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LIGHT FROM THE EAST

JUNE - JULY 1953

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NO. 4

PATRIARCHAL VISIT

His Holiness, Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII paid his first visit to the parishes in the East since his return from his trip to Europe and Cyprus.

Sunday April 26, His Holiness celebrated Qurbana Qaddisha in Gary, Ind., and at 2 p.m. a banquet was given in his honor in Hotel Gary, by the Gary parish. Speeches welcoming His Holiness were delivered by the parish priest, the Rev. Sargis Benjamin, and Shamasha Alexander Sayad chairman of the committee.

Plans for the building of a new church for the Gary parish were brought before the Patriarch and the general activities of the parish discussed.

On May 8, His Holiness left Chicago by train for Flint, Michigan, where he was met on his arrival by the parish priest, the Rev. Qashisha Baba Tamraz, deacons, the committee, and the faithful, and driven to his hotel.

While in Flint, he received reports from the parish priest, the church committee, and the various organizations of the church, and future plans were discussed.

On Sunday, May 10 His Holiness celebrated Qurbana Qaddisha in the church of Mar Shimun Bar Sabai, and preached. After the Qurbana a breakfast was given in his honor in the basement of the church by the Daughters of the Church of the East.

On May 12 the Patriarch left for Philadelphia. A report on the visit to Philadelphia appears in the Syriac portion of this magazine. In Philadelphia he celebrated the Qurbana Qaddisha, in the Episcopal church of St. Simeon, and a banquet was given in his honor by the Church of the East in Philadelphia.

Saturday, May 23 the Yonkers parish gave a dinner in honor of the Patriarch in the basement of St. Andrews Episcopal Church. Among the guests of honor were the rector of St. Andrew's Church, the Rev. H. S. Sizer, and other prominent members of the parish.

The Patriarch was also shown the house bought last year by the Yonkers parish, which soon will be used for all the needs of the parish. A chapel has been constructed in it.

Next day, Sunday, His Holiness celebrated Qurbana Qaddisha in the church of St. Andrew. Following Qurbana, a breakfast was given by the Daughters of the Church of the East in the Assyrian Club.

May 25 His Holiness was driven to New Britain by Mr. and Mrs. George Burney. During the next few days he gave audience in Mar Tooma's parish house to the various organizations, and reviewed the general affairs of the parish.

Sunday, May 31 he celebrated the Qurbana Qaddisha and preached in St. Mark's Episcopal Church. The New Britain choir of some 30 voices took part in the singing of the liturgy and contributed much to the beauty of the service.

At 7:30 p.m. a banquet was given in honor of His Holiness which was attended by over 200 persons. Among guest speakers were the mayor of New Britain; Dean L. M. Hershshon of the Episcopal Cathedral of Hartford; and the rector of the Episcopal Church of New Britain, the Rev. Reamer Kline, and his assistant, the Rev. J. M. McCann. The Ven Archdeacon Saul D. Neesan was toastmaster. Other guests of honor were Rev. Richard Pera of the Lutheran Church and the Rev. Stefan, and the Rev. Elisha, both of the Presbyterian Church.

His Holiness spoke of his recent visit to Cyprus and England. He stressed especially the importance of his trip in relation to the general progress of the Holy Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East, and the recent consecration of Mar Yokhanan as Bishop for Iran, where the Church had been without a bishop for the last 35 years.

The Patriarch prayed for the success of the new bishop and the Catholic Church of the East in Iran.

Addressing the parish itself, His Holiness congratulated them on their accomplishments of recent years, and exhorted them to greater efforts toward higher goals.

He urged them especially to work for the building of a church for their parish. Similar exhortations were made by the Patriarch to all the other parishes.

Monday, June 1 His Holiness was driven to New York by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Sutcliffe, who had come to New Britain in order to attend the function.

June 2 the Patriarch left for Washington, D.C., where he was met by Mr. George Lamsa. Accompanied by Mr. Lamsa, His Holiness called upon his Excellency, the Iranian Ambassador, whom he had not met before. He also met other friends and returned to Chicago on June 8.



