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**Concept of Mystery in the Syro - Malabar
Mass (Qurbana)**

Supervisor


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**A Thesis Submitted In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Baccalaureate in Theology**

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Declaration:

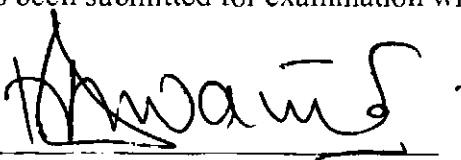
I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Award of Baccalaureate in Theology. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my congregation Cottolengo

ABBREVIATIONS

AM = Anaphora of Addai and Mari

DV = Dei Verbum

IN = Institution Narrative

SC = Sacrosanctum Concilium

Cor. = Corinthians

Rom. = Romans

Gal. = Galatians

Heb. = Hebrew

Phil. = Philippians

Dan. = Daniel

eg. = Example

ETC = Etcetera

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Introduction

The Eucharistic Liturgy of the Church is often qualified to be “Celebration of Mysteries”. In the Syro - Malabar Church it becomes all the more true. The most solemn form of her Eucharistic Celebration is known to be the *raza*, an Aramaic Syrian term which literally means mystery. Hence it has lot of meanings. For a true understanding of the Eucharistic Liturgy, it becomes important for us to understand the various meanings of the term “Mystery”.

In the ordinary usage the term “mystery” means something that is hidden, secret and mysterious etc. All the inner realities of the Eucharistic Liturgy in a way are qualified to be “mystery”. In this context I am trying to answer the questions: what are the implicit meanings of the term “mystery” in the Syro Malabar Qurbana? What is the concept of mystery in Sacred Scripture? The answers to these questions are the important point in this study.

The whole study is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, the attention is focussed on the meaning and implication of the term “mystery”. In the second chapter, the study is focussed on how this concept is used in the Sacred Scriptures, and how it is used therein. In the third chapter, we see that the concept of Mystery in Qurbana.

The study, at large, would give us the idea that the celebration of the mystery is something more than what we offer to God as worship; it is something what we receive from God in the context of worship. It would manifest the saving action of God continued through Church.

I hope that this study would give some new insight and understandings about the concept of mystery in the Syro - Malabar Qurbana. So we shall turn our attention to the study of the concept “Mystery” in detail.

Chapter one

Concept of Mystery in the Syro - Malabar Mass (Qurbana)

1.1 The Term “Mystery” (*Raza*) and Its Meaning

The concept of “Mystery” is very common to all the Liturgies especially to the Oriental Liturgies. In the Syriac orient, its term is *Raza*; in the Greek East it is *Mysterion* and in the Latin West it is *sacramentum*¹, which means a sign of the sacred Hence we have to see how these terms have come into use in the Liturgical languages and how they have contributed to the development of the different Liturgical theological in the church. With a special reference to Syro - Malabar Eucharistic Liturgy, we shall now try to analyse the concept of Mystery in detail.

1.2 Syriac Term Raza

In the Syro - Malabar Eucharistic Liturgy the term “Mystery” is used as a translation of the Aramaic Syriac term *raza*. It is a technical term very commonly found in the Syrian Liturgical tradition, especially in the case of sacraments and in a particular way in the Eucharistic Liturgies. It is also used as a title for the Eucharistic celebration. Hence the term *raza*, from its very nature and usage, seems to convey a variety of meanings which are all very important and substantial. The term *raza* which literally means mystery is a derivative of a Persian term *raza*.²

¹ Cf. K. LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*, 11.

² Cf. K. LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*, 18.

1.3 The Term Raza and its varied meanings

The term raz is of Persian origin. In the modern Persian it contains the meaning, such as hidden, secret, etc. This term has a very close connection with the Sanskrit rahas which also meant secret or mystery. The Malayalam word rahasyam is derived from this Sanskrit rahas.

1.4 The technical term raza

In Syriac the term raza is a technical term and is derived from raz. It possesses numerous meanings, such as, a secret, agreement, conspiracy. The technical term raza basically is a theological term and is very rich in meaning.³

1.5 The Christian Meaning of raz and raza

The verb raz has attained specifically a Christian sense in its usage and it has come into existence within the Christian setting of the Liturgical worship, and its nuances also have become liturgical. For the Syrian theologians raza meant the whole liturgy, the worship of the church and all its related elements. The liturgical commentaries would explain the individual elements of the worship and the secret meanings in the celebration. In the east Syrian Liturgical tradition, the singular form raza generally denotes any sacrament and the plural form raza always denotes the Eucharist. But among the Syro - Malabar Christians, the singular form is specifically indicative of the most solemn form of the Eucharistic Liturgy.⁴

1.6 Who are the Syrians?

The Syrians are the Arameans themselves, the inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent region (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Iraq, and South-eastern Turkey). They came from the Syrian desert in the 14th century B.C, and settled in the urban centers founding many

³ Cf. J. L. MCKENZIE, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 83.

⁴ Cf. K. LUKE. *The Technical Term Raza*, 21.

kingdoms. The strongest of these Aramean kingdoms were the kingdoms of Damascus, Nahreen (Mesopotamia), Sobah and Padan-Aram. Aram was translated as Syria, a synonym to "Aram". From here, the name "Syrian" began to replace Aramean, gradually. After the birth of Christ, this new name began to spread until it nearly eliminated the Aramean name in the entire geographical Syria. Because the Arameans, who now became Christians. Nevertheless, a group of writers continued to use the term "Aramean" instead of "Syrian" treating them as synonyms. They would say for instance, He was an "Aramean Syrian writer", and the Aramaic Syriac language. However, it is never said "The Aramean Church" but rather "the Syrian Church".⁵

1.6.1 Divisions in the Syrian Church

In the first four centuries A.D, there prevailed among the four Christian Churches i.e. the Syrian Church of Antioch, the Latin Church of Rome, the Coptic Church of Alexandria and the Byzantine Church of Constantinople. In early 5th century, a certain Patriarch of Constantinople, Nestor, came up with a new teaching that contradicted the faith of the holy Universal Church. There are two natures and two persons in Christ, therefore, He is two Christs, one is son of God, and the other is son of man; and that Mary did not give birth to an incarnate God, but to a pure human who is Jesus Christ, on whom, the word of God dwelled later. This teaching of Nestor was accepted by some Syrians in areas under Persian rule, and in some parts in Syria, Palestine and Cyprus. They split from the Syrian church of Antioch and established themselves a center of leadership in Madaen, Iraq, and then moved it, later on, to Baghdad in 762 A.D. Until recently, their church was known by

⁵ M. MCCULLOUGH, *A Short History of Syriac Christianity to the Rise of Islam*, 179.

the name "the Syrian church of the East"⁶. The Syrian Church today embraces seven separate Churches:

- 1- The Syrian Orthodox Church, the mother church
- 2- The Syrian Church of the East (The Nestorian or the Assyrian Church, as the new name stands)
- 3- The Syrian Chaldean Church (The Assyrian Chaldean Catholic Church, according to the new name)
- 4- The Syrian Maronite Church
- 5- The Syrian Catholic Church
- 6- The Greek Orthodox Church of Antiochian Origin (in the Arab Countries) or the Melkite Syrians
- 7- The Greek Catholic Church (The Syrian Melkite Catholic Church).⁷

1.6.2 The present status

The children of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch are spread, today, all over the world. They exist in significant numbers in the countries of the Middle East, (Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, and the Gulf States), Turkey, Europe (mainly in Sweden, Germany, The Netherlands), North and South America, Australia and India. The church has about three million followers, half of which are in India.⁸

⁶S. PAMPACKAL, *A short History of the Catholic Church in India*, 47.

⁷S. PAMPACKAL, *A short History of the Catholic Church in India*, 63.

⁸R. HAMBYE, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*, 28.

Chapter two

The Concept of “Mystery” in the Sacred Scriptures

Introduction

The sacred scripture as a whole contain Mysteries by way of vision, dreams, sayings, etc. which translate the secret plan of God into enigmatic symbols, and which invite the readers to respond to them positively and to get into their meaning more fully and deeply.⁹

2.1 The concept of mystery in the Old Testament

The term *raz* is found in the book of Daniel. Hence we shall see the main passage which contains the term *raz* in the book of Daniel.¹⁰

In the book of Daniel 2:18 we read that Daniel told his companion to seek mercy God of heaven concerning this Mystery, so that Daniel and his companion might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. In the chapter 2:19, “then the Mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night”. And soon we see in 2:27 Daniel answered to the king. No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the mystery which king asked. But there is God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he had made know to king Neduchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these: to you O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be hereafter, and he who reveals mysteries, made known to you what is to be. As for me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living has this mysteries been revealed to me, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thought of your mind. The king told Daniel, “truly your God is God of gods and lord of king of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this

⁹ Cf. R. PHILIP, *Essays in West Syrian Liturgy*, 28.

¹⁰ K. LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*, 45.

mysteries”¹¹. In chapter four, King Nebuchadnezzar describing about this event said, “At last Daniel came in before me he who was named Belteshazar after the name of my God and in whom is the spirit of the holy Gods and I told him the dream, saying, O Belteshazar. chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy Gods is in you and no mysteries is difficult for you, here is the dream which I saw, tell me its interpretation.”¹²

A few things are evident from these passages. The term mystery used in all these passages refers to a dream which the king Nebuchadnezzar had seen while he was sleeping. This dream was not an ordinary one, but an extraordinary. It was a vision. It was a revelation made known to the king pertaining to the future of his kingdom. Although it was a revelation, the king could not understand the meaning or content of the revelation. For the dream, as such, was a visionary phenomenon filled with signs and symbols. Hence it always necessitated the need of an intermediary to give the interpretation. And only a divinely revelation and is a gift of God. And ministers of the mysteries are divine agents and also that mystery as such incomprehensible that they are to be explained and interpreted with help of the spirit of God. Therefore the basic meaning of the term *raz* in the book of Daniel is the content of revelation. Hence it became very important to point out the main characteristic features of divine revelations in the whole biblical perspective with the immediate context of the meaning and nature of *raz*.¹³

2.2 The characteristic features of Raz as Revelation

A) Salvific - the object of revelation are mostly salvific plan of God regarding the future of man. The revelation can also be of God’s own nature, abode, actions, and reward, and punishment to people that it can include self revelation.

¹¹ Dan 2: 14-15.

¹² Dan 2: 18-47, 4: 8-9.

¹³ Cf. K. LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*, 50.

B) Eschatological – as the revelation is concerned with salvation of man it inevitably relates men to the eschatological days in view of judgement, reward, punishment and fulfilment of promise.

C) Incomprehensible and ineffable - the object of revelations are beyond the human capacity to be comprehended fully and they are ineffable to be expressed in words.

D) Already revealed, yet hidden – although God has revealed an event, the apocalyptic nature and the symbolic medium hide its true meaning from man. Interpretation and understanding of the revelation therefore, necessary demand the knowledge of symbolic language which is used therein.

E) Guidance of the spirit of God - only one who has with him spirit of God alone can understand and interpret the true inner meanings of the revealed things at large.

F) Gift of God – the knowledge of the symbolic language and the understanding of the revealed things are gifts of God.¹⁴

2.3 The term *Mysterion*

The idea of God's secrets was familiar to Israel from the time of prophets. These secrets in Hebrew are termed as *sod* and are concerned with God's plan of salvation. In Greek Old Testament *Mysterion* is found mostly in the books written in Greek, and also as translation of *raz* and *sod*. In the Septuagint usage it could sometime refer to worships like the Greek Mystery cults and also to the secret plans and wisdom of God, or things which cannot be divulged or visions that always a reference to ritual worship and such usage have close association with pagan Mystery cults.

¹⁴R. HAMBYE, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*.35.

