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Volume 1





**Healing**  
**in the**  
**Theology of Saint Ephrem**







**Healing in the  
in the  
Theology of Saint Ephrem**

**AHO SHEMUNKASHO**



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אלהים אלהים  
אלהים אלהים  
אלהים אלהים  
אלהים אלהים

God, [please] grant knowledge  
to the one who loves knowledge  
and the master who teaches excellently  
make him great in Your kingdom.

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## PREFACE

Throughout his work, Ephrem presents a wide range of theological themes and images that are characteristic of Syrian Christianity in the fourth century. A significant one that no one has yet studied in Ephrem, or in any other Syriac writer is the concept of sickness and healing. In the course of six chapters, this thesis presents the significance of healing theology and the ways in which the healing of man, spiritually, mentally and corporally is highly valued by Ephrem.

The Introduction, chapter one, looks briefly at some modern studies done on the place of ancient medicine in society in relation to religion, philosophy and science. In particular, it looks at how Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman scientific medicine was seen in relationship to religion, first pagan, and later to Judaism and Christianity.

Chapter two considers the concept of healing and healing imagery in three selected Syriac works that are earlier than Ephrem; the *Odes of Solomon*, the *Acts of the Apostle Judas Thomas* and Aphrahat's *Demonstrations*.

Ephrem's healing terminology is presented in chapter three, which analyses the use of significant terms relating to sickness and healing. To see how Ephrem's use differs from that of the Bible, the use of the same terms in the Bible is studied as well.

Chapter four focuses on Ephrem's exegesis of biblical passages dealing with healing. It shows not only his knowledge of Scripture's references to healing and sickness, but further how he incorporates these in his theological language, how he develops and uses them in his arguments against heresies and false interpretations of God's word, i.e. (in his terms) spiritual sickness.

Chapter five, the main part of this book, deals with the causes of spiritual sickness and the process of healing, and the way in which Ephrem places these in the divine history of salvation. The cause of spiritual sickness is sin that is the result of the misuse of man's free will and the influence of man's enemy, i.e. Satan, the



Evil One. Ephrem understands Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise as a 'Fall' into a state of sickness. God provides heavenly medicine for humanity, first through His chosen people, the patriarchs and the prophets, and then through His Son Who is the Physician *par excellence* and the Medicine of Life that is also present in the Church's sacraments for the faithful.

Finally, in the Conclusion, chapter six, the results of this examination of Ephrem's healing terminology are summarised, and the implications of these are discussed. Some suggestions are made for further work needing to be done.

In the Introduction, selected secondary sources have mainly been used, whereas in the rest of the book, the work focuses on the Syriac sources, edited and published texts. For the *Odes of Solomon*, the edition used is that by J. H. Charlesworth;<sup>1</sup> whereas for the *Acts of Thomas* the Syriac quotations are taken from W. Wright,<sup>2</sup> and the English text cited is from A. F. J. Klijn.<sup>3</sup> These translations have often been adapted and slightly altered. Aphrahat's *Demonstrations* are taken from 'Patrologia Syriaca',<sup>4</sup> and the translations are mine.

For Ephrem, the whole range of E. Beck's editions is used, as well as L. Leloir's edition of the *Commentary on the Diatessaron*, and Tonneau's edition of the *Commentary on Genesis* and Exodus.<sup>5</sup> Quotations from Ephrem's texts in English have been taken from existing translations, mainly the translations by Edward G. Mathews, Jr. and Joseph P. Amar,<sup>6</sup> Sebastian P. Brock,<sup>7</sup> Carmel Mc

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<sup>1</sup> J. H. Charlesworth, *The Odes of Solomon* (Montana 1977).

<sup>2</sup> W. Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles I* (London 1871).

<sup>3</sup> A. F. J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas* (Leiden 1962).

<sup>4</sup> J. Parisot, *Aphraatis Sapientis Persae, Demonstrationes*, PS I (Paris 1894), PS II (Paris 1907), 1 -489.

<sup>5</sup> See Bibliography. Also see the surveys in J. Melki, 'Ephrem le Syrien: bilan de l'édition critique', *PdO* 11 (1983), 3-88; and S. P. Brock, 'A brief guide to the main edition and translations of the works of St Ephrem', *The Harp* 3 (1990), 7-29.

<sup>6</sup> *Selected Prose Works, St. Ephrem the Syrian*, translated by E. G. Mathews, Jr. and J. P. Amar (Washington 1994); contents: Commentary on Genesis, Commentary on Exodus, Homily on Our Lord, Letter to Publius.



Carthy,<sup>8</sup> Kathleen E. McVey<sup>9</sup> and Paul S. Russell.<sup>10</sup> As with the other translations, they have been often adapted or slightly altered. The other texts are based on my own translation. Ephrem's works that have survived only in Armenian, such as the *Commentaries on Acts and the Pauline Letters*, and the *Memre on Nicodemia*, have not been considered.

Many citations can be found in the book. The English versions of the most important passages are cited only once in the main text, and the respective Syriac version in the footnotes. Throughout the entire book, some Syriac passages are quoted more than once in the footnotes, in order to make it convenient for the reader, to remind him/her about the precise words or phrases and how they are used. This is not intended to be mere repetition or duplication.

When reading, comparing, studying and analysing Ephrem's texts, the question of authenticity cannot be avoided. What is Ephrem's genuine work? Which texts have been added later or been attributed to him? Is the Commentary on the Diatessaron authentically Ephrem's work? Or is it partly Ephrem and partly a later revision and extension by one of his disciples, or by a later author? Even though it is not the primary aim of this dissertation to answer these questions, I have been aware of this problem and had to decide which text to include or exclude. For this dissertation, I am basically following E. Beck's observations - although modern scholars have different opinions concerning the authenticity of specific texts. In general there is no doubt about the genuine authenticity of 'hymni de azymis', 'hymni de crucifixione', 'hymni de ecclesia', 'hymni de fide', 'hymni de contra haereses', 'hymni de ieiunio', 'hymni de nativitate' (apart from the last few hymns), 'carmina Nisibena', 'hymni de paradiso', 'hymni de

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<sup>7</sup> S. P. Brock, *St. Ephrem the Syrian, Hymns On Paradise* (New York 1990).

<sup>8</sup> C. Mc Carthy, *Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron* (Oxford 1993).

<sup>9</sup> K. E. McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian Hymns* (New York 1989); contents: hymns On the Nativity, Against Julian, On Virginity, On the Symbols of the Lord.

<sup>10</sup> P. S. Russell, *Ephrem the Syrian, Eighty Hymns On Faith* [unpublished typescript] (1995).



resurrectione' and 'hymni de virginitate', as well as 'sermo de domino nostro' and 'sermones de fide', and the 'Commentary on Genesis' and the 'Commentary on Exodus'. Almost certainly the following texts are not by Ephrem: 'hymni de epiphania', 'sermones in hebdomadam sanctam', 'sermones III', 'sermones IV', 'Nachträge zu Ephraem Syrus' and 'Sogyatha'. Concerning the other works, there has been a long debate about how much is Ephrem and how much is later. These are the 'Commentary on the Diatessaron', 'hymni de Abraham Kidunaya et Juliano Saba', and texts in 'sermones I' and 'sermones II'.

In studying all the texts mentioned above I have primarily analysed and compared the texts which are certainly genuine; I have also included the *Commentary on the Diatessaron* and the hymns on Epiphany, and referred to certain material from other texts which are not, or which may or may not be by Ephrem. Where the non-genuine material is cited, it is not always indicated as such, though sometimes I mention the problem of authenticity for the convenience of the reader.

Finally the aim of this dissertation is to present Ephrem's healing theology and terminology. It focuses on Ephrem's texts - with awareness of the problem mentioned above. There is no comparison made with later Syriac writers, nor with Armenian and Coptic, or with Greek and Latin Church Fathers. However, the present work opens up the way for such studies.



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

### Syriac Texts

Abr Kid	hymni de Abraham Kidunaya, in: <i>Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen auf Abraham Kidunaya und Julianos Saba</i> , ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 322/323; SS 140/141; Louvain 1972 ).
Acts of Thomas	<i>Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles</i> I-II, ed. and tr. by W. Wright (London 1871 ).
Aphr	<i>Aphraatis Sapientis Persae, Demonstrationes</i> , ed. and tr. by J. Parisot, PS I (Paris 1894); PS II (Paris 1907), 1-489.
Azym	hymni de azymis, in: <i>Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Paschahymnen</i> (de azymis, de crucifixione, de resurrectione), ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 248/249; SS 108/109; Louvain 1964).
C	Codex Curetonianos.
CDiat	<i>Commentaire de L'Evangile Concordant</i> I-II, ed. and tr. by L. Leloir (Louvain 1963; 1990).
CGen	<i>Sancti Ephraem Syri in Genesim et in Exodum Commentarium</i> , ed. and tr. by R.-M. Tonneau (CSCO 153/153; SS 71/72; Louvain 1955).
CEx	<i>Sancti Ephraem Syri in Genesim et in Exodum Commentarium</i> , ed. and tr. by R.-M. Tonneau (CSCO 153/153; SS 71/72; Louvain 1955).
Crucif	hymni de crucifixione, in: <i>Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Paschahymnen</i> (de azymis, de crucifixione, de resurrectione), ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 248/249; SS 108/109; Louvain 1964).
Dom	<i>Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermo de Domino Nostro</i> , ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 270/271; SS 116/117; Louvain 1966).
Eccl	<i>Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Ecclesia</i> , ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 198/199; SS 84/85; Louvain 1960).



- Epiph      hymni de epiphania, in: *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Nativitate (Epiphania)*, ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 186/187; SS 82/83; Louvain 1959).
- Fid      *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Fide*, ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 154/155; SS 73/74; Louvain 1955).
- H      Harklean.
- Haer      *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen contra Haereses*, ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 169/170; SS 76/77; Louvain 1957).
- Hebd      *Ephraem Syrus. Sermones in Hebdomadam Sanctam*, ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 412/413; SS 181/182; Louvain 1979).
- Iei      *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Ieiunio*, ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 246/247; SS 106/107; Louvain 1964).
- Jul Sab      hymni de Juliano Saba, in: *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen auf Abraham Kidunaya und Julianos Saba*, ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 322/323; SS 140/141; Louvain 1972).
- Nachträge      *Nachträge zu Ephraem Syrus*, ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 363/364; SS 159/160; Louvain 1975).
- Nat      *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Nativitate (Epiphania)*, ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 186/187; SS 82/83; Louvain 1959).
- Nis      *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Carmina Nisibena I-II*, ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 218/219; 240/241; SS 92/93; 102/103; Louvain 1961; 1963).
- Odes of Solomon      *The Odes of Solomon*, ed. and tr. by J. H. Charlesworth (Montana 1977).
- P      Peshitta
- Parad      *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Paradiso und contra Julianum*, ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 174/175; SS 78/79; Louvain 1957).
- Resurr      hymni de resurrectione, in: *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Paschahymnen (de azymnis, de crucifixione, de resurrectione)*, ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 248/249; SS 108/109; Louvain 1964).



S	Codex Sinaiticus.
I Serm	<i>Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones I</i> , ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 305/306; SS 130/131; Louvain 1970).
II Serm	<i>Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones II</i> , ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 311/312; SS 134/135; Louvain 1970 ).
IIISerm	<i>Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones III</i> , ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 320/321; SS 138/139; Louvain 1972 ).
IV Serm	<i>Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones IV</i> , ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 334/335; SS 148/149; Louvain 1973 ).
SFid	<i>Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones de Fide</i> , ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 212/213; SS 88/89; Louvain 1961).
Sog	Soghyatha, in: <i>Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Nativitate (Epiphania)</i> , ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 186/187; SS 82/83; Louvain 1959).
Virg	<i>Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Virginitate</i> , ed. and tr. by E. Beck (CSCO 223/224; SS 94/95; Louvain 1962 ).

### Other Abbreviations

AOF	<i>Altorientalische Forschungen</i> , Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR. Zentralinstitut für Alte Geschichte und Archäologie. Berlin 1974.
Aram	<i>Aram Periodical</i> , Aram Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies. Oxford, 1989.
Bull Hist Med	<i>Bulletin for the History of Medicine</i> . 1968.
BZNW	<i>Beihfte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche</i> . Berlin/Giesen, 1923.
CSCO	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i> . Paris/Louvain, 1903.
FMS	<i>Frühmittelalterliche Studien</i> . Berlin, 1967.
Gesnerus	Vierteljahresschrift herausgegeben von der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften. Aarau 1943.



JSPS	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i> , Supplement Series. Sheffield.
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i> . Cambridge, 1954.
Numen	<i>International Review for the History of Religions</i> . Leiden, 1954.
OBO	<i>Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis</i> . Fribourg/Göttingen, 1973.
OCA	<i>Orientalia Christiana Analecta</i> . Rome, 1935.
OS	<i>Orientalia Suecana</i> . Stockholm, 1952.
PdO	<i>Parole de l'Orient</i> . Kaslik (Liban), 1970.
PS	<i>Patrologia Syriaca</i> . Paris, 1894-1926. 3 vols.
REA	<i>Revue des Études Arméniennes</i> . Paris, 1964.
SS	<i>Scriptores Syri</i> , CSCO. Paris/Louvain 1903.
ThLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i> . Leipzig 1876.
Traditio	<i>Studies in Ancient and Medieval History, Thought, and Religion</i> . Fordham University Press: New York, 1943.
ZKG	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i> . Gotha 1877-1930; Stuttgart 1931.



# 1

## INTRODUCTION

Looking at the whole of modern scholarly work on Syriac literature, we find hardly any publication on the concept of spiritual sickness and healing. Concerning natural medicine, drugs, diseases and ordinary physicians in Syriac literature we have the edition and translation of the Syriac 'Book of Medicines' by E. A. W. Budge,<sup>1</sup> the book of A. O. Whipple,<sup>2</sup> and a few articles by R. Degen, M. Dols, R. F. Hau, M. Maroth, J. Nasrallah, M. Ullmann and S. A. Vardanyan.<sup>3</sup> The presence of healing imagery in early Syriac

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<sup>1</sup> E. A. W. Budge, *Syrian Anatomy, Pathology and Therapeutics or "The Book of Medicines"* I, II (London 1913). The anonymous author divides the 'Book of Medicine' in three sections. The first section, as lectures, is about human anatomy, pathology and therapeutics and contains prescriptions for the various related diseases. Budge points out that these lectures were translated from Greek into Syriac, and are based fundamentally on Hippocratic medicine. Some of the nearly one thousand prescriptions are of Egyptian, Persian or Indian origin, and others are attributed to Galen, Dioskorides, Solon, Philo, Theodoretus. Several parts have since been shown to be translations of Galen's medicinal works. The second section is astrological in character, containing for example omens, portents and divinations. The third section has four hundred prescriptions which 'illustrate the folk-lore of a part of Mesopotamia, and preserve a number of popular beliefs and legends about birds, animals, magical roots' (Budge, I. iii-ix).

<sup>2</sup> A. O. Whipple, *The Role of the Nestorians and Muslims in the History of Medicine* (Princeton 1967).

<sup>3</sup> R. Degen, 'Ein Corpus Medicorum Syriacorum', *Medizin historisches Journal* (Hildesheim) 7 (1972), 114-22; - 'Das Verzeichnis der Schriften des Hippokrates in der Überlieferung des Barhebraeus. Ein kritischer Bericht', *Festgabe J. Assfalg*, 79-88. M. Dols, 'The origins of the Islamic hospital: myth and reality', *Bull Hist Med* 61 (1987), 367-90; - 'Syriac into Arabic: the transmission of Greek medicine', *Aram* 1:1 (1989), 45-52. R. F. Hau,





Christianity has been recognized by certain scholars, such as R. Murray<sup>4</sup> and S. P. Brock,<sup>5</sup> and M. F. G. Parmentier has published an article about the aspect of 'non-medical ways of healing in Eastern Christendom',<sup>6</sup> but until the end of the twentieth century no research has been done on its outstanding significance.

This dissertation on Ephrem's healing theology is the first of its kind in Syriac literature. It presents Ephrem's theological healing imagery, prefaced by briefer accounts of the healing terminology of the *Odes of Solomon*, the *Acts of Thomas* and Aphrahat's *Demonstrations*. Among the early Syriac writers, Ephrem is doubtless the greatest. He uses healing terminology to describe the theological process of salvation, looking back at man's Fall from Paradise and looking forward to his eschatological restoration in good health by the divine economy. Indeed the concept of healing is not the only one through which the history of salvation can be explored and plausibly explained, but it is very significant, for it provides a convenient analogy - particularly for Ephrem - placing the divine salvation of humanity between the poles of the state of present sickness and eschatological good health. In this work there is no comparison made with the Greek and Latin Church Fathers whose medical imagery has been studied by a number of scholars. It is hoped that this book will contribute not only to the medical-theological understanding of the ancient writers and Church Fathers in general, but furthermore that it will provide material that will contribute to a healthy spiritual life today, considering Jesus

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'Gondeschapur - eine Medizinschule aus dem 6. Jahrh. nach Chr.', *Gesnerus* 36 (1979), 98-115. M. Maroth, 'Ein Fragment eines syrischen pharmazeutischen Rezeptbuches aus Turfan', *AOF* 11 (1984), 115-25. J. Nasrallah, 'Médecins melchites de l'époque ayyubide', *PdO* 5 (1974), 189-200. M. Ullmann, 'Yuhanna ibn Sarabiyun. Untersuchungen zur überlieferung seiner Werke, Medizin-historisches Jahrbuch 6 (1971), 278-96. S. A. Vardanyan, 'Ancient Armenian traslationss of the works of Syrian Physicians', *REA* 16 (1982), 213-19.

<sup>4</sup> R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom* (Cambridge 1975), 199-203.

<sup>5</sup> S. P. Brock, 'Spirituality in the Syriac Tradition', *Maran 'Ethā'* 2 (Kottayam 1989), 41-42.

<sup>6</sup> M. F. G. Parmentier, 'Non-medical ways of healing in Eastern Christendom', in *Fructus Centesimus: Mélanges offerts à G. J. M. Bartelink* (ed. A. A. R. Bastiaensen and others; Dordrecht, 1989), 279-95.



Christ as the Medicine of Life in the way that Ephrem understood the Saviour.

Health and sickness have been experienced by almost every human being. Medicine, healing and health care not only concern our world today, but also concerned the ancient world. The concept of health and disease has changed over time. New techniques and new approaches to health care have altered the relationship of medicine to medical ethics and religion. In the last few hundred years scientific knowledge about the nature of disease and the remarkable progress in the biological sciences, chemistry, physiology, etc., has professionalized medical technology more than ever. Particularly in the twentieth century, clinical academic departments and laboratories have been established in universities and hospitals for performing such research. The result of their work has improved the physical health of modern industrialised societies enormously.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, besides clinical medicine for physical diseases we also find some other highly qualified disciplines for treating invisible sicknesses, such as psychiatry, psychology and pathology. Having such skilled and specialised physicians, psychologists, sociologists, etc., for treating physical, mental and psychological disorders, what can be the role of spiritual medicine today, where can it be placed, and what is its relationship to the others?

The ancient world came to various answers concerning the place of medicine within society. This can be seen from numerous studies on the ancient texts, on medical treatises, the Bible and the

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<sup>7</sup> The beginning of scientific medicine goes back to natural philosophy, and is associated especially with Isaac Newton and others, and their interpretations of the Aristotelean elements of earth, fire, and water. René Descartes considered a mechanical law behind all material things, including the human body. Based on this, the mechanical process of the body has been analyzed, and until today the cell, atoms, molecules and genes of the human body are a central object under microscopic research in laboratories. For scientific medicine, see C. Booth, 'History of science in medicine', in G. Teeling-Smith (ed.), *Science in medicine: how far has it advanced?* (London 1993), 11-22; I. Illich, *Limits to medicine. Medical nemesis: the expropriation of health* (Middlesex 1977); T. McKeown, *The origins of human disease* (Oxford 1988); D. J. Weatherall, *Science and the quiet art. The role of research medicine* (New York 1995).



Church Fathers. Both health and sickness can have their place in a religious, philosophical and medical sphere. In the ancient civilizations, health and disease were frequently associated with deities, and often magic and medicine went hand in hand. The Indian work 'Atharva-Veda' contains prayers against many diseases. In China, health and disease are incorporated into the philosophy of the Tao and the two polar principles, the *yin* and the *yang*. In ancient Egypt, men believed that pain and sickness are caused by the gods and goddesses, and evil spirits. For example, the Egyptian goddess Isis appears as a healer and her name is invoked against all kind of sicknesses.<sup>8</sup>

In 1924, W. R. Rivers discussed the inter-relationship of physicians, miracle-workers and magicians in the ancient world and observed that all three are seeking to overcome a disease by abstracting some evil factor from the physical body or by treating something external that has been connected with the body.<sup>9</sup> H. C. Kee studied the aspect of Medicine in Graeco-Roman culture and investigated the inter-relationship and difference between medicine, miracles and magic in New Testament times.<sup>10</sup> As Kee and O. Temkin emphasize, Galen's (130-200 A. D.) medical philosophy,<sup>11</sup> based on Hippocrates (460-370 B.C.), greatly influenced the

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<sup>8</sup> Diodorus Siculus, Loeb Classical Library 1.25.3-7, tr. by C. H. Oldfather (London 1933). Diodorus Siculus attributes not only magical healing to the Isis cult, but says that according to the Egyptians 'she was the discoverer of many health-giving drugs and was greatly versed in the science of healing'. The Egyptian physicians were skilled in their medicine, had a certain scientific and anatomical knowledge. They were respected in the community and their position was one of great importance and dignity (Budge, cxxxii-cxxxiii.). However, Egyptian medicine, even though famous in the ancient world, did not develop as later Hippocratic medicine did.

<sup>9</sup> W. H. R. Rivers, *Medicine, Magic and Religion* (London 1924), vii.

<sup>10</sup> H. C. Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times* (Cambridge 1986).

<sup>11</sup> Galen, *Adbortatio ad Artes Addiscendas*, tr. by J. Walsh, 'Galen's Exhortation to the Study of the Arts, Especially Medicine', in *Medical Life* 37 (1930), 507-29; - *On Anatomical Procedures*, intr. and tr. by C. Singer (London 1956); - *Medical Experiences*, tr. by R. Walzer (Oxford 1944).



subsequent history of medicine, in both the medieval Arab world and in the post-medieval West.<sup>12</sup>

Hippocrates (460-370 B.C.), called the ‘Father of Medicine’, taught in the medical school in Cos. His disciples wrote nearly 60 treatises on clinical, theoretical and medical subjects which are reflected in the so called ‘Hippocratic’ corpus of medicine. Among the most famous are the treatises ‘Airs, Waters, and Places’, and ‘Epidemics’ and ‘Regimen’.<sup>13</sup> At the time of Hippocrates, medicine was strongly related to the ministrations of the gods. The split between medicine and religion can be found later in the Hellenistic times.<sup>14</sup> Hippocrates developed a healing science (τεχνη ιατρικη) with an intellectual approach and methodology. His theory sought to explain the phenomena of health and illness. Disease was caused by an imbalance of the four bodily humors: blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile, or hot, cold, moist and dry. The physician’s goal, using his skill, was to correct the imbalance, restoring a healthy balance through the use of diet, rest, exercise and the prescribing of certain drugs. This healing ‘technē’ was secular, based on natural intellectual methods, and natural powers believed to exist in every human being and nature.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, 3; O. Temkin, *Galenism: Rise and Decline of a Medical Philosophy* (Ithaca, New York 1973). Galen’s medicine was translated into Syriac, and then into Arabic. For Syriac translations of Galen, see R. Degen, ‘Galen im Syrischen: eine Übersicht über die syrische Überlieferung der Werke Galens’, in V. Nutton (ed.), *Galen: Problems and Prospects* (London 1981), 131-166. As an example of an Arabic translation, see P. Bachmann, ‘Galens Abhandlung darüber, daß der vorzügliche Arzt Philosoph sein muß’, in *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* (1/1965), 1-67.

<sup>13</sup> Hippocrates, tr. by W. H. S. Jones. Loeb Classical Library (London 1923); - *Concerning Airs*, 1, 71-117; - *Epidemics I*, 1, 146-211; - *Precepts*, 1, 313-33; - *On Regimen*, 2, 57-126.

<sup>14</sup> L. Edelstein, ‘Greek Medicine in its Relation to Religion and Magic’, in *Ancient Medicine* (Baltimore 1967), 217-46.

<sup>15</sup> For the ‘Hippocratic Oath’ see K. Deichgräber, *Medicus gratus* (Wiesbaden 1970); L. Edelstein, *The Hippocratic Oath* (Baltimore 1943); - ‘The professional ethics of the Greek physician’, in *Bull Hist Med* 30 (1956), 391-419; G. Harig and J. Kollesch, ‘Der Hippokratische Eid’, in *Philologus* 122 (1978), 157-76; W. H. S. Jones, *The Doctor’s Oath* (Cambridge 1924). After the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C., Hippocrates’



This system conflicts with that of ancient religious healers, physician-seers (*iatromanteis*) and in particular the cult of Asclepius who, from the fifth century onward, gradually became the god of medicine. Asclepius is mentioned in the *Iliad* (2.728-33), in Homer's description of the ships and their leaders assembling for the attack on Troy, and in Pindar's Pythian Ode. According to Pindar's *Pythian Ode* (III. 47-53), Asclepius was honoured as a divine healer, and at Pergamum and Cos there were medical schools as well as shrines where the sick awaited his divine visitations.<sup>16</sup> In the year 292 B. C., Rome and the surrounding countryside were struck by the plague. After they consulted their oracles, they went to Epidauros to bring Asclepius to Rome. Arriving in Rome, sacrifices, incense and perfumes were offered on altars, where Asclepius appeared in the form of a serpent.<sup>17</sup>

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medicine was developed further in Alexandria, the chief cultural and commercial center. Here medical literature was added to the famous library of Alexandria, and famous scholars such as Herophilus of Chalcedon and Erasistratus of Cos carried out systematic medical research. Later Praxagoras of Cos pointed out the need for definition and an explanation of health and sickness and searched for theoretical knowledge in medicine. In contrast, the Empiricists, led by Herophilus doubted medical speculations and theories; instead, they had faith in practical experience at the bedside.

<sup>16</sup> Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World* (New Haven 1983), 78-108; see also the same author, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, 27. For earlier works on Asclepius see E. J. and L. Edelstein, *Asclepius: Testimonies* (Baltimore 1945); W. A. Jayne, *The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilization* (New Haven 1925); C. Kerenyi, *Asklepios: Archetypal Image of the Physician's Existence* (New York 1959). See also L. Wells, 'The Greek language of healing from Homer to New Testament times', in *BZNW* 83 (Berlin 1998). Wells studied the healing cult of Asclepius from fifth century B. C. until fourth century A. D. in four famous places: Epidauros as pilgrimage; Athens as the state of cult; Cos and its famous medical school; and finally Pergamon as the place of Galen and a historical cult (see Wells, 34ff.).

<sup>17</sup> See Livy, *From the Founding of the City* 10.47; 11; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.625-724. Kee says that 'Asklepios was viewed simultaneously as the patron of physicians and as the beneficent god who acted directly to heal suppliants' (Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, 4).