WEDDING OF HON. CAPT. SARGON D' MAR SHIMUN

On Sunday, May 17, Hon. Capt. Sargon d' Mar Shimun, brother of the Patriarch of the East, and Miss Mary G. Jaleel, were married in St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Kyrenia, Cyprus.

The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Qashisha Patros, a priest of the Church of the East from Beirut, Lebanon.

Following the ceremony, a reception was given in the garden of Bristol Hotel, which was attended by about 200 guests including ten different nationalities.

Among the guests were many former army officers who served with Capt. Sargon during World War II. The Qariwa and Qarutha (Syriac forms for best man and maid of honor) were Paris Karatagas and Mrs. A. Costanadis.

Capt. Sargon and his bride received many messages of goodwill from many countries. The importance of the wedding lies in the fact that Capt. Sargon is the first member of the immediate Patriarchal family to be married in a long time. It was an occasion of great joy especially for the father and mother of the bridegroom, the Rab Khaila and Lady Esther d' Mar Shimun.

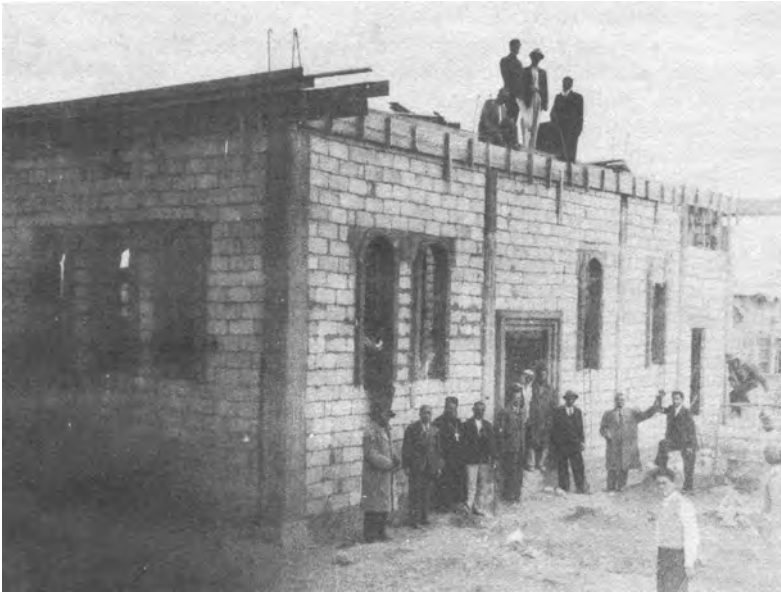
The Patriarch sent his blessings to the happy pair.



Right Reverend, Mar Yokhanan,
Bishop of Rezaieh, and all Iran

IRAN

In the last issue of *Light from the East*, an account was published of the consecration of Mar Yokhanan as bishop of the Church of the East for Rezaieh, and all Iran. His Holiness, the Patriarch of the East has since received many letters expressing the great joy of the Church in Iran at the consecration of the bishop. Under the leadership of his lordship Mar Yokhanan, the Church of Iran will, through God's Grace, make great headway. Thanks to the liberal policy of the Iranian government, the Church has been able to establish religious schools among many of the Assyrian villages in the Rezaieh (Urumia) area. Church members in the United States of America, through the Patriarchal Pence system, and by and through free will offerings made by the faithful, to the various churches in Rezaieh have been instrumental in carrying out these schools. Help for schools in Iran has also been coming from sources outside Assyrian Americans, or the Church of the East. The Episcopal Church of St. Stephen, through the Rev. Irwin St. John Tucker, some time ago contributed \$100, and recently the Rev. Charles C. Caine, of Florida, through the agency of George M. Lamsa, contributed \$100 for these schools. It is hoped that now that the bishop for Iran has been consecrated, this interest will be intensified, and that the faithful of Iran themselves will do much more than they have done in contributing, whether in money or other means, toward the support of the church. The success of the new bishop's mission will depend upon the zeal of his flock.



