This idea of self-emptying of God is based on the Pauline letter to Philipines (Phil 2:6-7). While the first Adam tried to capture the equality with God, the second did not regard (*hthupia*) the equality with God as something to be grasped: but emptied himself and took the likeness of the (*dmutha*) of a servant. The theme that the Son of God born of a woman, as seen in the letter to the Galatians (Gal 4:4), is also depicted in the third *G'hantha*. It mentions the wonderful dispensation of God (*mbranutha*) which is accomplished by the Son of God. He is the first born (*bukra*) of the creatures (Rom 8:29; Col 1:15). He is born from holy Virgin Mary with a mortal body and immortal soul. The *G'hantha* states that the fullness (*sumalaya*) of divinity dwells in Jesus who is the head of the Church (Eph 5:23; Col 1:18) and the firstborn from among the dead (Col 1:18). He was handed over (*esthlem*) for our sins and rose from the dead for our justifica-

³¹ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 24.

³² The designation ‘God, the Word’ (ܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܗ) expresses the pre-existence of the Word in God through whom the Father created and established heaven and earth (Jn 1:1; Heb 1:2).

³³ The Syriac words for splendour, image and light are ‘semha’ (ܣܡܗܐ) ‘salma’ (ܣܠܡܗ) and ‘nuhra’ (ܢܘܗܪܐ) respectively. Cf. Payne Smith. 1903. *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 330, 481,480. The attribute of Christ as ‘splendour of God’ signifies the core relation between the God and Jesus. In the Eucharistic liturgy Christ is called ‘the image of God’ (2 Cor 4:4). The term light symbolizes the person of Christ who is the light of God’s glory.

³⁴ The Syriac word ‘ihidaya’ (ܐܝܚܝܕܝܗܐ) means ‘the only begotten’. Cfr. Payne Smith. 1903. *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 191.

³⁵ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 28.

tion (*nsadegnan*) (Rom 4:25). Jesus saved us from the depth of sins through his death and resurrection and reconciled between heaven and earth. Jesus instituted the Eucharist by offering his body and blood to the disciples and asked them to do it in memory of him. According to the liturgical scholars, the commemoration of the death of Jesus in the liturgical commentary of Theodore is a clear reference to the Institution Narrative.³⁶ The fourth *G'hantha* defines Qurbana as the “living, holy and acceptable sacrifice, the mystery of the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world”.³⁷ Jesus is the true lamb (Jn 1:29) who is offered in the Qurbana. The sacrificial and propitiatory nature of the Qurbana is highlighted in this prayer and Jesus becomes the real offerer and the offering.

2.2. Trinitarian outlook

The *Qudasha* of Mar Theodore follows the theological perspective of giving equal importance to the persons of the Holy Trinity. It highlights the communitarian and distinctive natures of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The first *G'hantha* prayer refers to the three persons of the Trinity and describes their functions in salvific history. Moreover, this *G'hantha* is concluded with a doxology to the Holy Trinity. The *Qanona* in the prefatory dialogue is fully Trinitarian. Through the Pauline salutation, the Trinitarian God speaks to the community as His new covenant people. This simple formula summarises the whole mystery of the economy of salvation and emphasises the common and particular roles of the three persons in the celebration of the Holy *Qurbana*.

The second *G'hantha* mentions the three persons of the Trinity at the beginning itself. It says: “O God, the father of truth, existing from all eternity and your only Begotten Son, your Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit forever”.³⁸ It clarifies the functions and natures of each person in the Trinity. The concluding words in the second *G'hantha*, “your glorious Trinity which is confessed in three persons, co-equal and indivisible, all heavenly hosts render praises always before your great holiness...”³⁹ reveal the undivided unity of the three persons in the Trinity. It is praise, thanksgiving and worship of the Trinity, commemorating the creation of visible and invisible beings by the Father through the Son and the sanctifying role of the Holy Spirit.

³⁶ Theodore of Mopsuestia. 1933. *Commentary*, 103.

³⁷ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 31–32.

³⁸ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 24.

³⁹ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 24.

The third *G'hantha* explains the holiness of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. The first part of this *G'hantha* concludes with a doxology to the three persons of the Trinity. The key concept in this *G'hantha* is the revelation of the Holy Trinity by the incarnation of the second Person. The fourth *G'hantha* also narrates the functions of the Holy Trinity in the process of the accomplishment of the salvific plan. God has drawn back the human beings to Himself and Holy Spirit sanctified them and Jesus fulfilled the divine dispensation. Further, this *G'hantha* highlights the importance of the Holy Trinity in the celebration of the Holy *Qurbana*. The prayer of epiclesis concludes by offering doxology to the Trinitarian persons. Thus, we can surely affirm that the prayers of the *Qudasha* of the Mar Theodore are developed in the framework of Trinitarian theology.