What is important is that the original Hebrew word did not intend what the Greek word contained, but when the Biblical Greek adopted the *Mysterion* the Biblical vocabulary began to possess the meaning of divine secret and also the idea of worship while its non-Biblical usage, most often, conveyed the meaning of pagan ritual worship especially in its plural form *Mysteria*. And later *sod* and *raz* which in the Greek Bible were translated from Hebrew as *Mysterion* were again translated as *sacramentum* into the Latin version. Hence we have the interrelated Biblical terms *sod*, *raz*, *Mysterion* and *sacramentum* and consequently their meaning also had become interrelated and mutually complementing.¹⁵

2.4 The concept of Mystery in the New Testament

In the New Testament the concept of Mystery is highly a technical theological term. As the whole New Testament is written originally in Greek the technical term also happens to be Greek, viz, *Mysterion*. The Syriac term *raz* is found in the Peshitta version of the New Testament, as the translation of *Mysterion*. Similarly in the Latin version of the Bible *Mysterion* is again translated into *sacramentum* and sometimes translated as *mystrium*. In the Biblical context the technical term *Mysterion* conveyed many meanings, such as religious truths long kept hidden but now revealed through Christ to his Church; anything that has symbolic value; religious celebrations having ritual nature; things equivalent to sacraments etc. The term *Mysterion* occurs altogether 28 times in the New Testament of which three are in the synoptic Gospels, four in the book Revelation and 21 in the Epistles of St. Paul.¹⁶

2.5 Mysterion in the Gospels

Among the Gospels, the Synoptics have used the term *Mysterion* one each with reference to the secrets of the Kingdom of God. Jesus had answered his disciples when they asked the

¹⁵ Cf. J. B. BAUER, *Encyclopaedia of Biblical Theology*, Vol.2, 601.

¹⁶ Cf. J. POOVANNIKUNNEL, *The concept of Mystery*, 41.

meaning of the parable of the sower, "to you has been given the secret' of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables". Jesus had distinguished from among his listeners, 'those capable of understanding' the mystery 'those outside' whose hardness of heart prevented the comprehension of such secrets and revelations. Thus for the latter ones, the coming of the kingdom remained to be an enigma which is not understandable by the teaching through the parables.¹⁷

The Kingdom of God is a mystery indeed. Although in Jesus it has been revealed fully, it is kept hidden from the wise and the learned and the rulers of this kingdom. The Kingdom of God which Jesus had preached was not a terrestrial kingdom, but a spiritual kingdom, and this indeed is Jesus himself and it is in the hearts of men.¹⁸

The different parable about the kingdom of God further reveals its secret nature. The divine secrets are hidden from the wise and the understanding, and are revealed to the children. All these suggest the concealment of the kingdom of God from the human mind, that it is revealed to those who are disposed, while it is kept hidden to the undispensed.¹⁹

Kingdom of God again is a mystery that it is revealed to all, but all do not understand it. Which is understood only by the revelation from the part of God, by the gift of Holy Spirit, and it is not by the human merit or by his intellect²⁰. Although it is revealed to all men, by their deprivity it remains a hidden reality or an incomprehensible mystery.

The reason for the incomprehensibility of the Kingdom of God consists, also, in the fact that, it has a close relation to Jesus himself and to his message. For, although the parable of the sower is about the Kingdom of God, what is sown according to Mt. 13:19, is 'Word of

¹⁷ Cf. P. PALLATH, *Important Roman Documents Concerning the Catholic Church in India*, 54.

¹⁸ Cf. R. HAMBYE, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*, 40.

¹⁹ Cf. R. HAMBYE, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*, 42.

²⁰ Cf. K. LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*, 55.

the Kingdom', which according to Mk 4:14, is 'word' (Logos), and in Lk. 8:11, it is 'word of God'. The Markan usage of the 'word' (logos) always refers to the person of Christ, and in Mk. 4:33, the usage, "he spoke the word", has a revelatory significance; for the Greek term used for 'speaking' has a meaning of speaking with a revelatory significance. The coincidence of the Mystery of the Kingdom of God with the person of Jesus had demanded for a better understanding of Jesus himself for the full revelation of the Kingdom of God. Here, in this context Mystery meant, what God has revealed of Jesus to the disciples as, the messiah, who does proclaim the coming of the Kingdom. However, there was a difficulty from the part of the people in understanding Jesus, and even from the part of his disciples themselves, and it was due to their lack of faith, The true character of Jesus can only be perceived by the eyes of faith; and for those outside faith, this is a riddle and it would remain always -as secret.

Therefore, the Mystery of the Kingdom is not something hard to understand, but something hidden; for it is revealed to those who are initiated, viz, to those who have come to the faith having been attracted by the Father, and guided by the Spirit. And it has, then, a close similarity to the Greek Mystery-religions where religious secrets are conveyed only to the initiated one.²¹

2.5.1 Mystery and Parables

The Mystery of the Kingdom of God was revealed by Jesus through parables. The term 'parables' in the Gospels cannot be understood with the meaning with which we today explain them. They are the combination of different literary forms. The Hebrew term *mashal* and the Greek term *parabole* include similes, riddles, allegories, metaphors, similitudes, stories etc.²²

²¹ Cf. E. MAXIMOS, *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity*, 36.

²² Cf. E. GOULD, *The International Critical Commentary on the Gospel*, 72.

The parable of the sower, regarding the Mystery of the Kingdom of God remained a riddle to those who had not been granted the power to understand it. Often the parable method of instruction was obscure or unintelligible even to the most enlightened of the Saviour's hearers. It is true of all the four Gospels. And often Jesus had to explain the parables to the disciples. Sometime the Gospel the parables hide the message from the unbelievers, and convey it to those who believe in Jesus. This is the distinction which the Gospels point out between the disciples and the crowd; disciples and those outside, the children and the wise. The incomprehension of the mystery from the part of the crowd is qualified as the fulfilment of the words of Prophet Isaiah who mentions the purposeful hesitance of the people towards divine message. Therefore, what is important regarding parable is that, parables, are means of revealing divine mysteries, but they are understood only to, those who are disposed, the disciples, the babes and those who are attracted by the Father; and they remain unrevealed and in comprehended to those who, are undisposed, to the wise, and to those who are outside.²³ This is quite clear from a few passages.

- Mt. 13:11 To you it has been given to know the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given
- Mt 13:34 All this Jesus 'said to the crowd in Parables.
- Mt 4:11 To you has been given the secret of the Kingdom of God, but for those outside everything in parables: of that they may indeed see but not perceive; and may indeed hear but not understand.
- Lk. 8:10 To you it has been given to know secrets of the Kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables: so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. From all these, it is certain that parable is a hiding factor in revealing the

²³ Cf. E. GOULD, *The International Critical Commentary on the Gospel*, 75.

divine mysteries from the undisposed multitude. They sometimes, remained hidden even, to the apostles. From their own words it becomes clear:

- 16:25 (Jesus) I have said this to you in figures; the hour is coming when I shall no longer speak you in figures but tell you plainly of the Father
- Jn. 16:29 (Disciples) Ah, now you are speaking plainly, not in any figure.²⁴

Another thing important of the parables in relation to the Mystery is that, there is sometimes an intentionally mysterious presentation of the parables that one may turn to it in order to understand the enigmatic character. Thus it contained a mysterious character and a gradual revelation of the disciples. In this way the parables are seen as a necessary means of opening up the minds of the people to believe in Jesus and to understand the Mystery. Thus this method contained a three part arrangement, the parable, and the requests for explanation a detailed explanation of the mystery revealed. Therefore, parables sometimes make use of enigmas, and arouse curiosity in the listener for further revelation. In this way parables are means for gradual revelation. Hence, the more the listener penetrates into the mystery.

In short, the parables tell us that they hide the mysteries from the understanding of the undisposed ones, and that, they remain as a medium for the revelation of the mysteries to the disposed ones, to the disciples, believers and babes. And they demand for a deep penetration into the mysteries through the interiority of the heart and the openness of the mind being instigated by the curiosity to know the truth and to accept the truths which are revealed by the divine agent.²⁵

²⁴ Mt 13: 11, 4:34, 4:11.

²⁵ Cf. J. POOVANNIKUNNEL, *The concept of Mystery*, 45.

2.6 Mysterion in the Epistles of St. Paul

For Paul, the term Mysterion has a special pre-eminence, Paul makes use of this term about 21 times, of which 19 are in singular and two are in plural. The term Mysterion in Paul contains numerous meanings, but all are interrelated.²⁶

2.6.1 Divine plan of Salvation

The term "Mysterion, in Paul, primarily denotes the divine plan of salvation which is centred upon the person of Jesus Christ. It was hidden for long ages but is now revealed -and made known to all by the apostolic preaching. It is a 'mystery' not because it is inexplicable, but because its superabundant wealth overwhelms our understanding. In accordance with the Gospels, Paul says' that the divine secret of God's revelation is Jesus Christ who is the power and wisdom of God. But, he goes beyond the evangelists to state that the mystery leads to the inclusion of Gentiles as well as Jews in the divine purpose of salvation.²⁷ Paul, agreeing with the mystery of election in the Gospel account, would say that the Christians are the ekkletos (the specially called ones) to whom are given the mystery of Gospel. Hence, he would tell the Corinthians to consider the nature of their calling that they are not the wisest or the noblest of this world, yet they are given the wisdom of the cross, the divine wisdom. God has called the Christians to whom the message is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.²⁸ Therefore, the sacred history, through which God has revealed Himself, His will, His plan of salvation in various waves and finally through His Son, according to Paul, is a mystery.

²⁶ Cf. K, LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*, 60.

²⁷ Cf. E. MAXIMOS, *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity*, 39.

²⁸ Cf. J. POOVANNIKUNNEL, *The concept of Mystery*, 49

2.6.2 Revealed and Hidden

The general etymological understanding of the word *Mysterion* is very evident in the Pauline usage. Just as the content of the 'Mystery thing' cannot be divulged, and is being kept secret, the eyes, lips and mouth are kept sealed (in order that it shall not be made open to others), the divine mystery, the Mystery of the wisdom of God was kept sealed and was silent for ages. And just as the "Mysterion", is made known to the "mystes" (initiated ones), so also, the mystery of the Salvific plan of God is made revealed to the believers, to the saints, and they are sealed with the Holy Spirit, but it was not understandable to the wise and the rulers of this age that it was hidden to them. This revelation of the mystery was given through the Holy Spirit, first to those who are called to be the mouthpieces of God, that is, to the apostles, prophets etc. who are to impart the mystery to others, and in a special manner to Paul himself.²⁹

The mystery is meant to be imparted universally to all without exception that it might include the whole of mankind, and, this is the very nature of the Christian Mystery. In this respect it is diametrically opposed to the esoterical knowledge claimed by the adherents of the ancient mysteries.³⁰ However, although this mystery is imparted to all, only spiritual men, who have received the Holy Spirit, are able to understand the gifts bestowed on them by God the point of emphasis for Paul especially in the first two chapters of the first epistle to the Corinthians is nothing but, the same. Thus, for those who are outside, although it is revealed, it remains closed or mysterious, that they are not fit enough to grasp it; for them it is either a folly or a scandal.³¹

²⁹ Cf. E. MAXIMOS, *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity*, 65.

³⁰ Cf. K. MATHEW, *The Order of Qurbana*, 20.

³¹ Cf. F. ABEL, *Syro-Malabar Liturgy as I see it*, 45.

Therefore, the knowledge of the mystery of the salvific plan of God is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. Here, just as the mystery of the Kingdom of the God is revealed to the believers and disciples and as for those outside it remained as a parable. Paul would say, to the spiritual men it is Salvific and to others it is a folly and a scandal. In this respect, the Pauline image of Mysterion and that of the Gospel are related. And Paul's understanding of the Gospel as a Mystery is founded on Christ's teachings.³²

If Jesus' ministry, his person and his message of the proclamation of the Kingdom of God - are understood only by those who are called. Pauline point of reference also is the same. And what Paul had proclaimed as the Mystery of Gospel was nothing but the Mystery of Christ his person, ministry and message. Paul himself was called to interpret and proclaim the mystery of Christ, his Person, ministry and message and his life, death and resurrection and this way the Mystery of the wisdom of God was proclaimed by him.³³

It is noted that Paul had used the term Mysterion with the esoteric insight according to its original Greek concept that, it is granted only to the spiritual men and not to the psychic man or even to the cosmic powers which failed to comprehend the significance of the cross. In Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:25-27 and in Eph. 3: 2ff. it is explained that the Mystery is being revealed and extended to the whole gentile world through Paul himself, the apostle of Gentiles. In this regard Paul would also make use of terms and phrases referring to anything specially esoteric, such as the resurrection of the saints, participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, putting on the new man, experiencing of salvation, symbolism of the

³² Cf. E. MAXIMOS, *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity*, 52.

³³ Cf. M. MCCULLOUGH, *A Short History of Syriac Christianity to the Rise of Islam*, 200.

marriage of Adam and Eve, etc³⁴. The plural usages of "Mysteria" would also imply such esoteric significance.

