CHAPTER 9.

ABOUT BAPTISM

286. Q. Is Baptism necessary to all?
A. Yes. Our Lord Jesus Christ has said, "..If a man is not born of the water and spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5)

287. Q. What is Baptism?
A. Baptism is the spiritual bath in water in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

288. Q. Who administers Baptism?
A. A Priest who has received the apostolic laying of hands with his helper deacons.

289. Q. Is it just for a layman to baptize others?
A. No. It is in no way just; for a layman has not received the laying on of hands. So he is not permitted to administer the Holy Mysteries as Qurbana (Holy Sacrifice), the laying of hands etc. So also he should not baptize.

290. Q. What elements are necessary for Baptism?
A. Pure olive oil and clear water. But both must be consecrated.

291. Q. How is Baptism performed?
A. It is performed by immersing thrice in water.

292. Q. How is the dipping done these three times?
A. It is instructed in the 'order of Baptism' (Thakhsa d'Amada) that "the one who is being baptized must be immersed thrice: at first "(name of the person who receives Baptism) is baptized in the name of the Father ...Amen; the second time "...in the name of the Son" ...Amen and for the third time "in the name of the Holy Spirit for ever and ever ... Amen."

293. Q. What are the exterior signs, i. e. the visible and vocal signs, of Baptism?
A. The visisble signs are water and olive oil and that which is heard is "in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

294. Q. What is its hidden meaning?
A. It is the rebirth by which we become the members of Christ; because it is written "not so much by work of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Titus 3:5)

295. Q. Why should we be reborn?
A. We are not born of the covenant of God; but in sin. It is therefore an extreme necessity for us to have a spiritual birth that we may have the remission of our sins and be admitted to the covenant of God. (John 3:5; Acts 2:38).

296. Q. From whom do we get our life in the first birth?
A. We receive it from our parents.

297. Q. From whom do we receive it when we are reborn?
A. We receive it in our rebirth from our Lord Jesus Christ who gives His life for us.

298. Q. What does He do for us in our rebirth?
A. He makes us in our rebirth the members of His body, flesh and bones. (Eph. 5:30)

299. Q. Were we holy when we were born?
A. No. We were brought forth in sin and even in our infancy we deserve the punishment of God.

300. Q. How is this natural sin absolved?
A. It is absolved by Baptism. Just as Messiah was buried and resurrected we also die for sin in the water of Baptism and we resurrect forth from the water for righteousness of the new life which He gives us from Himself. "Do you not know, that those of us who have been baptized into Jesus Christ have been baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism into death; so that as Jesus Christ arose from the dead by the glory of His Father, even so we also shall walk in a new life." (Rom. 6:3,4; Eph. 5:25-27). So says St. Paul, the apostle.

301. Q. If an infidel, who is of mature age, believes and accepts Baptism, will the sins he had committed till then be absolved?
A. Yes. St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, told the people "...repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Lord Jesus for the remission of sins, so that you may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38). St. Paul says, that Ananias spoke to him, "....arise, and be baptized and wash away your sins calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16; 12-16)

302. Q. Can we receive other mysteries before we are baptized?
A. No. Baptism is the only gate for us to enter into the other Mysteries.

303. Q. Can you cite some examples of rebirth from the Old Testament?
A. 1. The entrance of Noah into the ark and his rebirth from the water. (1 Peter 3:20,21)
2. The passage of the House of Israelites through the Red Sea. (1 Cor. 10:1,2).
3. The incident of Naaman the Aramite, bathing in the river of Jordan seven times and becoming clean of his leprosy. (2 Kings 5:14).

304. Q. Is it necessary that infants too should be baptized?
A. It is necessary that their natural (Original) sins must be absolved since they are born in sin and that they may be admitted into the covenant of God.

305. Q. How are the Jewish children admitted to the covenant of God?
A. The Jewish children were admitted into the covenant of God by circumcision on the eighth day of their birth.

306. Q. What do we learn from this?
A. We learn from this that if it was so highly necessary that children should be admitted into the incomplete covenant of the Old Testament, how much more should it be so to admit them into the covenant of Christianity.

307. Q. From what of the words of our Lord Jesus Christ do we learn this?
A. Christ said, "allow the little boys to come to Me and do not forbid them; for, the Kingdom of God is for such as these ..(Then) He took them in His arms and put His hands on them and blessed them." (Mark 10:14-16)

308. Q. What does this prove?
A. This proves that it is not impossible even for little children to receive "Grace" or "Gift."

309. Q. What is the confirmation of Baptism?
A. It is the completeness or sealing of the Grace of the Holy Spirit which we receive through the laying on of hands of Baptism.