2.3. Pneumatological insights

The various prayers in the *Qudasha* of Mar Theodore highlights the power and role of the Holy Spirit in the liturgical celebration. The pledge (*rahvona*)⁴⁰ of the Holy Spirit, of which the first *G'hantha* refers, is a divine gift gratuitously given to prepare us for wearing the heavenly things (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5). St. Paul further instructs that we are marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit and this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory (Eph 1:14). The second *G'hantha* points out the role of the Holy Spirit in the empowering and sanctifying process of the creatures to praise God, the Father. It states: "By the Holy Spirit, the spirit of truth who is from you the Father, all creatures visible and invisible are strengthened, sanctified and made worthy to lift up praise to your adorable divinity".⁴¹ It is to be noted that the Holy Spirit is attributed as the 'Spirit of truth' (Jn 14:17; 15:26). It is proper and just to call the Spirit of Jesus as the 'Spirit of truth' (1 Jn 5:6).

The different attributes given to the Holy Spirit in the third *G'hantha* is worthy to be noted. "Holy indeed, is also the Holy Spirit, uncreated divine nature, the author of all things, who from eternity is verily holy. Holy is his name, and holy is his abode".⁴² It is a condensed expression of the faith of our Church in the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. Holy Spirit personifies the holiness of God which makes God transcendent over all other beings. Therefore, he sanctifies all those who are made

⁴⁰ The Syriac word 'rahvona' (ܪܗܘܢܐ) means earnest-money, a pledge etc. Cf. Payne Smith. 1903. *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 531.

⁴¹ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 24.

⁴² *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 27.

worthy to receive the gift of grace. The role of the Holy Spirit in relation to the divine dispensation is clearly expressed in the third *G'hantha*. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that God the Word put on humanity from the Holy Virgin.⁴³

The fourth *G'hantha* states that God sanctifies all the sinful human beings by the grace of the Holy Spirit. It confesses that the renewal and the sanctifications are acts of the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:16; 2 Thess 2:13). The usage 'the grace of the Holy Spirit' firstly seems to be in the prayers of the *Qudasha* of Theodore. It is in the epiclesis that the role of the Holy Spirit is clearly expressed. The grace of the Holy Spirit is invoked upon the bread and cup so that they may become the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

2.4. Ecclesiological Vision

The *Qudasha* of Mar Theodore has an ecclesiological framework in its *G'hantha* prayers. Church is a community of the faithful and the locus of the celebration of the Holy Mysteries. In the sanctuary entrance prayer, the celebrant thanks God for setting him "as a distinctive member in the sublime body of your holy Church".⁴⁴ The first *G'hantha* implores God to fill with the grace of the Holy Spirit without regarding the weakness and sinfulness of the members of the Church. Through the Diptychs, the Church intercedes for the dead and the living.⁴⁵ According to the liturgical commentators, the Church commemorates the living and the dead in the Qurbana in order to show that both the living and the dead are profited by the oblation.⁴⁶ The second *Kusapa* is a priestly prayer for having unity and love among themselves and with others. The hymn of Sanctus is also ecclesiological since the earthly and heavenly churches join together to praise the Creator of the Universe. Through this hymn, the earthly and heavenly churches become one unit to render glory to the adorable and glorious name.⁴⁷ The Church is a projection and prophetic

⁴³ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 28; Vadakkal. 1989. *The East Syrian Anaphora*, 158; Robert Matheus. 2000. *The Order of the Third Sanctification*. Kottayam: OIRSI, Kottayam, 293.

⁴⁴ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 17.

⁴⁵ *The Syro-Malabar Qurbana: The Order of Raza*. 1986. Trivandrum: Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference, 35.

⁴⁶ Narsai. 1909. *The Liturgical Homilies*, 10; Theodore of Mopsuestia. 1933. *Commentary*, 94–95; Gabriel Qatraya. 2003. *Commentary on the Liturgy*. Ed. Sebastian Brock, 60. New Jersey: Hugoye.

⁴⁷ Idris Emlak. 2004. *Mysterienfeier der Ostsyrischen Kirche im 9. Jahrhundert. Die Deutung der göttlichen Liturgie nach dem 4. Traktat einer anonymen Liturgie Erklärung*, Münster: LIT, 68. Emlak writes, "Die Einheit der irdischen und der himmlischen Kirche beruht auf der göttlichen und der menschlichen Natur in Christus: Gott erschien auf der Erde und der Mensch stieg in den Himmel empor".

sign of the heavenly Jerusalem on earth. The title “the head of the Church” is attributed to Jesus in the third *G’hantha*. The commandment of Christ that “Whenever you gather together in my name, do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19) is fulfilled in the ecclesial framework. Christ gave the Church the mystery of Eucharist to be celebrated as his memorial for the salvation of the people. He has asked his disciples to celebrate the paschal mysteries whenever they gather for his memorial.

