

Malankara Catholic Holy Qurbono

- All the salvific events, from the creation of the universe up to the second coming of Christ are commemorated in the Holy Qurbono
- The Old Testament events, the birth of the Saviour, his baptism, public life, trial, passion, death on the cross, resurrection, ascension and the second coming are celebrated in the Holy Qurbono
- The Syrian Fathers have divided the Holy Qurbono into four parts:
 1. The Service of Preparation
 2. The Service of the Word
 3. The Service of Sacrifice
 4. The Service of Communion

Part I - The Service of Preparation

Introduction

- The first part of the Malankara Holy Qurbono, the Service of Preparation is known in Syriac as *Thuyobo*
- This includes the part from the beginning of the Holy Qurbono up to the beginning of the public service
- In fact, the Holy Qurbono begins with the prayers of the Hours
- Before the beginning of the Morning Prayers, the server enters the sanctuary and lights the candle, placed in front of the cross in the middle of the *thronos*
- Through this, the creation of the universe by God saying: 'Let there be light' (Genesis 1:3) is remembered
- The pulling aside of the veil after having lighted the candle signifies the self-revelation of God through the creation of the universe as well as the opening of heaven
- The time of the Morning Prayers, the celebrant wears the black outer garment, which signifies the human state of sin => the prodigal son
- After the Morning Prayers, the celebrant enters the sanctuary => the ascension of Moses to Mount Sinai to receive the Commandments
- The pulling of the veil across the sanctuary => the relationship between God and man is lost through the sin of the first man

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- Through the private service of preparation, the Old Testament period is particularly commemorated
- The Service of Preparation has two parts:
 - The Service of Melchizedek and
 - The Service of Aaron

The Service of Melchizedek

- It is the service of arranging the bread and wine on the *thronos*
- Through this, the incident of Mechizedek, the king of Salem going to receive Abraham carrying bread and wine, is commemorated (Genesis 14:18)
- Melchizedek was a priest who stood before God as the representative of all gentiles even before priesthood was established among the Jews
- Christ, the eternal priest according to the order of Melchizedek, was not only the priest of the Israelites but also the priest of all races
- The celebrant arranges the big host and the particles in the paten and wine in the chalice with the prescribed prayers
- A little water is added to the wine to symbolize that in Jesus, divinity and humanity are united

The Service of Aaron

- The Service of Aaron is to commemorate his priestly service and incensing. The priest of the New Testament wears his official dress which is similar to the dress the High Priest Aaron and other priests of the tribe of Levi worn during the incensing they had performed.
- The celebrant, holding the paten and the chalice cross-wise, recalls the salvific events of God, remembers all the important persons from Adam and Eve up to the present, recalls to mind all the departed and prays for the particular intention of the Holy Qurbano
- Then the celebrant covers the chalice and paten with the *Susopo* => the *Susopo* represents the adornment of the sky, which covers heaven.
- Afterwards, incensing above the *Susopo*, the entire Church is remembered
- Through this private service behind the veil, the history of salvation of the Old Testament from the first parents up to Abraham, from Abraham up to Aaron and from Aaron up to Jesus Christ, is specially remembered

Part II – The Service of the Word

Introduction

- The veil covering the Madbaha is pulled aside – signifying the reinstatement of the relationship between heaven and earth
- The public service begins with the procession around the Thronos
- The intercession of Mother Mary, John the Baptist are sought
- The birth of Jesus is celebrated in the procession
 - The chief server with candle => John the Baptist
 - The Sanctuary => The manger
 - The Thronos => The lap of Mother Mary
 - The bread and wine => The child Jesus
 - The Susopo => The swaddling cloth
 - The singing of the hymn => The hymn of the angels
 - The Celebrant => The wise men

The Hymn ‘Thrice Holy’

- Christological prayer
- Proclamation of faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ
- The ‘thrice Holy’ part from Isaiah 6:3
- The response part from the prayer of Joseph and Nicodemus to Jesus seeing Him crucified

Readings from the Holy Scripture

- Altogether seven readings in the Holy Qurbano: four from the Old Testament and three from the New Testament
- OT readings are done after the Morning Prayers during the Preparatory Service
- In another words, OT readings are done when the celebrant commemorates the mysteries of the OT and expects the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah
- They are read standing in the *hykala*
- The first reading of the NT will be from the Acts, the Catholic Epistles or the Book of Revelation
- It is read after the hymn ‘*Bhoovilasesham.....*’ based on Mark 16:15
- The second reading is from any of the Epistles of St. Paul and read after the hymn ‘*Paulos sleeha....*’ Based on Galatians 1:8
- Finally, the reading from the Gospel after the hymn ‘Hoololo’
- The preaching of the homily is followed
- The Priest stands as the representative of the people when he faces the East and as the representative of God when he faces the people.

The Prayers for the Atonement of Sins

- The prayer includes *Proemion, husoyo and sedra*
- At the end of the *Sedra*, by reciting the prayer of forgiveness for sins, the Priest imparts general absolution to the people
- Being thus sanctified, the faithful enter into the important part of the Holy Qurbana

The Blessing of the Thurible

- Since the thurible is the symbol of the Church and the world, the service of the blessing of the thurible symbolizes the blessing of the worshipping community
- It reminds us of the baptism of Jesus: the communion between God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
- The blessing of the thurible is a symbolic action:
 - The fire of the thurible => God the Son
 - The 72 rings of the chain => The 72 Announcers
 - The 12 bells of the chain => The 12 Apostles
 - The first chain => God the Father
 - The second and third chain => God the Son
 - The fourth chain => Holy Spirit
- The second and third chain together signify the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ
- During the blessing, the priest faces south because Jordan is in the south of Jerusalem and Antioch.

The Creed

- All the truths of faith is contained in the Nicene-Constantinople Creed
- The Celebrant washes his hands and says a silent prayer in order to show spiritual preparation
- Then he prostrates before the *Thronos* and silently makes the intercessory prayer and renews the intention of the Holy Qurbano.