From the time of Homer onwards, the physician was considered as a craftman (δημιουργος, *Odyssey* 17.383) who performed his skill publicly for man's benefit.<sup>18</sup> In Rome, the most famous physician was Galen of Pergamon (130-200 A.D.) who carried out anatomical dissections and physiological experiments on animals. With his hundreds of treatises, Galen's medical knowledge, based on Hippocrates, was used until nearly the end of the Middle Ages. Side by side with the concept of spiritual healing in Christianity, physicians such as Oribasius (4<sup>th</sup> century), Aetius of Amida, Alexander of Tralles (6<sup>th</sup> century) and Paul of Aegina (7<sup>th</sup> century), compiled and preserved ancient medical knowledge, based on Galen's experiments.<sup>19</sup>

The Bible, even though not a scientific book, contains some valuable information about ancient sickness and medicine. In the early twentieth century, the medical doctor J. Preuss studied Biblical and Talmudic medicine.<sup>20</sup> His concern was not the theological medical imagery, but rather he looked at physical sicknesses, drugs and the role of ordinary physicians in biblical times. He points out that basically there is no 'Talmudic medicine' ('Medizin des Talmuds') to be compared to Galen's medicine, nor is there any 'Judaistic medicine' similar to Egyptian or Greek medicine. According to him, the first Jewish physicians who studied medicine were Arabs.<sup>21</sup>

In the Bible, scholars also looked at the aspect of spiritual healing and its relationship to ordinary medicine. S. Noorda finds a positive attitude to ordinary physicians and medicine for the first time in Ben Sira 38:1-15, where the function of a physician is incorporated within a religious context.<sup>22</sup> Ben Sira valued the role

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<sup>18</sup> L. Cohn-Haft, *The Public Physician of Ancient Greece* (Northampton 1956), 11-18.

<sup>19</sup> Temkin, *Galenism: Rise and Decline of a Medical Philosophy* (Ithaca, New York 1973).

<sup>20</sup> J. Preuss, *Biblisch-talmudische Medizin* (Berlin 1911). He considered not only the results of others' work before him (see Preuss, iii-iv), but also the whole Bible and a wide range of Talmudic literature.

<sup>21</sup> Preuss, 3.

<sup>22</sup> S. Noorda, 'Illness and sin, forgiving and healing: the connection of medical treatment and religious beliefs in Ben Sira 38:1-15', in M. J. Vermaseren (ed.), *Studies in Hellenistic Religions* (Leiden 1979), 215-24.



of the ordinary physician for ‘also him God has appointed’ and ‘from God the physician gets his wisdom’ (Ben Sira 38:1-2). In Ben Sira, the physician has an intermediate function; healing can be achieved through faithful prayer and the physician’s skill or wisdom. Noorda emphasises that having the physician’s skill and wisdom added to faith is an ‘impact of Hellenistic culture and sciences on traditional Jewish beliefs in second century Palestine’.<sup>23</sup> Ben Sira has not ignored Jewish tradition and biblical faith, that God’s creation is good, and human freedom of choice is able to produce evil, that it is sin which causes illness, and forgiveness brings healing. However, certain injuries were allowed to be treated by an ordinary physician - even though there was a fear that ordinary medicine was associated with magic and foreign religion.<sup>24</sup>

L. P. Hogan points out that at the time of Ben Sira Israelite medicine must have gone far beyond the stage of the treatment of external wounds, and made use of Hippocratic medicine. In order to justify the role of the ordinary physician in Jewish society, Ben Sira portrays the ideal Jewish physician to be an instrument of God’s healing purpose.<sup>25</sup> Hogan points out that illness was accepted as God’s punishment for the sins of an individual or of the People, and that the ultimate healer is God. Only Job’s critics and some of the Psalms (Ps 6; 28; 30; 38 41; 88; 103) objected ‘that illness is always the result of sin’.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, he refers not only to the healing aspect in Ben Sira, but to the whole of Hebrew Scripture in general, including the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, and the New Testament, Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo of Alexandria and Josephus. He concludes, that in the second Temple Period there are five causes of illness: ‘These five are 1) God, for His own purposes, 2) intermediaries of God, 3) evil spirits (devils, fallen angels, Satan), 4) the stars and their movements and 5) sin’.<sup>27</sup> Likewise he outlines five ‘means’ of healing, considering ‘God as

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<sup>23</sup> Noorda, 215.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. J. Hempel, ‘Ich bin der Herr, dein Arzt’, in *TbLZ* 82 (1957), 809-826.

<sup>25</sup> L. P. Hogan, *Healing in the Second Temple Period* (Freiburg 1992), 38-48.

<sup>26</sup> *Hogan*, 25. Hogan distinguishes between ‘sickness’ that can be ‘healed’ and ‘illness’ that can be ‘cured’ (see Hogan, 1-2).

<sup>27</sup> *Hogan*, 302-05.



the ultimate Source of healing as well as the ultimate Source of illness. These means are: 1) faith and prayer, 2) exorcism or apotropaic means, 3) virtuous living, 4) physicians, scientific and folk medicine and 5) magical means'.<sup>28</sup>

Studying the concept of spiritual healing in the Old Testament, H. C. Kee worked on the biblical stories of healing, signs and wonders, Jahweh's function as Healer and His relation to human physicians, including the patriarchs and prophets. Kee emphasises that healing, signs and wonders focus on the divine destiny of the covenant people, and they are identified as God's actions on behalf of Israel. Ezekiel's prophecy of the renewal of nature is 'healing' (Ez 47:8-12).<sup>29</sup> Kee compares Ben Sira's view of healing with that of Pliny. While Pliny attributes the power of plants to their nature as 'self-originating', Ben Sira accepts nature, and so the power of plants as medicine 'out of the earth', as God's creation, and consequently God as the provider of medicine.<sup>30</sup> Referring to G. Vermes, Kee also draws attention to the Book of Tobit where demons and exorcism are linked to sickness and death,<sup>31</sup> and he considers Josephus, who depicts the medical skill of the Essenes, as an author who manifests the influence of Hellenistic medical tradition and belief in the link between demons and sickness.<sup>32</sup> According to Josephus, there is no negative attitude towards medicine, as in the older biblical tradition, for the Jewish people were engaging in medicine, miracles and magic. The Essenes used two modes of healing: medicine and exorcism, whereby the factor of forgiveness of sins was included.<sup>33</sup>

D. W. Amundsen published eleven of his essays in the book 'Medicine Society, and Faith in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds'. Chapters 5 to 7 could be considered as the most important. In

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<sup>28</sup> Hogan, 305-310.

<sup>29</sup> Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, 9-14.

<sup>30</sup> Kee, *Medicine*, 20-21. According to Pliny the Elder, Natural History xxiii.1, healing is provided by the right use of natural medicine, as the Greeks speak of 'sympathia' and 'antipathia'.

<sup>31</sup> Tob 2:10; 6:7-16; 8:1-3; 11:8-14. See G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (New York 1973), 61; Kee, *Medicine*, 21.

<sup>32</sup> Kee, *Medicine* 23; see Antiquities 8.136.

<sup>33</sup> IQ GenAp 20:12-29; 4QOrNab; Kee has own definition of medicine, miracle and magic, see Kee's *Medicine*, 3-4; 24-25.



chapter five, 'Medicine and Faith in Early Christianity', Amundsen outlines the relationship between natural medicine and Christian theology, based on the doctrines of various Church Fathers. Some of them believed that diseases are a result of a natural cause, others considered the source of illnesses to be supernatural. However, the Christian writers' view differs from that of the pagans, for Christians believed in an omnipotent God Who loves everyone. Amundsen emphasises that the early Christian writers based their view on biblical tradition, but they - the Greek and Latin Church Fathers - approached it from their own Hellenistic-philosophical background. Therefore, there have been different ways of bringing these traditions together, and this can also be seen in the aspect of Hellenistic medicine and its incorporation into Christian belief. While Tatian and Arnobius (including Marcion) rejected medicine altogether, other early Christian writers accepted its place within Christianity.<sup>34</sup> However, they consider God, Who can also heal without the use of means, to be the Fountain of Healing. When ordinary physicians have failed, the Church Fathers draw attention to miraculous divine healing, such as the healing of Gregory Nazianzen's father<sup>35</sup> and Gregory of Nyssa's sister.<sup>36</sup>

Basil considers physical suffering, sickness and healing as a mirror for spiritual sickness and the medicine of the soul. God allows man to fall ill and suffer so that he may become aware of the need of spiritual healing. Physical sickness can be a punishment for man's sin and it calls for repentance, so that man does not sin further and become wounded spiritually, as, for example, through

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<sup>34</sup> D. W. Amundsen, *Medicine, Society, and Faith in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (Baltimore 1996), 127-157. These are the writers to whom he refers: Clement (ca. 150 - 215), Origen (ca. 184 - 253); the Cappadocian fathers: Basil (ca. 329 - 379), Gregory Nazianzen (ca. 330 - 390), Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 335 - 394); John Chrysostom (ca. 349 - 407); Augustine (354 - 430), Ambrose of Milan (339 - 397), Jerome (ca. 345 - 420); Tertullian; Tatian, Arnobius, Marcion.

<sup>35</sup> Amundsen quotes from from Gregory Nazianzen, *On the Death of His Father*, 28-29.

<sup>36</sup> Amundsen refers to Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of St. Macrina*; Jerome, *Life of St. Hilarion* 14,15; Augustine, *City of God* 22.8. Chapter six of Amundsen's book is on 'Tatian's «Rejection» of Medicine in the Second Century', 158-174.



pride.<sup>37</sup> Likewise Gregory Nazianzen, John Chrysostom and Jerome consider physical illness in the same way, and its benefit can be man's spiritual healing.<sup>38</sup>

H. J. Frings studied the aspect of medicine and the role of physicians in the early Greek patristic texts up to John Chrysostom.<sup>39</sup> He defines the function of medicine and physicians according to the patristic texts, and refers to the inter-relationship of theology and herbal medicine, as well as of spiritual healers and ordinary physicians. Medical art is considered to be good, and it is used as an argument against heresies, i.e. Manichaeans. Frings pointed out that medicine was seen as part of God's creation that is good and for man's benefit. God grants physical skills to man in order to make use of the power of medicinal herbs. Likewise He grants the gift of Healing (the physician's art) to certain people to show that human beings need and depend on each other.<sup>40</sup>

In his article 'Christus als Arzt. Ursprünge und Wirkungen eines Motivs', G. Fichtner argues very clearly against those who maintain that early Christianity had a hostile attitude towards scientific medicine, and that faith and science exclude each other in general.<sup>41</sup> In three sections, Fichtner shows how the early Christians understood sickness, the way they treated it, and how they incorporated Hellenistic medicine into the concept of theological healing. He points out that 'Christ as Physician' has been understood in two ways: metaphorically and in reality, as He is the Physician *par excellence*. Furthermore, Fichtner argues that Hippocratic medicine was not completely free from religious thought. Since Christianity has grown up in a Hellenistic culture where the role of a physician was highly respected, theological thought was influenced by Hellenism in general, as can be seen in John's prologue, Christ as the *λογος*. Galen's understanding of the

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<sup>37</sup> Amundsen, 137. See Basil, *The Long Rules* 55.

<sup>38</sup> See Amundsen, 137-38, and the bibliography given there.

<sup>39</sup> H. J. Frings, *Medizin und Arzt bei den griechischen Kirchenvätern bis Chrysostomos* (Bonn 1959).

<sup>40</sup> Frings, 8-11.

<sup>41</sup> See G. Fichtner, 'Christus als Arzt. Ursprünge und Wirkungen eines Motivs', *FMS* 16 (1982), 1-18. By name, Fichtner only mentions the article of Matoušek, 'Zur Frage des Verhältnisses der Urchristentums zur Medizin' (1960).



cause of sickness differs from the biblical Jewish point of view: instead of sin, Galen sees the cause of sickness to be imbalance in the human body. Referring to the Gospel, such as Jn 9:1-3, Fichtner points out that the Christians did not look for the cause of sickness any more, but rather for its spiritual meaning. In order to show the significant role of sick people in the early Christian community, Fichtner draws attention to the Christians' charitable work, *diakonia* (Acts 6:1-7; Rom 16:1), which led to activities such as those of Bishop Basil who built a place for the sick (*nosokomeion*) in Caesarea around 370 A.D. Finally, Fichtner looks for biblical and early Christian sources (Ignatius of Antioch, the *Act of John*, Justin, Tertullian, Actantius, Arnobius, Clemens of Alexandria, Hieronymus, Augustine, Ambrosius) where healing terminology is used. As a result, Fichtner says that hardly anyone mentions Asclepius by name, but referring to K. H. Rengstorff (1953), he observes that there are some implications that conflict with Asclepius' healing cult and with Hellenistic philosophy, which resulted in the fully developed motif of Christ as the *δωτηρ* and Healer in Christian theology.<sup>42</sup>

J. Hempel would agree with Fichtner that the concept of Jesus Christ as Healer and Physician has been understood in both ways, metaphorically and literally, but Hempel does not see such a Hellenistic influence in the Christus-medicus motif.<sup>43</sup> Hempel discusses the role of medicine in the religious culture of old Israel, and he looks at the conflict between demons and man's will to survive as well. Likewise, Hempel draws attention to Jahwe as the

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<sup>42</sup> Fichtner, 11-12: 'So hat sich das Christus-medicus Motiv aus der einen Wurzel der zumeist verdeckten, selten offenen Auseinandersetzung zwischen dem Soter Asklepios und dem Heiland Christus heraus entwickelt und verselbständigt. ... Auch in der kynisch-stoischen Philosophie war der Arztvergleich sehr beliebt: so wie der Arzt die Leiden des Körpers heilt, so heilt der Philosoph die Leidenschaft der Seele. Voraussetzung dieses Vergleichs ist also eine dichotomische Anthropologie, eine strenge Teilung in Körper und Seele ([in the sense of] soma-sema, der Körper ist nur ein Grabmal, ein Gefängnis der Seele). ... Christus wird in der plastischen Kunst des 3. Jahrhunderts in Philosophentracht dargestellt.'

<sup>43</sup> J. Hempel, 'Heilung als Symbol und Wirklichkeit', in *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* (3/1958), 237-314.



One Who heals His People and the Good News of Jesus Christ as being the  $\delta\omega\tau\eta\rho$  Who saves and gives life. And, therefore, the Good News has been understood as being sound/healthy and demanding sound/healthy faith, as it can be found in the pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 1:10; 2 Tim 4:3; Tit 1:9; 2:1; 2:10ff) which imply the metaphorical sense of healing and its reality.<sup>44</sup>

In her recent publication *The Greek language of healing from Homer to New Testament times*, L. Wells has explored the use and meaning of Greek healing terminology in selected Greek sources from the fifth century B. C. until the fourth century A. D.<sup>45</sup> She studied the terms  $\gamma\upsilon\gamma\eta\varsigma$ ,  $\iota\alpha\sigma\mu\alpha\iota$ ,  $\theta\epsilon\rho\alpha\pi\epsilon\upsilon\omega$ ,  $\sigma\omega\zeta\omega$   $\pi\alpha\sigma\chi\omega$  and their derivatives in the work of Homer, Septuagint, Philo of Alexandria, Josephus and the New Testament (Aramaic and Hebrew are excluded). Discussing Asclepius' healing cult in Epidaurus, Athens, Cos and Pergamon, Wells realised that these healing terms in literature and in inscriptions are uniform in meaning, and 'there shows a remarkable degree of consistency in the use of healing

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<sup>44</sup> Hempel resumes (Hempel, 311): 'Was das biblische Schrifttum über Krankheit und Heilung berichtet oder erwartet, gehört nur am Rande in den Bereich rationaler Medizin. Fünfhundert Jahre nach Hippokrates verraten die Heilungserzählungen der Apostelgeschichte keinen Einfluß dieses Meisters auf den Verfasser, in dem doch die Tradition einen Arzt sehen will, und im Grunde steht es nicht anders, wenn wir die wissenschaftliche Medizin Ägypten zum Vergleich mit dem AT heranziehen. Die Heilkunde der AT gehört in den Zusammenhang mit der altorientalischen Volksmedizin, aber gerade auf deren Hintergrund zeigt sich ihre religionsgeschichtliche Sonderstellung. Sie konzentriert Krankmachen und Heilen auf ihren Gott, seinen Willen und seine (prophetischen) Werkzeuge, die sich im Töten und Heilen als solche legitimieren und seine souveräne Macht repräsentieren. Im eminenten Sinne gilt das für Jesus, in dessen Heilungen zugleich der Kampf Gottes gegen den (in der dualistischen Erweichung des strengen Monotheismus und seiner Ambivalenz Gottes tätig geglaubten) satanischen Gegenspieler sichtbar wird. Sie sind symbole des Gottessieges, wie die "Heilung" im AT bereits als Bild für die Überwindung der "Krankheit" des Volkes in dem doppelten Sinne seiner Sünden und der durch sie bedingten äußeren, gottgewirkten Katastrophen genutzt wird.'

<sup>45</sup> L. Wells, *The Greek language of healing from Homer to New Testament times* (1998).



language by authors'.<sup>46</sup> However there is some difference in some of these words in Jewish writers, the Septuagint and the New Testament. In the Septuagint,<sup>47</sup> εἰρήνη (peace) is used in preference to the Greek word ὑγίεια to describe health in order to include a strong spiritual emphasis in its notion of health and this 'appears to be akin to holistic health with a spiritual emphasis'.<sup>48</sup> In the Septuagint, θεράπευω is not related to divine healing, except in Wisdom 16:12 when it refers to the healing λογος of God, but Philo of Alexandria uses it in the sense of 'to court and to worship, and it 'involves healing the soul as well as the body, incorporating spiritual mental, emotional and physical healing'.<sup>49</sup> Josephus uses the verb θεράπευω to mean 'to court' or 'flatter' in the context of bribery, political social life and human activity, but it can also mean 'to worship' and 'to serve' God, in a religious context.<sup>50</sup> Wells points out that Jesus' healing ministry (θεράπευω), along with that of teaching (διδασκων) and preaching (κηρύσσων) are evidence of His divinity. The synoptic authors prefer to use the term θεράπευω to describe Jesus' ministry and they link it to preaching and teaching. Wells says: 'Thus θεράπευω seems to be a description of a process which occurs when the gap between a human and God is closed, i.e. when an individual's sense of alienation and separation from God is destroyed, and that individual becomes aware of the presence of the kingdom (i. e. "God"), and inclusion in a new

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<sup>46</sup> Wells, 100. For example, Wells says, 'ὑγιαίνω is used in a holistic sense to indicate the general well-being and effective functioning of the state, family or individual' (Wells, 61).

<sup>47</sup> There is no difference in the use of ἰαομαι that 'denotes the activity and nature of the Septuagint God, and on occasion, of his agents. It is the preferred verb in a healing context, and is the verb that is put into God's mouth when he speaks of healing. In this incidence and use it reflects the language of healing in the Greek world' (Wells, 108f.)

<sup>48</sup> Wells, 107.

<sup>49</sup> Wells 112-14: 'Thus to cure in the sense of θεράπευω is to strive for holistic health'. Philo understands θεράπευω primarily in a spiritual sense, referring to teaching or contemplating.

<sup>50</sup> Wells, 115-16. 'Thus Philo and Josephus' use of it (θεράπευω) in a secular context differs greatly from its use in a spiritual context. In a spiritual and teaching context the verb θεράπευω refers primarily to the health and well-being of the soul, and the nurturing of the God-human relationship.



spiritual community. In this way *θεραπέυω* is primarily a spiritual term, but it can have a holistic effect, affecting the physical, mental, and emotional state of a person, as well as a person's spiritual state.<sup>51</sup> Wells argues that Luke, as a medical doctor, uses the term *ἰάομαι* more in a sense that could imply both a 'cure' and 'divine intervention' in its meaning, in order to avoid the notion of 'nature' or 'persuasion' implicit in *θεραπέυω*.<sup>52</sup> Otherwise, all four terms (*υγιαίνω*, *ἰάομαι*, *θεραπεύω*, *σώζω*) and their derivatives in the synoptic Gospels are used to depict the healing ministry of Jesus.

P. D. E. Knipp worked on the illustrations of the biblical healing miracles in the iconography of sarcophagi from the Theodosian era in the fourth and fifth centuries. He focuses on three miracles: giving sight to the man born blind (Jn 9), healing the woman with a haemorrhage (Lk 8:43-48), and healing the one who was sick for 38 years in Bethesda (Jn 5:1-9). The sarcophagi portray 'Christus medicus' in various ways, most probably based on different theological concepts - even though these cannot be identified precisely. According to Knipp, it is obvious that the Christian pictures are influenced by imperial language and art. The healing of the blind man is related to Jesus Christ as the Light of the world (*φῶς, του κόσμου*) and to Christian baptism (*βαπτισμός*).<sup>53</sup> The metaphor of light, sun (*ἡλιος*), shows that healing means illumination of the soul, in contrast to darkness that is the cause of being spiritually sick. Thus, the healing of the man born blind is incorporated into the antique image of the light symbol in the myth and the cult of Helios and Sol. In the myth of Orion, Helios is the healer of the blind Orion.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Wells, 154-55.

<sup>52</sup> Wells, 155. It does not seem that Syriac can distinguish between *ἰάομαι* and *θεραπεύω* (Syriac did not have the problem of Asclepius' religious cult as such), for basically both of these terms are rendered with ܐܕܪܐ. The Syriac verb equivalent to *υγιαίνω* would be ܕܒܪܐ, and to *σώζω* it would be ܕܡܪܐ.

<sup>53</sup> P. D. E. Knipp, 'Christus medicus' in *der frühchristlichen Sarkophagskulptur: ikonographische Studien der Sepulkralkunst des späten vierten Jahrhunderts* (Leiden 1998), 34-39.

<sup>54</sup> Knipp, 34-53. For the healing of the woman with a haemorrhage whose iconography is greatly influenced by the theology of Ambrose, see Knipp, 90-139; for the healing miracle in Bethesda, see Knipp, 140-184.



R. Arbesmann, in his article 'The concept of «Christus medicus» in St. Augustine', points out that Augustine warns of the sickness of pride. God as the heavenly Physician humiliated Himself to heal man from the festering wound of pride which caused man's Fall from Paradise. Arbesmann argues that Augustine uses the image of the physician and healing for his salvation theology in order to emphasise the importance of the virtue of humility as the foundation of Christian life. Any disease can be healed by the 'cup of humility' which is drunk first by the divine Physician. God is able to heal and restore human nature, for He is its Creator. He wants to restore human nature to full health, even though He permits some after-effects of sin to cause pain to man's soul. From the second and third century onwards, Augustine's predecessors used the concept of healing to argue against the healing cult of Asclepius, the pagan healer and physician. Instead, based on the Gospel, the Church Fathers draw attention to Jesus Christ as the Healer of body and soul.<sup>55</sup>

O. Temkin has gone further and studied health and sickness in a specific Christian context, namely Asceticism.<sup>56</sup> He has looked at the relationship of the ascetic to his body, health and sickness. Referring to the life of St Antony, Temkin says: 'Antony's mode of life broke all the rules of Hippocratic hygiene. He and his fellow ascetics not only deviated from Hippocratic medicine but also believed that their deprivations returned man to his pristine condition before the Fall.'<sup>57</sup> Although the ascetics considered Jesus to be the perfect Healer of both soul and body, they did not have a hostile attitude towards the ordinary medicine and physician. In their opinion ordinary medicine and physical doctors were God's arrangements for the weak and for those without faith, because God does not want to destroy utterly sinful human beings. Temkin says: 'So far as ascetic doctrine can be summarized briefly, it can be said to have viewed complete reliance on God and Jesus in all disease, to the exclusion of all medical help, as ideal. The

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<sup>55</sup> R. Arbesmann, 1-28.

<sup>56</sup> O. Temkin, *Hippocrates in a world of Pagans and Christians* (Baltimore 1991); chapter five is on 'Asceticism' (149-70), chapter six on 'Hippocratic Medicine and Spiritual Medicine' (171-177).

<sup>57</sup> Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, 154.



fulfillment of this ideal could be expected of those who had reached perfection in their faith. For all others, laymen as well as monks, God had provided doctors and medicines as help in their weakness.<sup>58</sup>

Finally, it can be said that Christianity adapted Hippocratic medicine to its theology and biblical belief. The function of pagan medicine has been altered in the light of faith. Medicine is considered to be given to mankind by God, and as the provider of medicine, both spiritual and physical, there remains God Who is the perfect Healer of humanity. It is in this sort of context that Ephrem developed his own understanding of healing.

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<sup>58</sup> Temkin, *Hippocrates*, 160.







# 2

## HEALING IMAGERY IN SOME OTHER WORKS

Before dealing with Ephrem's healing imagery, the concept of sickness and healing in three other Syriac works, all earlier than Ephrem, will be discussed. These are the *Odes of Solomon*, the *Acts of Judas Thomas the Apostle* and Aphrahat's *Demonstrations*. Among these the *Odes of Solomon* provides only a few references concerning our theme, whereas the *Acts of Thomas* and Aphrahat's *Demonstrations* are rich sources. The *Acts of Thomas*, which is basically a Christ-oriented missionary narrative, emphasises Jesus Christ as the Healer and Physician of mankind. Whereas the *Acts of Thomas* hardly makes use of any biblical text outside the Gospel, Aphrahat refers to the whole Bible and quotes a variety of references concerning sickness and healing.

### 2.1 The Odes of Solomon

The *Odes of Solomon*<sup>1</sup> do not provide any healing imagery, apart from twice when the terms 'sickness' (ܠܡܝܥܐ) and 'pain' (ܠܥܠܐ) are used, and once ܠܥܬܐܐ in the sense of 'poisons'.<sup>2</sup> The author uses the term 'sickness' once in the singular (ܠܡܝܥܐ) and once in the plural (ܠܡܝܥܐ). In Ode 18, the inspired Odist expresses his

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<sup>1</sup> J. H. Charlesworth's edition and translation of *The Odes of Solomon* (Montana 1977) is mainly used here, but also following books have been taken in consideration: - H. Grimme, *Die Oden Solomos* (Heidelberg 1911); - J. R. Harris, *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon* (Cambridge 1911); - J. R. Harris and A. Mingana, *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon II* (London 1920); - M. Lattke, *Die Oden Solomos in ihrer Bedeutung für Neues Testament und Gnosis II* (Göttingen 1979).

<sup>2</sup> *Odes of Solomon*, 18.3; 19.7; 21.3; 25.9; 38.8.



joy about God who strengthened his ‘limbs’ (כַּחֲזָקָה) and removed the ‘sickness’ (רָמָה) from his ‘body’ (גִּידָה).

1 כַּחֲזָקָה לִי כִּי יָדָהּ לִי כִּי יָדָהּ לִי

כִּי יָדָהּ לִי כִּי יָדָהּ לִי

2 כִּי יָדָהּ לִי כִּי יָדָהּ לִי

כִּי יָדָהּ לִי כִּי יָדָהּ לִי

3 כִּי יָדָהּ לִי כִּי יָדָהּ לִי

כִּי יָדָהּ לִי כִּי יָדָהּ לִי

כִּי יָדָהּ לִי כִּי יָדָהּ לִי

- 1 My heart was lifted up and enriched in the love of the Most High,  
so that I might praise Him with my name
- 2 My limbs were strengthened,  
that they may not fall from His power.
- 3 Sicknesses fled from my body,  
and it stood firm for the Lord by His will;  
because His kingdom is firm/true.<sup>3</sup>

*Odes of Solomon, 18.1-3*

‘Sicknesses’ have been removed from the speaker’s body and his limbs have received power. Both terms ‘limbs’ and ‘my body’ refer to physical sickness and healing, and do not specifically indicate spiritual healing. But, the fact that the Odist’s heart is lifted up and he is pleased to praise the Lord by using his name, shows peace and health within.