The main focus of the fourth *Kusapa* and *G’hantha* of the *Qudasha* of Mar Theodore is the Church and her members. The fourth *G’hantha* is specially embellished with ecclesiological orientations. “Our Lord and our God, grant that your peace and tranquillity dwell in the holy Catholic Church forever. Protect her from all persecutions, strife, controversies, schisms and divisions”.⁴⁸ The importance of having the peace and tranquillity of God in the Church is highlighted in this prayer and it is the responsibility of each faithful to pray for it. The peace which exists in the Church is to be reflected in the community life of the people. The *G’hantha* continues to pray for all the bishops, priests and deacons who do the service of truth. They have to do their service in the Church with purity and holiness and their concern should be to attain the eternal reward from the Jesus Christ. The *G’hantha* remembers and prays for all the members of the holy Church. It prays, “May the children of the holy, Catholic Church, here and elsewhere, be nurtured in the worship of your majesty, in true faith and in virtuous and noble deeds for their salvation”.⁴⁹ Here, the family consciousness of the Church is emphasised and all the members of the Church may participate in the liturgical celebration with a family spirit to worship Jesus Christ. All the faithful should strive for eternal salvation through the deeds of charity and love.

2.5. Eschatological perspectives

The *Qudasha* of Theodore is filled with the themes of eschatology. Eschatological hope is inherent in the very notion of the Eucharist which is the sacrifice of the new Israel that has been called into being as the eschatological community. The celebration of the paschal mysteries of Christ is an image of what is happening in heaven at present and in future.

The first *Kusapa* says, “When you shall appear at the end of time in our human nature that you assumed, we may find grace and mercy before you and be made worthy to sing your praises with the host of angels”.⁵⁰ The prayer mentions the

⁴⁸ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 32.

⁴⁹ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 33.

⁵⁰ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 18.

eschatological coming of the Son of man and need of finding grace at the presence of God. The *Kusapa* which creates eschatological thoughts in the minds of the faithful states that the grace of God is needed to stand at the right hand of Jesus, the eternal judge and to sing praises together with the angels. The Diptychs is a prayer not for the living but also for the dead ones. It asks the Lord to receive the prayer for all the members of the Church who are departed from us. The celebrant recites the following prayer at the time of the removal of the *Soseppa* that is covering the holy mysteries: “May I find favour in your presence on the day of judgement”.⁵¹ This priestly prayer also mentions the eschatological judgement and his request for favour in front of the eternal judge. In the prefatory dialogue of the feast days, the celebrant admonishes the community to raise its mind to heaven and the heavenly liturgy: “Let your minds be on high, in the awesome place of glory where Cherubim incessantly flap their wings and the Seraphim unceasingly and melodiously chant holy, holy, holy”.⁵² The commentators interpret the meaning of the term ‘High’ in relation to Heaven. Narsai says that ‘High’ is the place where Christ sits at the right hand of the Father.⁵³ The Anonymous Author of the 9th century describes that ‘the High’ is the place: “where the whole adobe is pure and the dwellers thereof are glorious- where the angles in the awful place cease not from flying and honouring the nature of Godhead and with *hullale* praise and sing to His Lordship and with pleasant sounds, with honour please the Lord- there, as men who have been shaken of death and have become companions of spiritual beings”.⁵⁴

Another element with eschatological symbolism is the hymn of Hosanna. “Blessed is he who came and is to come in the name of the Lord”.⁵⁵ By singing this hymn, the community foretastes the experience of Parousia of the Lord. The expectation of the second coming of Christ, the last judgement and the reception of the rewards are clearly depicted in the third *G’hantha*. The fourth *G’hantha* contains a lot of eschatological thoughts. It prays for the Pope, Bishops and priests to attain the eschatological reward from Jesus, the eternal judge: “May they be made worthy to receive from you blessed and exalted share at the glorious coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”.⁵⁶ The *G’hantha* particularly prays for all those who have departed

⁵¹ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 21.

⁵² *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 22.

⁵³ Narsai.1909. *The Liturgical Homilies*, 11.

⁵⁴ *Anonymi Autoris Expositio Officiorum Ecclesiae Georgio Arbelensi vulgo adscripta II*. 1954, 53/51; Pittappillil. 2011. *Celebration of the Holy Mysteries*, 229.

⁵⁵ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 22.

⁵⁶ *Second Qudasha and Third Qudasha*, 32–33; Vadakkal. 2018. *The Structure and Content*, 104.

from this world in true faith that they may attain eternal bliss. The resurrection is understood as the pledge of the general resurrection at the end of time.

Conclusion

Since the Second Order of *Qudasha* contains typical East Syrian theological and liturgical elements, we can conclude that *Qudasha* of Mar Theodore is an East Syrian in origin and content. The special features of the East Syrian liturgy are fully prevalent in this *Qudasha* in its structure and theological outlook. The special characteristic of this *Qudasha* is its developed theological reflection and structural organization. The themes of praise and thanksgiving and the anamnesis of the gifts of God are repeatedly present in all the *G'hantha* prayers of this *Qudasha*. Since, each *Qudasha* is a treasury of the rich wealth of Church's liturgy, the Second *Qudasha*, being a theologically well developed Eucharistic prayer, is very helpful for the proclamation of the faith.

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