310. Q. How do we receive this?
A. Immediately after immersing the one who is to be baptized in the Baptismal font, the priest with deacons and the necessary accessories comes out through the big door of the "Madbkha" (Altar) and standing on the steps thereof recites, as is written in the end of the prayers of the Baptism Service:- "(Such and such a one, he or she) is baptized and confirmed in the name of Father, Son and Holy **Spirit."**

311. Q. What does the priest do when he recites this?
A. He confirms by drawing the sign of the living cross by the Holy ointment on the forehead of the recipient of Baptism.

312. Q. Can you prove from the Bible that this mystery of Baptism is indispensable to us?
A. Yes. We read in the Scriptures that St. Peter and St. John went down to a Samaritan city from Jerusalem to lay their hands on those whom St. Philip (Pilipos) had baptized in Shmarin, that they might receive the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:5-17). The disciples at Ephesus who had received only the Baptism of St. John, the Baptist, were asked to receive the Baptism of Christians and their Baptism was confirmed by laying hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. So we read about St. Paul. (Acts 19:1-6)

313. Q. By what other name is the confirmation of Baptism known?

A. It is called 'the Seal' as it is written "Now it is God who has confirmed us with you in Christ and who has annointed us; and who has sealed us and pledged His Spirit in our hearts. (2 Cor. 1:21,22). St. Paul says again "do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God whereby you are sealed unto the day of salvation." (Eph. 4:30). It is also called "the anointing." (1 John 2:20-27)

CHAPTER 10.

ABOUT QURBANA QADDISHA. (THE HOLY OFFERING)

314. Q. What does Qurbana mean?
A. It means offering.

315. Q. Is the term scriptural?
A. Yes it is used by Christ Himself. (Matt. 5:24)

Q. What is the other name used for Qurbana?
A. Raza, which in English means Mystery. This word might have various meanings. But I understand this as that which is above our knowledge,ie. that which is beyond our research and wisdom and impossible to be grasped, yet which could be found out and realized by faith.

316. Q. Is this mystery of Qurbana necessary for all of us?
A. Yes. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ says, "Truly, truly I say unto you, unless you eat the body of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood you have no life in yourself." (John 6:53)

317. Q. What are the things needed for Qurbana?
A. Bread made of wheat and wine prepared from grapes.

318. Q. Of what variety should the wafer be?
A. It must be made like other breads with flour, leven (yeast), salt, water and three drops of olive oil.

319. Q. Will anything more be added to these?
A. Yes. Before baking, 'Malka' or 'Khmeera Qaddisha' which is the 'Holy leaven', traditionally preserved by the church, as handed down by the Apostles, is added to that portion only which is used for the Qurbana.

320. Q. What is 'Pateera'?
A. 'The unlevened bread' as against 'the bread of the Scriptures' is called 'Pateera'.

321. Q. Can we use the unlevened bread for Qurbana?
A. No. It cannot be used since our Lord Jesus Christ has not used that and was not known during the first centuries of the church.

322. Q. How do you know that Jesus did not use it?
A. Various methods of preparing breads are described in the Bible. But there are differences between those words or methods. 'Lakhma' (Bread) is one prepared from leavened flour and 'Pateera' (lifeless, tasteless) is made of unleavened flour. It is stated that Jesus Christ took 'Lakhma'.

323. Q. Can you explain this a little more clearly?
A. Yes. I will explain. 'The True Passover Lamb' is 'The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world'.

It was therefore highly necessary that He, too, should be sacrificed at the day and time of the offering of the Passover Lamb. We see clearly from the Gospel of St. John that because of this He took His supper the day preceeding the Passover. (John 13:1-38; 18:1-12, 28, 29)

324. Q. Who must be celebrant of this Holy Mystery?
A. A Priest (Kaseesha) who is ordained by the apostolic laying of hands - all those in rank above him too may celebrate - with the deacons.

325. Q. What are exterior, ie. the visible, signs of Holy Qurbana?
A. Lakhma (Bread), as has been commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ, and wine.

326. Q. What are the interior signs of Holy Qurbana?
A. They are the flesh and blood of Christ.

327. Q. When did our Lord institute this Holy Mystery?
A. He instituted this Holy Mystery at the last supper on the day preceeding the Passover as He was to be offered on the cross on the day of Passover.

328. Q. How did He institute this?
A. "....Our Lord Jesus on that very night in which He was to be betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise after supper, He also gave the cup, and said, this cup is the new testament in My blood: do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me". (1 Cor. 11:23-25)

329. Q. What does St. Paul, the apostle, say of that which we do in the Holy Sacrament of Qurbana?
A. St. Paul says, "...Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you commemorate our Lord's death until He comes". (1 Cor. 11:26)

330. Q. How is this?
A. This mystery is a commemoration of our Lord's death for all times. So, the same sacrifice which Christ fulfilled on the cross is being offered to God and is revealed to Angels and men.