The term ‘body’ (גִּידָה) also appears in Odes 22 and 39. While the former speaks positively about the dead bones that were covered with ‘bodies’ (גִּידָה) by the Lord’s right hand,<sup>4</sup> the latter illustrates the negative effect of the Lord’s power that snatches bodies and corrupts souls like strong rivers.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The verb ‘and it stood for’ (עָמַד) is singular and refers to the term ‘my body’. The other manuscript has the plural form ‘and they stood for’ (עָמְדוּ) which refers to the ‘sicknesses’ (רָמָה). See, R. Harris and A. Mingana, *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon II*, 295-98.

<sup>4</sup> *Odes of Solomon*, 22.7-9.

<sup>5</sup> *Odes of Solomon*, 39.1-3.



The word 'limbs' (רַמְתָּא) is used in seven further Odes.<sup>6</sup> The limbs, which are like the harp's strings, through which the Lord speaks, need to be restored and made healthy. If they collapse, they need the Lord's power and light to be strengthened,<sup>7</sup> for it is the Lord Who has formed man's limbs;<sup>8</sup> they belong to Him,<sup>9</sup> and need to be without pain and suffering.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the limbs are elements that should rightly praise the Lord as the Odist says: 'I will praise and exalt Him with all my limbs'.<sup>11</sup> The singing and praising of the Lord affect the limbs, causing them to be pleased and anointed as with oil.<sup>12</sup>

In Ode 25, the Odist praises the Lord because of his personal experience of salvation and illumination. The Lord granted him redemption and honour, and He removed 'sickness' (רַמְתָּא) from him.

9    חַלְלָהּ הַיְמִינָהּ אֵימָרָהּ  
       .רַמְתָּא מִמֶּנִּי  
       10    .וְיִתְּנֵהּ לִי חַיִּים  
           .וְיִתְּנֵהּ לִי חַיִּים

- 9    Because Your right hand exalted me,  
       and removed sickness from me,  
 10    and I became mighty in Your truth  
       and holy in Your righteousness.

*Odes of Solomon 25.9-10:*

<sup>6</sup> *Odes of Solomon*, 3.2; 6.2,16; 8.14 (16); 17.16 (15); 21.4; 26.4; 40.3.

<sup>7</sup> *Odes of Solomon*, 6.2: .רַמְתָּא מִמֶּנִּי חַלְלָהּ הַיְמִינָהּ אֵימָרָהּ. See also 6.16: חַלְלָהּ הַיְמִינָהּ אֵימָרָהּ. רַמְתָּא מִמֶּנִּי.

<sup>8</sup> *Odes of Solomon*, 8.14(16): רַמְתָּא מִמֶּנִּי חַלְלָהּ הַיְמִינָהּ אֵימָרָהּ. רַמְתָּא מִמֶּנִּי חַלְלָהּ הַיְמִינָהּ אֵימָרָהּ.

<sup>9</sup> *Odes of Solomon*, 17.16 (15): חַלְלָהּ הַיְמִינָהּ אֵימָרָהּ. רַמְתָּא מִמֶּנִּי חַלְלָהּ הַיְמִינָהּ אֵימָרָהּ.

<sup>10</sup> *Odes of Solomon*, 21.4: חַלְלָהּ הַיְמִינָהּ אֵימָרָהּ. רַמְתָּא מִמֶּנִּי חַלְלָהּ הַיְמִינָהּ אֵימָרָהּ.

<sup>11</sup> *Odes of Solomon*, 26.4: חַלְלָהּ הַיְמִינָהּ אֵימָרָהּ. רַמְתָּא מִמֶּנִּי חַלְלָהּ הַיְמִינָהּ אֵימָרָהּ.

<sup>12</sup> *Odes of Solomon*, 40.3: [חַלְלָהּ הַיְמִינָהּ אֵימָרָהּ] חַלְלָהּ הַיְמִינָהּ אֵימָרָהּ. רַמְתָּא מִמֶּנִּי חַלְלָהּ הַיְמִינָהּ אֵימָרָהּ.







Obviously, thinking about the Lord and being guided by Him, means to be saved, restored and healthy. Inasmuch as suffering, affliction and pains are related to 'darkness' (כחש), the thoughts about the Lord belong to the 'light' (קיום). Coming out of the darkness is like no longer being sick or in pain (כחש). Another form of the term 'pain' (כחש) is used in Ode 19.7-8, where the author speaks about the Virgin giving birth without pain:

7 .כחש לא ידע כי ילד בלא כחש ופחד

8 .כי לא ידע כי ילד בלא כחש ופחד

כי לא ידע כי ילד בלא כחש ופחד

7 So the Virgin became a mother with great mercies.

8 And she laboured and bore the son but without pain, because it did not occur without purpose.

*Odes of Solomon 19.7-8*

When Eve transgressed the Lord's commandment, she was punished with pains in childbearing (cf. Gen 3.16). Here, in contrast, the Virgin gives birth without any pains. Both the Virgin giving birth and the childbearing free from pains are not natural. However, this can happen in agreement to the Lord's will through his 'mercies' (חסד).

Finally, one might look at the term **מחשבה** that is used once in Ode 38. This Ode, full of difficulties and obscurities, is about truth and error:

7 .כי לא ידע כי ילד בלא כחש ופחד

כי לא ידע כי ילד בלא כחש ופחד

8 .כי לא ידע כי ילד בלא כחש ופחד

כי לא ידע כי ילד בלא כחש ופחד

כי לא ידע כי ילד בלא כחש ופחד

10 .כי לא ידע כי ילד בלא כחש ופחד

כי לא ידע כי ילד בלא כחש ופחד

כי לא ידע כי ילד בלא כחש ופחד

כי לא ידע כי ילד בלא כחש ופחד

11 .כי לא ידע כי ילד בלא כחש ופחד

כי לא ידע כי ילד בלא כחש ופחד

7 But truth was proceeding on the upright way, and whatever I did not understand He exhibited to me:







## 2.2 The Doctrine of the Acts of Judas Thomas the Apostle

The Syriac *Acts of Thomas* is one of the oldest apocryphal acts along with those of Paul and John. The Apostle's life, deeds, words and mission in India proclaim Jesus the Messiah Who became a man for the salvation of mankind. Whilst referring to Jesus Christ, His Life on earth and His divinity as the Son of God, the author refers to Him as 'the Healer of His creation' (ܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ) Who was sent for the 'healing of men' (ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ).<sup>16</sup> Judas Thomas performs various healing miracles in the name of the Lord and indicates that Jesus is the Healer and Physician of bodies and souls. Almost all the healing imagery occurs in the context of miracles done through the Apostle, his prayer or through the prayer of those who believed the Apostle's preaching.

In the following, the first section presents the description and terms of physical and spiritual sickness. The second section draws attention to Jesus Christ and Judas Thomas as the healers and physicians. Finally, the relationship between healing and the holy sacraments is described, such as the healing power of the oil and water used in baptism, and the consecrated bread and wine used in Holy Communion.

### 2.2.1 The Sickness of Body and Soul in the Acts of Thomas

Although the *Acts of Thomas* speaks about the healing of the body and soul, certain passages show a difference between them. While the soul can be saved as it is incorruptible, the body cannot be saved since it is corruptible, and it dissolves.<sup>17</sup> But even though the

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<sup>16</sup> *Acts of Thomas*, ܡܠܝܚܐ [62]; ܡܕܢܐ [143]. Quotations of the Syriac text are taken from W. Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles I* (London 1871), and the page numbers are given in Syriac characters. His translation, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles II* (London 1871), is also edited in A. F. J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas* (Leiden 1962). Klijn divides the text into chapters which are given here between square brackets.

<sup>17</sup> *Acts of Thomas*, ܡܕܢܐ [35], ܡܕܢܐ [78]; for corruptibility see further pages ܡܕܢܐ [67], ܡܕܢܐ [79], ܡܕܢܐ [103], ܡܕܢܐ [115], ܡܕܢܐ [117], ܡܕܢܐ [124], ܡܕܢܐ [126], ܡܕܢܐ [135], ܡܕܢܐ [143], ܡܕܢܐ [156].







makes it sick'.<sup>25</sup> The term 'sick' (כָּמָה) is used for the body, but the effect of fornication is also mental, spiritual and physical sickness.

The term 'sick' (ܚܬܡܐ) appears in chapter 59. Thomas' reputation caused the people to meet him for they expected to be healed by him.<sup>26</sup> Together with 'sick people', there are mentioned those who are 'possessed by a spirit' (ܠܡܢ ܪܥܝܬܐ), 'lunatic' (ܠܚܝܬܐ) and 'paralytics' (ܠܡܢ ܦܠܝܬܐ). These sick people were suffering because of their 'grievous sicknesses' (ܠܡܢ ܚܬܡܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ) and 'hideous torments' (ܠܡܢ ܬܕܡܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ). The term 'restored/healthy' (ܫܠܡܐ) describes the opposite of sickness. Although the term ܚܬܡܐ is used in the context of some physical diseases, it cannot be limited to these only. It seems that it can refer to any kind of sickness, as in chapter 143, the author speaks of 'all sickness/pains, hidden and visible'

[illegible][illegible]



The contrast between ܠܡܠܝܬܐ and ܠܡܝܬܐ is also found in the passage where Vizan was baptised and his wife had received healing.<sup>30</sup> Because of being ‘sick’ (ܠܡܝܬܐ) she is called ‘feeble’ (ܠܡܠܝܬܐ).<sup>31</sup> In this context the term ‘sickness’ (ܠܡܝܬܐ) is frequently used. In chapter 155 it appears together with the adjective ‘grievous’ (ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܝܬܐ), as in chapter 59: ‘grievous sicknesses’ (ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܝܬܐ).<sup>32</sup> The author also refers to the time and location with reference to the term ‘sickness’. He speaks of ‘the

<sup>32</sup> *Acts of Thomas*, ~~κα~~ [59], Δι [155].



long time of sickness' (ܠܡܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡ ܕܒܪܐ) <sup>33</sup> and of 'the place of sickness' (ܠܡܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ) which can be compared to 'the weary place' (ܠܥܠ ܕܝܬܐ), 'unclean place' (ܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡ) and 'place of the enemy' (ܠܥܠܐ ܕܝܬܐ). <sup>34</sup> The sickness dwells not only in some places at certain times, but it can also reside in man. When a certain bridegroom believed in Judas' preaching and consequently was healed, he praised God for he had been delivered from 'the sickness that was abiding' in him for ever. <sup>35</sup>

Since **ᲕᲗ᲏Თ** does not specify any particular physical sickness, the term **ᲕᲕᲗ** is used to illustrate that kind of pain and suffering. As life on earth ends and the world is corruptible, the author prefers virginity to the married state. He cites some of the reasons for remaining a virgin, being saved from the ‘hidden and visible sufferings/passions’ (**ᲕᲗ᲏Თ ᲕᲗ᲏Თ ᲕᲗ᲏Თ**) and from ‘the heavy care of children, the end of whom is bitter sorrow’ (**ᲕᲗ᲏Თ ᲕᲗ᲏Თ ᲕᲗ᲏Თ ᲕᲗ᲏Თ ᲕᲗ᲏Თ ᲕᲗ᲏Თ**). In particular, he assumes that most children have ‘many diseases’ (**ᲕᲗ᲏Თ ᲕᲗ᲏Თ ᲕᲗ᲏Თ ᲕᲗ᲏Თ ᲕᲗ᲏Თ ᲕᲗ᲏Თ**).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Acts of Thomas*, **III** [150].

<sup>34</sup> *Acts of Thomas*, ~~xxx~~ [156]: ~~𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰~~  
~~𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌹𐌸 𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰~~  
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[illegible][illegible]











### 2.2.2 Jesus Christ and Thomas as Physicians and Healers

The first report to King Gudnaphor about Thomas illustrates the Apostle's work as 'healing the sick' (𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰), and 'driving out demons' (𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰). Both sentences are paralleled to each other. Thomas' compassion and his healing are without recompense (𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰 𐌸𐌹𐌳𐌰).<sup>47</sup> The term 'his compassion' is related to Thomas'

<sup>46</sup> *Acts of Thomas*, ԼԻԻ [81]: Երեսն և քսան օր քաջացաւ ի իմաստութեամբ իւր: Տես նաև ԼԻ [42].

[illegible]







While the ordinary physicians heal only corruptible bodies, Thomas heals both bodies and souls. Obviously, Thomas' healing cannot be compared to that of other physicians. Healing both body and soul indicates a perfect healing. The body and soul belong to each other. Chapter 42 speaks of the 'giver of life to the souls' (ܡܨܝܠ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܢܦܫܐ) and of 'the healer of the bodies' (ܡܨܬܪܝܬ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܥܡܪܐ). A woman in whom the devil lived said to Thomas: ܡܨܬܪܝܬ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܥܡܪܐ ܡܨܝܠ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܢܦܫܐ. ܡܨܬܪܝܬ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܥܡܪܐ ܡܨܝܠ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܢܦܫܐ. ܡܨܬܪܝܬ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܥܡܪܐ ܡܨܝܠ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܢܦܫܐ. ܡܨܬܪܝܬ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܥܡܪܐ ܡܨܝܠ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܢܦܫܐ. ܡܨܬܪܝܬ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܥܡܪܐ ܡܨܝܠ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܢܦܫܐ. ܡܨܬܪܝܬ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܥܡܪܐ ܡܨܝܠ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܢܦܫܐ.<sup>51</sup> Following Wright, Klijn refers 'the giver of life' (ܡܨܝܠ) and 'the healer' (ܡܨܬܪܝܬ) to God (the Greek refers the former to God), as he translates:

Apostle of the new God, who art come to India;  
servant of the holy God, who by thee is proclaimed  
both the Giver of Life to the souls of those that come  
unto Him, and the Healer of the bodies of those who  
are tortured by the enemy; (thou) who art the cause of  
life to the whole people of India; permit them to bring  
me before thee, that I may tell thee what has befallen  
me.<sup>52</sup>

Unfortunately, it is not clear whether these terms describe the Lord or His servant. The phrases '(thou) who art the cause of life to the whole people of India' might apply to Thomas, for the woman addressed her speech to him. The particle 'and' connects ܡܨܝܠ and ܡܨܬܪܝܬ with the first part of the sentence and is paralleled to ܡܨܬܪܝܬ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܥܡܪܐ. Therefore, it is likely that the woman accepted Thomas as the 'life giver of the souls' (ܡܨܝܠ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܢܦܫܐ) and 'healer of the bodies' (ܡܨܬܪܝܬ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܥܡܪܐ). It is

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ܡܨܬܪܝܬ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܥܡܪܐ ܡܨܝܠ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܢܦܫܐ. ܡܨܬܪܝܬ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܥܡܪܐ ܡܨܝܠ ܐܝܬܐ ܠܢܦܫܐ.

<sup>51</sup> *Acts of Thomas*, ܬܝ [42].

<sup>52</sup> Wright, *Apoecryphal Acts of the Apostles* II, 182-83. Cf. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas*, 87 [42].











































through the medicine of his Lord. The healing miracles of the Apostle are highly comparable and similar to those of Jesus Christ. Both of them provide medicine for body and soul, and generally healed any kind of sickness and drove out demons. Both their healing is without recompense, but it required faith and is different from that of the ordinary medical physicians.

It has to be emphasised, that the author - like Aphrahat and Ephrem - clearly distinguishes between Jesus Christ as the main Healer and Source of healing, and His servant Judas Thomas as the mediator through whom God's medicine is made accesible to the people in India.

The mission of the Apostle and his charitable work - like the ministry of his Master - are characterised by his healing miracles. People came to him in a similar way to going to see a medical doctor in his practice. He prayed for those who approached him with faith and God healed them. Also after his death, people approached his grave and bones in order to be healed.

Furthermore, the author makes clear that healing can be achieved by approaching the Lord, as well as His disciples and the divine sacraments in the Church with the right attitude, i.e. faith. The Lord's healing power is given to His disciples, and it dwells and abides in the eucharistic bread and wine, and is provided in the oil and water of Christian baptism. Baptism is capable of washing and healing man's wounds, transgressions and sins, whereas the Eucharist serves as divine medicine for mankind.

### **2.3 Aphrahat's Demonstrations**

Aphrahat's *Demonstrations*, addressed to one of his friends in the first half of the fourth century, offer a wide variety of Biblical aspects of healing and healing terminology. The biblical references and citations illustrate Aphrahat's good knowledge of the Old Testament, as well as the New. While most Demonstrations include only a little healing imagery or a few relevant verses from the Bible (such as Demonstration 1 On Faith and 2 On Love, which mention Jesus' healing miracles), the theme of healing and healing terminology are primarily focused in the Demonstration 7 On Repentance where the sinners are compared to those wounded in the war. The Demonstrations 14 On Intercession and 23 On the Vinecluster (23) come second in importance as texts concerning healing.



After having discussed the biblical references that contain healing imagery, some of the significant terms such as ‘physician’, ‘medicine’ and ‘wound’ are studied mainly on the basis of three Demonstrations: Demonstration 7 On Repentance (ጸሐፊዱ), 14 On Intercession (ጸሐፊ) and 23 On the Vinecluster (ጸሐፊዱ).

### 2.3.1 Old Testament Healing Imagery in Aphrahat’s Demonstrations

In his *Demonstrations*, Aphrahat includes a number of biblical references when he speaks about healing or sickness. This subsection considers references from the Old Testament. Firstly he relates the curse of Adam and Eve to disease and suffering (Gen 3:8-18). Secondly, some verses from Leviticus and 2 Kings are quoted when Aphrahat discusses the Law of purity and cleanliness, such as the commandments concerning food and leprosy (Lev 11:2; 13:45-46; 15:5). Gehazi and King Uzziah’s leprosy, as well as Hezekiah’s sickness and Uzziah’s punishment, are included. Two Psalms are used in the context of healing (Ps 41:2-4; 69:27). Finally, Aphrahat’s excellent knowledge of the Prophets enables him to use the prophecies which are linked to healing in different Demonstrations (Is 28:12; 53:3; 63:11; Jer 6:7-8; 33:10; Ez 13:4-5; 33:11; 34:2-19; Mal 1:14; 2 Macc 9:18).

#### 2.3.1.1 *Adam and Eve’s Fall (Gen 3:8-18)*

Adam and Eve’s Fall is mentioned in Demonstrations 6.6, 7.8 and 23.3. Here the Fall is related to sickness, suffering, pain and death. In the Demonstration On Repentance, Aphrahat considers repentance as a medicine. Those who become injured in the battle of life, need to reveal their wounds in order to be healed. Unlike Adam, those who sin should not be ashamed to confess their sins:

I also advise you who are stricken not to be ashamed to say that we have been overpowered in the battle. Take the priceless medicine and repent and live before you get killed. I remind you, physicians, about what is written in our wise Physician’s books that He has not stopped repentance. After Adam had sinned, He called him to repentance, saying: Where are you, Adam? And [Adam] hid his sin from the One Who examines the heart; and he laid the blame on Eve who had led him astray. And because he did not



Even though the Demonstrations are addressed in general to one of Aphrahat's friends, here he addresses the 'physicians' (ܠܗܩܕܝܫܐ) who are the leaders, priests or bishops of the faithful people, and likewise the ܚܕܝܬܐ. Nevertheless, it is the Lord Who is 'our Physician' (ܠܗܩܕܝܫܐ) Whose 'priceless medicine' (ܠܗܩܕܝܫܐ) is given in the Bible, as for example through the narrative about Adam. Although Adam was disobedient to the Lord's commandment, God offered him repentance when he asked him: 'Where are you Adam' (Gen 3:9: ܐܝܬܐ ܕܐܕܡ). If Adam had accepted repentance as the 'priceless medicine' (ܠܗܩܕܝܫܐ), he would not have been punished with death. However, rejecting repentance from 'our wise Physician' (ܠܗܩܕܝܫܐ) is a further sin that increases the wounds and pains.<sup>95</sup>

[illegible]

<sup>95</sup> *Aphr* 14.42: ܐܒܐ ܠܗ :ܕܥܬܝܢ ܡܝܬܐ ܡܠ ܚܝܐ ܠܗ ܝܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܕܐܒܐ ܠܗ ,ܕܐܬܝܬ ܠܗ :ܡܬܬܬܝܦ ܡܠ ܚܝܬܐ :ܚܬܬܬܐ ܝܬܕܝܡܚܐ (Gen 3:12). Cf. R. J. Owens, *The Genesis and Exodus Citations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage* (Leiden 1983), 63-62.

<sup>96</sup> The term ܠܚܝܬܐ reflects a life with sexual abstinence which required a special charism. Although Aphrahat and Ephrem were ܠܚܝܬܐ and lived the consecrated life, they affirm and approve marriage (*Aphr* 6.3-4; 18.8; *Haer* 45.6-10; *Virg* 5.14). For works on early Syriac monasticism see A. Adam, 'Grundbegriffe des Mönchtums in Sprachlicher Sicht', *ZKG* 65 (1953-54), 209-39; - E. Beck, 'Ein Beitrag zur







The virgins and those who live a consecrated life are not cursed. As the curse does not effect everyone necessarily, so too everyone has the opportunity to escape from it to a certain degree. Humankind suffered under the curse, but the curse was not performed completely. Although Adam and Eve were persuaded by the enemy and ate from the fruit and were cursed, they were saved from the promise of the curse. In the Demonstration On the Vinecluster, Aphrahat says:

And for men who had previously taken hold of many scourges, because of disorderly and harmful knowledge, the curse's promise was torn apart through this resource of healing. When the enemy realised [this], he was ashamed a little in his mind, and his plots came to an end, and he was wroth about the fruit and those who ate it. And they received the annulment of the curse in their bodies. And the wisdom of truth overcame the Evil One's deceitfulness. And those who ate the fruit were preserved as a vinecluster in the bunch. And because of the blessing, the whole bunch was preserved until the time which is determined by the Most High will be fulfilled, and the fact that He was patient with them concerning the decree upon the rest of the bunch, [yet] they were not willing to repent through the power of the blessing so that they might ripen and become sweet from the bitterness that they had received, and would be partakers of the fruit's sweetness seeing that the plant is being cultivated by the Vinedresser's wisdom, though for a long time it had been deprived of the help and recognition of the gift of healing.<sup>100</sup>

[illegible]







And why did he say about the seers and diviners that they will be ashamed and cover their lips (Mic 3:7)? This is the wound without any healing. In the Law it is written: If there is a leper in Israel, he should cover his lips, and his clothes must be tattered and his head

<sup>104</sup> Cf *Aphr* 9.2: כחל וסוס חסדו רב: חסדו רב חסדו רב חסדו רב  
 דכר.

[illegible]







And behold, when Gehazi, Elisha's servant, inclined his mind toward this world and desired possessions, a wife and children, Elisha told him: Is this the time to gain wealth, vineyards and olive gardens? Because you did this, Naaman's leprosy will clothe Gehazi and all his family (2 Reg 5:26-27).<sup>110</sup>

In the Demonstration On the Persecution, the prophet Elisha is compared to Jesus. While Elisha had only made one person come back to life, Jesus gave life to all humankind.<sup>111</sup> In the following

[illegible]







#### 2.3.1.4 Uz<sup>3</sup>ah and the Ark of the Lord (2 Sam 6:6-7)

In Demonstration 14, Aphrahat refers to Uzzah who reached out his hand and took hold of the Ark of God. God struck him down for he dishonoured God's Ark (2 Sam 6:6-7). Aphrahat takes this event as an example of someone who acts presumptuously towards the Lord. Those who do not honour God's Ark will be afflicted with 'bitter pains' (ܠܥܒܪܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ) as the Philistines were struck by the Lord (1 Sam 6:1-7:14). The phrase 'bitter pains' (ܠܥܒܪܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ) appears in parallel to 'evil wounds' (ܠܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ).<sup>117</sup>

<sup>115</sup> The term ‘to restore’ (መመልሰ) appears in 2 Kgs 20:7. 2 Kgs provides some more terms: verse 1 and 12 have ‘become sick’ (ጠፍቶ), whereas verse 5 and 8 has the term ‘to heal’ (መረገ) 2 Kgs 20:5: ስለዚህ ለመረገ; 2 Kgs 20:8: ለመረገ.

[illegible][illegible]















Woe to [you], foolish shepherds; you clothe yourself with pure wool, you eat the meat of fatlings and you do not shepherd the flock: You have not healed the sick or bound up the injured; you have not strengthened the weak, and you have not gathered the lost and scattered (cf. Ez 34:2-4, 9-12, 18-19).<sup>124</sup>

#### 2.3.1.9 Malachi (Mal 1:14)

The term **מַיִס**, attributed to an animal and not to people, is used in Malachi. Aphrahat quotes it in Demonstration 4 saying: ‘listen to the prophet what he is saying: “cursed is the cheat who has a good

[illegible][illegible][illegible]







And our Saviour said this to everyone who drew near to Him: it should happen to you according to your faith. When the blind man drew near to Him, He said to him: do you believe that I can heal you (Mt 9:28)? The blind man responded: yes, my Lord, I believe. And his faith opened his eyes. And He said to the one whose son was sick: believe and your son will live. He answered Him: I believe, my Lord, help my weak faith (Mk 9:22, 26). And his son was healed through his faith. The centurion's servant was also healed when he approached Him in faith, since he said to our Lord: say Your word and my servant will be healed through it. And our Lord wondered at his faith, and it happened to him according to his faith (Mt 8:8-10). And also while the elder of the Synagogue besought Jesus concerning his daughter, He said to him: just believe and your daughter will live. And he believed and his daughter was revived and rose (Mk 5:23, 36). And when Lazarus died, our Lord said to Martha, if you believe, your brother will rise. Martha responded to Him: yes my Lord I believe. And He raised him after four days (Jn 9:23, 27).<sup>130</sup>

[illegible]







us 'healed' (ܡܫܬܪܦܐ) the centurion's servant (Mt 8:8-13). He  
d' (ܪܥܝܐ) the woman with the haemorrhage (Mk 5:29) and  
' (ܥܝܢܐ) the eyes of the blind (Mt 9:30). Concerning the  
s, in Demonstration 1.17 Aphrahat says: 'and they shall lay  
nds over the sick, and they will be healed' (ܡܫܬܪܦܐ  
ܡܫܬܪܦܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ), whereas here the  
pain' (ܥܝܢܐ) and 'sickness' (ܡܫܬܪܦܐ) appear: 'they  
power and authority over every pain and sickness' (ܡܫܬܪܦܐ  
ܡܫܬܪܦܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ). This power is not limited  
the disciples, but is also given to 'us through them'.<sup>135</sup> The  
ckness' (ܡܫܬܪܦܐ) is linked with the Canaanite woman's  
r (Mt 15:28). Concerning the man who was 'sick' (ܡܫܬܪܦܐ)

135 *Aphr* 2.20.