2.7 Various usage of Mysterion in St. Paul

Paul had made use of the term Mysterion with different attributes in order to emphasize one or the other aspect of the great reality of the salvific plan of God realized in Jesus Christ and proclaimed by the apostles and believed, celebrated and lived by the people in the Church. Hence, we have different phrases, viz, Mystery of God, Mystery of the wisdom of God, Mystery of Christ, Mystery of the Church, and Mystery of the Gospel, Mystery of Faith, etc. and they all together express the incomprehensible nature of this Mystery.³⁵

2.7.1 Mystery of God

There are various references in Paul corresponding to this phrase, Mystery of God, viz, testimony of God' stewards of the Mysteries of God, God's Mystery' etc. In none of them, it does explain what really is the Mystery of God³⁶. According to Odo Casel, Mystery of God implied three things. In the first phase, God is considered in Himself. He is the infinitely distant, holy and unapproachable to whom no man can draw near and live. In the second phase, this all holy God reveals Himself. He comes down to His creatures and reveals Himself. He comes down to His creatures and reveals Himself to them. This God once again, in Mysterion' reveals Himself to those whom he has chosen-the humble, the pure of hearts, etc. - by His grace; and this is the third phase. In other words God's Mystery is a revelation: made open only to the believers, His chosen Ones and not open to the profane world³⁷. In Paul, the Mystery of God is the Mystery of His will, according to His purpose which He had

³⁴ Cf. K. LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*.65.

³⁵ Cf. R. HAMBYE, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*,48.

³⁶ 1 Cor 2;1.

³⁷ Cf. D. CASEL, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 55.

set forth in Christ. Therefore, Mystery of God is not something which for itself can be explained, it is an incomprehensible Mystery. For it is the Mystery of God's wisdom hidden for ages and generations.³⁸

2.7.2 Mystery of the wisdom of God

The 'Mystery of God' is nothing but the "Mystery of His Wisdom". It was secret and hidden, and it was decreed before ages for our glorification. In the Old Testament wisdom is the architect of everything created, and it appears to be something like an emanation of God's power. To find out wisdom is something like finding a hidden treasure. It is the finding out of one's own salvation; for by wisdom, it meant salvation. In the New Testament a perfect resplendence of this truth is well seen; that is the uncreated wisdom is identified with Christ Himself.³⁹

The planning out of salvation by the Father and its working out by the Son together form the content of the Mystery of the wisdom of God. It was hidden for ages and generations, and therefore, it was incomprehensible until it was revealed by Christ. Even when it is revealed it is incomprehensible to the princes of this age. It is not wisdom according to this world, that, it is qualified as, "what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him"⁴⁰. In Paul, the 'Mystery of the Wisdom of God; the Salvific plan of God the mystery of will of God; etc. are all identical expressions. According to Paul, it is the divine plan of God to unite all things in Jesus Christ and to make every man reconciled in Jesus to God.⁴¹

³⁸Eph 1:9, 3; 8-10.

³⁹Cf. J. KOTTACKAL, *The Salvific Folly of the Cross*, 57.

⁴⁰R. PHILIP, *Essays in West Syrian Liturgy*, 55.

⁴¹Eph. 1: 9-10.

It is only through revelation that this mystery is made understandable to man, and in Christ there is the full revelation of it. In Jesus, we have the wisdom and salvation revealed and realized. It is in Jesus we have our righteousness and sanctification and redemption⁴². The wisdom that is revealed is nothing but Christ crucified: "to those who are called; both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power and wisdom of God". The wisdom of God is revealed through Christ who is crucified, but it is comprehend by only those who have received the Spirit of God, and the unspiritual men are unable to comprehend this Mystery⁴³. That is why the wisdom imparted by Paul became a scandal to the Jews and a folly to the Greeks. Hence, the 'Mystery of God, which is the wisdom of God revealed in Jesus Christ is still a mystery to those who are not open, to those who try to judge the wisdom of God with the human categories of the intellectual pursuit. The emphasis is that divine wisdom is beyond human comprehension, and that only with the help of God, His Spirit, man can understand this Mystery.⁴⁴

The analysis of the mystery of God and the mystery of the wisdom of God demands from us knowledge of the Greek Mystery-cults and the Greek philosophical mind. In the case of Greek Mystery-cults, the mysteries regarding God and his wisdom are handed over only to those who are initiated. Here, the mystery of the wisdom of God is comprehended only by those who are believed, baptized, viz, the Christians, and for others, it is only a scandal or a folly.⁴⁵

However, the term, 'mystery, here, is not something that is concerned with 'worship, and it does not seem to have any close relation with the Greek mystery cults. Whereas, it is seen that it is related to a mystical or experiential. Knowledge of God, about his plan of

⁴² Rom. 11:33.

⁴³ 1Cor. 1:30.

⁴⁴ 1Cor. 1:24.

⁴⁵ 1Cor 2: 10-14.

salvation, that it is the Salvific understanding of knowledge of God mystically experienced by men. Hence it is closely related to the meaning which the Greek mystagogical philosophy would give it in similar cases⁴⁶. Therefore, the term 'mystery' in this context has certain implications. 1. The term 'mystery' does supply a meaning of partial revelation, that is to say, it keeps itself it is veiled and unveiled. It is unveiled to those who are called and it remains veiled to those who are not initiated, those who are still outside. 2. It is by the power of God, by the Spirit of God that man is enabled to understand the mystery and is not by toe human wisdom. 3. What is basic for to be guided by the Spirit of God is humility and openness, the readiness to respond to the message of God positively; and it is nothing but faith itself.⁴⁷

2.7.3 Mystery of Christ

The content of the Mystery of the Wisdom of God' is the universal saving plan of God that all the Gentiles and Jews are to be saved.⁴⁸ This was the Mystery hidden for ages and generations and now made manifested to the saints, in Jesus Christ, and therefore, it is the Mystery of Christ.⁴⁹ For Paul, Mysterion basically, is the marvellous revelation of God in Jesus Christ. In Col. 2:2, Paul says, "... that their heart may be encouraged as they are knit together in love, to have all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of Gods mystery, and of Christ. in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Odo Casel would say, this event of Christ gave a new and a deepened meaning for the term 'Mysterion'.⁵⁰

⁴⁶Cf. D. CASEL, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 58.

⁴⁷ Cf. D. CASEL, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 64.

⁴⁸ Cf. R. PHILIP, *Essays in West Syrian Liturgy*, 59.

⁴⁹ Cf. R. PHILIP, *Essays in West Syrian Liturgy*, 64.

⁵⁰ Cf. D. CASEL, *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, 66.

In the Epistles to the Ephesians, 'mystery' above all is the Mystery of Christ, who is risen, glorified and operative in' the Church. Therefore, the basic of 'mystery' is the event of Christ who made peace by the blood on the cross and reconciled man to God. He has also made peace between man and man that he has broken down the middle wall which separated Jews and Gentiles. So, in Christ both Jews and Gentiles have now access by one Spirit to the Father.⁵¹ And both Jews and Gentiles are acceptable before God on the same basis - faith; and both are justified on the same basis - grace through faith; and both are baptized into one body, and are joined into a mystical union with Christ, for both drink the same Spirit.⁵²

In the Epistle to Colossians, the Mysterion is Christ himself.⁵³ He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation and it is in him all things are hold together. He is, therefore, the Lord over the thrones, principalities, powers, and forces within the universe. In everything he is prominent, and the entire fullness of God is resident on him. And it is through him all things are reconciled, by the blood on the cross. Hence, the greatness and richness of the glory of the Mysterion is nothing but the greatness and richness of the mystery of Christ Himself.⁵⁴

It is through Christ that we come to know about the Mystery of God' and that it has become the Christian mystery, the Mystery of Christ. This Mystery of Christ is not simply the person of Christ, but the events of his saving mission. Therefore it implies the coming down of the divine life into the world in the saving acts accomplished in the incarnate son. Paul, both in the epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, would point out Christ as the fullness of the Mystery'. He reveals in himself what God had intended of his creation. The

⁵¹ Cf. Eph. 1:13-14; 2:18.

⁵² Cf. J. KOTTACKAL, *The Salvific Folly of the Cross*.60.

⁵³ Cf. M. MCCULLOUGH , *A Short History of Syriac Christianity to the Rise of Islam*, 210.

⁵⁴ Cf. R. PHILIP, *Essays in West Syrian Liturgy*.68.

fullness of the 'Mystery', therefore, is the achieving of the fullness of the mystery of the wisdom of God.⁵⁵

According to Paul, the Mystery of Christ is a gratuitous gift of God for us. It is out of the great mercy and love of God that we are saved and it provides us an experience of having been saved. For Paul says:

“But God, who is rich in mercy out of great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his graces in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God.”⁵⁶

It is in Jesus and through Jesus that the charis and agape of God is completely revealed to us.⁵⁷ It is through the Mystery of Christ, we understand the meaning and depth of the hesed of Yahweh towards man. For Jesus Christ is uniquely related to the Father, and in his human nature, life and mission, he is truly the revelation, the Mysterion of the ineffable secret of God's love. That is to say, the Mystery of Christ is the complete revelation of the secret of God's' Being as hesed and emet; as 'God is Love'.⁵⁸

In Short, the content of the Mystery of Christ in Paul is the complete revelation and realization of the mystery of the wisdom of God in Christ which has become the source of universal redemption of mankind, where all men come to experience the love of God and

⁵⁵ Cf. K. LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*, 69.

⁵⁶ R. HAMBYE, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*, 50.

⁵⁷ Cf. M. BOTHER, *The Mystery of Confirmation*, 53.

⁵⁸ Cf. M. BOTHER, *The Mystery of Confirmation*, 59.

participate in the Salvific events of Jesus and share the salvation promised to us by God as a gratuitous gift.⁵⁹

2.7.4 Mystery of the Gospel

According to Paul, the Mystery of Christ itself is the content of the Mystery of the Gospel.⁶⁰ It is, through the preaching of the Mystery of the Gospel that people are called to the glory of Lord Jesus. There is only one Gospel, and it is the Gospel of Christ. The Mystery of the Gospel is found both in its preaching and writing and is inspired by God. It is through the preaching of the Gospel that the divine plan of salvation realized in Jesus Christ is being made known to the whole mankind.⁶¹

The Mystery of the Gospel included a proclamation and a revelation. However, the Gospel that is being proclaimed and the mystery that is being revealed remain still veiled to a few who are perishing, to the unbelievers. In this respect Paul would say, "The God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God."⁶² And this is the paradox of revelation. Everything that is revealed is not known to everyone although it is revealed and proclaimed for everyone. Those who are not disposed by faith are not given the capacity to know the mysteries of God. Those who have blinded their eyes from seeing the light and who have closed their ears from hearing the good news are not fit enough to know the mystery of Gospel and to experience the mystery of Christ, who is the source of redemption, the Lord and saviour. Therefore, it is the very nature of the Mysterion that it is Salvific, revealed and

⁵⁹ Cf. M. BOTHER, *The Mystery of Confirmation*, 62.

⁶⁰ E. GOULD, *The International Critical Commentary on the Gospel*, 79.

⁶¹ Cf. E. GOULD, *The International Critical Commentary on the Gospel*, 82.

⁶² Cf. E. GOULD, *The International Critical Commentary on the Gospel*, 82.

proclaimed and it invites everyone to partake and experience the salvation: but it is not understood by the unbelievers and the undisposed ones.⁶³

2.7.5 Mystery of Faith

The Mystery of Faith is nothing but man's positive response to the Mystery of the Gospel which preaches the Mystery of God the eternal Salvific plan of God realized and revealed in Jesus Christ. For Paul, when he enunciates the qualities of the deacons, one thing which he points out is that, they must hold the Mystery of Faith with a clear conscience.⁶⁴ In the concluding remark in the epistle to the Romans, Paul would say:

"Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for ages is now disclosed and through the prophetic writings is made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith."⁶⁵

The whole emphasis of Paul is that the disclosing of the mystery is in order to bring about the obedience of faith. For faith is the fruit of preaching the Gospel of Christ, the revelation of the Mystery of Christ, and it is the expression of the acceptance of the Mystery of Christ into oneself.⁶⁶ Through Faith, we all have become sons and heirs of God in Jesus Christ.⁶⁷ And because we are sons of God has sent the Spirit of His son into our hearts, crying "Abha Father" and we are sealed by the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.⁶⁸ Therefore, anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ does not belong to him; and if the Spirit of him who

⁶³ Cf. E. GOULD, *The International Critical Commentary on the Gospel*, 85.