Church being constructed in Qamishly, Syria

SYRIA

The Rev. Qashisha Yokhanan Zaya, of Gundikta, Tkhuma, has informed His Holiness, Mar Shimun XXIII, of the building of a new church for the Assyrians in Qamishly, Syria. This holy enterprise has been accomplished by the zeal and labor of the faithful of the church in Qamishly. Through the efforts of Yacob Malik Ismail, who sent Shamasha Kako Lazar, to all the Assyrian villages on the Khabour, a sum of money was also raised there to help this worthy cause. Qashisha Yokhanan and the parishioners have appealed to His Holiness for some assistance from Assyrians in the United States, in order to complete this church. His Holiness commends this appeal most warmly, and every Assyrian or other reader of Light from the East wishing to make some contribution toward the project, may send it to the Patriarchate, and make the check payable to The Church of the East, General Educational Fund. His Holiness sends his apostolic blessing to Qashisha Yokhanan and all those who labored with him in this holy enterprise.

DEATH IN SYRIA

On April 24, 1953, Mr. Daniel, son of Malik Ismail, of Upper Tiari, now residing in Khabour, Syria, died of sugar diabetes. He was taken ill on Easter day and complications followed. He leaves behind his widow Batishwa d'beth Matran, three sons, and four daughters. Light From The East, wishes to express its deep sympathy to the bereaved members of the house of Malik Ismail. The history of the house of Malik Ismail, as one of the prominent leaders among the Assyrian nation, dates back many generations.

INDIA

The Holy Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East in India is making good progress under the leadership of His Grace, Mar Tooma, metropolitan of Malabar and India. Plans for the establishment of a theological school in Trichur are under discussion. During the last five years or so, two new church publications have been issued by the Church in India, and considerable progress has been made in the various aspects of the life of the church. The new publications are "Messenger of The East" and "Assyrian Trumpet."

IRAQ

His Grace, the Metropolitan Mar Yosip Khanishoo has reported to His Holiness that a large piece of ground adjacent to the school building in Kirkuk has been purchased by the faithful of that parish for the erection of a church. His Holiness sends his apostolic blessing to all who have contributed to this enterprise.

A similar lot was purchased in the city of Baghdad through the generosity of Mr. Kira Iskha, an Assyrian from Jilu, who is a successful business man in Baghdad. On this lot also, it is planned to build a church.

A LETTER FROM THE BRITISH MUSEUM

His Holiness,
Mar Eshai Shimun,
Catholicos Patriarch of the East

May 15, 1953

Your Holiness,

I beg to thank you for your gracious kindness in presenting the Museum with a set of the Periodical "Nuhra Min Madhnha, Light From The East." This is a most welcome addition to our Syriac collection, and more so since the Journal was completely unknown (so far as I can discover) to students of Syriac on this side of the Atlantic.

When your Holiness honoured the Museum a few months ago with your presence, I remarked that we possessed an incomplete set of "Zahrira d'bahra," a new Syriac Journal published by the American Missionaries at Urmi during the XIXth century (1849-71). The numbers of this new Periodical Nuhra Min Madhnha will fittingly stand on our shelves beside their XIXth century predecessors, a testimony to your Holiness' generosity and to the continued vitality, despite all the storms of persecutions, of the Assyrian Nation, of whom you are the spiritual head.

May your Holiness one day set up once again your Patriarchal throne on the banks of the Tigris, once more ruling the Christians of the East from the city made glorious by the Martyrdom of your illustrious predecessor St. Simeon Bar Sabbae (Mar Shimun Bar Sabbai).

Your Holiness will receive a formal acknowledgement of your gift, signed by the Keeper of the Department of Oriental Books and MSS., in due course.