15:1: **ܐܨܬܝܢ ܫܠܡ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ**). This sentence is followed with the quotation from the Epistle to the Hebrews: ‘the one who is lame shall not be disabled but healed’ (Hebr 12:13: **ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ**).<sup>140</sup> Helping a sick person is not just bearing with him his sickness, but more: he needs to be ‘healed’ (**ܡܫܝܚܐ**). For Aphrahat, repentance is a way of healing.<sup>141</sup>

Here Aphrahat refers to 1 Cor 1:27-30: 'And the Apostle said: God chose the foolish people of the world in order to make the wise ashamed through them; and he chose the sick in order to make the strong ashamed through them.'<sup>142</sup> While strength, power and knowledge count in the eyes of this world, in the eyes of the Lord they are vain for they can harm man. Here Aphrahat mentions some biblical figures and what has happened to them because of their physical health and beauty: the result was spiritual sickness of pride and haughtiness.

body and the pain it can experience, he quotes from Rom 7:5: 'when we were flesh, the pains of sin were at work in our limbs, so that we might be fruits for death'.<sup>143</sup> Even though pains, caused by sin, dwell in humankind, people are able to think about spirituality. Paul is used as an example: he thought and talked magnificently about the soul and the Spirit of God. As long as people dwell in

[illegible]

<sup>141</sup> *Aphr* 7.12.

ለሕዝብ ጥላቻ መሠረት ለሚገኝ ስራ ማድረግ ይቻላል።

കർമ്മ കമ്മിറ്റി: കമ്മിറ്റി അംഗങ്ങൾ.







**7.2** All pains have medicines, and they can be healed, if the wise physician finds them. And those who are struck in our contest have repentance as medicine which they put on their ulcers and they will be restored. Oh physicians, disciples of our wise Physician, receive this medicine through which you will restore the wounds of the sick. When the wise physician is found for the fighters who have been stricken in the war by the hands of the one who fights against them, he devises their healing in order to restore the wounded. And after the physician has restored him who was stricken in the war, he will receive gifts and honour from the king. Likewise, my beloved, you ought to give repentance as medicine to the one who has laboured in our contest and the enemy overcame him and struck him, if the stricken one feels great contrition; because God does not reject the penitent. The prophet Ezekiel said: "I am not willing to let a sinner die, but wish he might repent from his evil way and be saved" (Ez 33:11; cf. 18:23, 32).<sup>146</sup>

**7.3** The one who has been stricken in the war is usually not ashamed to entrust himself to a wise physician's hands for the war has overcome him and he was stricken. And once he has been healed, the king does not reject him, but he will reckon and count him in his army. Likewise, the one whom Satan wounds ought not

[illegible]















Nonetheless, although the power of sin is defeated in Jesus' victory, something of it has remained. Since Adam's transgression, sin reigns on earth and 'wounds' (جرح), 'strikes' (ضرب) and 'has killed' (مهلك) many. After sin has been killed on the cross, its power was at an end, but not its 'sting' (دسمه) that still exists and 'pierces' (أخى) man. Sin's sting will finally be extinguished for ever on the last day of judgment.<sup>153</sup>

ሰላም ነፊ ስለመታዘን ይኸውን ጥያቄ አድርጎናል፡፡  
 መስጠት፡፡ ስለዚህም በተጨማሪም እነዚህን ጥያቄዎች  
 አድርጎናል፡፡ Aphrahat's first quotation from Paul is from 2 Cor  
 5:21. Then in the loose allusion to Col 2:14, strictly what Christ nailed to  
 the cross was not 'sin' but the **ጥያቄ**.

[illegible]

In this context Aphrahat does not discuss what Jesus' victory precisely means. Nor is what sin's sting means widely illustrated. However, attention is drawn to the fact that people still suffer under sin and they, metaphorically speaking, get wounded and pricked. Aphrahat certainly knows 1 Cor 15:55-56: 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O Sheol, is your sting? The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the Law' (**ܕܡܐ ܟܥܠܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ**). However, Paul does not use the verb **ܕܡܪܝܬܐ** along with **ܕܡܪܝܬܐ** as Aphrahat does. The term **ܕܡܪܝܬܐ** is further used in Act 9:4; 26:14.







In Aprh 7.4, the author speaks of the whole camp of the army as being comparable to the believer community. If some of them get injured and wounded, all of them should try to heal the wound and not reveal it to their enemy who is Satan. Again, this means sinners should not be blamed and disgraced for their wickedness, so that they will be caused to do further evil deeds. The defeat of

[illegible][illegible]







The term ‘ulcer’ (ꠘꠞꠦ꠳) also appears in the Demonstration On Humility where Aphrahat presents ‘anger’ (ꠘꠞꠦ꠳ꠞ) in contrast to ‘humility’ (ꠘꠞꠦ꠳ꠞꠞꠞ). While humility causes man to live peacefully and bear good fruit, anger causes an ‘ulcer’ (ꠘꠞꠦ꠳). Therefore, the person addressed is advised not to become angry and express this anger on his lips.<sup>172</sup> The speech and words caused by anger are like an ulcer, and they make man unclean. While the singular is used metaphorically here, in Demonstration 20, the plural appears in its physical sense. When Aphrahat refers to the episode of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31) to explain the parable of the rich fool (Lk 12:13-31), he uses this term once in its simple plural form (ꠘꠞꠦ꠳ꠞ) and twice with a suffix-ending (ꠘꠞꠦ꠳ꠞꠞ).<sup>173</sup> Both forms are taken from Luke. When Jesus speaks about Lazarus’ ulcers, he says: ‘even the dogs came and licked his ulcers’.<sup>174</sup> Aphrahat explains the parable allegorically. Referring to Moses (Dtn 4:7; 6:10-13), the Hebrews are identified with the rich man,<sup>175</sup> whereas Jesus is identified with the poor man

[illegible]

173 *Aphr* 20.7-8.

[illegible]















However, the verb ‘to heal’ (ܥܠܡ) is used more with the term ‘physician’ (ܥܠܡܐ). If the Samaritan who is called the physician can be identified with the Lord, then the term ‘to heal’ (ܥܠܡܐ) is related to the Lord as ‘the Physician Who took two dinars by

[illegible]















### 2.3.2.8 *Conclusion*

Aphrahat shows clearly that he is not only familiar with both Old and New Testament, but is also aware of the biblical aspects of healing and sickness. He draws attention to a number of biblical passages which provide healing imagery and incorporates them in his Demonstrations in order to support his arguments.

In a Christian spirit, Aphrahat is basically concerned about the spiritual life of the faithful and their salvation. Based on holy Scripture, Aphrahat tries to provide a plausible explanation of a right way of life for Christians, and warns them to be aware of the invisible spiritual war against the enemy of humanity, Satan and the Evil One; i.e. sin. The metaphor of war, including wounding and healing, between nations and countries, serves as an ideal image for Aphrahat to place human life after the Fall. All pains, suffering, sicknesses and death experienced in human life are related to the curse of man's Fall from Paradise. Although the curse has never been performed completely, and sin has been killed on the Cross through Jesus' crucifixion, sin's sting is still present in human life and pierces man. Apart from Jesus Christ Who was not wounded and won the battle against Satan, death, and sin, everyone can be hurt to a certain extent in the fight against man's enemy.

Mankind gets wounded in the spiritual war, but God has provided repentance as medicine through His chosen people. In order to be healed, both the chosen people in authority, i.e. spiritual leaders, priests and bishops, and the wounded soldiers, are advised to make use of this heavenly medicine, that is freely given in the Bible and in the Church's sacraments. The spiritual leaders of the Christian community - in particular Aphrahat might be addressing those of the **ܥܕܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ** - are explicitly compared to ordinary medical physicians whose function is to heal the wounded wisely. Likewise they are compared to shepherds who care about the sheep, as this metaphor is used by Ez 34. In turn the wounded have to reveal their wounds to the wise physicians. Spiritually they will be healed if they confess their sin, repent with contrition (**ܕܥܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ**) and pray and have faith.

Aphrahat uses the term 'gangrene' to make an emphatic warning about the danger of being wounded twice in the same place. Even if this wound is healed, old scars will stay. This would be caused by repeated sinful acts and immoral life. Those who are baptised, or those who gave their vows to live a consecrated life (in



the community of **ܕܩܪܝܬܐ ܡܫܚܐ**) should not sin repeatedly. Even though repentance can heal, repeated sinful acts may not be forgiven.

Aphrahat's concern is for the individual and whole community; both are related and cannot be separated. The faithful community is compared to the whole body, or, using the metaphor of a war, it is compared to a camp or army. If any of the body's limbs or army's soldiers is hurt and defeated, then the whole body or army is affected.

Thus, with these metaphors, Aphrahat echoes Christ's message to his contemporaries to take spiritual war seriously. He encourages spiritual leaders and individuals to make use of the spiritual medicine provided in Scripture and the Church's sacraments. In an unusual interpretation given to the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, receiving Holy Communion is compared to a loyal and faithful dog who licks his owner's ulcers.



# 3

## EPHREM'S HEALING TERMINOLOGY

This chapter discusses the most significant terms related to sickness and healing. Basically it shows which terms Ephrem most frequently uses, what he employs with them and how he uses them. At the beginning of each term, attention is drawn to the appearance of these significant terms in the Bible, and it is emphasized where Ephrem refers to Scripture and how he develops the meaning and use of healing and sickness terminology.

### 3.1 Terms Related to Sickness

The following terms are studied here: all terms based on **ܡܝܫܬܪ**, 'to become sick', **ܠܥܪܐ**, 'pain', **ܠܥܬܐ**, 'to strike, wound', **ܠܬܠܥ**, 'to swallow, be struck' and **ܝܫܬܐ**, 'to break, fracture'. Some further terms are also dealt with: **ܠܥܬܐܝܬܐ**, 'bruises, sores', **ܠܥܬܐܝܬܐܝܬܐ**, 'pus', **ܠܥܬܐܝܬܐܝܬܐ**, 'hurts', **ܠܥܬܐܝܬܐܝܬܐ**, 'ulcer', **ܠܥܬܐܝܬܐܝܬܐ**, 'scars' and **ܠܥܬܐܝܬܐܝܬܐ**, 'gangrene'.

#### 3.1.1 **ܡܝܫܬܪ** and Related Terms

In the Peshitta Old Testament, the verb **ܡܝܫܬܪ** appears frequently with the verb 'to die' (**ܡܝܬܐ**) and emphasises physical sickness in old age and consequent death. The phrase **ܡܝܫܬܪ ܡܝܬܐ** occurs first in relation to Abraham in Genesis 25:8 and 25:17; later it is used for Isaac (Gen 35:29), Jacob (Gen 49:33) and Elisha (2 Kgs 13:14).<sup>1</sup> While **ܡܝܫܬܪ**, along with **ܡܝܬܐ**, in these

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<sup>1</sup> Also with reference to Hezekiah, even though he did not die, it is said: 'Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death'; 2 Kgs 20:1; 2









In the New Testament, the term **מִיָּחִיד** or **מִיָּחִי** refers to various individual people such as Lazarus (Jn 11:1-6), the official's son (Jn 4:46), the centurion's son (Lk 7:10) and Trophimus (2 Tim 4:20); and it is used in the sense of a physical sickness. In Mt 26:41, where Jesus prays in Gethsemane, He says that the body is sick (**מִיָּחִי גַם כִּיָּלָא**). While in Mt 26:41 and in Mk 14:38 **מִיָּחִי** is attributed to the term **כִּיָּלָא**, in 2 Cor 10:10 it refers to **כִּשְׁמָל**. Acts 28:8 speaks of a particular physical sickness when it says 'he was sick from fever and dysentery'.<sup>11</sup> As we saw above in the Pentateuch, also in Phil 2:25 **מִיָּחִיד** leads to death: 'he was sick until death'.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Phil 2:25: **ἔδοξα** **ἔλθαι** **ἰσθῆναι**. For **ἔδοξα** see further Act 9:37.



In Lk 4:40, the phrase ‘the sick who were sick with various kinds of sickness’<sup>13</sup> could refer to both physical as well as spiritual sickness. In the sense of non-physical sickness **ṁṁṁṁṁ** or **ṁṁṁ** occurs clearly in the Epistles. Rom 4:19 speaks of Abraham who ‘did not become sick in his faith’ (**ṁṁṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁ**) for he believed ‘in hope against all hope’ ( **ṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁ**);<sup>14</sup> and he did not doubt the promise of God. Therefore, it says, ‘he was strengthened in his faith’ (Rom 4:20, **ṁṁṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁṁṁ**), which contrasts with the phrase **ṁṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁṁṁṁ**. 1 Tim 6:4 uses **ṁṁṁ** in the context of false doctrines: ‘he is sick with controversies and quarrels’ ( **ṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁ**). Here, too, **ṁṁṁ** contrasts with **ṁṁṁṁṁ** of 1 Tim 6:3. Any other teaching which is not based on the ‘sound/ healthy words of our Lord Jesus Christ’ ( **ṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁṁṁ**) corrupts the mind of the person who is then ‘sick with controversies and quarrels’. In the context of food sacrificed to idols, Paul uses **ṁṁṁ** together with **ṁṁṁṁṁṁ**: ‘for their defiled conscience is sick’ (1 Cor 8:7, **ṁṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁ**). Furthermore, 1 Cor 1:27 speaks of ‘the sick of the world’ (**ṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁṁṁ**) and Hebr 5:11 of ‘sick in obedience’ (**ṁṁṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁṁ**).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Lk 4:40: **ṁṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁṁ**. For **ṁṁṁṁṁ** **ṁṁṁṁṁ** see further Mt 4:24; Mk 1:34.

<sup>14</sup> For **ṁṁṁṁṁṁ** see Rom 14:1; Jas 5:15.

<sup>15</sup> Mt 25:36; Lk 4:40; 10:9; Act 20:35; Rom 14:2; 2 Cor 11:29; 12:10; 13:9; Phil 2:26. While with **ṁṁṁṁṁ** terms such as ‘demons’ (**ṁṁṁṁ**, Mt 10:8; Lk 3:15), ‘lepers’ (**ṁṁṁṁ**, Mt 10:8), spirit (**ṁṁṁṁ**, Lk 13:11) or ‘spirits’ (**ṁṁṁṁ**, Act 5:16), ‘blind, lame and paralysed’ ( **ṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁ**, Jn 5:3) and ‘weak’ (**ṁṁṁṁ**, 1 Cor 11:30) are linked; with **ṁṁṁṁṁṁ** terms such as ‘pain’ (**ṁṁṁṁ**, Mt 4:23; 8:17; 9:35; 10:1), ‘spirits’ (**ṁṁṁṁ**, Lk 6:18), ‘death’ (**ṁṁṁṁ**, Jn 11:4), ‘wounds and evil spirits’ ( **ṁṁṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁṁṁ**, Lk 7:2; 8:2), ‘insult and hardship’ (**ṁṁṁṁṁṁ ṁṁṁṁ**, 2 Cor 12:10), ‘devils’ (**ṁṁṁṁ**, Lk 9:1; Act 19:2) and ‘demons’ (**ṁṁṁṁ**, Mk 1:34) are used.



The healer of **ḥmḥ** or **ḥmḥs** is usually the Lord;<sup>21</sup> or those who have received power from Him.<sup>22</sup> As agents of healing the **ḥmḥ**, the laying on of the ‘hand’ (**ḥḥ**, Mk 6:5; 16:18; Lk 4:40; Act 19:12) and ‘oil’ (**ḥḥ**, Mk 6:13) are significant. The verb ‘to strengthen’ (**ḥ**) or the noun ‘strength’ (**ḥ**) may also be used in connection with **ḥmḥs**,<sup>23</sup> **ḥmḥ**<sup>24</sup> or **ḥḥmḥ**.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Lk 9:1; Rom 15:1; 2 Cor 12:9; Hebr 11:34.



While ܡܪ is often used with the terms ܪܡܝܬܐ<sup>26</sup> and ܠܡܝܬܐ,<sup>27</sup> the verbs 'to visit' (ܝܬܐ, Mt 25:36), 'to be restored' (ܕܡܠܝܬܐ, Lk 7:10; cf. Mk 16:8) and 'to heal' (ܡܪ, Lk 10:9) are only employed rarely in direct connection with the verb ܡܝܬܐ.

In the Pauline Epistles the term ܪܫܝܬܐ is used a number of times to denote the fallen human condition. Thus Paul speaks of the ܪܫܝܬܐ of the flesh (Rom 6:19; 8:26; Gal 4:13), and of 'our sick state' (ܪܫܝܬܐ, Rom 5:6; 8:26; Heb 4:15). Accordingly, Christ's incarnate state can be described as ܪܫܝܬܐ, when He was 'clothed in the sick condition' (ܠܒܝܬ ܪܫܝܬܐ, Heb 5:2). This metaphor for the incarnation is also found in 1 Cor 1:25 where 'God's [adoption of the human] sick condition' (ܪܫܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܝܬܐ) is 'stronger than human beings'.

In Ephrem, ܪܫܝܬܐ is the general human condition of spiritual sickness after the fall (as in Paul); in Parad 11.9 it is specifically said to have been brought about by Eve; its opposite is ܪܫܝܬܐ.<sup>28</sup> By contrast, ܠܡܝܬܐ is a particular state of sickness, whether physical or spiritual; brought about by such things as 'paganism' (ܪܫܝܬܐ),<sup>29</sup> 'error' (ܕܡܠܝܬܐ)<sup>30</sup> etc. 'Error' (ܕܡܠܝܬܐ) is able to 'grow strong' precisely because of the general human condition of ܪܫܝܬܐ.<sup>31</sup> Those affected are, for instance, a person who 'has become sick' (ܡܝܬܐ), or 'fallen into sickness' (ܠܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܝܬܐ),<sup>32</sup> and is 'sick' (ܪܫܝܬܐ), or 'lying in sickness' (ܠܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܝܬܐ).<sup>33</sup> The verbs 'to press hard' (ܕܡܠܝܬܐ),<sup>34</sup> 'to fall

<sup>24</sup> 1 Cor 1:27; 4:10.

<sup>25</sup> 1Cor 1:25; 1 Cor 15:43; 2 Cor 12:9.

<sup>26</sup> Mt 10:8; 14:18; Mk 3:15; 6:13; 6:15; Lk 9:2; Act 4:9; 28:9.

<sup>27</sup> Mt 4:23; 9:35; 10:1; Lk 5:15; 6:18; 7:2; 8:2; 9:1.

<sup>28</sup> Virg 4.10.

<sup>29</sup> Nis 21.18.

<sup>30</sup> Nis 34.9.

<sup>31</sup> Fid 60.13; 75.18; Nat 3.1; Parad 3.11; 11.9; Virg 4.10; 39.7.

<sup>32</sup> Nis 5.22; 21.18.

<sup>33</sup> Parad 3.18.

<sup>34</sup> Fid 68.22: ܠܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܝܬܐ.



<sup>35</sup> Nis 5.22: **ሥጢፍር ይባላል**; Nis 21.18: **ይህ ሥጢፍር**  
**ሥጢፍር**.

<sup>37</sup> Parad 8.5: **ṣṣṣṣṣṣ ḥḥḥ ḥḥḥ**.

<sup>39</sup> Virg 39.7:  $\kappa\theta\alpha\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$   $\mu\theta\epsilon\chi\alpha$   $\kappa\theta\alpha\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\tau\omicron$   $\mu\theta\iota\alpha$ .

41 Nis 43.10.

<sup>43</sup> Eccl 32.8: **ሕንጻው ሕጻን ሕጋዊ ስራ ሆኖ**.

<sup>44</sup> Eccl 2.19; 2.22; Fid 35.4. Fid 42.1 uses the term ‘honey’ (דבש).

<sup>46</sup> Nis 21:18: **സമീപം ഉപ, ന, ന്ന ഏകദേശം 150 മൈൽ.**

<sup>48</sup> Sog 1.29.

49 Lei 10.7.

<sup>50</sup> Iei 10.7: **സമീപമുണ്ടായ നഗരത്തെ നഗരം കല്പിച്ചു നമ്പര  
മുദ്രിപ്പു.**























sickness' (ܠܗܠܝܡܝܢ ܕܗܪܐ ܕܗܠܝܡܝܢ), e.g. 'He heals every pain and sickness among the People'.<sup>117</sup> The terms ܗܪܐ and ܠܗܠܝܡܝܢ are very close to each other. The difference can be described as following: while ܠܗܠܝܡܝܢ describes the kind of sickness from the physician's point of view, ܗܪܐ expresses the effect, experience and feeling of sickness from the patient's side, i.e. the pain and suffering. The verb 'to be restored/cured' (ܬܫܠܡܐ) is only used once with the term ܗܪܐ: 'every pain was cured'.<sup>118</sup> Based on Is 53:4, Mt 8:17 uses ܬܫܠܡܐ ܕܗܠܝܡܝܢ<sup>119</sup> in a moral and spiritual sense. Paul goes beyond the physical meaning of ܗܪܐ and speaks of 'the pain of sins' (Rom 7:5: ܗܪܐ ܕܬܝܒܐ). Because of sin, Rom 1:26 speaks of the 'shameful pains' (ܠܗܪܐ ܕܬܝܒܐ); Col 3:5 draws attention to sinful deeds as ܗܪܐ.<sup>120</sup>

Ephrem frequently uses the term ܗܪܐ in the context of Jesus as the One Who 'heals' (ܬܫܠܡܐ),<sup>121</sup> 'binds up' (ܬܫܠܡܐ),<sup>122</sup> 'chases away' (ܬܫܠܡܐ),<sup>123</sup> 'cuts away' (ܬܫܠܡܐ)<sup>124</sup> and 'cuts off' (ܬܫܠܡܐ)<sup>125</sup> the ܗܪܐ or ܗܪܐ ܕܗܠܝܡܝܢ.<sup>126</sup> Terms such as 'sickness' (ܠܗܠܝܡܝܢ),<sup>127</sup> 'bruises/sores' (ܬܫܠܡܐ),<sup>128</sup> 'pains' (ܬܫܠܡܐ)<sup>129</sup> and

<sup>117</sup> Mt 4:23: ܬܫܠܡܐ ܕܗܪܐ ܕܗܠܝܡܝܢ; cf. Mt 9:35; Mt 10:1; cf. Mt 8:17.

<sup>118</sup> Jn 5:4: ܗܪܐ ܕܗܠܝܡܝܢ. Jn 5:4 is not included in C and the best Greek manuscripts.

<sup>119</sup> Mt 8:17 (P): S has ܬܫܠܡܐ; C ܬܫܠܡܐ.

<sup>120</sup> Rom 1:26; Col 3:5.

<sup>121</sup> Dom 19; CDiat 16.8; Fid 15.7; Eccl 38.4 and the Refrain; Nis 11.3.

<sup>122</sup> Nat 17.7; Azym 20.18. In Sog 1.29, the verb 'to carry' (ܬܫܠܡܐ) is used.

<sup>123</sup> Fid 5.19. Nis 1.7 refers to Jonah.

<sup>124</sup> Azym 20.19.

<sup>125</sup> Eccl 25.8.

<sup>126</sup> Fid 15.7; Azym 20.18-19; Eccl 52.6; Nis 1.7; 38.4.

<sup>127</sup> CDiat 16.8; Sog 1.29.

<sup>128</sup> Nat 22.1.

<sup>129</sup> Parad 5.13.



‘thorns’ (ܚܩܬܐ)<sup>130</sup> are occasionally linked with the term ܠܡܚܕܐ. Although ܠܡܚܕܐ has the literal meaning of a particular ‘pain or disease’, Ephrem uses it in the sense of ܠܡܚܕܐ too, referring to the general state of sickness or being sick. Therefore, it is often difficult to differentiate strictly between the way Ephrem uses ܠܡܚܕܐ and ܠܡܚܕܐ.

Furthermore, Ephrem mentions a variety of ܠܡܚܕܐ. He speaks of ‘souls’ pains’ (ܠܡܚܕܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ),<sup>131</sup> ‘the body’s pain’ (ܠܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ),<sup>132</sup> ‘hidden pain’ (ܠܡܚܕܐ ܡܚܝܐ),<sup>133</sup> ‘first pain’ (ܠܡܚܕܐ ܡܚܝܐ),<sup>134</sup> ‘creation’s pains’ (ܠܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ),<sup>135</sup> ‘women’s pains’ (ܠܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ),<sup>136</sup> ‘freedom’s pain’ (ܠܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ)<sup>137</sup> and ‘Sheol’s pain’ (ܠܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ).<sup>138</sup> Beyond these, mainly in the hymns On Nisibis, Ephrem uses phrases such as ‘it is a real pain’ (ܠܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ),<sup>139</sup> ‘the pain that is customary among us’ (ܠܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ),<sup>140</sup> ‘the pain that the physician renewed’ (ܠܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ)<sup>141</sup> and ‘it is a great pain for us’ (ܠܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ).<sup>142</sup>

Obviously ܠܡܚܕܐ refers not just to the body, but also to the soul and all of nature. In Virginité 7.9, the body (ܡܝܬܐ) is described as ‘the source of pains’ (ܠܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ). Likewise, Virg 4.4 speaks of ‘bodies’ (ܡܝܬܐ) as the ‘vessels of pains’ (ܠܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ). Morally, in Eccl 25.8 ‘pride’ (ܠܡܚܕܐ) is

<sup>130</sup> Eccl 48.11.

<sup>131</sup> Nis 34.10; Iei 4.1; 10.6.

<sup>132</sup> Iei 10.6.

<sup>133</sup> Fid 38.7; Dom 19; Iei 4.1.

<sup>134</sup> CDiat 11.5.

<sup>135</sup> Sog 1.29.

<sup>136</sup> Virg 24.11

<sup>137</sup> Eccl 2.11.

<sup>138</sup> Nis 37.2.

<sup>139</sup> Nis 10.16.

<sup>140</sup> Nis 21.6.

<sup>141</sup> Nis 27.5.

<sup>142</sup> Eccl 1.5.



considered as the ‘cause of pain’ (ܟܪܐ ܫܠܡܐ); and because of sin ‘nature came to pains’ (ܠܚܒܐ ܕܝܗܝܬܐ ܟܪܐ).<sup>143</sup>

The ܟܪܐ needs to be healed. While terms such as ‘health’ (ܫܠܡܐ),<sup>144</sup> ‘medicines’ (ܕܡܝܬܐ)<sup>145</sup> and ‘physician’ (ܕܡܝܬܐ)<sup>146</sup> are often linked closely with the term ܟܪܐ, the ‘Medicine of Life’ (ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܝܗܝܬܐ) is only once directly linked with the term ܟܪܐ.<sup>147</sup> The ܕܡܝܬܐ and ܕܡܝܬܐ are contrasted with the ܟܪܐ and said to oppose them: ܟܪܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.<sup>148</sup>

Beside the Lord Who is the main Healer<sup>149</sup> of the ܟܪܐ, we also find the ‘remorse/compunction of soul’ (ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܝܗܝܬܐ),<sup>150</sup> ‘oil’ (ܕܡܝܬܐ),<sup>151</sup> ‘fragrance’ (ܕܡܝܬܐ),<sup>152</sup> ‘fasting’ (ܕܡܝܬܐ),<sup>153</sup> ‘the hand of grace’ (ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܝܗܝܬܐ) and ‘the hand of justice’ (ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܝܗܝܬܐ),<sup>154</sup> ‘His words’ (ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܝܗܝܬܐ)<sup>155</sup> and the words of the Apostles<sup>156</sup> as effecting their healing.