⁶⁴ Cf. R. PHILIP, *Essays in West Syrian Liturgy*, 70.

⁶⁵ J. POOVANNIKUNNEL, *The concept of Mystery*, 64.

⁶⁶ Cf. R. PHILIP, *Essays in West Syrian Liturgy*, 75.

⁶⁷ Cf. R. PHILIP, *Essays in West Syrian Liturgy* 79.

⁶⁸ Cf. E. MAXIMOS, *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity*, 55.

has raised Jesus from the dead dwells in him, he will give life to the mortal bodies. This in fact, is the Mystery of resurrection of man.⁶⁹

According to Paul, it is through faith, one is baptized into the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection that he also would be raised from the dead and would be able to walk in the newness of life.⁷⁰ For it is through faith and baptism that one becomes a son of God and put on Christ in him. Accordingly all those who believe become one in Christ and through him all receive access to the Father in the same Spirit.⁷¹

One thing is important that only those who have believed in the Mystery of Christ are baptized into Christ, and only to them are given the Spirit of the Lord.⁷² And only those who have received the Holy Spirit is able to understand the mysteries of the wisdom of God revealed to us; for only the spiritual men are able to discern them.⁷³ So too, only those who believe are given the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God for a greater enlightenment of the hearts to know what is the hope to which they are called, and what are the immeasurable greatness of His power placed in them.⁷⁴

It is through faith that one is justified in Jesus Christ and by that God's love is poured into his heart by the Holy Spirit. That is to say, one is led to the eternal life through Jesus Christ, However, it is by the grace that all have been saved through faith, and it is the gift of God.⁷⁵

In I Tim. 3:16, Paul, exhorting and encouraging Timothy how to behave in the Church, proclaim that, "great indeed is the mystery of our religion". The 'Mystery of

⁶⁹ Rom. 8: 9-11.

⁷⁰ Rom. 6: 3-6.

⁷¹ Gal. 1:28, 3: 26-27.

⁷² Cf. E. GOULD, *The International Critical Commentary on the Gospel*, 87.

⁷³ Cf. J. POOVANNIKUNNEL, *The concept of Mystery*, 68.

⁷⁴ Cf. J. POOVANNIKUNNEL, *The concept of Mystery*, 70.

⁷⁵ Cf. E. MAXIMOS, *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity*, 57.

Religion"- here, is the Mystery of Faith lived in the Church according to the Mystery of Gospel proclaimed and revealed in Jesus Christ. For he say, "He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory."⁷⁶ All these statements are summary points of the Mystery of God revealed and realized in Christ, and preached by the apostles and prophets and believed in the Church, which is the household of the living God.⁷⁷

2.7.6 Mystery of the Church

The Mystery of the Church is intimately related to the Mystery of Christ. Paul sees the relation between the Church and Christ as a great Mystery it is like the relation between bride and bridegroom.⁷⁸ The image of the Church as the bride of Christ is an attempt to clarify the Mystery of the union, the quasi-identity between Christ and his mystical body. Paul had compared this relation symbolically as a relation in -marriage, and calls this union as a "great Mystery."⁷⁹

It is through this Mystery of the Church and Christ; the manifold wisdom of God is made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly place.⁸⁰ Today, it is through Christ and Church that men are reconciled to God and to one another, and it is by the fellowship of the members of the Church that it is being carried out.⁸¹ Hence, a great significance is given to the Church, whose divine purpose is to proclaim Christ and bring man into unity with him. Paul saw himself as one who is specially called and commissioned to

⁷⁶ E. MAXIMOS, *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity*, 60.

⁷⁷ Cf. E. MAXIMOS, *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity*, 62

⁷⁸ Cf. M. BOTHER, *The Mystery of Confirmation*, 65.

⁷⁹ M. BOTHER, *The Mystery of Confirmation*. 66.

⁸⁰ Cf. M. BOTHER, *The Mystery of Confirmation*. 68.

⁸¹ Cf. M. BOTHER, *The Mystery of Confirmation*, 70.

communicate this Mysterion that gentiles are now fellow heirs and members of the same community, the Church. Hence, the Church is a temple built upon Christ, the corner stone.⁸²

The Church is a "Mysterion" of Christ, as his mystical body, and it is so, not only as the bearer of that revelation which is the truth and wisdom of God, but also as the mysterion of the Father's love and power through the saving events of redemption. That is, the Church is a sacrament a mystery and a symbol of Christ as the unique Word spoken in the fullness of time and as the saving event, the redeeming action of God's love.⁸³ As the sacrament of Christ, the Church is also the fullness of Christ that is through her the riches of the saving grace of Christ is being poured out in the world today.⁸⁴

The Mystery of Church as the extension of Christ's incarnation in the world has the duty to continue Christ's work of reconciliation, and this ministry has been handed over to the Church by Christ himself. And it was the plan of God that the whole human race should be united, the body of Christ, the Church that both the Jews and gentiles are gathered into one body.⁸⁵

The Church is the visible sign of the presence of God among man and as such bears witness to the mystery of his saving love and election unto the praise of his resplendent grace, and this praise of God constitutes the worship of the Church.⁸⁶ By the very fact that the Church is the Mysterion of Christ, the body of Christ - the priestly body - her actions by her very nature also becomes priestly. It is the prolongation of the priesthood of Christ in the Church. Hence in the priestly exercise of the Church, the acts of praise and thanksgiving, offering of spiritual sacrifices etc. are performed in union with Christ, the head and Lord of

⁸² Cf. M. BOTHER, *The Mystery of Confirmation*, 84.

⁸³ Cf. R. HAMBYE, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*, 82.

⁸⁴ Cf. R. HAMBYE, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*, 86.

⁸⁵ Cf. M. BOTHER, *The Mystery of Confirmation*, 88.

⁸⁶ Cf. J. KOTTACKAL, *The Salvific Folly of the Cross*, 65.

the Church. Therefore, the priestly actions of Christ having transcended and supernatural value, having redemptive and eternal nature, become operative and effective in the Church in her exercise of priestly mediation. Hence, the priestly actions of the Church becomes a 'Mysterion' or 'sacramentum' of the priestly actions of Christ, here and now and is manifested today through the liturgical actions of the Church. Accordingly the liturgical actions of the Church are the mysteries-sacraments- of the Church, which manifest the redemptive actions of Christ in the Church, and the positive response of the members of the Church towards the gratuitous gift of God.⁸⁷

The Mystery of the Church is not only the Mystery or sacrament of Christ as the revelation of the Father's love, it is also the Mystery of Christ as that Holy encounter of God with man, and of man with God, and as such who is the sacramental revelation of Christ as the mediator and priest.⁸⁸ Since then Christ is a priest, by the very mystery he is the God-man, Church too is a priestly body, and as such, she is the sacrament or Mysterion of Christ the high priest and mediator. Therefore just as the saving design is not merely a teaching, but first and foremost, is the saving deeds of Christ, so too, the Church leads mankind to salvation not merely by the 'Word' alone (Mystery of Gospel), but also by the sacred actions; and Christ lives in the Church and his Salvific actions are contained in the Church through her faith and Mysteries. This is the content of the "Mystery of the Church", which is also qualified as the "Mystery of our Religion".⁸⁹

2.7.7 Mystery of the Church and Mystery of Worship

The very nature of the Mystery of the Church necessarily includes the Mystery of Worship. For the Church is a worshipping community and is the Mysterion or sacrament of

⁸⁷ Cf. J. KOTTACKAL, *The Salvific Folly of the Cross*, 68.

⁸⁸ Cf. P. PALLATH, *Important Roman Documents Concerning the Catholic Church in India*, 60.

⁸⁹ P. PALLATH, *Important Roman Documents Concerning the Catholic Church in India*, 65.

Christ, who is the heavenly eternal high priest and mediator.⁹⁰ The Church which is the mystical body of Christ, therefore, is a priestly people and is qualified as the *ekklesia* (*ekkalos*), the community of those who are called, the community of the faithful, who are initiated into it through baptism.⁹¹ A community is meaningful only when it is gathered. The Church, being the community of the believers, is fully manifested only when it is gathered together to offer spiritual sacrifices to the Father in union with Christ, the head of the mystical body. The community which is gathered together like the early Church, first and foremost is the liturgical community.⁹² It is there in the liturgical community that the Church becomes what she is, and the mystery of Gospel- the word of God - is proclaimed, the mystery of faith is confessed and the Mystery of Christ the paschal mystery is celebrated and commemorated; according to the instruction of the Lord: "do this in remembrance of me.

The Church through her liturgical actions, the redemptive mysteries of Christ, having eternal value and supernatural Character, are made present operative and effective here on earth mystically. It is manifested through the liturgical signs of the Church, and as a whole the liturgy becomes a mystery of redemptive revelations and actions of God in Christ and the efficacious sign of Christ's saving presence in his Church. That is, in every liturgy the presence of the Mystery of Christ in his saving Pasch, is celebrated. Hence, through the liturgy, the Mystery of Christian Worship, the participants encounter with Christ and this in fact is an encounter with God the Father, and this in fact turns to be an ineffable experience and thanksgiving from man's part.⁹³

The important aspect of the 'Mystery' of Christ' brought into limelight by the epistles to Ephesians and Colossians has a necessary connection with the public worship of the

⁹⁰ Cf. J. KOTTACKAL, *The Salvific Folly of the Cross*, 70.

⁹¹ Cf. P. PALLATH, *Important Roman Documents Concerning the Catholic Church in India*, 68.

⁹² Cf. P. PALLATH, *Important Roman Documents Concerning the Catholic Church in India*, 70.

⁹³ Cf. J. KOTTACKAL, *The Salvific Folly of the Cross*, 75.

Church, to the celebration of the Eucharist, wherein the 'mystery' is made present. For Paul, Eucharist is not something restricted to the 'Last Supper' of the Lord, but is something more than that.⁹⁴ The Liturgical community, especially the Eucharistic assembly, does manifest itself as the community of the "new covenant" who shares from the table of the Lord.⁹⁵ And the participation in the body and blood of Christ would, therefore, imply union with Christ and one another; and that it becomes a sharing - 'koinonia' - in the Body of Christ.⁹⁶ It is in Paul, we see the earliest account of the institution of Eucharist in the New Testament, and there he passes it on as a tradition, and does not recount the event in and for itself, but only alludes to it in discussing other problems.⁹⁷

In the Institution narrative of the Eucharist the sacrificial aspect of the death of Christ is brought out by the reference to the 'covenant blood' in 1 Cor. 11:25. Paul is very strong against the unworthy participation in the Body and Blood of Christ and he warns that any such participation would bring forth judgement upon him who would be profaning the Body and Blood of the Lord. Here the meal dimension of the Eucharist- the Body and Blood of Christ-has a very strong allusion to the 'meals' of the Mystery religions.⁹⁸

The intimate union of Christians with Christ is explained by Paul, in two ways of which the first one is by joining in the mystical body of Christ, the Church, through baptism, and the second one is by participating from the Body and Blood of Christ, viz, the Eucharistic Body and Blood of Christ.⁹⁹ For through baptism, a Christian mystically or sacrament ally shares the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and puts on Jesus Christ, the new man in

⁹⁴ Cf. J. L. MCKENZIE, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 90.

⁹⁵ Cf. R. HAMBYE, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*, 96.

⁹⁶ Cf. J. L. MCKENZIE, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 92.

⁹⁷ Cf. J. L. MCKENZIE, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 94.

⁹⁸ Cf. R. HAMBYE, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*, 98.

⁹⁹ Cf. R. HAMBYE, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*, 99.

him.¹⁰⁰ Through the sharing of the Eucharistic Body and Blood of Christ, too, one share the Salvific mysteries of Christ and there by participates in the eternal life of God.¹⁰¹ And these baptism and Eucharist are nothing but the celebration of the Mystery of Faith in the Church, and they are the liturgical manifestations of the Mystery of Worship in the Church which provides them participation in the divine life and experience of salvation and intimate union with Christ, the saviour God. Therefore, the Mystery of Worship includes every actions of the Church which is the Mystery of Christ. Hence, it includes the entire liturgy in its manifold ways of Christian living.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Cf. M. BOTHER, *The Mystery of Confirmation*, 90.

¹⁰¹ Cf. J. KOTTACKAL, *The Salvific Folly of the Cross*, 80.

¹⁰² Cf. J. KOTTACKAL, *The Salvific Folly of the Cross*, 81.