I am, Your Holiness, Cyril Moss,
Yours faithfully (Assistant Keeper)

CHICAGO NEWS

On June 6, the Youth Organization presented a successful play entitled "Omar Khayyam." The play was directed by Sargis Khanbaba. The cast included Jack Bookie, Julie Odishoo, Bessie Sargis, Ben Abraham, Noel Joseph, Sam Aziz, John Hosanna, Maureen Hosanna, Irene Lazar, Rachel Tamraz, Ben Joseph, Eli DeKasha, and Narsay Serges. The net profit was \$1,100.00, of which \$800.00 will be given to the Church Building Fund. The group is to be congratulated on its fine efforts.

On June 28, the Church held a picnic in Caldwell Woods. The net profit of \$650.00 will greatly aid the church in meeting its first mortgage payment.

Recent visitors to California were Andrew and Elsie George, and William and Ann Sargis. They had made a special trip to attend the wedding of their cousin, Marian Pera, to Henry Baba. Now vacationing in California are Julie Odishoo and Esther Serges.

GARY NEWS

On June 27, Miss Ann Malham, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Zaia Malham, was married to Ben Abraham, son of Mr. and Mrs. Elisha Abraham of Chicago. The bride's sister, Helen, was the maid of honor, and the groom's brother, Jerry, served as best man. The ceremony was performed in the Assyrian Congregational Church in Chicago, with Rev. Paul Newey officiating. The reception was held in the Furniture Club, with 550 people present. Congratulations to the newlyweds.

TURLOCK NEWS

On May 23, Marian Pera and Henry Baba were united in holy matrimony. The ceremony was held in Mar Addai Church with Rev. Elisha Oushana officiating. On June 6, Viola Radke and Israel Abraham were married in the same church, with Rev. Elisha Oushana officiating.

On June 21, a Father's Day dinner was held in Mar Addai Church. A shish kabab dinner was served to the large crowd by the Daughters of the Church of the East. Gifts were given to the oldest and youngest fathers. They were David Badal and Fred Tamimi.

On April 15, funeral services were held for Aiwaz Karam (Mushawa). The services were held in Mar Addai Church. On June 27, funeral services were held for Mrs. Asly Yohannan, wife of Deacon Baba Yohannan. Although she had been ill the past five years, she was still an active member of the church, and the Daughters of the Church of the East. One of her final requests was that flowers not be sent to the funeral home. Instead she desired that her relatives and friends purchase liturgy books for the church, and hoped that this practice would set a precedent for the future. One of Mrs. Yohannan's fondest dreams was that someday a home for the Assyrian aged would be built in Turlock. Mrs. Yohannan was 80 years old, and had been a resident of California for 32 years. Survivors include her husband, Deacon Baba Yohannan, a son, four daughters, eight grandchildren, two great grandchildren, three brothers, and two sisters. The "Light from the East" extends its deepest sympathy to the families of the deceased.

FLINT NEWS

Marie David, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ewan Benjamin, and Eashoo Esse, son of Mr. and Mrs. Baitar Esse, were united in holy matrimony on June 27.

A surprise party was recently held for Dolores Lazar, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nimrod Lazar, in honor of her graduation from the University of Michigan. It was given by Marion and Rose Tamraz.

The annual picnic of the Church of the East was given on July 4, at Murphy Park. Jake Jacobs won the door prize, a 21 inch television console. Everyone present had a good time, and enjoyed the variety of food prepared by the Daughters of the Church of the East.

TIME AND WRITINGS OF MAR TIMOTHEUS I CATHOLICOS PATRIARCH OF THE EAST

Among the many great and saintly men who sat upon the Patriarchal throne of the Holy Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East, the figure of Mar Timotheus I looms among the foremost, whether it be in learning, in statecraft, in the organization of the church or in missionary zeal. Mar Timotheus was consecrated Catholicos Patriarch in the year 780 and died in the 823 A.D. One has to look into the religious and political history of the period in order to appreciate the greatness of the Patriarch, the opportunities afforded the Church of the East, and the obstacles facing it.

Under the Constantines the Christian Church within the Byzantine empire had been reduced to a political institution, given to constant changes, whether theologically, administratively or politically, in accordance with the dictated policy of the ruling prince. The Church of the East, on the other hand, within the Persian empire, was free from this influence, and withstood all efforts on the part of the emperors of Byzantium to bring it under their sway and thereby reduce it to a similar fate.