331. Q. By what designation is Holy Qurbana known because of this?
A. Because of this, it is called 'the Christian Sacrifice (Offering)'; and also it is often known as 'the Bloodless Sacrifice'.

332. Q. Is this another sacrifice apart from the one which Christ fulfilled on the cross?
A. No. Christ has offered only one sacrifice which He fulfilled on the cross as is written, "By this very will, we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all... But this Man after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down on the right hand of God forever." (Heb.10:10,12). Holy Qurbana is the everlasting memorial of that sacrifice before the Holy Trinity. It is also written, "You have come nearer.....to Jesus, the

Mediator of the new covenant, and to the sprinkling of His Blood, which speaks a better message than Abel did." (Heb. 12:23,24)

333. Q. What do you prove by the fact which is stated in the 24th verse of Hebrews 12th Chapter?
A. Abel was killed and he died: therefore his blood was crying justly. (Gen.4:10). Jesus Christ, too was crucified and He also died truly, (Matt.27:50; John 19:30-37), but He rose up from the dead. (Luke 24:5,6). He of a certainty, will not die again. (Rom. 6:9; Rev.1:18). Therefore it means that by the Holy mystery of Qurbana "it speaks for ever a better message than Abel did."

334. Q. How can you say this?
A. I can say this because the cup of thanks-giving which we bless and the bread which we break are the communion of the Blood and Body of Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 10:16).

335. Q. By whom is this 'Offering of Remembrance' offered?
A. 1. In Heaven by Jesus Christ Himself, because it is written about this deed that, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Malchesdeck" (Psalm 110:4), "and this Man, because He is immortal, has a priesthood which remains for ever...for this is the kind of High Priest proper for us." (Heb.7:24,26) These and the like (Heb. 7:17-28; 8:3; 9:11-14, 23-28) are recorded. It is also stated "Now above all we have a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of Majesty in heaven; and He has become the Minister of the Sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which God pitched and not man." (Heb. 8:1-3)
2. On earth, too, the priests as the representatives of Jesus Christ offer it. In another way, all the Christians, who have assembled to receive it when the priest celebrates it, are also offering them, "But you are a chosen people, ministers to the kingdom..." (1 Peter 2:9)

336. Q. Had the Jews more than one sacrifice?
A. Yes. They were to offer new sacrifices daily. The aim of all these sacrifices was to remind the covenant in connection with the Christ to come.

337. Q. If Christ has offered only one sacrifice which He fulfilled on the cross, then what effect is there in Qurbana?
A. It is written "...every High Priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; therefore it is necessary that this Man have something to offer also." (Heb.8:3), and "This Man, because He is immortal, has a priesthood which remains forever." (Heb.7:24; 25-28). But this is a very great mystery. Even now Jesus executes the services of a High Priest. We too, offer to God, through Him, Holy Qurbana that we might remind Him of the death and the second coming of His Son.

338. Q. Does not God remember without being reminded?
A. Yes. Surely; for God knows what we need before we pray Him. (Matt.6:8, 31,32), but He has commanded us to pray. (Luke 11:5-13; 18:7,8 etc.). So also He has desired that we should remind Him by offering. (1 Cor. 11:26).

339. Q. By which of His words has Christ instructed us to offer this commemoration sacrifice?
A. "This do in remembrance of Me", (1 Cor. 11:24,25) so said Christ, our Saviour.

340. Q. Can you cite some of the prophecies about this Christian Sacrifice?
A. It is stated "...from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same My name shall be great among the gentiles, and in every place incence shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering; for My name shall be great among the heathens, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Malachi 1:11). More may be seen in Malachi 3:1-4, Isaiah 56:6,7; Jeremiah 33:15-22 etc.

341. Q. How do we know that these prophecies are about the sacrifices of Christians and not about the offerings of Jews?
A. The gentiles or heathens did not become Jews; but they became Christians and offer sacrifices accordingly. Therefore it was not the sacrifice of the Christians that was destroyed but those of the Jews.

342. Q. What do we do by this Christian Sacrifice?
A. We worship and adore God by this offering, for the worship or adoration of God is the prime duty of men.

343. Q. What is this worship a shade of?
A. It is the shade of the worship in Heaven of the Lamb as it had been slain. (Rev. 5:6-9)

344. Q. What more do we do by this sacrifice?
A. We priase God, pray for our sins, and beseech for all good to those who now live and for those who are dead in Jesus Christ, in true belief. It is written "I beseech you, therefore, first of all to offer to God petitions, prayers, supplications and thanksgiving for all men, for kings and for all in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceful life, in all purity and godliness." (1 Thim. 2:1,2).