Chapter Three

The Concept of Mystery in the Syro-Malabar Qurbana

Introduction

From the age old tradition of the Church, the Celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy, very often, is called to be Celebration of the Mysteries. It is very true with regard to the Syro-Malabar Qurbana also; here, the original term for Mystery is *raza*. In the Syro-Malabar Qurbana the term *raza* is used 25 times. The term *raza* as used in the Qurbana can be grouped into three: first, in a broader sense, the term is meant to denote the whole celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy; secondly, in a limited sense to denote the anaphora alone and thirdly in a strict sense to denote the Eucharistic Species alone. This distinction can be understood only from the nature of the prayers and the emphasis made therein. As the singular form *raza* in the Syro-Malabar Church stands for the most solemn form of the Eucharistic Liturgy and this being the title for the whole celebration, we shall be mainly considering this term from its broader sense, implying the other two, as taken for granted.¹⁰³

In this chapter we shall discuss the various dimensions of the meaning and theology conveyed by the term *raza* irrespective of the singular or plural form in the Syro Malabar Eucharistic Liturgy.

3.1 Mystery as the Worship of the Church

The concept *raza* from its very nature, first of all denotes worship or liturgy of the Church. What is special, about liturgy is that it is an visible activity and a public worship of God by the whole Church. The assembly of the believers gathered for worship in the Church is called

Liturgical Assembly. And indeed, in a certain sense, Church is Church only in Liturgy, for a gathering is a gathering only when it is gathered. For, the Church primarily is a

¹⁰³ Cf. K. LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*, 86.

gathering or communion of those who are called and believe, who gather together in the name of Jesus for prayer and worship. As a matter of fact, the Church manifests herself fully in the Liturgical assembly, gathered for offering public worship to God.¹⁰⁴ And *raza* is celebrated in the liturgical assembly

3.1.1 Nature of the Church as a Liturgical Assembly

The *raza* is celebrated in the Church, and the Church itself is a *raza* or Mystery: The Church offers her worship to God in the Liturgical assembly. The Liturgical assembly primarily, is a gathering of those who are called, believed, and are baptized. It is a community filled with and guided by the Holy Spirit. It is the sheep of the pasture gathered together who follows the good shepherd, Jesus Christ. It is a pilgrim people moving towards the heavenly Jerusalem. It is a community of the disciples of Jesus who love one another, share everything commonly, correct each other and encourage mutually. It is the mystical body of Christ in which Christ himself is the head. It is also a community of those who are witnessing to Christ. This Church, especially the Liturgical assembly, is the bride of Christ crowned like a spouse full of help and blessings. Moreover, this is a community of the New Covenant, chosen race, holy nation and royal priesthood, who offer spiritual sacrifices to God in union with Christ. It is a praying community who gather together in the name of Jesus to worship the Father in Truth and Spirit.¹⁰⁵

3.1.2 Spiritual Sacrifices

In the Celebration of the Syro- Malabar Eucharistic Liturgy, the element of worship is seen extensively from the beginning to the end through various prayers in terms of praising, blessing, confessing, worshipping, glorifying, honoring and exalting the holy Name of God and also in the form of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Of all the worships, spiritual

¹⁰⁴ Cf. E. FINN, *Brother East and West*, 25.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. R. HAMBYE, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*, 112.

sacrifices are the most important ones. The Eucharistic Liturgy itself is seen as a spiritual sacrifice.¹⁰⁶

3.1.3 Qurbana

Qurbana is another term commonly used in the RAZA to denote the sacrificial character of the Syro-Malabar Eucharistic Liturgy. *Qurbana* is also a commonly accepted title for the Eucharistic Liturgy. The word *Qurbana* it meant the greatest gift of offering or a sacrifice. This term has the peculiarity that it is expressive of a sacrifice, most pleasing to God. It is also reflective of the ineffable gift which God gives to man. Hence, the term *Qurbana* manifests the nature of the Eucharistic sacrifice as a self gift or sacrifice of man towards God and the ineffable gratuitous gift of God towards man. Yet primarily it refers to the sacrifice which the Church offers to God.¹⁰⁷

3.1.4 Worship in Truth and Spirit

Truth in the Biblical terminology is a title of Jesus Christ and it reveals his person. For Jesus would say, I am the way, the Truth and Life. Jesus praying to the Father for the sanctification of the disciples said; sanctify them in the Truth; Thy Word is Truth. Here, the term Word is a title of Jesus. In another passage Jesus would again say, for their sake I consecrate myself that they also may be consecrated in truth. In the whole Biblical perspective, Truth is the truth of the Gospel, the revealing Word of the Father present in Jesus Christ and illumined by the Spirit, which we must welcome in faith, so that it may transform our lives. This Truth of salvation is passed on to us authentically in the sacred books; and it shines out for us in the person of Christ, who is at once the mediator and the fullness of revelation. Therefore, by worship in Truth meant worship in union with Christ.

By "Spirit", it meant Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit is the fruit of the New Testament

¹⁰⁶ Cf. K. MATHEW, *The Order of Qurbana*, 56.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. R. PHILIP, *Essays in West Syrian Liturgy*, 85.

revelation. In the New Testament era people have to worship God by being filled with and guided by the Holy Spirit. In all the activities of the Church, the Holy Spirit does work invisibly. For the spirit is the continuation of the presence of the Lord in the world. He is promised to be with the Church always. Everyone who is baptized into Christ is given the spirit. In short, the Eucharistic Liturgy is the true worship offered to God the Father in Truth and Spirit, according to the New Testament perspective. In the Eucharistic Liturgical assembly the Church manifests her nature as a priestly people. Her members are gathered together in the name of Jesus who is the head of the Mystical Body, the Church, and He is the High Priest and the sole Mediator in the heavenly place. And she offers her spiritual sacrifices to God the Father in union with Jesus Christ and it is with the help of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁸

3.2 Revelation of the Mystery of Christ

The Eucharistic Celebration is not limited to its worshipping dimension alone. For the Celebration of the Mysteries would also involve a revelatory dimension. As in the Biblical perspective, in the Divine Liturgy also the term Mystery is related to divine revelation. We have already seen that the nature of the Church is fully manifested in the Liturgical assembly. So too, during the Celebration of the Mysteries, the whole Mystery of Christ also is fully revealed to the Church, the Liturgical assembly.

By the Mystery of Christ, it meant those things which God has revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. It was the salvific plan of God which He had set forth in Jesus Christ and it was hidden for long ages until it was finally revealed and realized in Jesus Christ. Hence it included the events of incarnation of Jesus and the redemption of mankind. Hence the Mystery of Christ which is historically a past event, included the whole Christ-event: His birth, baptism, public life, passion, death, burial, resurrection and ascension. At the same

¹⁰⁸ Cf. R. HAMBYE, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*. 120.

time, it has also a transhistorical dimension that the sacrificial death of Jesus is an eternal sacrifice and is eternally present before the Father and is ever pleasing to Him. So that the High Priesthood of Christ and his mediation before the father also are eternal. So too the glorified Christ who has ascended into heaven is seated at the right hand of the father and at the same time, he is present in the Church until the close of the age. Similarly, he is present in the liturgical assembly which is gathered together in name.¹⁰⁹

3.3 Sacred History and the celebration of the Mystery

In the Eucharistic Celebration it carries out the whole salvation history, especially the Christ event and in a special way his Paschal Mystery through the celebration of its memorial. For liturgy is nothing but the revelation and realization from Pentecost to the Parousia, of the meaning of the sacred history under the veil of the sensible and efficacious signs of sanctification and of worship. This specific mode of the revelation of the sacred events of the past history as a present reality was called to be *Mysterion* or *sacramentum* or *raza* by the ancients. And it is why Eucharistic Liturgy is called to be the Celebration of the Mysteries or even as the sacramental sacrifice of Christ.¹¹⁰

3.3.1 Sacred History and the Jewish worship

The Jewish worship along with prayers and sacrifices had certain forms of memorials. Because God showed Himself to the people of Israel through the Historical events, and these events were to be kept continually before the peoples' mind. First of all, the liberation from Egypt was celebrated in the annual Passover. God's prescriptions were carried out in exact ritual: the Paschal Lamb was eaten in travelling clothes; the history was read recalling how they had left the land of Egypt, etc. So Israel's salvation and exodus events were celebrated each year in ritual, and God's preserving of Israel in the Promised Land was secured anew.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. E. MAXIMOS, *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity*, 69.

¹¹⁰ Cf. R. PHILIP, *Essays in West Syrian Liturgy*, 90.

This celebration, therefore, was not merely a memorial of God's saving action, but an occasion or revelation which enabled the Jews to be partakers of that great event as if they were also witnesses of the same event.¹¹¹

3.3.2 Paschal Mystery of Christ and the Celebration of the Mysteries

The whole Eucharistic Liturgy is a memorial of the paschal Mystery of Christ, viz, the Christ's passage from this world to the other through his death and resurrection. But it does not remain merely as an object of memorial in the very liturgy, but it becomes a revelation for here and now, and helps the members to enter into it and have an ever deeper and fuller communion with these salvific events. The celebration speaks of it in a language of symbols, and it is a *Mysterion*, or a *sacramentum* or *raza*. Hence, liturgy brings to the present this unique, unrepeatable Mystery of Christ, realized historically in the past and is sacramentally re-presented in the liturgical commemoration. It is because of this, the liturgy itself is called a Mystery.

The Mystery is a memorial and revelation in worship. Christ the head of the Church is present in the liturgical assembly and is ever active in the Public worship of, the Church. Thus, the Church through her liturgy sacramentally reveals and brings to us the sacred history and the saving works of Christ. This is all the more true in the case of Eucharistic Celebration. For it contained the sacramental commemoration of the Paschal Mystery of Christ and that it is a sacramental sacrifice.¹¹²

The theme of Eucharistic Sacrifice as a sacramental sacrifice was developed especially by the Oriental Fathers like, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Narsai, etc. Consequently the structures and prayers of the Eucharistic liturgy also were developed on its basis. Through the liturgical signs the earthly and heavenly, visible and invisible, historical

¹¹¹ Cf. R. PHILIP, *Essays in West Syrian Liturgy*, 94.

¹¹² Cf. C. VAGGAGINI, *A Study on the Syro Malabar Liturgy*, 24.

and eschatological dimensions of the Mystery of Christ were made present for the participation of the faithful. The different moments of the life of our Lord were thus duly commemorated and lived through liturgical signs. The term "Mystery" was the favorite term ever in the history of the liturgical theology of the Church, for it included all these meanings in a greater manner. And it had Biblical and cultural backgrounds for such a usage.

The term "Sacrament," which is derived from the Latin term *Sacramentum* is only a translation of Mystery. In the broad sense sacrament would mean signs which have some efficacy in the whole process of salvation. Accordingly sacramentality would mean first of all, the perceptibility or visibility of both the divine saving action and the corresponding human response. Secondly, through the efficacy of signs, which God and man use in the liturgy, the whole history of salvation is made present in the celebration. And this mainly is a divine action; an action of the Holy Spirit. Sacramentality is common to the whole liturgy; it cannot be restricted to a few things alone. Even the Church itself is a sacrament in its broader sense. For the Church is nothing but the expression of Jesus Christ who is the original sacrament of God on earth.¹¹³

3.4 Mystery of salvation and Salvific Experience

The very nature of the Celebration of the Mysteries, which contained a celebration of the revelation and the memorial of the sacred history and their foundational events, would lead the participants of the Mystery to those past historical events. It would enable them to have a share in them. In the Mystery-worships the participants were made one with their deities and came to have a share in the life of their Gods. In the celebration of the Mystery the Christian is enabled to have a share in the salvific actions of God in the person of Christ. Thus, in the celebration of Baptism one is initiated into death and resurrection of Jesus and is incorporated into the body of Christ and is enabled to share the royal priesthood of Christ.

¹¹³ Cf. K. LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*, 92.