The Council of Ephesus marked a final effort in this direction on the part of the emperor of Byzantium, and also brought about the final break between the Church of the East and the Churches of the Roman Empire; namely, Greek, Latin and Egyptian. The theological confusion which has reigned within Western Christianity from that day to this may be judged by the accusation which the Monophysite Coptic and Abyssinian churches hurled against the Romans' proselytizing missions, "You are Nestorians" they said, "you profess two natures in Christ."

During the reign of Patriarch Timotheus, Islam was in the freshness of its new faith, and animated by the glories of its sweeping triumphs.

The new city of Baghdad had been founded by the Khaliph Mansour in the year 762 A.D. to replace Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the capital of the Persian empire. The Patriarchal See also had just been moved from the former capital to Baghdad by Mar Khnanishoo II. The city of Baghdad had grown with amazing rapidity. Its fame had already spread far and wide.

The renowned college of medicine of the Church of the East also was moved to Baghdad. Along with the city itself, it attained great fame. Scholars from all over the Church congregated in Baghdad, and a new era of scientific knowledge was ushered in, which affected not only the Khaliphate of Islam and the Church of the East, but the whole world. The science and philosophy of the ancient Assyrians, Babylonians and Greeks (who acquired the knowledge from the former two) had all been retained by the Church of the East, or translated from the Greek into Aramaic. This, along with all the additional scientific discoveries made during the Christian era by the medium of the famous colleges of Urhai, Nisibin, Beth Lapat, Seleucia and numerous other institutions of learning, was now rendered into Arabic by scholars of the Church of the East, and placed at the disposal of the Khaliphate of Islam. Names of men such as Eyob of Urhai, Khunain Bar Iskhaq, Sahda d'Karkh, Shimun d'Taybuteh, Abu Yahya Al Batriq, his son Yahya Bar Batriq, Khunain Bar Iskhaq, Alkindi and many other scholars of this ancient church were on the lips of all the learned men of the day, not realizing their immense contribution to the history of our twentieth century.

During this period the Church of the East, favored by the charters granted the Patriarchal See by Muhammad himself and also by Ali and his successors, was given considerable freedom and favored by the Khaliph. The Patriarch was recognized not only as the spiritual head of the church universally, but was also acknowledged as the head of the Eastern Christians. It is indeed a recognized historical fact that the merchants and missionaries of Islam followed throughout Asia the path already trodden by the Assyrian missionaries of the Church of the East, just as today others are treading the path made by Western missionaries in those very lands. But, at the same time, the order existing within the Arab empire assured the church a measure of security never before experienced by its missionaries in their travels to the distant countries of Asia.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that a hidden animosity against Christians of the East always existed among certain elements of the religious leaders of Islam, just as was manifested by Christianity of the West towards Islam in the invasion of the Crusades.

This animosity manifested itself in oppressions and persecutions of various degrees of violence. Some of the succeeding Khaliphs also were not tolerant and generous in their treatment of the Christians. But in all fairness it must be said that no other religion which claims an independent origin and revelation has ever shown more respect to Christ and his holy teaching than has Islam. Some scholars indeed, in their definition of Muhammadan theology, have gone so far as to consider Islam a form of Christianity.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica says: "This (Islam) may be regarded indeed as a form of Christianity, for it is not more foreign perhaps to the prevailing type than some sects which claim that name."

Our object in this article, however, is not a definition of Islam or its history, but rather of the situation under which the Church of the East existed, and the part that it was destined by its Lord to play through the agency of Mar Timotheus I, during this most eventful period of history.

Of the many writings of Mar Timotheus we have only a fraction extant. Others have shared the fate of the thousands of works of famous authors of this ancient Church which have been lost in the cataclysms of the history of the Middle East. About two hundred epistles written by Mar Timotheus to individuals or churches, bound in two volumes numbering some five hundred pages, have been preserved to this day.