The passive participle ܟܪܐ is used in the Sermon On the Lord to describe the sick who are in need of a physician in general

<sup>143</sup> Fid 35.2; also see Nis 28.1 where Ephrem speaks of ܟܪܐ in plural.

<sup>144</sup> Dom 14; Virg 26.4; Nis 19.11; 26.5.

<sup>145</sup> Dom 19; 21; Virg 30.10; Fid 56.11; Iei 10.6; Eccl 38.4; 52.6.

<sup>146</sup> Dom 19; Fid 5.19; 56.11; Parad 11.9; Eccl 25.8. Nis 11.3.

<sup>147</sup> Epiph 5.14, which may not be by Ephrem.

<sup>148</sup> Dom 21; Virg 4.13; Nis 16.21.

<sup>149</sup> CDiat 16.8; Dom 14; 19; 21; Nat 17.7; 22.1-4; Sog 1.29; Fid 5.19; 15.7; Eccl 25.8 38.4 and the refrain; Nis 16.21; 34.10. Epiph 5.14 has ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܝܗܝܬܐ as ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܝܗܝܬܐ for ܟܪܐ; Virg 26.4 has ܟܪܐ; and Virg 30.10 ܟܪܐ.

<sup>150</sup> Virg 3.10.

<sup>151</sup> Virg 4.13; see also Virg 7.9.

<sup>152</sup> Parad 11.9.

<sup>153</sup> Iei 4.1.

<sup>154</sup> Azym 20.18; Nis 11.3.

<sup>155</sup> Eccl 52.6.

<sup>156</sup> Virg 4.4.















Ephrem uses the passive of ܠܡܫܝܬ twice in connection with doctrinal error. In hymn 15 On Faith, Ephrem considers any Arian who pries into the Son as ‘a limb that is wounded’ (ܐܡܠܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ), and he fears that this will harm the whole body if it is not healed immediately.<sup>173</sup> Furthermore, since this limb has been wounded (ܥܠܕ), ‘He who heals all our ills will cut it off and throw it out from the flock’.<sup>174</sup> Here the ‘limb’ (ܠܡܫܝܬܐ) that is wounded through prying into the Son, is in danger of spreading infection and so ‘harming the whole body’ (ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ). The verb ܠܡܫܝܬܐ which is used immediately after ܠܡܫܝܬܐ expresses the urgent need to heal the wounded limb. In hymn 10 On Fasting, the erring Israelites are ‘smitten’ (ܠܡܫܝܬܐ) by the Golden Calf, and ‘fasts’ (ܥܡܝܬܐ) are prescribed as the ‘medicine’ which will heal.<sup>175</sup> The verb was suggested by the Exodus narrative about the Golden Calf (Ex 32) where, however, the term ܠܡܫܝܬܐ is used with God as the subject: ‘And the Lord struck the people because they worshipped the calf Aaron had made’ (Ex 32:35).<sup>176</sup>

There are several significant verbs which are used together with ܠܡܫܝܬܐ. Firstly, the verb ‘to heal’ (ܠܡܫܝܬܐ) counteracts the effect of the ‘striking’. This applies in two passages already quoted.<sup>177</sup> When the subject of ܠܡܫܝܬܐ is God, His grace or His justice, the verbs ܠܡܫܝܬܐ, ܠܡܫܝܬܐ and ܠܡܫܝܬܐ point to the positive aspect of

<sup>173</sup> Fid 15.1.

<sup>174</sup> Fid 15.7:

ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܐܡܠܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ  
ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ  
ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ  
ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ

<sup>175</sup> Iei 10.4:

ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ

<sup>176</sup> Ex 32:35: ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܬܐ  
ܠܡܫܝܬܐ.

<sup>177</sup> Virg 1.3; Fid 15.7.



ܠܚܫܐ.<sup>178</sup> If the term ܠܚܫܐ is negative and its subject is the Serpent or Satan, the verbs ܠܠܐ and ܠܠܕ emphasise the serious and dire effect of wounding.<sup>179</sup> But the verb ܠܠܕ is also used in connection with Jesus, when it describes Him as the victim.<sup>180</sup>

The noun 'wound' appears frequently in both the singular (ܠܚܫܐ) and plural form (ܠܚܫܐܐ). In the *Commentary on the Diatessaron*, Ephrem describes the issuing of blood as the 'hidden wound of that wounded woman' (ܠܚܫܐܐ ܠܚܫܐܐ ܠܚܫܐܐ).<sup>181</sup> Ephrem also speaks of 'visible wounds' (ܠܚܫܐܐ ܠܚܫܐܐ) and a 'bodily wound' (ܠܚܫܐܐ ܠܚܫܐܐ) which are the object of healing by Jesus. The singular ܠܚܫܐ usually describes a particular wound, such as the wound of the woman with the haemorrhage (ܠܚܫܐܐ), whereas the plural ܠܚܫܐܐ is used in a general sense.<sup>182</sup>

Ephrem uses the term 'wounds' in connection with Adam (ܠܚܫܐܐܐ ܠܚܫܐܐܐ), where Adam is the victim and not the agent.<sup>183</sup> 'We' are also the victims when the term ܠܚܫܐܐ or ܠܚܫܐܐ is used.<sup>184</sup> Likewise, Jesus is the victim of the wound (ܠܚܫܐܐܐ).<sup>185</sup> But people can be the agent too: 'the wounds that those before effected' (ܠܚܫܐܐܐ ܠܚܫܐܐܐ ܠܚܫܐܐܐ).<sup>186</sup> By contrast, the Serpent is the agent in the phrase: 'the wound of the first Serpent' (ܠܚܫܐܐܐ ܠܚܫܐܐܐ ܠܚܫܐܐܐ).<sup>187</sup> The same is the case in the phrase

<sup>178</sup> Nis 11.7; Eccl 28.15. For the verb ܠܠܐ see below, chapter III, 2.4.

<sup>179</sup> CDiat 16.15.

<sup>180</sup> Nat 3.18: ܠܚܫܐܐܐ ܠܚܫܐܐܐ ܠܚܫܐܐܐ; CDiat 6.13: ܠܠܠܐ ܠܠܠܐ.

<sup>181</sup> CDiat 7.1.

<sup>182</sup> CDiat 7.9; 7.16; 7.20; Nis 74.14.

<sup>183</sup> CDiat 16.10.

<sup>184</sup> Nis 19.11; Nis 34.10; 34.12; Nat 22.3.

<sup>185</sup> Nat 3.18; Mt 27:14.

<sup>186</sup> CDiat 6.13.

<sup>187</sup> Nat 1.28; Num 21:8f.



‘the wound of death’ (ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ) where death causes the wound.<sup>188</sup>

In two passages it is a city which suffers from a ‘wound’, Edessa and Harran. Ephrem describes Edessa as speaking of ‘my wound’, referring to the time when the church in Edessa suffered badly under the Emperor Valens who assisted the Arians (ca. AD 365). Ephrem compares the city’s suffering with that of the woman with the haemorrhage.<sup>189</sup> Harran’s wound (ܐܬܝܠܬܐ), however, is considered along with that of Egypt and Babel as a ‘gangrene of idolatry’ (ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ).<sup>190</sup>

The passive participle of the Pa‘el has a nominal function on several occasions, often referring to specific people. Thus the masculine singular ܐܬܝܠܬܐ is used of the man who fell among thieves in the parable of the Good Samaritan (based on Lk 10:30 ܐܬܝܠܬܐ).<sup>191</sup> The feminine ܐܬܝܠܬܐ is employed to refer to either the woman with the haemorrhage (Lk 8:43-48; Mk 5:25-34),<sup>192</sup> or the sinful woman<sup>193</sup> in Luke 7:36-50. Ephrem uses the plural ܐܬܝܠܬܐ to refer to those in general who are in need of healing by Jesus the Physician.<sup>194</sup>

The passive participle is also occasionally used adjectivally. Thus, in connection with the episode of the Golden Calf, Ephrem speaks of ‘the wounded [Israelite] camp’ (ܐܬܝܠܬܐ

<sup>188</sup> Nis 74.14.

<sup>189</sup> Nis 27.5:

ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ  
ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ  
ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ

<sup>190</sup> Nis 34.5:

ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ  
ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ

<sup>191</sup> CDiat 16.24; Eccl 33.3.

<sup>192</sup> CDiat 7.1; 7.6.

<sup>193</sup> Dom 42: ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ  
ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ  
ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ  
ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ ܐܬܝܠܬܐ

<sup>194</sup> Dom 13; Nat 4.24; Nis 34.12.



ܡܚܝܬܐ).<sup>195</sup> Elsewhere Jesus is described as healing 'wounded minds' (ܬܚܝܬܐ ܡܚܝܬܐ).<sup>196</sup>

### 3.1.4 The Verb ܬܠܕ

The verb ܬܠܕ is often used in the Syriac Bible either with the sense of 'to swallow up, devour', or 'to be struck, smitten, beaten or wounded'. For the first time in the Peshitta Old Testament, ܬܠܕ appears in the narrative about Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:1-29), where the two angels 'struck the men who were at the door of the house'.<sup>197</sup> Even though the word ܬܠܕ appears in the sense of 'to strike' physically, the reason is sin (cf. Gen 19:15). In certain other passages too sin is the reason people are 'struck' or 'wounded'.<sup>198</sup> The one who 'strikes, wounds or swallows' can be Satan (ܬܠܕ; 1 Pet 5:8) or Sheol (ܬܠܕ; Pr 1:12), the earth (ܬܠܕ; Ex 15:12; Num 16:30-40; Dtn 11:6) or the fish (ܬܠܕ) as in the case of Jonah and the whale (Jon 1:17; 2:1). Surprisingly, in the Bible, death appears as an object of ܬܠܕ, and not as a subject (Is 25:8; 1 Cor 15:54). Therefore, in particular at baptism, the ܡܚܝܬܐ of every single person 'will be swallowed up' (2 Cor 5:4: ܬܠܕܐ). However, ܬܠܕ is also used in the sense of a physical 'wounding', as in battles and war (cf. Ex 15:9; 22:2; 1 Sam 26:10).

Ephrem uses ܬܠܕ in his hymns,<sup>199</sup> as well as in the Commentary on the Diatessaron<sup>200</sup> and Sermo on the Lord.<sup>201</sup> Dom 3 is the most significant passage in which the verb ܬܠܕ is developed in the context of the mystery of salvation through Christ's descent to Sheol from where He freed Adam and all those who were 'swallowed' by death. Christ's incarnation is explained in the context of becoming an object for death: Since death was

<sup>195</sup> Iei 10.4.

<sup>196</sup> Dom 42: ܬܚܝܬܐ ܡܚܝܬܐ ܬܠܕܐ.

<sup>197</sup> Gen 19:11: ܬܠܕܐ ܡܚܝܬܐ ܬܠܕܐ.

<sup>198</sup> Ex 15:16; Num 16:26; Jos 22:20; Jer 51:6.

<sup>199</sup> Nat 3.18; Fid 15.7; 28.11; Parad 3.14; Eccl 17.2; Nis 1.7.

<sup>200</sup> CDiat 6.13-14.

<sup>201</sup> Dom 3-5; 7.



In Parad 3.14, Adam appears as the victim, as he is compared with King Uzziah.<sup>209</sup> The cause of his being wounded is sin as he disobeyed the Lord's commandment. Likewise, the Arians are considered 'wounded' because of their sin. Consequently, Ephrem

<sup>209</sup> Parad 3.14: **𐎧 𐎠𐎢𐎡𐎹 𐎠𐎢𐎡𐎹 𐎠𐎢𐎡𐎹 𐎠𐎢𐎡𐎹 𐎠𐎢𐎡𐎹.**











In Nat 17.7, ܠܒܝܬ is used as a synonym to ܠܒܐ whose 'binder up' (ܠܒܝܬܐ) is the Lord. In Iei 4, ܠܒܝܬ refers to the mind which needs to be bound up (ܠܒܝܬܐ) through fasting.<sup>223</sup>

Also hymn 2 On the Crucifixion, Ephrem plays with the term ܠܒܝܬ while he uses it as a verb (ܠܒܝܬ) in a physical sense and as a noun (ܠܒܝܬܐ) in a metaphorical sense. The physical meaning is based on the Bible (Jn 19:36; Ex 12:46; Num 9:12) where a bone of the lamb should not be broken. However, according to John 19:36 the phrase ܡܐ ܠܒܝܬܐ ܠܒܝܬܐ ܠܒܝܬܐ refers to Jesus on the cross who 'binds up the fractured' (ܠܒܝܬܐ ܠܒܝܬܐ ܠܒܝܬܐ).<sup>224</sup>

In the hymns on Nisibis, ܠܒܝܬ appears four times along with ܠܒܝܬܐ. As a verb it is used in Nis 2.17 with the connotation of 'to fracture', in contrast to ܠܒܝܬܐ; the noun ܠܒܝܬ is the subject of both. The contrast between ܠܒܝܬ and ܠܒܝܬܐ, both as nouns, is provided in Nis 10.16 where the adjective ܠܒܝܬܐ expresses the bitter suffering of the city Nisibis. Likewise in Nis 14.2, ܠܒܝܬ refers to the wounds and grief at the city during the war. The one who binds up is Bishop Babu of Nisibis. Here, however, ܠܒܝܬ could also mean 'the state of being defeated'. In Nis 19.4, Ephrem challenges Bishop Babu to 'bind up the fractured sheep' (ܠܒܝܬܐ ܠܒܝܬܐ ܠܒܝܬܐ), based on Ez 34:4.<sup>225</sup> The responsibility of a bishop is not just to heal a physical fracture, but rather a spiritual one.

From the CDiat 2.25 and Fid 5.19, it is again clear that the term ܠܒܝܬ refers to spiritual fractures too, and not just a physical fracture, such as of bones. The term ܠܒܝܬ is also not limited to individuals. It can be used in a general sense, as when Ephrem speaks of 'our fractured state' (ܠܒܝܬܐ, i.e. mankind's),<sup>226</sup> or 'Adam's

<sup>223</sup> Iei 4.1: ܠܒܝܬܐ ܠܒܝܬܐ ܠܒܝܬܐ.

<sup>224</sup> Crucif 2.3.

<sup>225</sup> Nis 19.4.

<sup>226</sup> CDiat 2.25.



fractured state' (ܡܢ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ) that signifies the fractured state of all humanity.<sup>227</sup>

### 3.1.6 Some other Terms

#### 3.1.6.1 The Term ܐܬܝܬܐ

The term ܐܬܝܬܐ, meaning 'bruise, sore',<sup>228</sup> is in its sense very close to ܐܬܝܬܐ; but ܐܬܝܬܐ differs, somewhat in that it is the immediate consequence of being beaten or struck.<sup>229</sup> ܐܬܝܬܐ does not occur in the Bible at all. In the Old Testament the etymologically related is ܐܬܝܬܐ rendered with ܐܬܝܬܐ (Gen 4:23) or ܐܬܝܬܐ (Ex 21:25) in the Peshitta. Isaiah 1:6 uses ܐܬܝܬܐ along with ܐܬܝܬܐ and ܐܬܝܬܐ referring to physical wounds.

In the context of healing, Ephrem uses only the plural ܐܬܝܬܐ.<sup>230</sup> The verb ܐܬܝܬܐ that describes the act of healing is used four times in connection with ܐܬܝܬܐ.<sup>231</sup> Through the 'tears' (ܐܬܝܬܐ) and kisses (ܐܬܝܬܐ) of the sinful woman 'her bruises were healed'.<sup>232</sup> The term ܐܬܝܬܐ describes the sinful state of this woman; it does not refer to the corporal wounds, but rather to her moral and spiritual situation. Viginty 3.10 clarifies that ܐܬܝܬܐ can be used for inner spiritual and psychological wounds: 'penitence heals through its constancy our bruises'.<sup>233</sup> In this context ܐܬܝܬܐ is equivalent to 'pains' (ܐܬܝܬܐ). Hymn 22 On the Nativity accounts ܐܬܝܬܐ among ܐܬܝܬܐ and ܐܬܝܬܐ.<sup>234</sup> In Fid

<sup>227</sup> Fid 5.19.

<sup>228</sup> Cf. J. P. Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 125.

<sup>229</sup> Cf. R. P. Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus* I, 1185. The Hebrew has the same term ܐܬܝܬܐ; the Greek term is ελκος, 'wound, sore, ulcer'.

<sup>230</sup> Dom 42; 44; Nat 3.20; 22.1; Virg 3.10; Fid 5.19; Eccl 5.6.

<sup>231</sup> Dom 42; 44; Nat 3.20; Virg 3.10.

<sup>232</sup> Dom 42: ܐܬܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܐ; Dom 44: ܐܬܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܐ.

<sup>233</sup> Virg 3.10: ܐܬܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܐ.

<sup>234</sup> Nat 22.1.



5.19, the terms ܠܚܬܝܬܐ and ܠܚܬܝܬܐ<sup>235</sup> are also mentioned to emphasise the moral wounds and pains of ܠܚܬܝܬܐ.<sup>236</sup> Even though ܠܚܬܝܬܐ is related to ܠܚܬܝܬܐ in Fid 5.19 and to ܠܚܬܝܬܐ in Eccl 5.6, it does not lose its spiritual sense. The 'Physician' (ܠܚܬܝܬܐ) Who came down from heaven 'healed the bruises' (ܠܚܬܝܬܐ ܠܚܬܝܬܐ)<sup>237</sup> which implies wounds caused by sin, death or Satan.

### 3.1.6.2 The Term ܠܚܬܝܬܐ

The word ܠܚܬܝܬܐ, which means 'putrefaction, decay, rottenness, stink, pus and matter'<sup>238</sup> is not found in the Syriac biblical concordances, though the verb ܠܚܬܝܬܐ is often used.<sup>239</sup> This usually refers to flesh, body or physical limbs, in the sense 'to putrefy, melt and waste'.<sup>240</sup> The heart (ܠܚܬܝܬܐ)<sup>241</sup> and eyes (ܠܚܬܝܬܐ)<sup>242</sup> appear as the object of ܠܚܬܝܬܐ. Ezekiel uses ܠܚܬܝܬܐ twice together with <sup>243</sup>ܠܚܬܝܬܐ which implies that sin is the reason for ܠܚܬܝܬܐ.

Ephrem uses ܠܚܬܝܬܐ in the context of healing on several occasions. Epiph 8 uses examples from the Bible that symbolise baptism: Epiph 8.22 reminds us of Joshua, the son of Nun, who cursed the water of Jericho (cf. Jos 6:26); in turn, as a symbol of Jesus the water was blessed and healed, as the 'salt tears'<sup>244</sup> from

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<sup>235</sup> The term ܠܚܬܝܬܐ which refers to the physical as well as spiritual 'stains' or 'marks' is often used with the verb ܠܚܬܝܬܐ; for example in Dom 44: ܠܚܬܝܬܐ ܠܚܬܝܬܐ ܠܚܬܝܬܐ ܠܚܬܝܬܐ ܠܚܬܝܬܐ ܠܚܬܝܬܐ. Further see Dom 2; Fid 5.19; Eccl 26.1; 31.7; CDiat 10.8; Epiph 5.7-8; Parad 4.5.

<sup>236</sup> Fid 5.19.

<sup>237</sup> Nat 3.20.

<sup>238</sup> Cf. J. P. Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 615.

<sup>239</sup> Cf. 2 Sam 17:10; Sa 14:12; Jb 7:5; 10:10; Is 13:7; 19:3; 34:3-4; Ez 4:17; 17:9; 21:7; 24:11; 24:23; 33:10; Act 28:6.

<sup>240</sup> Sa 14:12: ܠܚܬܝܬܐ ܠܚܬܝܬܐ ܠܚܬܝܬܐ ܠܚܬܝܬܐ.

<sup>241</sup> Is 13:7; 19:1; Ez 21:7.

<sup>242</sup> Sa 14:12.

<sup>243</sup> Ez 17:9; 24:3.

<sup>244</sup> For 'salt' as 'dissolving' (ܠܚܬܝܬܐ) pus, see Aphr 23.49.



Mary 'were mixed with the water, and so the pus of our wickness flowed away (cf. 2 Kgs 2:20-22).<sup>245</sup> The abstract term **ܫܠܣܐ** implies the metaphorical sense of **ܫܠܡܐܬܐ**, so that the pus here is not physical, but spiritual. This is also the case in Nis 11, where Ephrem presents divine justice as a physician: 'its sharp medicine consumed the pus with its strong love.'<sup>246</sup> Likewise, in Eccl 52.4 the Lord is described as 'a pure Physician Who descends towards the ulcer so that His purity will heal the pus.'<sup>247</sup> Here the **ܫܠܡܐܬܐ** which needs a physician to heal it is linked with **ܦܫܐܝܬܐ**.<sup>248</sup> The term **ܡܫܠܡܐ** contrasts with **ܫܠܡܐܬܐ**, which is compared to **ܫܠܡܐܬܐ**. Thus, the healing of **ܫܠܡܐܬܐ** is similar to the act of purification. Ephrem emphasises the purity of God in contrast to the impurity of man, as he also does in Haer 33. The word **ܫܠܡܐܬܐ**, along with **ܫܠܡܐܬܐ**, **ܦܫܐܝܬܐ**, **ܦܫܐܝܬܐ**, **ܦܫܐܝܬܐ**, **ܦܫܐܝܬܐ** and **ܦܫܐܝܬܐ**, describes the impurity of man (i.e. in the sense of **ܫܠܡܐܬܐ**) that God wants to heal and purify. This action of healing and cleansing is related to the 'pure Physician' (**ܦܫܐܝܬܐ ܦܫܐܝܬܐ**), 'glorious Physician' (**ܦܫܐܝܬܐ ܦܫܐܝܬܐ**), and to the 'Medicine of Life' (**ܦܫܐܝܬܐ ܦܫܐܝܬܐ**). It is always this Physician Who approaches the **ܫܠܡܐܬܐ** to heal it.<sup>249</sup>

### 3.1.6.3 The Term **ܦܫܐܝܬܐ**

The word **ܦܫܐܝܬܐ** is worth mentioning as Ephrem uses it in the context of healing, even though it is not a technical term for sickness, illness, or disease. The term **ܦܫܐܝܬܐ** can mean 'harm, hurt, damage, injury, pain and destruction'.<sup>250</sup> There is no particular biblical passage that links **ܦܫܐܝܬܐ** immediately with healing imagery.

<sup>245</sup> Epiph 8.22.

<sup>246</sup> Nis 11.5: **ܫܠܡܐܬܐ ܕܥܝܢ ܦܫܐܝܬܐ ܡܫܠܡܐ ܦܫܐܝܬܐ**.

<sup>247</sup> Eccl 52.4: **ܦܫܐܝܬܐ ܦܫܐܝܬܐ ܫܠܡܐܬܐ ܫܠܡܐܬܐ ܦܫܐܝܬܐ ܦܫܐܝܬܐ**.

<sup>248</sup> The term **ܦܫܐܝܬܐ** is only here (Eccl 52.4) to be found in the context of healing.

<sup>249</sup> Cf. Haer 33.9-11.

<sup>250</sup> Cf. J. P. Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 339.



The Peshitta provides the verb ܠܗܡ with subjects, such as ܠܗܡܐܢܐ (Pr 8:36), ܠܗܡܐܢܐ (Pr 10:26), ܠܗܡܐܢܐ (Sa 3:1), ܠܗܡܐܢܐ (Act 10:38) and ܠܗܡܐܢܐ ܠܗܡܐܢܐ (Is 49:10). Apart from ܠܗܡܐܢܐ ܠܗܡܐܢܐ (Is 49:10) all the other passages imply spiritual harm through sinful deeds through the influence of evil. In Gal 5:17, ܠܗܡܐܢܐ and ܠܗܡܐܢܐ are contrasted as two rivals who 'harm' each other.<sup>251</sup>

Without referring to the biblical passages mentioned above or other verses using the verb ܠܗܡ, Ephrem uses the term ܠܗܡܐܢܐ; mainly in the plural to mean spiritual harm. In Virg 4.5, he speaks of 'healing of all hurts' (ܠܗܡܐܢܐ ܠܗܡܐܢܐ). This hymn compares 'oil' (ܠܗܡܐܢܐ) with 'Christ' (ܠܗܡܐܢܐ). The former naturally signifies the invisibility of the latter. As the oil naturally heals many kinds of physical 'hurts' (ܠܗܡܐܢܐ), and the people are 'healed' through it, so Jesus too was healing while He 'was driving out all hurts'.<sup>252</sup> ܠܗܡܐܢܐ ܠܗܡܐܢܐ is the object that needs to be 'driven out' and 'healed'. In Fid 15.7 the verb ܠܗܡ (in af'el) clearly contrasts with ܠܗܡܐܢܐ: the sick limb (i.e. the Arian) either 'will be healed' (ܠܗܡܐܢܐ) or 'will harm the whole body' (ܠܗܡܐܢܐ ܠܗܡܐܢܐ). In Eccl 25.8 ܠܗܡܐܢܐ and ܠܗܡܐܢܐ refer to the same thing: if the physician heals the ܠܗܡܐܢܐ, the hurt goes immediately. The source of the ܠܗܡܐܢܐ is nothing other than 'our evilness' (ܠܗܡܐܢܐ) which causes the ܠܗܡܐܢܐ, as well as the visible and invisible ܠܗܡܐܢܐ.<sup>253</sup> Finally, also Nis 11, uses ܠܗܡܐܢܐ in parallel to ܠܗܡܐܢܐ that can be healed by divine justice and mercy.<sup>254</sup>

<sup>251</sup> Gal 5:17: ܠܗܡܐܢܐ ܠܗܡܐܢܐ. ܠܗܡܐܢܐ ܠܗܡܐܢܐ. ܠܗܡܐܢܐ ܠܗܡܐܢܐ.

<sup>252</sup> Virg 4.7: ܠܗܡܐܢܐ ܠܗܡܐܢܐ.

<sup>253</sup> Eccl 32.1.

<sup>254</sup> Nis 11.3-4.



### 3.1.6.4 *Some Important Terms that are seldom used*

There are a few terms left which Ephrem uses occasionally. Firstly, the word ܠܡܥܐ appears only once in Ecclesia 52.4 in the context of healing. It is used as the object towards which the ‘pure Physician’ (ܠܡܥܐ ܡܥܪܐ) descends. The term ܠܡܥܐ has the sense of the ‘ulcer’ that has ܠܡܥܐܐܐܐܐ and so needs to be cleansed.<sup>255</sup>

Secondly, the term ܠܡܥܐ<sup>256</sup> is found in hymn 46 On Virginity and 5 On Faith. The former hymn speaks of the ‘imprint of scars’ (ܠܡܥܐ ܡܥܪܐ)<sup>257</sup> in the sense that the sins committed before baptism are easily forgiven, but those after need greater effort. Even though sins committed after being baptised can be forgiven and the wounds healed, a mark of the wounded place will stay like an ‘imprint of scars’.<sup>258</sup> On Faith 5.19 refers ܠܡܥܐ to ܠܡܥܐ when Ephrem speaks of ܠܡܥܐ ܠܡܥܐ in parallel to ܠܡܥܐ ܠܡܥܐ and ܠܡܥܐ ܠܡܥܐ.<sup>259</sup>

Finally, the term ܠܡܥܐ is used once in Nis 34.5 where Ephrem describes Egypt as a sick land and Harran as afflicted with a ‘gangrene’ (ܠܡܥܐ) that can not be healed; for even though its wound is healed, it will return again.<sup>260</sup>

## 3.2 Terms Related to Healing

Concerning healing the most significant terms are those based on the following roots: ܡܥܐ, ‘to heal’, ܡܥܐ, ‘to give medicine’, ܡܥܐ, ‘to be restored’, ܡܥܐ, ‘to bind up’, and ܡܥܐ, ‘to visit’.