The Mystery of Christ basically is the reality of Christ. In the Mystery of Worship the participants are given the opportunity of entering personally into the Mystery of Christ and sharing deeply his Paschal Mystery. That is, through the participation in the Celebration of the Mysteries, we enter into the saving deeds of Christ. Thus through the Eucharistic Liturgy which celebrated the memorial of the Paschal Mystery of Christ the economy of God's saving deeds are carried out in the Church for all ages and generations. Christ had accomplished the salvation of mankind through his saving deeds in the sacred history of salvation. But the Church from her part shares every acts of Christ through her liturgical celebrations. The active participation in the liturgy is the active participation in the salvific events of Christ and its fruits from the deepest level of the liturgy by way of mystical experience. Thus, *in the Celebration of the Mysteries we re-live the Mystery of Christ and this in its turn would mean a real participation and sharing in the very saving acts which constitutes the Mystery of Christ.* And it is for this purpose the past events of the Mystery of Christ and the whole sacred history of salvation are brought to the present by way of celebration of the memorial through the efficacious signs.¹¹⁴

Eucharistic Liturgy is the summit of all the services of the Church. The whole economy of salvation having its centrality in the Paschal Mystery of Christ is carried out in this Celebration. It is handed over to us by Christ himself that we may commemorate in it His graces towards us and it is continued in the Church that all may be enabled to participate in the economy of salvation until his second coming.

The Eastern Liturgies have fostered a spirit of experiential dimension in the celebration and have developed their structures accordingly. The rich symbolisms and the repetitive style in them seem to form part of this experiential dimension of the liturgy. The rich symbolisms

¹¹⁴ Cf. J. POOVANNIKUNNEL, *The concept of Mystery*, 78.

and sings inspired from the Biblical roots remain the language of these liturgies, and they help the participants to have mystical experience of the presence of God through spiritual visions and to have real salvific experience within oneself and to enjoy the fruits of redemption in a spiritual bliss. This is the net result and fruit of the revelatory dimension of the Qurbana.¹¹⁵

In the RAZA we see a wide horizon of possibilities for having salvific experience and encounter with God. Through various signs and symbols, hymns and prayers, ritual actions and structural arrangements it enables us to have a true participation in the revelation of the whole Christ event and in a special way in his paschal mystery, In their background the whole salvation history is brought to the Present by way of memorial and anticipation. The hymn at the beginning: glory to God in the highest reminds us about the incarnation event of Christ. The recitation of the Psalmody brings out the historical background of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The Liturgy of the Word reminds us about the public life of Jesus. Accordingly the pre-anaphoral part brings into our minds the passion, death and burial of our Lord and the whole anaphora makes them a sacrament or *Quddasa* and the epiclesis sacramentally carries out the resurrection of the Lord in this Celebration. The concluding service would allude to the ascension of the Lord to heaven, where as the Communion Service would bring our attention to the banquet prepared by the Lord for which we are also invited to sit with him at the heavenly table and to enjoy the heavenly banquet which marks the climax of the whole salvific economy, and the whole memorial and anticipatory celebration of the salvation economy provides us heavenly bliss, blessedness of light, spiritual vision, mystical experience of God, forgiveness of sins, eternal life, sharing in the Divine nature, inheritance of the sons of God, mutual abiding with God, resurrection at the

¹¹⁵ Cf. J. POOVANNIKUNNEL, *The concept of Mystery*, 90.

end of days, etc.¹¹⁶

3.5 Celebration of the Mysteries and the celebration of the Memorial

The Celebration of the Mysteries what is predominant is the celebration of the Paschal Mystery of Christ. Hence it implies a commemoration of the whole Christ event. Jesus, the incarnate Son during his Last Supper had instituted the Eucharist for a perpetual remembrance of his saving deeds in the world till the end and he had commanded to the apostles: do this in remembrance of me. Every celebration of the mystery is a celebration inspired by the command of the Lord and consequently it is a commemoration or memorial of the, passion, death burial resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus.

At the Last Supper, our Saviour instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice on the Cross throughout the ages until he should come again and so to entrust to his beloved spouse, the Church a memorial of his death and resurrection. The Eucharistic Liturgy being the solemn official Worship of the Church, it concentrated on the central Mystery of her faith and thus makes a most solemn memorial of the Mystery of Christ. Therefore, Memorial is a very important element in the Celebration of the Mysteries.¹¹⁷

3.5.1 Memorial in the Old Testament

The Old Testament and in the Jewish religious worships we come across different modes of memorials. First of all, we see a commemoration of the great saving actions of Yahweh through the symbolic re-enactments. The feasts of Passover and the Unleavened Bread are meant to be memorials. The Passover feast - Pasch - for the Israelites was a festival of redemption connected with a salvific intervention of God in the history of Israel. The memorial, therefore, implied the remembrance of the salvific interventions of God in the history made known and experiential to the subsequent generations. Hence, its meanings are explained by the recital of salvation history, and the rite itself, was meant to be a sign to remind the Israel about Yahweh's great salvific deeds in the past history. It was also meant to move her again

¹¹⁶ Cf. K. LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*, 98.

¹¹⁷ C. VAGGAGINI, *A Study on the Syro Malabar Liturgy*, 33.

to a response of faith. The essential religious response, the faith and loyalty towards Yahweh, manifested in worship is the second element of memorial. It was in a solemn ritual that Israel first assumed her covenant obligations at Sinai. The recital and the re-presentation of salvific history in the solemn ritual provided the motive for Israel to renew publically and sacramentally her essential religious devotions and obligations.

A third element of the Israelite worship was the sense of sacredness. In the patriarchal times an altar, or a pillar, or a monument of the twelve stones marked the spot of a divine intervention and they reminded Israel and others about Yahweh's favour. In the elaborate cultic institutions of Israel sacred persons, places, things and times served to signify the transcendence of Yahweh and His presence in the worship and they used to move men towards a positive religious response. Yahweh's presence was represented symbolically in various ways. The purposes of the whole cultic system and of the Law of Holiness was the consecration of a people truly holy and make them intimately united with their covenant God.¹¹⁸

3.5.2 Christian Meaning of Memorial

In the Christian celebrations they proclaim not only the ministry of Christ but also the whole works of salvation accomplished in him. Therefore, the memorial of Christ's Mystery is the core of Christian worship. In this memorial Christ testifies that he is still present with us to make his great works fully our own. Hence, it implies an *anamnesis*.¹¹⁹

The term *anamnesis* invariably connotes much more than the English words - remembrance and memorial. *Anamnesis* is used to convey a Hebrew concept of active or

¹¹⁸ Cf. R. PHILIP, *Essays in West Syrian Liturgy*, 98.

¹¹⁹ Cf. D. C. SMOLARSKI, *Eucharist A Study of Eucharistic Prayer*, 68.

effective memorial, *Zikkaron*.¹²⁰ It would thus mean that in our remembering, *we are actually making the event which is remembered present here and now, because of the act of remembering itself. Zikkaron or anemnesis* also indicates that by our remembering we, who are present, enter into the meaning of the event as if we are present at the time of that historical event which is remembered. The event, thus, becomes incarnated in the present through the symbolic actions; but it is not a re-incarnation. That is to say, *the meaning and implications of the event are alive, active, and effective for us today.* The basic nature of *Zikkaron* is very clearly seen from a Biblical passage: “Lord, our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Not with our Fathers did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive this day. Here it means, although the event took place in the past, it remains a living reality in the present too.”¹²¹

It seems that St. Paul is using this basic idea involved in *Zikkaron* to explain the reality of Baptism:

“When we were baptized in Christ Jesus, we were baptized in his death: in other words, when we were baptized we went into the tomb with him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in the newness of life.”¹²²

Our liturgical memorial or anemnesis makes real in our present day lives the event which had chronologically took place in the past. Hence in the celebration of the Mysteries its memorial character makes the past historical event of the death and resurrection of Jesus fully a present reality for the worshippers. The memorial here involves a memorial of everything that has resulted from the life giving Mystery of Jesus Christ. Hence Celebration of the Mysteries is a Memorial Celebration and it opens up a new way for the Christians to

¹²⁰ Cf. C. VAGGAGINI, *A Study on the Syro Malabar Liturgy*, 40.

¹²¹ D. C. S MOLARSKI, *Eucharist A Study of Eucharistic Prayer*, 70.

¹²² ROM. 5: 2-3

experience the revelation of the mystery of Christ in the present day context.¹²³

3.5.3 Memorial: A Divine action

When the word *anemnesis* is translated as memorial, commemoration, remembrance, etc. in the subjective sense, it suggests that the person or event which is being commemorated belongs to the past and that it is absent today. Although the mental recalling is an integral part of the Eucharistic Celebration, the word here means the opposite: it recalls before God an event of the past so that it may become a present here and now. It gives us the idea that the Celebration of the Qurbana is a reality, true memorial of the Mystery of Christ and his Salvific acts. Consequently, the Celebration of the Mysteries becomes a revelation re-lived in the context of a memorial.¹²⁴

In the context of the institution of Eucharist, Jesus had instructed the apostles: "Do this in remembrance of me"; hence, the Eucharist does imply a memorial. But the exact nature of this commemoration has to be understood from elsewhere. In the Acts of Apostles, we read of an angel appearing to the charitable Cornelius and telling to him: your prayers and alms have ascended as memorial before God. Here, God is the subject of the remembering. That is to say, God remembers the prayers and alms of Cornelius.¹²⁵

Accordingly, in the Eucharistic Celebration too, the memorial becomes a divine action and it is not a mere human action. For in this memorial the past is not merely remembered from our part subjectively; instead, it is *re-lived, re-enacted* and *re-captured by the divine power objectively*. Hence the memorial here becomes really a divine revelation. Consequently, in the Celebration of the Mysteries the human role is only a limited one, while the important role is that of God Himself. Because it is the Holy Spirit who bring into our

¹²³ Cf. D. C. SMOLARSKI, *Eucharist A Study of Eucharistic Prayer*, 75.

¹²⁴ Cf. L. BOYER, *Life and Liturgy*, 79.

¹²⁵ Cf. J. JEREMIAS, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 113.

remembrance what Jesus had taught us: The counselor, *the Holy Spirit*, whom the Father will send in my name, *He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*¹²⁶

In the opinion of J. Jeremias, the anemnesis in the Eucharistic Celebration is God's remembering of Jesus. For he would say, the command of Jesus has to be understood as, this you may do that God may remember me. St. Paul in his epistle to Corinthians would say, as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup; you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.¹²⁷

The death of the Lord is not proclaimed at every celebration of the meal as a past event, but as an eschatological event, as the beginning of the new covenant. The proclamation of the death of Jesus is not therefore intended to call to the remembrance of the community the event of passion; rather this proclamation expresses the vicarious death of Jesus as the beginning of salvation time, and prayers for the coming of the consummation. As often as the death of the Lord is proclaimed at the Lord's Supper, and the Maranatha rises upwards, God is reminded of the unfulfilled climax of the work of salvation until he comes.¹²⁸

In the Syro Malabar Qurbana, there is a commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God upon the altar. Similarly, the memory of the St. Thomas the apostle in company with the just ones who have triumphed and the martyrs who have been crowned also is made on the altar. Accordingly, the divine presence is fully resorted at the altar that the sacrifice might be accepted and sanctified and be given back as the divine gift to man, the due effect of remembrance. In the fourth *G'hantha* of AM we see an invocation and a supplication, to make a memorial from the part of God Himself:

“My Lord, in your abundant and ineffable mercies, *make a good and acceptable memorial of the virgin Mary, mother of God, of all the just and righteous fathers who have found great favour in your presence, in the commemoration of the Body and Blood of our*

¹²⁶ Cf. J. JEREMIAS, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 116.

¹²⁷ 1 Cor. 11:26.

¹²⁸ J. JEREMIAS, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 119.

Christ which we offer You upon the pure and- holy altar as you have taught us."¹²⁹

As the climax of this supplication, the prayer of Epiclesis is recited that the Holy Spirit might come down and dwell in the Qurbana and bless it and sanctify it and declare it to be the Body and Blood of Christ.

3.6.4 Memorial of the Mystery of Christ

The Celebration of the Mysteries brings to our remembrance the command of the Lord and the whole Mystery of Christ and especially his paschal mystery of the passion death, burial and resurrection. The intoning of the Syro Malabar Qurbana itself is with a reflection on the command of the Lord; Let us begin. This Qurbana in accordance with the command given you; we do this in accordance with the command of Christ. In the prayer at the placing of the gifts on the altar, the archdeacon would pray: By your command, O Lord, our God, these glorious, holy, life giving and divine mysteries are set and arranged on the holy altar of Christ, until his glorious second coming from heaven. The prayer before the placing of the gifts on the altar also is one referring to the memorial of the paschal mystery of Christ. At the IN what is remembered is the passion of the Lord: O Lord my God, we make the memorial of the passion of Your Son ns he taught us. In the *Onilha d' Qanke* of the Maundy Thursday too, the object of memorial is the passion of the Lord. At the beginning of the *Karozutha* of Reconciliation, the deacon invites the people to recall both the passion and resurrection of the Lord. Bread and wine are the material objects with which the memorial of Christ and his paschal mystery are brought into expression. In the *Onila d'Raze* of the fifth Sunday of Resurrection, we sing: we perform in the bread and wine the memorial of Christ who suffered for us.¹³⁰

The Eucharistic Celebration implies a Synaxis of Bible readings and a meal. Both of

¹²⁹Cf. K. LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*, 108.