These epistles, which are theological, philosophical, scientific or commentaries, bear eloquent witness to the erudition of the Patriarch, his mastery in all these fields and his deep spirituality.

His canonical pronouncements and his synodical epistles are also extant. His other works listed by Mar Odishoo, Metropolitan of Suwa and Armenia, who died 1318 A.D., in his detailed catalogue of the works that still existed in his day and were known to him, include also a work of Mar Timotheus on Astronomy, the book of Questions, Debate with Heretics, and debate with Mahdi. This goes to show that while the Catholic Church of the East was engaged in a great debate with Islam it never lost sight of the Christian Heretics either.

(To be continued)

THE BOOK OF TREASURES PHILOSOPHY OF JOB OF EDESSA PART IV

MATHEMATICS

Job of Edessa often speaks of geometry, with its angles, points, slides, triangles and circles. He also mentions the three dimensions of bodies. He is not very charitable toward those who "juggle with numbers" as he terms arithmeticians. There is a difference in his mind between geometricians and arithmeticians.

Despite this hostility to arithmeticians, he himself sometimes juggles with numbers; i.e., with the number 3, in relation to the Trinity. "We must draw attention here to an interesting historical point dealing with the origin of the zero, or figure 0", says Mingana. "This important mathematical sign is historically explained by the fact that numbering in general stopped at 9, then turned back to the number 1, after which it began to mount up. Early mathematicians considered the number 9 as complete in every respect. We have it on the authority of Job that early mathematicians made use of the fingers for counting the above numbers, and that after having reached the ninth finger, which would be the forefinger, they began again with the first finger, which would be the little finger of the other hand. But in order to find a link to connect number nine with number one, they formed cipher Zero, which means emptiness, by linking the forefinger and the thumb together in a circle. This explanation of the origin of the cipher is all the more important because the author is the earliest writer to make mention of the cipher, as it was in his time that this indispensable arithmetical sign reached Baghdad.

ASTRONOMY

Since Job had no intention of writing a systematic treatise on cosmography, it is sometimes difficult to define clearly his opinion on certain astronomical problems.

He believes stars are bodies composed of the same elements as those which we have in this world, the only difference being that the elements which constitute the stars are endowed principally with a "circular movement", unlimited in its action, while the earth is animated chiefly by a "straight movement".

These two movements, says Mingana, which are well studied in Aristotle's works, are of paramount importance in Job's system. He adduces many mathematical and metaphysical arguments to demonstrate the nature of these two movements. He devotes a special chapter to the Galaxy, which he describes (against Aristotle's doctrine) as a thick mass of stars, the blurred appearance of which is accounted for by their great distance.

He attacks vigorously the opinion of the ancients that the stars are reasonable beings endowed with a rational soul. He has no words strong enough to inveigh against the theory that the planetary system has anything to do with prognostication of future events affecting the lives of men. All types, therefore, of astrological speculations dealing with the horoscope are severely criticized and ridiculed.

ATTITUDE OF CHURCH

It will naturally be asked what was the attitude of the Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East towards the theories expressed by Job of Edessa, especially those relating to theology.

The answer is that Job's theories are not as diametrically opposed to orthodox interpretation of the church, as appears at first sight, especially his theories in relation to the resurrection of the body, and the torment of hell. These the author endeavors to explain in metaphysical and scientific terms, basing his argument upon the statement of St. Paul, regarding the "spiritual body".

His doctrine a priori and his argument regarding the attributes of God and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity are sound and orthodox. His arguments, in general, although in more detail and more scientific, are in accord with those of the various fathers of the Church, such as Mar Bawai the Great, Mar Timotheus I, Mar Zubi, Mar Odishoo and others. It should be borne in mind that his approach to theology is primarily that of a philosopher and scientist.

Nevertheless, the very fact that the author's works were permitted to stand and be circulated is sufficient evidence of the understanding attitude and tolerance of the Patriarchs and the authorities of the Church. Mar Timotheus, Patriarch of the day, was himself a profound philosopher and theologian.

(To be continued)

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