<sup>255</sup> Eccl 52.4.

<sup>256</sup> Lev 13:2-43 and 14:56 are typical passages where ܠܡܥܐ, in singular and not plural, is frequently used. Also Is 1:6; 53:5 and 1 Pet 2:24 employ the term ܠܡܥܐ.

<sup>257</sup> Virg 46.25; 46.27.

<sup>258</sup> Virg 46.21-27.

<sup>259</sup> Fid 5.19.

<sup>260</sup> Nis 34.5.



### 3.2.1 ܡܫܚ and Related Terms

#### 3.2.1.1 *In the Syriac Bible*

The verb 'to heal' (ܡܫܚ) appears often in the Bible. The *paʿel* ܡܫܚ is mainly used in the context of the Lord's action.<sup>261</sup> Already in Gen 20:17, God (ܐܠܗܝܡ) occurs as the subject of ܡܫܚ, and humankind as object, such as the healing of Abimelech, the prophetess Miriam and the People. The Lord heals as a result of prayer.<sup>262</sup> In 2 Kgs 20:5, the Lord heard Hezekiah's prayer and promised to heal him from his sickness.<sup>263</sup> Prayer, as well as repentance and the whole way of life,<sup>264</sup> has a significant role in the context of healing and wounding. The subject of ܡܫܚ can also be the 'hands' of the Lord (ܡܫܚܐܢܐ), as in Job 5:18: where the verb ܡܫܚ is contrasted with ܡܫܚ, as ܚܕܐ with ܕܡܫܚ.<sup>265</sup>

<sup>261</sup> Gen 20:17; Num 12:13; Dt 32:39; 2 Kgs 2:21; 20:5; 20:8; 2 Chr 7:14; 30:20; Pr 14:23; Job 5:18; Is 19:22; 30:26; 57:18-19; Jer 3:22; 17:14; 30:13; 30:16(17); 33:6; Hos 6:1; 7:1; 11:3; 14:4(5).

<sup>262</sup> Gen 20:17: 'And Abraham prayed in the presence of God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his slave girls' (ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ). In Num 12:13, Moses asked God to heal his sister Miriam from her leprosy, and she was healed: ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ. In 2 Chr 30:20, the Lord heard Hezekiah, and 'He healed the People' (ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ).

<sup>263</sup> 2 Kgs 20:5: ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ. cf. 2 Kgs 20:8: ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ.

<sup>264</sup> Is 57:18-19: ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ. ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ. In Hos 6:1, the prophet appeals to the Israelites: 'Come, let us return to the Lord; He has torn us to pieces but He will heal us' (ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ), and later in, Hos 14:4(5), the Lord says: 'I will heal their backsliding' (ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ), as in Jer 3:22: ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܐ.

<sup>265</sup> Job 5:18.



Beside the Lord, certain people also appear as the agent of **שְׂרָא**; for example, the prophet Elisha healed Naaman from his leprosy,<sup>276</sup> or Sheerah who ‘healed the sick’, among whom was Ladan the son of Ammihud.<sup>277</sup> Likewise, the shepherds may be the

277 1 Chr 7:24-26: **ኦሕሴወሐ ስላወ ወሐ ወሐወሐደገ ስሐወሐ**  
**ኦሕሴወሐ ስላወ ስሐወሐ ወሐወሐደገ ስሐወሐ** :ኦሕሴወሐ  
**ገላወሐወሐ ስላወ ወሐወሐ ስሐወሐወሐ ወሐወሐ** (there is nothing  
 about healing in the Hebrew original). In turn, in Jer 6:14 and 8:11, the  
 prophets and priests, who should be able to heal, ignore their duties; Jer  
 6:14: **ኦሕሴወሐ ስላወ ወሐወሐ ስሐወሐ**.



subject of ܐܕܡ if they take their responsibility seriously, but often they do not.<sup>278</sup> In the same way, because of the Lord's judgment against Israel, a king 'is not able to heal' the sickness and sores of Ephraim,<sup>279</sup> and the people cannot heal Babylon.<sup>280</sup> Job calls his friends Zophar, Bildad and Eliphaz those 'who heal without anything' (ܐܕܡܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܝܬܪܝܐ)<sup>281</sup> for they blame him without a real reason.

As wisdom is supreme in the book of the Proverbs, its words are able 'to heal the whole flesh/body';<sup>282</sup> and the 'tongue of the wise heals'<sup>283</sup> too.

While the *ethpaeal* ܡܫܬܪܝܐ appears more often in the context of humankind, it is only used once in the context of 'water' that has been healed/cured.<sup>284</sup> It is used four times in Leviticus, in the context of the regulations about infectious skin diseases, such as 'ulcer' (ܡܠܥܬܐ),<sup>285</sup> 'wound' (ܚܬܡܬܐ)<sup>286</sup> or 'leprosy's wound' (ܚܬܡܬܐ ܕܡܠܥܬܐ).<sup>287</sup> It appears in the context of individual people being healed from their sickness, such as 'Naaman from his leprosy'<sup>288</sup> and 'Joram from the wound'<sup>289</sup> - even though he was not healed. It can also apply to a whole nation, such as those who were

<sup>278</sup> Ez 34:4: ܡܫܬܪܝܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܝܬܪܝܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܝܬܪܝܐ; cf. Sa 11:16: ܡܠܥܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܥܬܐ.

<sup>279</sup> Hos 5:13: ܡܫܬܪܝܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܝܬܪܝܐ.

<sup>280</sup> Jer 51:9: ܡܫܬܪܝܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܝܬܪܝܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܝܬܪܝܐ.

<sup>281</sup> Job 13:4.

<sup>282</sup> Pr 4:22: ܡܠܥܬܐ ܡܠܥܬܐ ܡܠܥܬܐ.

<sup>283</sup> Pr 12:18: ܡܠܥܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܝܬܪܝܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܝܬܪܝܐ.

<sup>284</sup> 2 Kgs 2:2: ܡܠܥܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܝܬܪܝܐ.

<sup>285</sup> Lv 13:18: ܡܠܥܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܝܬܪܝܐ.

<sup>286</sup> Lv 13:37: ܚܬܡܬܐ ܕܡܠܥܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܝܬܪܝܐ; cf. Lv 14:48: ܚܬܡܬܐ ܕܡܠܥܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܝܬܪܝܐ.

<sup>287</sup> Lv 14:3: ܚܬܡܬܐ ܕܡܠܥܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܝܬܪܝܐ.

<sup>288</sup> 2 Kgs 5:11: ܚܬܡܬܐ ܕܡܠܥܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܝܬܪܝܐ.

<sup>289</sup> 2 Kgs 8:29: ܚܬܡܬܐ ܕܡܠܥܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܝܬܪܝܐ; cf. 2 Kgs 9:15; 2 Chr 22:6.



circumcised at Gilgal,<sup>290</sup> or those who returned the ark to Israel.<sup>291</sup> However, healing cannot be achieved against the Lord's will. For example, when the Lord had afflicted man with tumours and festering sores because of disobedience, those who were afflicted could not be healed;<sup>292</sup> or if the Lord afflicts the knees and legs, then neither can they be healed.<sup>293</sup> Likewise, Babylon could not be healed because the Lord had proclaimed His judgement about her.<sup>294</sup> Anything that is in disagreement with the Lord is unable to be healed,<sup>295</sup> but if it is in accordance with the Lord's will then it can be healed, as in Jer 17:14: 'Heal me, o Lord, and I shall be healed.'<sup>296</sup> Likewise, man can be healed through the Lord, as in Is 53:5: 'and by His wounds/sores we will be healed'.<sup>297</sup> But, as Jer 15:18 emphasises, the wound would not be healed if it does not want to be healed: 'my wound is grievous and does not want to be healed'.<sup>298</sup>

The term **ሥዊድ**, singular, is used twice in Exodus (Ex 15:26; 21:19), Proverbs (Pr 13:17; 14:30), Jeremiah (Jer 8:22; 33:6) and once in 1 Chr 7:25. In the latter, Sheerah is the only woman who is called 'physician' (**ሥዊድ**)<sup>299</sup> Her function is described as healing sick people (**ሥዊድ ሥዊድ**). While Ex 21:19 speaks of an ordinary physician and his reward in the context of personal injuries,<sup>300</sup> Ex 15:26 presents the Lord as 'your Physician'

<sup>290</sup> Is 5:8: 'were in camp until they were healed' ( **ሥዊድ ሥዊድ** **ሥዊድ**).

<sup>291</sup> 1 Sm 6:3: **ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ**.

<sup>292</sup> Dt 28:27: **ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ**.

<sup>293</sup> Dt 28:35: **ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ**.

<sup>294</sup> Jer 51:8-9: **ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ**.

<sup>295</sup> Jer 19:11: **ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ**.

<sup>296</sup> Jer 17:14: **ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ**.

<sup>297</sup> Is 53:5: **ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ**.

<sup>298</sup> Jer 15:18: **ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ**.

<sup>299</sup> 1 Chr 7:25: **ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ**.

<sup>300</sup> Ex 21:19: **ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ ሥዊድ**.



















not need a physician'.<sup>339</sup> However, the need of a physician is mentioned in the second half of the verse: 'those who are suffering badly'.<sup>340</sup> The other passage, where ܠܡܪ is used, Jesus says: 'probably you will tell me this proverb, "physician heal yourself"'.<sup>341</sup> This seems impossible for an ordinary physician. Finally, in Col 4:14 Luke is called physician.<sup>342</sup>

The plural ܠܡܪܝܬܐ, 'physicians', is used in the context of the woman with the haemorrhage, in Mk 5:26 (ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ) and Lk 8:43 (ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ). The ordinary physicians on whom she spent all her money were not able to heal her. According to Mt 5:26, she actually suffered more because of them. These physicians contrast with Jesus who healed her, but He is not called Physician in the Gospel, apart from in the metaphorical phrase in Mt 9:12 and parallels (see above).

The verb ܠܡܪ, in *pa'el*, appears both in the Gospel and in the Acts is often used having as subject Jesus<sup>343</sup> or his apostles.<sup>344</sup> In Lk 5:17, the 'power of the Lord' (ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ) is the agent of the infinitive of 'to heal' (ܠܡܪܝܬܐ).<sup>345</sup> Furthermore, the infinitive is used in the question about healing on the Sabbath: 'is it allowed to heal on the Sabbath?'<sup>346</sup> The subject of ܠܡܪ may also be the noun ܠܡܪܝܬܐ, 'physician', as in the phrase: 'physician heal yourself'.<sup>347</sup> The way of healing might be through the laying on of the hand, as

<sup>339</sup> Mt 9:12: ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ; cf. Mk 2:17 and Lk 5:31: ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ.

<sup>340</sup> Lk 5:31: ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ; cf. Mt 9:12; Mk 2:17.

<sup>341</sup> Lk 4:23: ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ.

<sup>342</sup> Col 4:14: ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ.

<sup>343</sup> Mt 4:24; 8:7; 8:16; 12:15; 12:22; 13:15; 14:14; 15:30; 19:2; 21:14; Mk 1:34; 3:2; 3:10; 6:5; Lk 4:18; 4:40; 6:7; 6:19; 7:21; 9:11; 9:34; 9:42; 13:14; 14:4; 22:51; Jn 4:47; 12:40.

<sup>344</sup> Mt 10:1; 10:8; 17:16; 17:19; Mk 3:15; 6:13; Lk 9:1-2; 9:6; 10:9.

<sup>345</sup> Lk 5:17: ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ.

<sup>346</sup> Lk 14:3; Mt 12:10: ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ.

<sup>347</sup> Lk 4:23: ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ.



Jesus did;<sup>348</sup> or through oil, like the apostles.<sup>349</sup> In the case of Jesus, the object of healing could be either general and not defined, or it refers to individual people He has healed: Aeneas,<sup>350</sup> the demon-possessed man,<sup>351</sup> the centurion's son<sup>352</sup> or the official's son,<sup>353</sup> the man with a shrivelled hand,<sup>354</sup> the boy with an evil spirit,<sup>355</sup> a leper,<sup>356</sup> and the ear of a servant of the high priest.<sup>357</sup> The following undefined objects could refer to any kind of healing that Jesus performed: 'them' (אנ),<sup>358</sup> 'all of them' (הכלם),<sup>359</sup> 'many' (הרבה),<sup>360</sup> 'sick' (חולים),<sup>361</sup> or 'their sick' (חולייהם),<sup>362</sup> those of 'broken heart' (לב חסר),<sup>363</sup> 'all those who were in need of healing' (הכלם אשר צרכו לרפואה),<sup>364</sup> and 'those who have been harmed by Evil' (אשר נזקקו לרפואה).

<sup>348</sup> Lk 4:40: רפאנו את כל המכוסים; cf. Mk 6:5.

<sup>349</sup> Mk 6:13: רפאנו את כל חולייהם ואת כל המכוסים.

<sup>350</sup> Act 9:34: וישב אנה: רפאנו: רפאנו את אנה.

<sup>351</sup> Mt 12:22: וישב אנה: רפאנו את אנה.

<sup>352</sup> Mt 8:7: וישב אנה: רפאנו את אנה.

<sup>353</sup> Jn 4:47: רפאנו את אנה: רפאנו את אנה.

<sup>354</sup> Mk 3:2: רפאנו את אנה: רפאנו את אנה.

<sup>355</sup> Lk 9:42: רפאנו את אנה: רפאנו את אנה.

<sup>356</sup> Lk 14:4: רפאנו את אנה: רפאנו את אנה.

<sup>357</sup> Lk 22:51: רפאנו את אנה: רפאנו את אנה.

<sup>358</sup> Mt 4:24; 8:16; 13:15; 15:30; 19:2; 21:14; Jn 12:40.

<sup>359</sup> Mt 12:15; Lk 6:19.

<sup>360</sup> Mk 1:34; 3:10; Lk 7:21.

<sup>361</sup> Mk 6:5: רפאנו את אנה: רפאנו את אנה.

<sup>362</sup> Mt 14:14: רפאנו את אנה: רפאנו את אנה.

<sup>363</sup> Lk 4:18: רפאנו את אנה: רפאנו את אנה.

<sup>364</sup> Lk 9:11: רפאנו את אנה: רפאנו את אנה.







379 Lk 8:36: መካቲስ ቢሉ፡ ልዩ፡ ምሉእ ልሙሳዊና  
 ቢሉ፡ ልዩ ነገር፡  
 380 Jn 5:10; 5:13: መካቲስ፡ ምሉእ ልዩ፡  
 381 Jn 9:36: መካቲስ፡ ልዩ ቢሉ፡  
 382 Lk 8:2: ልዩ፡ ምሉእ ልሙሳዊ ምሉእ መካቲስ፡ ምሉእ ልሙሳዊ  
 ነገር፡  
 383 Mt 14:36; Mk 6:18; 6:56.  
 384 Jn 5:10: ልዩ፡ ምሉእ መካቲስ፡ ልዩ ልሙሳዊ ምሉእ ልሙሳዊ  
 ልሙሳዊ ልሙሳዊ ልዩ፡ cf. Jn 5:13.  
 385 Jn 9:36: ልዩ ምሉእ ልሙሳዊ ልሙሳዊ መካቲስ፡ ልዩ ቢሉ፡  
 386 Lk 8:2: ልዩ፡ ምሉእ ልሙሳዊ ምሉእ መካቲስ፡ ምሉእ ልሙሳዊ  
 ነገር፡  
 387 Act 4:14: ልዩ ነገር፡ ልሙሳዊ ልዩ ልሙሳዊ ልዩ ልሙሳዊ  
 መካቲስ፡  
 388 Lk 5:15: ልዩ ልሙሳዊ ልሙሳዊ ልዩ ልሙሳዊ ልሙሳዊ  
 ልሙሳዊ ልሙሳዊ ልዩ፡ cf. Lk 6:18.  
 389 Lk 8:2.  
 390 Lk 6:18: ምሉእ መካቲስ፡ ልዩ ልሙሳዊ ልሙሳዊ ልዩ  
 ልሙሳዊ ልሙሳዊ ልዩ ልሙሳዊ ልሙሳዊ ልዩ፡  
 ልዩ፡  
 391 Mt 14:36; Mk 6:56.



on the island Malta.<sup>392</sup> Beside Paul, the crippled beggar was healed through Peter and John,<sup>393</sup> whereas in Samaria the 'paralytics and cripples' were healed through Philip.<sup>394</sup>

### 3.2.1.2 *In Ephrem*

Ephrem uses the *pa<sup>ae</sup>l* ܡܪܝܬ<sup>395</sup> more often than the *ethpa<sup>ae</sup>l* ܡܪܝܬܐ.<sup>396</sup> The subject of ܡܪܝܬ can be the Lord, the prophets and disciples, as well as ordinary physicians<sup>397</sup> and other people. Also some natural products appear as the subject such as ordinary 'medicine' (ܡܪܝܬ) <sup>398</sup> and 'iron' (ܡܪܝܬ).<sup>399</sup>

When the Lord is the agent of ܡܪܝܬ, He may appear under different titles, such as 'Medicine of Life' (ܡܪܝܬ ܕܗܝܐ)<sup>400</sup> and

<sup>392</sup> Act 28:9.

<sup>393</sup> Act 4:14: ܐܡܢ ܕܡܪܝܬ ܕܡܪܝܬ ܕܡܪܝܬ ܕܡܪܝܬ ܕܡܪܝܬ ܕܡܪܝܬ.

<sup>394</sup> Act 8:7: ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ. 1 Pet 2:24, based on Is 53, refers the fact of being healed to the 'wounds' of Jesus: ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ. Jas 5:16 emphasises the power of prayer through which 'you will be healed': ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ. ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ. Finally, in Hebr 12:13, the term 'lame limb' (ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ) is related to ܡܪܝܬܐ too: ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ.

<sup>395</sup> CDiat 2.23; 5.19; 7.2; 7.6-7; 7.9; 7.12-13; 7.15; 7.21; 7.23; 7.27b; 10.7a; 11.7; 13.1; 13.3; 16.8; 16.10; 16.24; 16.32; Dom 21; 42; 44; Nat 1.28; 3.20; 21.12; 22.1; 23.11; Epiph 11.7; Virg 1.3-4; 3.10; 4.7-8; 14.11; 25.14; 26.6; 26.9; 34.3; 42.5-6; 46.15; 46.27; 49.15; Fid 2.15; 2.19; 8.12; 9.11; 10.6; 12.9; 36.1; 56.11; 75.18; Iei 4.1; 10.6; Crucif 3.18; Eccl 5.6; 26.1; 28.16; 38 Ref; 38.4 41.3-4; 43.6; 44.14; 52.4; Nis 6.1 27.2-3; 27.5; 34.1; 34.5; 34.7-12; 39.10; 46.8; 51.16; 74.14.

<sup>396</sup> CDiat 7.6-7; 7.10; 7.21; 7.22b; 7.24; 7.27b; 11.5; 11.7; 16.32; Dom 42; Nat 2.7; Epiph 8.22; Fid 15.7; Eccl 8.3; Nis 11.4; 34.9; 34.11.

<sup>397</sup> Nis 27.2; 34.12; 36.1; 51.16.

<sup>398</sup> Virg 49.15; Eccl 26.1: ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ.

<sup>399</sup> Fid 56.11: ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ.

<sup>400</sup> Nis 34.10; 74.14: ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ.



414 Fid 8.12.







Lord, the healing ability of the ‘physicians of the world’ ( **ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ** )<sup>428</sup> is limited.

As the object of **ḥṣṣ**, the term **ḥṣṣṣṣ** refers to the general wound of humanity through death; only the Medicine of Life is able to heal the ‘wound of death’ ( **ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ** ).<sup>429</sup> ‘Adam’s wounds’ ( **ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ** )<sup>430</sup> are the object of **ḥṣṣ**, as well as those whom Jesus healed: ‘the wounded person’ ( **ḥṣṣṣṣ** ),<sup>431</sup> ‘crippled’ ( **ḥṣṣṣṣ** ),<sup>432</sup> ‘paralytic’ ( **ḥṣṣṣṣ** ),<sup>433</sup> the blind and possessed man,<sup>434</sup> the man born blind,<sup>435</sup> the man who had been sick for 38-years,<sup>436</sup> ‘Peter’s mother-in-law’ ( **ḥṣṣṣṣ** ),<sup>437</sup> the ‘bruises’ ( **ḥṣṣṣṣ** )<sup>438</sup> of the sinful woman and the woman with haemorrhage ( **ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ** )<sup>439</sup> are all explicitly mentioned.

The object of **ḥṣṣ** generally refers to people, such as the Israelites,<sup>440</sup> the ‘living’ ( **ḥṣṣ** ),<sup>441</sup> ‘whole man’ ( **ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ** ),<sup>442</sup>

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( **ḥṣṣṣṣ**, Fid 2.15; 2.19.), ‘free medicine’ ( **ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ**, Eccl 5.6) and ‘spiritual medicinal herbs’ ( **ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ**, Iei 10.6.) are used as subject of **ḥṣṣ**.

<sup>428</sup> Nis 27.2; 34.12; Fid 36.1.

<sup>429</sup> Nis 74.14.

<sup>430</sup> CDiat 16.10; cf. Nat 22.1.

<sup>431</sup> CDiat 16.24; cf. Lk 10:36-37.

<sup>432</sup> Eccl 41.3: **ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ**.

<sup>433</sup> Nis 39.10: **ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ**.

<sup>434</sup> CDiat 10.7a: **ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ** (Mt 12:22).

<sup>435</sup> CDiat 16.32: **ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ**... (Jn 9:5-8).

<sup>436</sup> CDiat 13.1: **ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ**; CDiat 13.3; 16.32 (cf. Jn 5:5-12).

<sup>437</sup> Virg 25.14: **ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ** (Mt 8:14).

<sup>438</sup> Dom 44: **ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ**; see further chapter IV, 2.1.2.

<sup>439</sup> Virg 26.6: **ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ** (Mt 9:20; Mk 5:25; Lk 8:44); cf. Nis 27.3.

<sup>440</sup> CDiat 11.7: **ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ** (cf. Ps 107:20).

<sup>441</sup> Eccl 41.4: **ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ**.



‘all’ (ܠܐ) <sup>443</sup> or just ‘us’ (ܠܡܢ); <sup>444</sup> but it is also used for a particular object, such as ‘my lacerations’ (ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ) <sup>445</sup> or ‘my perturbation’ (ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ). <sup>446</sup> More often, terms from the sphere of sickness and medicine are used as object: ‘suffering of everyone’ (ܠܡܢ ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ), <sup>447</sup> ‘pain’ (ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ), <sup>448</sup> ‘pains’ (ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ) <sup>449</sup> or ‘our pains’ (ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ), <sup>450</sup> ‘the pains of souls’ (ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ), <sup>451</sup> ‘pains and sickness’ (ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ), <sup>452</sup> ‘our state of sickness’ (ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ) <sup>453</sup> or ‘all those who are badly effected’ (ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ). <sup>454</sup>

Some terms also distinguish between spiritual and corporal sickness, such as ‘visible limbs’ (ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ) <sup>455</sup> - for instance ‘eye’ (ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ) <sup>456</sup> and ‘ear’ (ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ), <sup>457</sup> -, ‘wounded minds’

<sup>442</sup> Nis 46.8: ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ.

<sup>443</sup> Fid 12.9: ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ; Eccl 28.16: ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ.

<sup>444</sup> Nat 21.12: ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ.

<sup>445</sup> Nis 6.1: ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ, i.e. Nisibis.

<sup>446</sup> Fid 10.6: ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ, i.e. the author.

<sup>447</sup> CDiat 16.8: ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ.

<sup>448</sup> Nis 27.5: ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ.

<sup>449</sup> Eccl 38.4: ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ.

<sup>450</sup> Eccl 38 Ref.: ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ.

<sup>451</sup> Nis 34.10: ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ.

<sup>452</sup> CDiat 16.8: ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ.

<sup>453</sup> Fid 75.18: ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ.

<sup>454</sup> Dom 42: ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ (Mt 9:12; Mk 2:17; Lk 5:31-32).

<sup>455</sup> Dom 21: ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ ܠܡܢܬܝܢܝܐ; cf. the sinful woman (Lk 7:36-50).

<sup>456</sup> CDiat 16.32; Fid 45.1-2; Iei 6.4-8 (Mk 10:46); Nis 51.16; see the man born blind (Jn 9:5-8).

<sup>457</sup> Crucif 3.18; Eccl 29.2-3; Nis 46.8-9 (Lk 22:51).



The subject of the *ethpaeel* መጽሐፍ is mainly general, such as ‘all’ (ሁሉ),<sup>462</sup> ‘thousands’ (ጠቂቶች),<sup>463</sup> and ‘man’ (ሰው);<sup>464</sup> or not specified such as ‘who ever’ (ሕጻን).<sup>465</sup> In CDiat 7, the author uses the personal pronouns as the subject of the passive verb.<sup>466</sup> From the medical sphere only the terms ‘her bruises’ (ጭቆናዋ) and ‘the wounded’ woman (ወግዳችን) are used as a direct subject of መጽሐፍ. Only a few sicknesses are explicitly mentioned from which people were healed: those are an ‘evil spirit’ (ጭንቀት ሥነ),<sup>469</sup> ‘pain’ (ቀዳሳ) and the ‘hidden sickness of the soul’ (ጭንቀት ሥነ ሥነ ሥነ).<sup>471</sup> The terms ‘voice’ (ድምፅ)

<sup>471</sup> Nis 34.9: *കുലം കയ്യെ കുമിറു പൂ നന്ന കേകുവ.*



and 'His hand' (ܡܝܢܐ)<sup>473</sup> occur as the medium through which healing was performed. 'Approaching' Jesus (ܐܝܬܐ)<sup>474</sup> and 'tears' (ܕܡܝܡܐ)<sup>475</sup> cause man to be healed, as well.

The term ܪܫܝܬܐ (feminine), 'physician',<sup>476</sup> is only three times attested in Ephrem's work, whereas the masculine ܪܫܐ is often used, either as a title for Jesus,<sup>477</sup> the patriarchs and prophets,<sup>478</sup> or when the author speaks of an ordinary physician<sup>479</sup> or compares the function and use of other things to a physician.<sup>480</sup> The feminine term ܪܫܝܬܐ describes either the Lord's justice<sup>481</sup> or Egypt's reputation in medicine.<sup>482</sup>

The term 'physician' (ܪܫܐ) is especially used for Jesus. Commenting on the healing miracles Jesus had performed, Ephrem describes Jesus as the Physician, par excellence; he calls Him the

<sup>472</sup> CDiat 16.32: ܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ.

<sup>473</sup> Nis 34.11: ܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ.

<sup>474</sup> CDiat 7.6; 7.24: ܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ.

<sup>475</sup> Com 42: ܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ. In Epiph 8.22, it is through the 'salt' (ܡܝܢܐ) that water was healed.