345. Q. When is the Qurbana sanctified?
A. It is sanctified when the priest invokes the Holy Spirit to sanctify that,ie. when he recites the prayer, "Neethi Mar Rukhakh Qaddisha..." wherein we invoke and beseech "Oh Lord! Let Thy Holy Spirit come and live upon this sacrifice of thy servants and bless and sanctify this..."

346. Q. What more is Holy Qurbana besides being a commemoration sacrifice?
A. It is a heavenly feast for our souls.

347. Q. How did our Lord Jesus teach us this?
A. Christ said "Take, eat; this is my body" and again "Receive ye and drink; This cup is the new testament of my blood."

348. Q. Because of this what did Christ designate Himself?
A. He called Himself "the bread of Life." He said, "I am the Bread of Life, he who comes to Me shall never hunger; and he who believes in Me, shall never thirst." (John 6:35)

349. Q. In what manner should a communicant receive Holy Qurbana?
A. It may be done in two ways:
1. The first and the most appropriate is: Place the right hand with palm upwards in that of the left, in the shape of a cross and on that cross, receive the Holy Body of Christ, from the priest. Then, with humility, piety and fear take that heavenly food by the mouth and enjoy. This is the commandment of Christ and the tradition of the church. (Matt. 26:26)*
*(Khayyil Maran...means "Oh! our Lord! strengthen our hands which we extend to receive the Holy Qurbana for the remission of our sins....")
2. The second and that which has its origin in the baseless piety of some believers is; to receive it in the mouth only. If you wish to receive it in the mouth, raise your head a little and opening your mouth accept it from the officiating priest; in all solemnity.

350. Q. What should we do after receiving the Holy Body?
A. We must obey the commandment of Christ as church observed it. (1 Cor.11:26 & Matt. 26:27). We must then go to the deacon, who stands, at the right side of the door of the altar, to administer cup and drink the Holy Blood therefrom.

351. Q. How are we to drink the cup?
A. We must bring our mouths to the Holy cup and holding the brim of the cup between our lips, must drink from it taking care not to spill a drop from it.

352. Q. Does the substance of the bread and wine in this Holy Mystery undergo any change?
A. If there is transubstantiation, it is not at all a mystery. If it is a mystery, then truly, it is the Body and Blood of Christ. Not by change of substance (transubstantiation) but by strength and remission it is one with Him. The holy patriarchs of the church assert that "the body that sits on the right side in heaven with glory and the body that which the priests break in the church are one and the same."

353. Q. How could this be?
A. Just as the word of God, by His incarnation, had communion with our nature and became one Messiah and one Lord, so also the Messiah effects a mysterious communion with the bread and wine that are placed on the Holy Altar.(1 Cor10:16)

354. Q. How does Jesus reward those who receive His Holy Body and Blood with repentance and belief?
A. Jesus gives them grace to fight the Satan and to grow in purity.

355. Q. By which of His words Jesus made this promise?
A. Christ says, "He who eats of My body and drinks of My Blood has eternal life; and I will raise him at the last day. For My Body truly is the food and My Blood truly is the drink." (John 6:54,55)

356. Q. Can we fight Satan without this grace?
A. No. Never. For just as our body requires temporal food, so also our souls must have the spiritual food that they may be strengthened to face Satan or temptations.

357. Q. How should we, therefore, prepare ourselves for receiving the Body and Blood of Christ?
A. We must examine ourselves (1 Cor. 11:28), turn from our sins with repentance, take care well to walk in the new life, believe in the covenant of God, be grateful with regard to the death of our Saviour and behave in love towards all other people.

358. Q. At what age should we receive Holy Qurbana?
A. If we request food by crying immediately after our worldly birth how much more must it be necessary for us to have the heavenly food simultaneously with our rebirth in spirit.

359. Q. Can we derive any benefit from this mystery in case we do not repent?
A. No. We won't derive any benefit from this in case we do not repent and turn from our sins. "For he who eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks to his condemnation; for he does not discern the Lord's Body." (1 Cor. 11:29.)

360. Q. Can we distinguish the method whereby Christ gives us His body and blood?
A. No. It is so great a mystery that even the most wise of men cannot fathom that; but even a small child may believe it.

361. Q. What did the Jews say when our Lord Jesus promised them His Body and Blood?
A. They said "How can this man give us His body to eat?" (John 6:52)

362. Q. What do we learn from this Jewish doubt?
A. We ought to learn from this that if Jesus commands anything we must take it in belief.