¹³⁰Cf. K. LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*, 110.

them help us to recall God's saving actions of having entered into the human history and at its climax we have the commemoration of the Paschal mystery of Christ. The Eucharistic Liturgy as a whole is a commemoration and a celebration of the Mysteries of Jesus so that it is a commemoration in celebration and vice versa. Thus we have at the end of the fourth *G'hantha* prayer, a portion often qualified as *Anrnmesis* which gives us a clear picture of the memorial and Celebration of the Paschal Mystery of Christ.

And we also, my Lord, your weak, frail and miserable servants who are gathered together in your name, and who stand before you at this time and have received by tradition the example which is *from* you, rejoicing and glorifying, *commemorating* and *celebrating* this great, awesome, holy, vivifying and divine *mystery of the passion death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.*¹³¹

3.7.5 Memorial of the Mystery of salvation

The memorial that we celebrate in the Eucharistic Liturgy is not merely that of Christ himself but also the Mystery of our Salvation. The *G'hantha* prayer which introduces the IN RAZA ends up like this: "And he left unto us *the memorial of our salvation, this Mystery which we offer before you.* The Eucharistic Liturgy is the commemoration and the celebration of the salvific events centered on Jesus Christ, the savior. Thus we make a memorial of the whole economy of salvation and offer to God a thanksgiving for them all. By the Economy of Salvation it means not only the death and resurrection of Jesus but also the whole life of Jesus and the whole fruits of his salvific actions. It includes all the salvific events from the moment of his incarnation to his glorification in heaven, and even also the eternal character of his offering before the Father. It is for all these salvific events and their fruits that we give thanks

¹³¹ Cf. K. LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*, 112.

to God."¹³²

This dispensation of salvific events necessarily includes the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is something noteworthy that it is after the *Epiclesis* that we give thanks to God for all the salvific dispensation of God. For it is HOLY SPIRIT who brings into our remembrance all that Jesus had taught us, Thus at the conclusion of AM we have this prayer: "And for all this great and admirable dispensation towards us we will thank and glorify you unceasingly in your Church redeemed by the precious Blood of Your Christ."¹³³ The third *G'hantha* prayer as a whole is a commemoration of the fruits of the salvific deeds of God centered on Jesus Christ. Therefore, Eucharistic Liturgy is an occasion for the worshippers to have an encounter with God and His Salvific deeds mystically and fruitfully, here and now, in the Church as if in a revelation. Thus, *past is memorialized and brought to the present in an efficacious and experiential manner, as a true revelation, through the Mystical or sacramental Celebration of the Mysteries with the help of Holy Spirit who is the dynamic, active and internal principle of the Celebration.*¹³⁴

As in the case of the Mystery--worships, in the Christian celebrations also there is primeval saving act. This is very true with regard to all the sacraments from which flows divine life and grace to man. In the Mystery-worships the myth is lived out in worship and the rite itself is living the myth. It seeks in the past a model which will give a meaning for its present action. In the Christian worship of the Celebration of the Mysteries the paschal mystery of Christ and his saving actions are the objects of the past which are remembered; but they are not myths, instead they are historical truths which form the centrality of the revelation of the Mystery of the saving plan of God set forth in Jesus in view of the whole

¹³² Cf. D. C. MOLARSKI, *Eucharist A Study of Eucharistic Prayer*. 80.

¹³³ K. LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*, 114.

¹³⁴ Cf. D. C. SMOLARSKI, *Eucharist A Study of Eucharistic Prayer*. 82.

mankind.¹³⁵

3.8.7 Memorial as Sacrifice

The Celebration of the Memorial has also the character of sacrifice. Often the Celebration of the Memorial is equated with sacrifice and this in its turn, has its root in the command of the Lord. The prayer said by the archdeacon in the RAZA just before placing the gifts on the altar would make it clear:

“May Christ who was sacrificed for our salvation, and who *commanded us to celebrate the memory* of his passion, death, burial and resurrection *accept this sacrifice* from our hands, through his grace and mercy, forever Amen.”¹³⁶

Similarly, in the *Onitha d' Raze* of the Maundy Thursday it is sung: The living *sacrifice is placed* on the altar; the priest *celebrates the memorial* of his (of Christ) death praising and singing with the angels. The reference to the offering of memorial on the altar also has a very close association with sacrifice. Thus we see in the fourth *G'hantha* prayer: in this commemoration of the Body and Blood of your Christ which we offer you upon the pure and holy altar as you have taught US. And the prayer before the ends up likes this: He left unto is the *memorial-of our salvation, this mystery which we offer* before you. Here it becomes very clear that the Mystery itself is a memorial and a sacrifice.¹³⁷

3.9.8 Memorial as Thanksgiving

It is the memorial dimension that inspires the worshippers to offer praise and thanks in the Celebration of the Mysteries. The Eucharistic Celebration by its very nature and meaning refers to thanksgiving. Hence the third *G'hantha* prayer, which refers to the Salvific deeds of God and to the fruits of salvation, starts with the theme of thanksgiving: And with this

¹³⁵ Cf. L. BOYER, *Life and Liturgy*, 85.

¹³⁶ K. LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*, 115.

¹³⁷ Cf. K. LUKE, *The Technical Term Raza*, 116.

heavenly host we give you thanks. The liturgical assembly is gathered together according to the command of the Lord to meditate on the great favours which God has done to us, with an attitude of gratitude which reach unto the rendering of praise and thanks, glory and honour, to God and to His Son. After the Institution Narratives, the theme of memorial goes along with the act of thanksgiving; As we have been commanded, O my Lord, we are gathered together because you have done great favours which cannot be repaid And the anaphora is ended with an act of thanksgiving for all the great and admirable dispensations of God towards mankind, It is the same when the gifts are placed on the altar before the anaphora. The archdeacon reflecting on the command of the Lord sets the Mysteries on the holy altar and offers to God glory, thanksgiving, worship and honour.¹³⁸

3.4.9.1 Memorial and Gift of God

Eucharistic Celebration is a memorial of the great saving act of God through which the divine *act* is overflowed into this world, The Living Bread, which is broken and shared, and upon which we meditate, is a gift of God and it comes from heaven, at the first stanza of the *Karozutha* of Reconciliation the deacon reminds the people of the Holy Mysteries, which are delivered to the mankind, and of which we all should remember the mercy of the Lord. In the *Onitha de Raze* of the Maundy Thursday it is sung: The priests celebrate the memorial of his death praising and singing with the angels, glory to him for his ineffable gift, Jesus in his Last supper had instituted the Eucharist and he commanded to his apostles to, do this in memory of me.¹³⁹

3.5 Praise and Thanksgiving and the Celebration of the Mysteries

In the Celebration of the Mysteries, the aspect of praise and thanksgiving is an important factor. In the Church, the commemoration of the Mystery of God and His Salvific plan

¹³⁸ Cf. J. KOTTACKAL, *The Salvific Folly of the Cross*, 90.

¹³⁹ Cf. E. MAXIMOS, *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity*, 69.

realized and fulfilled in Jesus Christ are sacramentally carried out and celebrated in the Eucharistic Liturgy with an attitude of gratitude. The Celebration of the Mysteries which is often called otherwise as Eucharistic Liturgy by its very name meant a liturgy of thanksgiving.

In the institution narratives which we find in the Gospels of Mathew and Mark, the actions of Jesus corresponding to the bread is described as: He took the bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it, the term here used for blessed is *eulogesan*.¹⁴⁰ And corresponding to the cup, the actions are: He took the cup, and when he had giving thanks he gave to them; the term used for given thanks is *eucharistesas*. In Luke and Paul, they do not use the term blessed (*eulogesan*), instead they use only had given thanks? (*eucharislesas*). The term *eulogesan* comes from the Greek word: *eulogia*, meaning a eulogy, great praise, glory, blessing, good speaking, speaking well off, etc. The term *Eucharistesas* comes From the Greek verb: *eucharisteo*, which meant to give thanks, to return thanks, to requite, to give in return, etc. And it has the root: *eu-charist-ein* that it includes in it *eulogesan* in a broader sense of praising, blessing, speaking well of in return, etc.¹⁴¹

The Christian Mystery of worship which publically celebrates the Mystery of salvation already accomplished in Jesus Christ offers praise and thanks to God and glorifies Him for, the same, so that it might be intensified in all the participants and be, communicated to others for the building up of the Church and for the glory of God's Holy Name. Hence, liturgy is both God's unending saving activity and our prayerful response to it in faith and is expressed through the acts of praise and thanksgiving. The Liturgy, the Celebration of the Mysteries, therefore, has precisely the same dynamics as the NT that it also contains and demands our response to it. Just as Bible is the saving Word of God in the words of man, the Celebration

¹⁴⁰ Cf. J. POOVANNIKUNNEL, *The concept of Mystery*, 94.

¹⁴¹ Cf. D. C. SMOLARSKI, *Eucharist A Study of Eucharistic Prayer*. 88.

of the Mystery is the Saving Deeds of God in the action of the Church.¹⁴²

In the Eucharistic Liturgy it implies an act of thanksgiving. Sometimes the whole anaphoral part is called to be thanksgiving prayers or Eucharistic prayers. For it includes a thanksgiving to God for all His gifts, for the creation and redemption. One of the salient features of the East Syrian Liturgy (Syro Malabar Qurbana) is its emphasis on the aspect of praise and thanksgiving. The AM itself begins with a prayer of thanksgiving: "We thank you Lord, our God, for the abundant graces you have showered upon us"¹⁴³. And this prayer is, concluded with a doxology: "We offer you praise and honour worship and thanksgiving now and always forever. The same anaphora is concluded with another prayer of thanksgiving: And for all this great and admirable dispensation towards us we will thank and glorify you unceasingly in the Church redeemed by the precious Blood of Your Christ"¹⁴⁴. As the opening and the concluding prayers make clear, the whole anaphora is an act of thanksgiving. As Fr. V. Pathikulangara would say, it is a liturgy of praise of glorification, of thanksgiving and of adoration. It is all the more clear in the Prayers Proper for the seasons of the Liturgical year.¹⁴⁵

3.5.1 Praiseworthiness of God

The sole justification for praising God is the fact that God is praiseworthy; for he is the God-head, creator, savior and protector. In the Book of Revelation it is very clear: Worthy art thou, our Lord and God, to receive glory, honour and power, for Thou didst create all things, anti by Thy will they existed and were created.¹⁴⁶ In another passage we read:

Then I looked and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and elders the

¹⁴² Cf. L. BOYER, *Life and Liturgy*,92.

¹⁴³ L. BOYER, *Life and Liturgy*,93.

¹⁴⁴ L. BOYER, *Life and Liturgy*,93.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. V. PATHIKULANARA, *Liturgy: Interpersonal Experience*,41.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. C. VAGGAGINI, *A Study on the Syro Malabar Liturgy*,45.

voice of many angels,... saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing. And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and therein saying, To Him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might forever and ever.¹⁴⁷

In the Celebration of the Mysteries, it is filled with such praises. The second G'hantha prayer begins with an act of praising: Worthy of praise from every mouth, of confession from every tongues and worship and exaltation from every creature. In the prayer of thanksgiving after the Communion Service, the celebrant would pray: It is fitting, O Lord, every day, it is right at all times, it is just at every hour that we give thanks to, adore and glorify, the revered Name of Your Majesty. For through Your grace, O Lord, and through your mercy, you have made the weak nature of your sons of mortal men worthy to bless Your Name with the angels. Similar prayer constructions, in our Qurbana, therefore, reflect the prayers in the O. T. and the N. T. and the Jewish benedictions which begin with a call to blessing. Here, God is acknowledged to be worthy of praise from all creation.¹⁴⁸

3.5.2 Thanksgiving and Memorial

It is in the background of the memorial that we offer thanks to God. *For* the Eucharistic Celebration is a memorial Celebration and vice versa. It is by commemorating we celebrate the Salvific Mysteries *to* the effect of thanksgiving. For the Israelites the Passover-meal was a memorial-meal and it was a meal of thanksgiving; a meal to express their deep gratitude to Yahweh who delivered them from Egypt and to pay Him homage and to ask Him to bless them. In the Syro- Malabar Qurbana too, the same pattern is followed and the prayer *would really* reflect this aspect of memorial.