<sup>476</sup> Azym 20.19; Nis 11.3; 34.8.

<sup>477</sup> CDiat 10.10; 17.3; Dom 14; 24; 42; 44; 48; Nat 3.20; 22.3; Virg 25.13-14; 26.10; 30.11; 35.3; Fid 5.19; 12.9; C.Jul 1.9; Eccl 25.8; 28.16; 52.4; Nis 1.7; 6.1; 26.3; 27.3; 34.9-10; 40.2. In some of these it is not obvious to which person of the Trinity ܪܫܐ refers; for instance the praise in Nat 3.19 (ܪܫܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ) links ܪܫܐ clearly with the term 'God' (ܡܝܢܐ), but the rest of the stanza and almost all the hymn praises Jesus as the Son of God for His economy.

<sup>478</sup> Virg 49.1; 49.13-14; Nis 34.1-2; 34.7.

<sup>479</sup> CDiat 17.1; Dom 19; Nat 22.3; Nis 51.16; Eccl 7.5; 8.3; 28.17; Fid 56.12.

<sup>480</sup> Eccl 43.6; Parad 11.9.

<sup>481</sup> Nis 11.3: ܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ, i.e. ܡܝܢܐ. In Azym 20.19, it is the 'hand of the Lord's justice' that functions as a physician: ܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ.

<sup>482</sup> Nis 34.8: ܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢܐ ....



‘heavenly Physician’ (ܠܗܘܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ),<sup>483</sup> ‘wise Physician’ (ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ),<sup>484</sup> ‘great Physician’ (ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ),<sup>485</sup> ‘good Physician’ (ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ),<sup>486</sup> and ‘pure Physician’ (ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ).<sup>487</sup> He is the Physician of those whom He had healed either from their spiritual or their physical afflictions. Thus, He is called the Physician of the sinful woman (ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ),<sup>488</sup> Lazarus,<sup>489</sup> Peter’s mother-in-law,<sup>490</sup> ‘widow’ (ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ)<sup>491</sup> and the ‘blind’ (ܥܡܝܢܐ).<sup>492</sup> Since the function of this Physician, par excellence, is not just the healing of the individual, but of the whole of mankind, Ephrem presents Him as the Physician of ‘all’ (ܥܠܡܐ),<sup>493</sup> of ‘us’ (ܥܡܝܢܐ),<sup>494</sup> of ‘humanity’ (ܥܡܝܢܐ),<sup>495</sup> and of all ‘sinners’ (ܥܡܝܢܐ)<sup>496</sup> and wounded (ܥܡܝܢܐ).<sup>497</sup> His function is to heal all ‘bruises’ (ܥܡܝܢܐ)<sup>498</sup> and ‘pains’ (ܥܡܝܢܐ)<sup>499</sup> of man, and cut away

<sup>483</sup> Virg 25.13: ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ.

<sup>484</sup> Eccl 25.8: ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ.

<sup>485</sup> Nis 34.6: ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ, ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ.

<sup>486</sup> Dom 48: ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ.

<sup>487</sup> Eccl 52.4: ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ.

<sup>488</sup> CDiat 10.10; Dom 14; 44; 48.

<sup>489</sup> CDiat 17.3: ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ.

<sup>490</sup> Virg 25.14: ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ; Virg 25.13.

<sup>491</sup> Nat 26.10: ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ.

<sup>492</sup> Virg 35.3: ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ.

<sup>493</sup> Fid 12.9: ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ; Eccl 28.16: ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ.

<sup>494</sup> Dom 42: ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ.

<sup>495</sup> Nat 3.19: ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ.

<sup>496</sup> Virg 30.11: ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ.

<sup>497</sup> Dom 42.

<sup>498</sup> Nat 3.20: ܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ.



The verb 'to become' (ܠܡܫܠܡ)<sup>501</sup> draws attention to the relationship of Jesus with those to whom He 'became' a Physician. Many other verbs emphasise His action as a Physician: 'to heal' (ܫܡܥ),<sup>502</sup> 'to visit' (ܝܫܥ),<sup>503</sup> 'to open' (ܫܬܚ),<sup>504</sup> 'went out to go' (ܕܠܟܝܢ ܡܥܬܝܢ),<sup>505</sup> 'to cut' (ܕܝܠܥ),<sup>506</sup> 'to cut off' (ܡܥܬܝܢ),<sup>507</sup> 'to dry up' (ܕܝܠܥ),<sup>508</sup> 'to drive away' (ܕܠܥ),<sup>509</sup> 'to propound' (ܕܡܫܠܡ),<sup>510</sup> 'to show' (ܕܡܫܠܡ).<sup>511</sup> In particular, the verbs 'to have pity' (ܡܫܠܡ)<sup>512</sup> and 'to have mercy upon' (ܡܫܠܡܝܢ)<sup>513</sup> signify the spiritual side of the divine Physician.

<sup>513</sup> Nis 34.10: **መጠጥረ ስራዎች** ማጠቃለያ, ጠቃሚ.



Jonah as the ‘circumcised physician’ (כִּיָּן כְּבוֹק)

In some other passages, Ephrem also speaks of an ordinary physician whose function is to go ‘where suffering exists’<sup>518</sup> and to reveal the hidden pain with his medicines.<sup>519</sup> There is no physician who stops the wounded from coming to him.<sup>520</sup> Even though every one trusts the ‘book of medicines in which a physician reads’,<sup>521</sup> nevertheless, Ephrem warns people to be critical concerning the deeds and results of the physician’s work: it is not his medicines that count, but rather his assistance.<sup>522</sup> Likewise, it is important to pay attention to the reputation of each individual physician, before trusting him.<sup>523</sup> Ephrem puts the ironical question: can a physician who is blind in himself increase light for others?<sup>524</sup> The aspect of light or the eye is also incorporated in Nis 51.16 where Ephrem says: ‘and a physician does not heal an eye with the hated sting of a

515 Virg 49.1.

517 Parad 11.9.

<sup>519</sup> Dom 19: ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ

<sup>520</sup> Dom 42: മരിച്ചവർക്കു വേണ്ടി കർത്താവേ ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുക.

<sup>522</sup> Eccl 28.17: **ክርክር ስላገደኝ ስላገደኝ**

<sup>523</sup> Nat 22.3: כחמ ח חסר נא imdו mו כחמ ח חסר נא  
ולא



scorpion'.<sup>525</sup> While an ordinary physician is able to amputate a limb, in contrast, the Lord can cut off a limb and replace it again in the same place.<sup>526</sup>

The plural **ܚܕܝܐܢ** is either used for ordinary physicians or for the prophets. It occurs mainly in the hymns On Nisibis.<sup>527</sup> In Nis 27.2, Ephrem speaks of ordinary 'physicians' (**ܚܕܝܐܢ**) in the context of the woman with the haemorrhage whom they could not heal;<sup>528</sup> whereas in Nis 34, Ephrem describes the patriarchs as 'great physicians' (**ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ**)<sup>529</sup> and 'His famous visitors, physicians' (**ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ**).<sup>530</sup> The patriarchs (i.e. Abraham, Daniel, Moses and Jacob) are called the 'physicians of the world' (**ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ**)<sup>531</sup> or the physician of the world as a sick man (**ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ**)<sup>532</sup> and as the body (**ܚܕܝܐܢ**) of the statue in Dan 2:31.<sup>533</sup> The function of those physicians was to heal, even though when they performed healing it involved pain (**ܚܕܝܐܢ**).<sup>534</sup> However, the world's physicians were not capable of performing perfect healing with their medicines.<sup>535</sup> In CDiat 10.7a, the author admits that the medicines of the ordinary physicians possess various powers,<sup>536</sup> but what they healed was

<sup>525</sup> Nis 51.16: **ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ**.

<sup>526</sup> Nis 27.1: **ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ**.

<sup>527</sup> Nis 27.2; 34.6-12.

<sup>528</sup> Nis 27.2: **ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ** ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ.

<sup>529</sup> Nis 34.6: **ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ**.

<sup>530</sup> Nis 34.9: **ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ**.

<sup>531</sup> Nis 34.10; 34.12: **ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ**.

<sup>532</sup> Nis 34.7: **ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ**.

<sup>533</sup> Nis 34.6: **ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ**; cf. Nis 34.9.

<sup>534</sup> Nis 34.12.

<sup>535</sup> Nis 34.10: **ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ**.

<sup>536</sup> CDiat 10.7: **ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ ܚܕܝܐܢ**.



The term **ⲁⲙⲓⲛⲁⲓ**, ‘Healer of all’,<sup>539</sup> is used for the Lord, such as in Nis 34.5: Egypt ‘was healed through the Healer of all’,<sup>540</sup> or in the context of the ‘sinful woman’ who believed that ‘He was the Healer of all’.<sup>541</sup> Likewise, Jesus’ medicine is called the healer of all’.<sup>542</sup>

The term **ꠘꠞꠣꠤꠞꠤ**, ‘healing’, is mainly related to Jesus himself.<sup>546</sup> In CDiat 13.6, the author uses Jesus’ **ꠘꠞꠣꠤꠞꠤ** as a sign to identify Him with the Lord of Law ( **ꠘꠞꠣꠤꠞꠤ ꠘꠞꠣꠤꠞꠤ ꠘꠞꠣꠤꠞꠤ ꠘꠞꠣꠤꠞꠤ ꠘꠞꠣꠤꠞꠤ**), i.e. God. The way that Jesus grants **ꠘꠞꠣꠤꠞꠤ** to man, and only to man, is something that identifies Him as the Lord of Law. Jesus granted healing to man

<sup>538</sup> CDiat 17.3: חסדך נא לא תהייה מן המעט  
והוא יחיה ואלו הנהגותיו רבות והם יחיה ואלו הנהגותיו רבות והם יחיה

<sup>540</sup> Nis 34.5: **ᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ.**

542 Nic 4 20: 

543 Eccl 25 8 9

544 VIII. 4. 4. 4.

544 Virg 4.4: **ἄλκιμονα θεῶν ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ γυναικῶν**

545 lei 4.1: ~~කුසලා කුසලා~~ අනු අනු.

<sup>546</sup> CDiat 12.24; 13.6; 16.31; Dom 13-14; Fid 4.4.







not to God. Man, with his **מַחֲדָּר**, cannot heal the pains, because the Lord has already decided to act in vengeance against Babylon to destroy it (cf. Jr 51.1-14). Ez 23:14 uses **מַחֲדָּר** in the sense of pigments: 'they saw men portrayed on a wall, figures of Chaldeans portrayed with pigments'.<sup>553</sup> The subject of **נָדָר** are the two adulterous sisters, Samaria and Jerusalem.

In the New Testament, Mk 16:18 and Jas 3:8, **𐤀𐤌𐤌** is used in the sense of ‘poison’. Both texts, precisely, speak of ‘poison of death’ (**𐤀𐤌𐤌 𐤀𐤌𐤌**). Mk 16:18 is at the end of Mark’s Gospel where Jesus sends His disciples into the world to proclaim the Gospel to the people. Those who believe in Jesus Christ will be immune against poison of death: ‘even though they drink poison of death, it will not harm them.’<sup>554</sup>

#### 3.2.2.1 The Term *كسوف*

In Ephrem, usually the singular ܡܕܝܢܐ, in the sense of ‘medicine’, refers to the Lord Who is called, for example, the ‘Binder up, Physician and Medicine’ (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ).<sup>555</sup> The Son of God became Medicine for men (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ).<sup>556</sup> In Nis 4.20, the Lord’s medicine is defined as ‘medicine of Your salvation’ (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ). Ephrem also speaks of the ‘sharp

[illegible]

<sup>554</sup> Mk 16:18: ಮನುಷ್ಯನು ದೇವರನ್ನು ಕೊಲ್ಲುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. Jas 3:8, emphasises the impossibility of taming the tongue. The tongue is compared to ‘fire’ (ಕಿರು, Jas 3:6) that can set a great forest on fire. Although man is able to tame all kinds of creatures, he is not able to tame the tongue for ‘it is full of poison of death’ (Jas 3:8: ಮೃತಪ್ರಾಣಿಯು).

<sup>555</sup> Nis 34.11: אָבִי אֵלֹהִים חַי וְעַלְמֵי חַיִּים וְנִפְתָּח מַלְאָכָא דְּרַבּוּנָא  
חַבְדָּא אִם אָבִי חַבְדָּא אִם אֲרַמְלָא אֲרַמְלָא.

<sup>556</sup> Nat 3.20: כִּי אָמַר נְשָׁא חַיֵּי דְלָה עַד אֲסַפֵּי שְׂבִיעִית  
כְּעֶשְׂרָה דְּלָה בֹט.



The heavenly Medicine, as ‘the Healer of all’ (ܠܗܝܡܢܐ ܕܠܗܝܡܢܐ), was beneficial, for example, for the ‘wound’ of the woman with a haemorrhage (ܠܗܝܡܢܐ ܕܠܗܝܡܢܐ),<sup>561</sup> and is useful for the ‘wound’ (ܠܗܝܡܢܐ) of every sinner.<sup>562</sup> It can be also used for ‘us’ (ܠܗܝܡܢܐ),<sup>563</sup> for ‘my laceration’ (ܠܗܝܡܢܐ ܕܝܗܝܡܢܐ);<sup>564</sup> as well as, for ‘sinners’ (ܠܗܝܡܢܐ ܕܝܗܝܡܢܐ),<sup>565</sup> ‘ill’ (ܠܗܝܡܢܐ ܕܝܗܝܡܢܐ),<sup>566</sup> ‘sick’ (ܠܗܝܡܢܐ ܕܝܗܝܡܢܐ),<sup>567</sup> ‘pain’ (ܠܗܝܡܢܐ ܕܝܗܝܡܢܐ)<sup>568</sup> and ‘wounds’ (ܠܗܝܡܢܐ ܕܝܗܝܡܢܐ).<sup>569</sup>

<sup>557</sup> Nis 11.5: **כִּי־יִשְׁכַּח** **לְפָנֶיךָ** **יְיָ** **אֱלֹהֵינוּ**, **וְלֹא־יִשְׁכַּח**  
**לְפָנֶיךָ**.

[illegible]

<sup>559</sup> Nat 26.9: རྒྱལ་མོ་ཤིང་རྩེ་ནས་ཕྱིར་གཏོང་བའི་པདྨ་  
རྒྱུ་ཡིན།

<sup>560</sup> Nis 10.16: **നമുക്കു നന്മ നന്നാക്കു മഹാ നല്ല നമ്മ.**

<sup>561</sup> Fid 12.11: ἡδαισθησεν καὶ ὁμοῦ ἡμῶν.

<sup>562</sup> Fid 15.1: ముగ్గురూ ఒకరినొకరు కలుసుకొని.

<sup>563</sup> Fid 5.19: שלם מכל הדין והדבר שיהיה לי ושלמי  
למכשתי הדין חסדך.

564 Nis 4.20: **אֲנִי הָיִיתִי כְּמִי שֶׁנִּשְׁכַּח וְנִשְׁכַּח**.

<sup>565</sup> Nat 3.20; Fid 15.1.

<sup>566</sup> Virg 49.15: ממך וזמך מן קטנה קמך לחיף תמך  
ממך.

<sup>567</sup> Nis 19.11: **ന** **ചിര** **ക** **മി**.

<sup>568</sup> Nis 19.11: നെ ല കലി, കറുപ്പ് ത്വ ധർമ്മ കാര്യ യം ല.

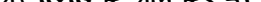
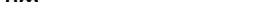
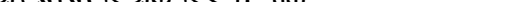
<sup>569</sup> Nat 3.20; Eccl 5.6.



#### 3.2.2.2 The Term مصدق

<sup>570</sup> Nat 3.20; Eccl 5.6; Nis 74.14; Virg 49.15.

<sup>571</sup> Nis 4.20; 19.11.

<sup>572</sup> Fid 5.19: ; Fid 15.1:   


[illegible]

574 Nat 3.20.

575 Fid 12.11.

<sup>576</sup> Nat 26.9:  $\text{כִּי לֹא יִשְׁכַּח אֶת הַיְּהוָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְךָ מִיְּמֵי הַיָּלְדוּת$   
 $\text{כִּי לֹא יִשְׁכַּח אֶת הַיְּהוָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְךָ מִיְּמֵי הַיָּלְדוּת}$

577 Virg 24.4.

<sup>578</sup> Nat 16.7; Virg 7.5; 28.2-3; Fid 5.12; 31.5; 33.4-14; 85.2; Parad 4.9; 11.7; Azym 15.9-11; Eccl 10.6; 20.6; Nis 17.12; 48.7; 68.9.

<sup>579</sup> CDiat 5.23; 7.1; 7.20-21; 10.7a; Dom 19; 44; Nat 4.24; 8.2; Virg 30.10; 37.3; 49.17; Fid 2.16; 10.7; 19.11; 28.2; 41.3; 53.6-7; 56.11-12; Iei 4.1; 10.4; 10.6; Azym 20.16; Eccl 1.7; 28.17; 38.4; 52.6; Nis 4.16;-17; 11.6; 16.21; 18.10; 19.11; 34.8; 34.10; 74.14.



Christians, baptism is the place where the new image, the image of the kingdom, is portrayed through the 'visible pigments' (ܠܒܫܬܗ ܠܒܫܬܗ), i.e. oil. This new image contrasts with the corruptible image of Adam.<sup>580</sup> The verb 'to paint/portray' (ܐܝܬܐ) appears always with the term ܠܒܫܬܗ when it is used in the sense of pigments, and signifies the act of painting. The term ܠܒܫܬܗ can also be attributed to 'our free will' (ܠܗܝܪܐ),<sup>582</sup> 'faith' (ܠܬܝܡܢܐ)<sup>583</sup> and to the mixing (ܠܚܝܬ) together of the divine and human natures (ܠܚܝܬܐ) which produces the God-Man (ܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ), i.e. Jesus Christ.<sup>584</sup>

The term ܠܒܫܬܗ, in the sense of medicines, may belong to the ordinary 'physicians' (ܠܬܝܒܐܢܐ)<sup>585</sup> or 'physician' (ܠܬܝܒܐܢ),<sup>586</sup> as well as to the Lord,<sup>587</sup> or to individual people.<sup>588</sup> Even though the medicines of the physicians have different powers so that they can cleanse, consume, cause to grow etc;<sup>589</sup> they were not sufficient for the world.<sup>590</sup> The ordinary physician, along with his medicines, is sometimes used as a metaphor for the Lord and His medicines.<sup>591</sup> A good physician uses the ܠܒܫܬܗ as an element through which he 'reveals' (ܠܚܝܬܐ) the hidden pains that

<sup>580</sup> Virg 7.5.

<sup>581</sup> Fid 31.5; 33.4-14; 85.2; Parad 4.9; 11.7; Azym 15.9-11; Eccl 10.6; 20.6; Nis 17.12.

<sup>582</sup> Fid 31.5.

<sup>583</sup> Nat 16.7.

<sup>584</sup> Nat 8.2: ܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܠܒܫܬܗ ܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ.

<sup>585</sup> CDiat 10.7; Virg 49.14; Nis 34.16.

<sup>586</sup> Dom 19; Eccl 28.17.

<sup>587</sup> Nat 4.24; Virg 30.10; 37.3; Fid 10.7; 10.11; Azym 20.16; Eccl 38.4; 52.6; Nis 4.16-17; 11.6; 16.21.

<sup>588</sup> Dom 44; Virg 49.17; Nis 17.12; 19.11; Nis 34.8.

<sup>589</sup> CDiat 10.7: ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܠܒܫܬܗ ܠܒܫܬܗ.

<sup>590</sup> ܡܕܢܚܐ.

<sup>591</sup> Nis 34.10: ܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܠܒܫܬܗ ܠܒܫܬܗ.

<sup>592</sup> ܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ.

<sup>593</sup> Dom 19; 44; Eccl 28.17.



Although the medicines of Egypt were famous, Moses rejected ‘the treasury of medicines’ (מִצְנוֹן תְּרָפִיּוֹת),<sup>598</sup> for those medicines affected only the body, but not the soul; i.e. at best ordinary medicines might be useful just for physical pains and sickness. The function of מִצְנוֹן is often to heal the ‘pains’ (כָּאֵב),<sup>599</sup> but sometimes they are attributed to ‘sickness’ (מַחֲמָה), ‘wounds’ (מַחֲסֵה)<sup>600</sup> and ‘sick’ (חָלֵה)<sup>601</sup> too. If medicines do not have the power of healing anymore, they are

601 Fid 19.11.



considered as useless: 'if medicines lose their [power], then no pains can be healed/restored'.<sup>602</sup>

In contrast, the Lord is able to heal 'without medicines' ( **ܠܐ ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ** )<sup>603</sup> for His words became medicines, useful for every kind of pain.<sup>604</sup> The Lord's medicines cannot be compared to any others; they are gratis and their reward ( **ܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ** )<sup>605</sup> cannot be paid for by any one.

Ephrem links **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ** to different things that are related to the Lord: the [Birth]day of the Lord is the 'treasure of medicines' ( **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ** );<sup>606</sup> His garment is the 'fountain of medicines' ( **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ** );<sup>607</sup> His words are like **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ**;<sup>608</sup> His grace carries **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ**;<sup>609</sup> His 'nails' ( **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ** ) became as **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ**.<sup>610</sup> In Virg 37.3, Ephrem speaks of three **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ** through which the Lord 'bound up our sickness' ( **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ** ): 'wheat, the olive and grapes' ( **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ** ).<sup>611</sup>

The **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ** through which the Lord performs healing do not necessarily come directly from God. Such as in the case of the sinful woman, **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ** can be provided by man. The oil of the sinful woman is considered as 'medicines' that she brought with her and poured over the Lord; the Lord healed her through medicines that she brought.<sup>612</sup> Likewise, 'fasting' ( **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ** ) can be

<sup>602</sup> Nis 18.10: **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ**.

<sup>603</sup> Eccl 38.4: **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ**.

<sup>604</sup> Eccl 52.6.

<sup>605</sup> Nis 4.16-17.

<sup>606</sup> Nat 4.24.

<sup>607</sup> Fid 10.7.

<sup>608</sup> Eccl 52.6: **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ**. Cf. Fid 53.6: **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ**.

<sup>609</sup> Azym 20.16: **ܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܚܝܢܐ**.

<sup>610</sup> Virg 30.10.

<sup>611</sup> Virg 37.3.

<sup>612</sup> Dom 44.



medicines that perform healing.<sup>613</sup> Ephrem also attributes ܠܡܕܝܢܐ to some people, so that they can perform spiritual healing; such as Jonah possessed ܠܡܕܝܢܐ,<sup>614</sup> Ephrem challenges the spiritual shepherds to take ܠܡܕܝܢܐ for their work.<sup>615</sup>

### 3.2.2.3 *The Title 'Medicine of Life' (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ)*

The title 'Medicine of Life' (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ) is used for Jesus, Paradise's fragrance, the Tree of Life and for other terms that represent and symbolize the Son of God. In hymn 9 On Paradise, the fragrance of Paradise is not just the air that we breathe, but it has rather a metaphorical character that symbolises the 'Medicine of life' (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ).<sup>616</sup> Paradise serves as a fountain of well-being (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ) for life on earth as well: the fragrance proclaims the sending of the Medicine of Life.<sup>617</sup>

The function of the fragrant breath which symbolises the Physician and the Medicine of Life is described as follows: Paradise 'cures our sickness' (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ) that entered into the world through the Serpent; the breath 'gives sweetness to the bitterness of this region' (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ); it 'tempers the curse of this earth of ours' (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ).

<sup>613</sup> Iei 4.1; 10.4.

<sup>614</sup> Virg 49.17.

<sup>615</sup> Nis 19.11.

<sup>616</sup> For the background of the phrase in ancient Mesopotamian religion see Widengren, *Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism*, 129-38. A comprehensive treatment of the title in a sacramental setting may be found in P. Yousif, *L'Eucharistie chez Saint Ephrem de Nisibe*, OCA 224 (Rome 1984), 317ff.

<sup>617</sup> In Parad 11.9-12, Ephrem uses three terms for the fragrance and breath of Paradise. These are ܠܡܕܝܢܐ (fragrance), ܠܡܕܝܢܐ (breeze, light wind) and ܠܡܕܝܢܐ (breath, puff of air). In stanza 13 there also appears ܠܡܕܝܢܐ (censer), ܠܡܕܝܢܐ (smoke), ܠܡܕܝܢܐ (whiff) and ܠܡܕܝܢܐ (aroma). While the aspect of the 'fountain' and 'river' refers to Gen 2:6 and 2:10-14, that of 'fragrance breath' has no basis in the Biblical narrative of Paradise. In Parad 11.10, Ephrem gives the reasons for the coming of the Medicine of Life as follows: it is the 'diseased world' (ܠܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ), its 'sickness' (ܠܡܕܝܢܐ) and 'our mortality' (ܠܡܕܝܢܐ).



ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ); the blessing should 'make clean the fountains of it [the world] that had become polluted by curses' (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ).<sup>618</sup>

In Ephrem's texts, the term 'Medicine of Life' (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ) frequently characterises Jesus as the Physician. If we have here the same meaning, it is not obvious. The use of the verb 'send' (ܥܠܡܐ) for the 'Medicine of Life', reminds us of the sending of the Son. Even though in other hymns Ephrem uses other verbs, the role and the function of the Medicine of Life is the same. In Nat 13.2, Ephrem speaks of the Medicine of Life Who 'descended to revive the mother of his mother'.<sup>619</sup> Also in Nat 26.9, Ephrem characterises Jesus as the Medicine of Life who was incarnate in order to grant Adam 'immortality' and to destroy the 'devourer'.<sup>620</sup> Jesus was incarnate because of the mortality and corruptibility of man. The 'medicine' of the economy of Christ should restore the corruptible Adam.<sup>621</sup>

In Eccl 19.7, the term 'Medicine of Life' (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ) appears contrasted with the 'poison of death' (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ). Both terms are described as fruit which the 'free will' of man can pluck (ܡܕܝܢܐ). Through the different tenses used the contrast between the Medicine of Life and the poison of death is emphasised. Just as free will plucked the poison of death before, so too she can pluck the Medicine of Life now. The different tenses help us to relate the poison of death to the Tree of Knowledge, and the Medicine of

<sup>618</sup> Cf. Parad 11.9-10.

<sup>619</sup> Nat 13.2:

ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ

<sup>620</sup> Nat 26.9:

ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ

<sup>621</sup> Cf. Eccl 20.6. The word ܡܕܝܢܐ can have two meanings here: 'medicine' as well as 'pigments'. The verb ܡܕܝܢܐ which Beck put in brackets goes with meaning of 'pigments' for painting the image of Adam.















### 3.2.2.4 *The 'Poison of Death'* (ܐܫܝܐ ܡܝܬ)

The word ܡܝܬ can mean 'poison' as well as 'medicine'. As we saw above in Fid 5.16, Ephrem uses the term ܡܝܬ in both senses: the 'poison of death' and the 'Medicine' of Life.<sup>657</sup> In this context, 'death' and 'life' define the meaning of ܡܝܬ: the Fruit Which descended can be both Medicine of Life and the poison of death.