In almost all the anaphors, the post-Sanctus part would recall the economy of salvation in detail. Generally, it includes a thanksgiving for the whole Christ-event. All that Christ has

¹⁴⁷ REV. 4: 9-11.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. C. VAGGAGINI, *A Study on the Syro Malabar Liturgy*, 50.

done to the effect of our salvation are remembered in thanksgiving. The post-Sanctus prayer in AM, is a thanksgiving prayer for the effect of redemption, especially immortality, forgiveness of sins, divine life, etc. but without enumerating the historical events of the salvation history as such. This is noted *to be the reason for the absence of the IN in AM.*¹⁴⁹ Moreover, in the institution, of Eucharist, the prominent element was one of thanksgiving. The Eucharistic Liturgy which is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving in its developed solemn celebration has its root and seed in the event of the institution of the Eucharist and in the command of the Lord to do it in his remembrance. Having centered on these things all has developed itself to be a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Hence the AM considers IN as the very seed and root of Eucharistic Celebration and not as its fruit and climax.¹⁵⁰

3.5.3 Sacrificial Value of Praise and Thanksgiving

What is in AM, as Qurbana is offered to God, the Lord of all, is found in other anaphoras as, Let us give thanks to the Lord. This difference is considered as a proof that the early Church saw the Eucharistic Celebration as a true sacrifice' of praise and thanksgiving offered to God. It is considered as an ancient and explicit reference to the sacrificial aspect of the thanksgiving. Thus it makes clear that the Celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy is seen here as an oblation of praise and thanks to God from the Church. Likely, the very act of praise and thanksgiving itself is a sacrifice - a spiritual sacrifice- most pleasing to God.

Accordingly, thanksgiving and offering are co-related. For any form of oblation is an expression of gratitude and all offerings imply thanksgiving. In this sense, the Eucharistic Liturgy is the supreme act of our thanksgiving and our oblation through which we offer back to God in Christ our gratitude for - everything we received from God. Thus Eucharistic Liturgy is our returned offering - *prosphora* or *anaphora* - of thanksgiving and gratitude.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. J. POOVANNIKUNNEL, *The concept of Mystery*, 98.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. J. POOVANNIKUNNEL, *The concept of Mystery*, 101

When we offer praise and thanksgiving to God in the Eucharistic Prayers or creation and redemption it is a tantamount to offering back to God for the whole creation redeemed in Christ.¹⁵¹

3.6 Celebration of the Mysteries and the Mystery of Faith

The Sacrificial, Memorial and Sacramental characters do not fully exhaust the meanings of Mystery in the Eucharistic Liturgy. For it would also involve a Meal dimension in the Celebration of the Mysteries. All the above mentioned characters of the RAZA does possess this Meal Dimension within them.

The sacrificial offerings very often carry with them a sacrificial meal at the end. In the Mystery-worships also, common meal was an important element. The OT sacrifices were partly offerings of food offered to God, and consequently it became a consecrated or a sanctified food. Even in wave offering a portion of the flesh of the ram and the bread offered to God were eaten by the priests. The Passover celebration was a memorial celebration in the context of a meal. The Chabura meal was a sacrificial meal and it was the only sacrifice in Israel during the period when the people were deprived of the temple worship.¹⁵²

Celebration of the Mysteries which involves dimensions of sacrifices, sacrament, memorial, divine gift and eucharistia is celebrated in the context of a meal which Jesus himself had instituted at his Last Supper. Through this, Jesus had perpetuated his paschal Mystery among us. The bread and wine that are used in this celebration do become the Body and Blood of Christ through a divine intervention in it. Christ has given himself to the world as food and drink and reveled himself to be the Bread of Life, which gives life to the world.

¹⁵¹ Cf. R. HAMBYE, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*, 125.

¹⁵² Cf. D. C. SMOLARSKI, *Eucharist A Study of Eucharistic Prayer*, 90.

And this is really a gift of God.¹⁵³

The explanation which Jesus gives about the Bread of life in Jn.6 becomes ever more mysterious and sacramental as it progresses. The darkness becomes light when Jesus had instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper. Taking the bread to his hands he said, this is my body broken for you, and regarding the chalice he said, this is my blood shed for the sills of many. The whole Paschal Mystery, its nature and fruits, are all well expressed through this meal which Jesus had shared with his apostles and which he instituted for the coming generations and ages. This *sacramental* food has also an eschatological allusion, of a heavenly banquet in which we all would sit together with Jesus.

The Celebration of the Mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ truly implies a communion. By communion it is usually understood as the reception of the sacramental Body and Blood of Christ by the individual believers. But really it is something more than that; it implies a *koinonia*, a word which demands to have communion with other members who all partake of the same gifts of God in common. Thus, by communion it means the Eucharist is a meal in which all the Participants are brought together to have common share in the common goods. In the Eucharistic Liturgy bread and wine, which are the ordinary elements of the human meal, are used with greater and deeper significances. By the Word of God and by the Holy Spirit the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ, and the whole Celebration assumes the character of a meal or banquet to the extend of a spiritual, divine, and a heavenly one.¹⁵⁴ Here, the words of E. J. Kilmartin are very important. He says:

“From the outset of the Divine Liturgy, Christ relates himself to the Eucharistic community. He is the host of the meal of the Church, the anticipated messianic banquet. Since the meal is the meal of the people of God gathered together around the High Priest unto

¹⁵³ Cf. R. HAMBYE, *Dimensions of Eastern Christianity*, 128.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. E. J. KILMARTIN, *Restoration of the Syro Malabar Quarbana*, 33.

the glory of the Father, its mystery is the self-offering of the Lord to the community under the form of sacrament of His Body and Blood.”¹⁵⁵

Hence it is proper that all those who are gathered together to celebrate the Mysteries should receive communion. The early Church was so cautious about it that those who were not fit enough for receiving the communion were not permitted to take part in the Liturgy of the Faithful, and such people were dismissed from the Celebration just immediately after the Liturgy of the Word. It was quite true of the Syro Malabar Qurbana too. Even in the Liturgical commentary of Narsai written in the 5th century also we see its reference. Hence, the Dismissal Service in the Qurbana has a great theological significance and has its origin in the early Church.¹⁵⁶

In the Syro Malabar Qurbana, the Communion Service is filled with the theme of banquet. At the Fraction Service the Body of Christ is - qualified as the Bread of life alluding to the Johannine theme of Bread of life which came down from heaven. The reference to the Breaking of the Body refers first to the Last Supper and to the context of the institution of the Eucharist, and secondly it alludes to the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross. In the Communion Service the Body and Blood of Christ are considered to be banquet prepared by the heavenly Bridegroom at his marriage feast, through the words of the deacon the Church invites the faithful for this banquet: “My brethren, the Church invites you: receive the Body of the Son and drink from his chalice with -faith in the kingdom of heaven, and it would also include the invitation of Jesus the heavenly king.”¹⁵⁷

This banquet is also called to be: Spiritual Banquet, Royal Banquet, Heavenly Banquet, etc. There are also references to the sacrificial meal, and once in the Prayers Proper it is seen

¹⁵⁵ D. C. SMOLARSKI, *Eucharist A Study of Eucharistic Prayer*, 90.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. D. C. SMOLARSKI, *Eucharist A Study of Eucharistic Prayer*, 90.

¹⁵⁷ D. C. SMOLARSKI, *Eucharist A Study of Eucharistic Prayer*, 95.

as, good paster who seeing his sheep hungry broke his own body for their food and pierced his side and poured out living water for them to drink. All these references direct our attention to a sublime, holy, divine and life giving meal with great spiritual and divine fruits. The faithful partake of it with almost care, respect and holiness. Any profanity to this holy meal is culpable and it would bring forth judgment and condemnation. Hence, it insists on purity of heart and clean conscience. However, none of the references in the RAZA describe the Communion Service as a mere friendly meal or agape meal, but it always insists that it is something of a more splendid nature-as a spiritual banquet, royal banquet, heavenly banquet, etc. - And it is seen as an ineffable gift of God which is shared with man.¹⁵⁸

There is a clear insistence that this holy meal is always regarded as the true Body and Blood of Christ, and that it is a gift of God and Holy Spirit does dwell within it. In the *Karozutha* Prayer during the *Karozutha* of Reconciliation, all these things become very evident and they express that the recipients have to become perfect witnesses of the glory of God, pure sanctuaries and the holy temples fit for the habitation, of the holy Trinity, and that they would be deified by way of being united to the Body and Blood of Christ.¹⁵⁹

Thus, at the climax of the Celebration of the Mysteries the Communion Service provides the believers a mystical experience of the indwelling presence of the Trinity within themselves. It also provides a participation in the divine life and nature, and consequently an experience of deification. And all these things remain the ultimate foundation of the Christian joy and hope all throughout one's life in the onward pilgrimage towards the heavenly Jerusalem.¹⁶⁰

In this respect, we see a close similarity between the Christian Eucharistic Communion

¹⁵⁸ Cf. L. BOYER, *Life and Liturgy*,98.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. C. VAGGAGINI, *A Study on the Syro Malabar Liturgy*,65.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. C. VAGGAGINI, *A Study on the Syro Malabar Liturgy*.68.

and the meal of the Mystery-religions. In the Mystery-religions too, the meal provided a *koinonia* or a common brotherhood, and a participation in the divine life and nature, and consequently warranted deification. In the Celebration of the Mysteries or *raza* it necessarily includes the communion or participation from the Holy Meal so as to gain the divine life, nature and holiness and it is an integral part of the Celebration. In addition to them it also provides an anticipatory outlook into the revelatory dimension of the heavenly banquet at the marriage feast of the Lamb of heaven at the heavenly Jerusalem. Hence, the concept of Mystery or *Raza* in the Syro Malabar Qurbana implies a wide range of meanings.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Cf. C. VAGGAGINI, *A Study on the Syro Malabar Liturgy*,70.

Conclusion

The study of the concept of mystery in the Syro Malabar Qurbana as a whole is an explanation of the Liturgical Theology of the Eucharistic. From this study we have seen that term Mystery is a technical one and it carries with it great many realities and meanings. The Syro Malabar Qurbana is called Mystery in its full and most form. This essay analyses deeply this reality of the Syro Malabar Eucharistic Liturgy and brings out its various aspects in the light of Biblical revelation.

The whole study is grouped into four chapters. In the first, we have looked at that how the Christian meaning of term Mystery. The second chapter is a detail discussion on how this term Mystery is used in the Sacred Scriptures. In the Gospels, this term is used for a single occasion, found in all three synoptic Gospels, denoting the secret nature of the Kingdom of God. It gives us the idea that although the divine secrets are revealed to all, all are not able to grasp them. It also teaches that only the truly deposed ones, those who have come to the faith in Jesus can alone, perceive into the inner secret of the Mystery of the Kingdom of God. In the Pauline epistles, Mystery becomes a technical term having different dimensions in meaning; it refers to the divine plan of salvation revealed to mankind in the person of Christ.

The third chapter is basically an analysis of the meaning of the term “Mystery” in the Syro Malabar Qurbana. In the Syro Malabar Qurbana, “Mystery” implies a lot of meanings, leading our attention to the various dimensions of the celebration of the Qurbana. It is first of all, related to the original meaning of the worship and the Salvific revelation of God. It is the Salvific plan of God revealed and realized in the person of Jesus Christ, which is called the “Christ – event” or “Paschal Mystery”, serves as the core of the Celebration.

In short, the concept of “Mystery” in the Eucharistic Liturgy meant the whole celebration or worship. It contains divine revelation of the salvific plan of God realized in

Jesus Christ and continued and carried out in the Church as a ritual celebration. It also includes participation in the salvific events and the sharing in the fruits of salvation. Hence, it includes all the Pauline expressions such as, the Mystery of God, the Mystery of the Wisdom of God, the Mystery of Christ, the Mystery of Church, the Mystery of the Gospel, the Mystery of Faith, the Mystery of Worship, etc. In short it conveys all Pauline ideas of Mystery, such as the divine plan of salvation, the revealed and hidden nature of the Mystery of Christ, the sharing of the fruits of the redemptive works through faith. Hence the concept of “Mystery” in the Qurbana is rich in meaning: wide in understanding; religious in expression and oriental in origin; and its usage in the Liturgy is found in the Bible.

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