The ܐܫܝܐ ܡܝܬ can be 'Paradise's tree' (ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ),<sup>658</sup> the fruit of Paradise or the heavenly Fruit (ܐܝܬܐ), the Son of God,<sup>659</sup> the 'Unleavened Bread' (ܐܝܬܐ),<sup>660</sup> 'greed' (ܐܝܬܐ)<sup>661</sup> or hidden in the worldly 'care' (ܐܝܬܐ).<sup>662</sup>

Ephrem frequently links poison with food. In hymn 26 On the Birth, he speaks of 'poison in food'.<sup>663</sup> The 'poison of death' (ܐܫܝܐ ܡܝܬ) has its root in the poisonous fruit of Paradise. As a

ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ  
ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ

The Son of God descended from heaven as the Fruit which can be either the 'Medicine of Life' (ܐܝܬܐ ܡܝܬ) or the 'Medicine of Death' (ܐܝܬܐ ܡܝܬ). In On Faith 5.16, the heavenly Fruit is the Medicine of Life for those who are faithful and possess good deeds, such as fasting, praying and being generous towards fellow human beings; or the same Fruit can be the 'poison of death' (ܐܫܝܐ ܡܝܬ):

ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ  
ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ  
ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ

<sup>657</sup> Fid 5.16. For ܐܫܝܐ ܡܝܬ see Fid 5.16; Parad 15.12; Iei 1.6; Azym 18.11-17; 19.22-24; Eccl 11.6; 19.7.

<sup>658</sup> Parad 15.12: ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ.

<sup>659</sup> Eccl 19.7; Fid 5.16.

<sup>660</sup> Azym 18.11; 18.16-17; 19.22; 19.24.

<sup>661</sup> Eccl 11.6: ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ.

<sup>662</sup> Iei 1.6: ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ.

<sup>663</sup> Cf. Nat 26.9: ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢܐ.



The ‘tree of Paradise’ (ܐܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ) offered the ‘poison of death’ to Adam whose free will (ܐܚܕܐܝܬܐ) allowed him to pick fruit from it, so too everyone has the free will to pluck either the ‘poison of death’ or the ‘Medicine of Life’.<sup>665</sup> While Ephrem identifies the holy bread of the Eucharist with the Medicine of Life; in turn, he portrays the ‘Unleavened Bread’ (ܠܚܝܡܐ) as the poison of death, even though in the Old Covenant the Unleavened Bread of the Passover symbolised the Medicine of Life and Bread of Life.<sup>666</sup> In Azym 18 and 19, Ephrem illustrates what happened during the Last Supper to the Unleavened Bread in which the symbol of the Medicine of Life was hidden. In Azym 19.22-24, Ephrem speaks of ‘Unleavened Bread of the [Jewish] People’ (ܠܚܝܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ), that contrasts with ‘our offering’ (ܩܪܒܢܐ), i.e. the holy Eucharist.<sup>667</sup> The symbol of the Medicine of Life in the Unleavened Bread is taken away from the Passover so that the Unleavened Bread became the poison of death. In turn, the bread of the Eucharist became the real Medicine of Life, no longer only a symbol. For Judas Iscariot, the Medicine of Life was

667 Azym 19.22-24:

[illegible]



washed from the Unleavened Bread so it became the poison of death for him.<sup>668</sup>

### 3.2.2.5 *Excursus: The Term 'Bitterness' (ܠܗܝܬܐ)*

The word ܠܗܝܬܐ, from the root ܝܬܐ, 'to be bitter, sour, acid', has the meaning of 'bitterness, gall, bile'.<sup>669</sup> In the context of healing, Ephrem also uses it in the sense of poison or venom.<sup>670</sup>

Ephrem considers the advice of the Serpent as an act of 'pouring venom into [Eve's] ears'.<sup>671</sup> While here ܠܗܝܬܐ is related to the Serpent, in hymn 9 On Paradise it refers to the Evil One who 'mixed his cup, proffering its venom to all'.<sup>672</sup> Ephrem links this venom directly to the eating of the fruit. Ordinary fruit gives forth its sweetness in due season but 'a fruit that is out of season, proves bitter to him who plucks it'.<sup>673</sup> The bitterness of the Evil One is so strong that Ephrem compares it with the sea:

How strong is his bitterness, upsetting the whole  
world.  
Who can hold back the sea of that bitter one?  
Everyone contains drops of it that can harm you.  
Judas was the treasurer (Jn 12:6) of his bitterness,  
and although Satan's form is hidden, in Judas he is  
totally visible;  
though Satan's history is a long one, it is summed up in  
the Iscariot.<sup>674</sup>

<sup>668</sup> Azym 18.16-17:

ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ	ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ	ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ	ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ	ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ

<sup>669</sup> Cf. Azym 30.4; Eccl 8.3; 11.6; Nis 14.2.

<sup>670</sup> Parad 7.6; 9.2; 12.3; 15.15.

<sup>671</sup> Parad 7.6:

ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ	ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ	ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ

<sup>672</sup> Parad 9.2: ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ.

<sup>673</sup> Parad 12.3: ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ.

<sup>674</sup> Parad 15.15:

ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܠܗܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ



Here for instance 'Judas was the treasurer of his bitterness', but this is not independent of man's free will and thought. As Ephrem shows in hymn 7 On Paradise, man has the freedom and ability to quell the 'bitterness of his thoughts' so that 'springs of sweetness' may well up in his limbs. Here the term ܐܕܝܚܐ refers more to the speech and moral life of man.<sup>675</sup>

In hymn 11 On Paradise, in parallel to the 'curse' (ܐܕܝܚܐ),<sup>676</sup> ܐܕܝܚܐ has the meaning of bitterness which becomes sweet by the breath of Paradise. Because of the curse, all life on earth would have been bitter, if there had not been the fragrance of Paradise. The source of bitterness may be the 'Serpent' (ܐܪܝܐ)<sup>677</sup> and 'Evil One' (ܐܝܠܐ) on the one hand, or man's 'free will' (ܐܕܝܚܐ)<sup>678</sup> and 'greed' (ܐܕܝܚܐ)<sup>679</sup> on the other.

### 3.2.2.6 The Verb ܐܕܝܚܐ

The denominative verb ܐܕܝܚܐ derives from ܐܕܝܐ, 'drug, medicine', as well as 'poison' and 'pigment'. While the Pael conjugation ܐܕܝܐ has a negative meaning, such as 'to poison'; the Palpel ܐܕܝܐ has only a positive sense, such as 'to give medicine, to heal, to cure'.

The verb ܐܕܝܐ is rarely used by Ephrem,<sup>680</sup> whereas ܐܕܝܐ does not occur at all. In the hymns On Paradise, the participle ܐܕܝܐ is found twice, in Parad 9.14 and 11.9. In the

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ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ  
ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ  
ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ  
ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ  
ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ

<sup>675</sup> Parad 7.14:

ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ  
ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ ܐܕܝܐ

<sup>676</sup> Cf. Parad 11.10.

<sup>677</sup> Parad 7.6.

<sup>678</sup> Eccl 8.3.

<sup>679</sup> Eccl 11.6; further more see Parad 7.14; Nis 14.2.

<sup>680</sup> Parad 9.14; 11.9; Nis 5.21; Virg 45.22.



In Nis 5.21, **ܐܪܒܐ** is used along with the verb ‘to grow’ (**ܕܠܥ**) and refers to the sick ‘fruits’ (**ܐܦܝܠܐ**) that have survived the wrath.<sup>683</sup> The metaphor of the sick fruits is used for the inhabitants of Nisibis. Nisibis addresses its supplication to the Lord ‘to give medicine’ and let its fruits grow. While here the agent of **ܐܪܒܐ** is the Lord, in Virg 45.22, the Ninivites are employed as the subject of **ܐܪܒܐ** and they, as sinners, ‘gave medicine to [Jonah]’.<sup>684</sup>

While the verb ܥܠܡܐ<sup>685</sup> appears six times and ܥܠܡ<sup>686</sup> twice in the Old Testament, the terms ܥܠܡܐ, ܥܠܡܐ and ܥܠܡܐ do not occur at all. The concordance for the Syriac Pentateuch does not provide any references for the verb, while in the whole Mautbe it is used only three times, in 2 Kgs 1:2; 8:8 and 20:7. At

ከዚህ በፊት ለጥያቄዎቼ ምላሽ ለሰጡት ለሁሉም ጥሪዎች ምስጋናዬን ያቀርባለሁ።

ൈ൬ ൈ൬ ൈ൬ ൈ൬ ൈ൬ ൈ൬ ൈ൬ ൈ൬ ൈ൬ ൈ൬  
 .൬ ൈ൬ ൈ൬ ൈ൬ ൈ൬ ൈ൬ ൈ൬ ൈ൬ ൈ൬ ൈ൬

ԿԱՅԻ ԻԺՈՒՆ՝ ԿԴԵՐ,                      ԻՆ՝ ԿԱԻՆ ՄԱՍՈՍ  
 .ԿԻԺԱՍՈՒ ՎԷԼ՝                      ԿՄԱՅԻՆ ԿՆԻՔ

[illegible]

<sup>686</sup> Is 38:16; Hs 5:13.



In Ez 30:21, **𐤌𐤍𐤕𐤏𐤃** refers to the Pharaoh's arm which the Lord has 'broken' (**𐤕𐤏𐤃𐤕**) and would 'not be bound up and restored to hold a sword'.<sup>692</sup> While in the context of Hezekiah **𐤌𐤍𐤕𐤏𐤃** contrasts with **𐤍𐤏𐤃𐤕**, in Ez 30:21 it contrasts with **𐤕𐤏𐤃𐤕**. Hosea 5:13 uses **𐤌𐤍** and **𐤌𐤏** together in the context of

<sup>692</sup> Ez 30:21: Լեռնի ժողովուրդը և Բաբելոնի ժողովուրդը  
 և Եգիպտոսի ժողովուրդը և Կենանի ժողովուրդը  
 և Կենանի ժողովուրդը և Կենանի ժողովուրդը







The laying on of hands is a way by which the sick were restored. The sick were restored to health either through Jesus laying on His hand, or through His disciples' hands as they received power to restore sick people (Mk 16:18), for example Paul (Act 28:8).

The term **ܠܗܝܠܐܢܐ** appears only once in Act 3:13 where the sick person received **ܠܗܝܠܐܢܐ** through faith (**ܠܗܝܠܐܢܐ**): 'and the faith in him granted him this health in front of everyone' (Act 3:16: **ܡܕܢ ܠܗܝܠܐܢܐ ܠܗܝܠܐܢܐ ܠܗܝܠܐܢܐ ܠܗܝܠܐܢܐ ܠܗܝܠܐܢܐ ܠܗܝܠܐܢܐ**).

The term **ܡܠܝܬܐ** or **ܡܠܝܬܐ** is used in four different contexts. First of all, the best known phrase is found in Mt 9:12: **ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܡܠܝܬܐ ܡܠܝܬܐ**. While Mk 2:17 uses the same phrase, Lk 5:31 uses **ܡܠܝܬܐ** instead of **ܡܠܝܬܐ** and, therefore, the order of the sentence is changed as follows: **ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܡܠܝܬܐ ܡܠܝܬܐ**.<sup>697</sup> This is the only passage where the plural **ܡܠܝܬܐ** is used. Secondly, **ܡܠܝܬܐ** refers to individuals who were restored from their physical and/or spiritual sickness; thus the centurion's servant (Lk 7:10), the prodigal son who came back safe and 'sound' (**ܡܠܝܬܐ**) to his father (Lk 15:27); the woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years (Mk 5:4); the healing at the pool of the one who had been an invalid for 38 years (Jn 5:4; 5:11); the healing of the crippled beggar (Act 4:10) and the healing of many by the apostles, especially of those who were tormented 'by evil spirits' (Act 23:30).<sup>698</sup> Thirdly, in Tit 1:3 **ܡܠܝܬܐ** refers to faith, and in Tit 2:2, furthermore, to faith, love and endurance. Finally, in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, **ܡܠܝܬܐ** is attributed to 'teaching' (**ܡܠܝܬܐ**)<sup>699</sup> and 'the word' (**ܡܠܝܬܐ**).<sup>700</sup>

<sup>697</sup> Ephrem quotes this verse in CDiat 5:21.

<sup>698</sup> In 3 Jn 1:2, the author prays that Gaius may be **ܡܠܝܬܐ**.

<sup>699</sup> 1 Tim 1:10; 2 Tim 4:3; Tit 1:9; 2:1.

<sup>700</sup> 1 Tim 6:3; 2 Tim 1:13; Tit 2:7.



In Parad 3.11, Ephrem employs **ܚܕܐܬܐܠܡܐ** to denote the perfect state of man, contrasted with **ܚܕܐܬܐܠܡܐ ܕܡܪܕܐ**, his fallen state.<sup>701</sup> Being in the state of sickness, **ܚܕܐܬܐܠܡܐ** remains a theoretical and almost unrealistic idea that man cannot reach on his own. However, the Lord is never explicitly mentioned in connection with the term **ܚܕܐܬܐܠܡܐ**, but instead, the 'oil' (**ܠܝܬܐܢܐ**) 'gives medicine to the state of sickness' (**ܚܕܐܬܐܠܡܐ ܕܡܪܕܐ**) and functions as 'the wall of good health' (**ܚܕܐܬܐܠܡܐ ܕܚܝܐ**).<sup>702</sup> In Eccl 28.10, Ephrem speaks of **ܚܕܐܬܐܠܡܐ ܕܚܝܐ** and considers it as a 'weapon for the body'.<sup>703</sup> By **ܚܕܐܬܐܠܡܐ ܕܚܝܐ** Ephrem means self-discipline in fasting and ascetical training, 'so that [his body] might be restored' (**ܡܠܬܐܬܐ**),<sup>704</sup> and also be spiritually strong against 'desires' (**ܚܕܐܬܐܠܡܐ**) and 'our debts' (**ܡܠܬܐܬܐ**).<sup>705</sup>

In contrast to the pain in the world, Paradise is the 'company of restoratives' (**ܡܠܬܐܬܐ ܕܚܕܐܠܡܐ**).<sup>706</sup> While man is not able to reach either **ܡܠܬܐܬܐ** or the perfect state of **ܚܕܐܬܐܠܡܐ** on his own (this would have been granted to him if Adam had been obedient to the Lord's commandment), the Lord alone remains as the 'Treasure of Restoratives' (**ܡܠܬܐܬܐ ܕܚܕܐܠܡܐ**),<sup>707</sup> and

<sup>701</sup> Parad 3.11: **ܕܡܪܕܐ ܚܕܐܬܐܠܡܐ ܕܡܪܕܐ ܡܠܬܐܬܐ ܕܡܪܕܐ ܚܕܐܬܐܠܡܐ ܕܡܪܕܐ**.

<sup>702</sup> Virg 4.10: **ܚܕܐܬܐܠܡܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܡܠܬܐܬܐ ܕܚܕܐܠܡܐ**.

<sup>703</sup> Eccl 28.10: **ܚܕܐܬܐܠܡܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܡܠܬܐܬܐ ܕܚܕܐܠܡܐ**.

<sup>704</sup> Eccl 28.9: **ܡܠܬܐܬܐ ܕܚܕܐܠܡܐ ܡܠܬܐܬܐ ܕܚܕܐܠܡܐ**.

<sup>705</sup> Eccl 28.10: **ܚܕܐܬܐܠܡܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܡܠܬܐܬܐ ܕܚܕܐܠܡܐ ܡܠܬܐܬܐ ܕܚܕܐܠܡܐ**.

<sup>706</sup> Parad 5.13: **ܡܠܬܐܬܐ ܕܚܕܐܠܡܐ ܡܠܬܐܬܐ ܕܚܕܐܠܡܐ**.

<sup>707</sup> Dom 13: **ܡܠܬܐܬܐ ܕܚܕܐܠܡܐ ܡܠܬܐܬܐ ܕܚܕܐܠܡܐ**.



the sick' (ܚܕܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ).<sup>708</sup> For example, the Lord 'brought a treasure of restoratives for the sinful woman's pain',<sup>709</sup> and everyone who accepted Jesus as the Lord received 'the treasure of restoratives for his pains';<sup>710</sup> or 'His right [hand] was full of restoratives'.<sup>711</sup> The term ܡܪܝܬܐ is used for the restored health that the Lord granted to the individual,<sup>712</sup> as well as to mankind in general.<sup>713</sup>

In connection with **شال** different verbs are used, such as: ‘He fought with His restoratives against their pains’;<sup>714</sup> ‘He stretched out and gave restoratives as well as promises’<sup>715</sup> and ‘He raised him in (restored) health’.<sup>716</sup> Likewise, people ‘have put on health’;<sup>717</sup> ‘the children ran towards His restoratives’;<sup>718</sup> or the sinful

[illegible][illegible]

<sup>710</sup> CDiat 7.5: ⲕⲉⲧⲉⲛ ⲉⲧⲉⲛ ⲉⲕⲉⲙⲓⲕ ⲙⲓ ⲕⲁⲙ ⲛⲓⲙⲁ  
ⲕⲁⲙ ⲛⲓⲙⲁ, ⲙⲁⲕⲁⲧⲉ.

<sup>711</sup> CDiat 13.6: קטלנו כלם ונחמנו כלם.

<sup>712</sup> CDiat 6.22b: **ሕያዳ ማርካይ ደግሞ ተቀባዊነት አግኝቶ**  
**በአንድም የሕይወት መቆየት ችለው** (Mt 8:8; Lk 7:6); or **ሕያዳ**  
of the woman with the haemorrhage, CDiat 7.2: **መሪዋል ከሕይወት**  
**ሕያዳ ማርካይ በእርሱ ሕይወት አግኝተዋል** (cf Lk  
8:45f); cf. CDiat 7.9; 7.20.

[illegible]

<sup>714</sup> Dom 21: חל דאמיהו חר לבא אר דאמיהו חסאחא  
למחל דאמיהו.

715 Resurr 1.10:

محم ط الحقم ۱۴۸۵ هـ ۱۸۶۵ م ۹ سلطنت حم مملکت.

716 Fide 54.4:

בבית מדרש ישיבת חכמי צדקת צדקת

717 Fide 86.4:

10. יצאנו מן המדבר ונכנסנו אל הארץ אשר נשבע לומר לאבותינו.

<sup>718</sup> Resurr 1.10: ,ᵐᵃᵛᵗᵏᵅᵐ ᵑᵒ ᵐᵓᵔ ᵁᵕᵐ.



Obviously, according to the Gospel, Ephrem refers to the Lord as the agent of **ܡܠܬܐ**, but he quotes only once from the Gospel where Jesus is the subject of **ܡܠܬܐ**: ‘He who restored me is the one who said to me take up your bed.’<sup>726</sup> Based on this, Ephrem speaks of restoring the limbs: ‘see He has restored the

720 Nis 5.22:

<sup>721</sup> Nis 11.7: 𐎧𐎠𐎡𐎹 𐎧𐎠𐎡𐎹.

അതിനാൽ ഈ പ്രശ്നം പരിഹരിക്കാൻ പറ്റാത്തതല്ല. പക്ഷേ, അതിനുള്ള  
 പരിഹാരം, നല്ലതല്ല.

,നമ്പതു പ്ല. പ്ല. നമ്പതു, പ്ല.  
പ്ല. നമ്പതുപ്ല. പ്ല. പ്ല. പ്ല. പ്ല.  
 .പ്ല. പ്ല. പ്ല. പ്ല. പ്ല. പ്ല.

[illegible]

...  
 ...  
 ...

<sup>726</sup> CDiat 13.3: *אם לא תאכלהם לא יאכלוהם*; Jn 5:11 C.



Individual people are restored or can be restored through the Lord; as ‘Simon’s mother-in-law was restored’<sup>735</sup> and the one who

<sup>735</sup> Nis 39.15: **ዕገሊክ** ~~ሊገደ~~ ጠቅሞ; Mk 1:30 and Lk 4:38 do not use **ዕገሊክ**/**ሊክ**.







for geographical places: the sick land<sup>746</sup> was restored through the Lord's sweat; Egypt was restored through the Healer of All;<sup>747</sup> and Babel as the head that went mad in the desert was restored through the prophet Daniel.<sup>748</sup>

In some general contexts, Ephrem portrays the characteristics of medicine: 'if medicine becomes powerless, no pains can be restored'.<sup>749</sup> Two other sayings are based on Scripture and Nature. The former is based on Mt 9:12 (Mk 2:17; Lk 5:31-32): 'when this man's fellow Pharisees took exception to the healing of sinners, the Physician explained this about His art, that the door was open to the sick, not to the healthy: »the healthy have no need of a physician, but those who have engaged in all kinds of evil«'.<sup>750</sup> The second proverbial saying is based on Nature: 'the nature of sweetness is sweet for the one who is restored, [but] bitter for the one who is sick; likewise the free will is sick for the sinners, but restored for the just'.<sup>751</sup>

א. חתונה  
 ב. חתונה

746 Crucif 8.1:

කැණෙන ස්වභාවයෙන් මනුෂ්‍යයා  
 ස්වභාවයෙන් මනුෂ්‍යයා ස්වභාවයෙන්  
 ස්වභාවයෙන් මනුෂ්‍යයා ස්වභාවයෙන්  
 ස්වභාවයෙන් මනුෂ්‍යයා ස්වභාවයෙන්

747 Nis 34.5:

ከጥቅም ስራዎች ጋር ለማግኘት ለሚችሉት ሰራተኛዎች ማሳሰቢያ

<sup>748</sup> Nis 34.8: א דעל לבל חס קר הילד נחמ נכח  
אזאקא אלטא.

<sup>749</sup> Nis 18.10: **اِنَّكَ لَمَّا كُنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا**

[illegible]

<sup>751</sup> Eccl 2.19: חסדא דמלכא לזמא דמלכא חסדא דמלכא לזמא דמלכא  
 חסדא דמלכא לזמא דמלכא חסדא דמלכא לזמא דמלכא



From all this it is obvious that ܠܠܗܐ belong to the Lord, especially when Ephrem uses the term ܡܠܚܡܐܗ, 'His restoratives'<sup>752</sup> or ܢܦܠܬܐܗ, 'Your restorative (power)'.<sup>753</sup> But because man is the receiver of ܠܠܗܐ, Ephrem can also attribute ܠܠܗܐ to individuals,<sup>754</sup> peoples<sup>755</sup> and places, such as Egypt.<sup>756</sup>

The adjective ܠܠܗܐ/ܠܠܗܐ can also refer to individual limbs, such as 'ear' (ܠܠܗܐ),<sup>757</sup> 'mouth' (ܠܠܗܐ)<sup>758</sup> and 'hands' (ܠܠܗܐ);<sup>759</sup> as well as to the 'senses' (ܠܠܗܐ),<sup>760</sup> 'voice' (ܠܠܗܐ),<sup>761</sup> the world as 'body' (ܠܠܗܐ),<sup>762</sup> or the sheep as a metaphor for man (ܠܠܗܐ);<sup>763</sup> it can also refer to the fragrance of Paradise (ܠܠܗܐ).<sup>764</sup>

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<sup>752</sup> Dom 21: ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ, ܡܠܚܡܐܗ ܡܠܚܡܐܗ ܡܠܚܡܐܗ; Resurr 1.10: ܡܠܚܡܐܗ ܡܠܚܡܐܗ ܡܠܚܡܐܗ.

<sup>753</sup> Nat 18.27: ܢܦܠܬܐܗ ܢܦܠܬܐܗ.

<sup>754</sup> In Nis 39.15, ܠܠܗܐ, 'her health', is used for Simon's mother-in-law: ܠܠܗܐ ܡܠܚܡܐܗ ܠܠܗܐ ܡܠܚܡܐܗ ܡܠܚܡܐܗ; in CDiat 7.9, for the woman with the haemorrhage: ܠܠܗܐ ܡܠܚܡܐܗ ܡܠܚܡܐܗ; cf. CDiat 7.2; 7.18; 7.20.

<sup>755</sup> In Dom 42, ܠܠܗܐ refers to sinners: ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ.

<sup>756</sup> Nis 34.5: ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ.

<sup>757</sup> Virg 30.3:

ܠܠܗܐ [ܠܠܗܐ] ܠܠܗܐ [ܠܠܗܐ] ܠܠܗܐ [ܠܠܗܐ] ܠܠܗܐ [ܠܠܗܐ].

<sup>758</sup> Eccl 2.20: ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ; cf. Eccl 43.20: ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ.

<sup>759</sup> Nis 43.9: ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ.

<sup>760</sup> Fide 42.1: ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ.

<sup>761</sup> Virg 30.3; Fide 22.3.

<sup>762</sup> Nis 34.13: ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ.

<sup>763</sup> Nis 19.4: ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ.

<sup>764</sup> Parad 11.12: ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ ܠܠܗܐ.



### 3.2.4 ܥܕ and Related Terms

The verb ܥܕ means ‘to bind up or bandage’, such as a wound.<sup>765</sup> In the Peshitta Old Testament, the object is normally ‘that which is broken’,<sup>766</sup> though in Ps 147:3 it is the ܥܡܬܬܐ of the ‘broken hearted’. The only occurrence of the verb in the Syriac New Testament is in Luke 10:34, in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Ephrem uses ܥܕ in several hymns.<sup>767</sup> In the context of healing, the verb appears only in the active. Although the subject of ܥܕ is often related to God, such as ‘the hand of Your grace’ (ܕܡܠܚܬܐ ܕܥܕܐ),<sup>768</sup> Nevertheless, people can also act as the subject.<sup>769</sup> As in the Old Testament, the main words used to denote the object of the verb are based on the root ܥܕܐ.<sup>770</sup> However, the terms ܥܕܬܐ, ܥܕܬܐ, ܥܕܬܐ and ܥܕܬܐ also appear as the object of ܥܕ.<sup>771</sup>

The noun ܥܕܐ, ‘binding’ or ‘bandage’, appears only four times in the context of spiritual healing.<sup>772</sup> The form ܥܕܐ, along with ‘guard’ (ܥܕܐ), ‘pardonner’ (ܥܕܐ) and ‘pursuer’ (ܥܕܐ), appears as a title for the Lord Who is the ‘Binder up of their wounds’.<sup>773</sup> Likewise, in Crucif 2.3 where Ephrem speaks about the Passover, the term ܥܕܐ is used once for Jesus the ‘New Lamb’ (ܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ): ‘for He is the One Who binds up

<sup>765</sup> Cf. J. P. Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 423.

<sup>766</sup> Eg. Ezek 34:4 ܥܕܐ; Is 30:26 ܥܕܐ; Is 61:1 ܥܕܐ.

<sup>767</sup> Cf. Azym 20.18; Crucif 2.3; Eccl 5.2; 33.3; 43.6-7; Iei 4.1; Nis 2.17; 14.2; 19.4; 34.1; Virg 4.9; 37.3.

<sup>768</sup> Azym 20.16; Crucif 2.3; Eccl 5.2; 33.3; Nis 11.7.

<sup>769</sup> Cf. Virg 49.13; Nis 14.2; 34.1.

<sup>770</sup> Cf. Nat 17.7; Iei 4.1; Crucif 2.3; Eccl 43.6-7; Nis 2.17; 10.16; 14.2; 19.4.

<sup>771</sup> Cf. Virg 37.3; Azym 20.18; Eccl 5.2.

<sup>772</sup> Cf. Nat 17.7; Nis 10.16; 11.7; Virg 49.13.

<sup>773</sup> Nat 17.7: ܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ.







penitents' (ܚܕܝܬܐ ܠܡܩܬܐ) is called 'the mother of the teachers' (ܡܬܪܐ ܕܠܡܢܐ).<sup>780</sup> In view of this, it is not surprising that in Nis 11, it is no longer God's mercy, but His justice which 'binds up'. Ephrem emphasises the benefit of the Lord's punishment that is performed by His justice: 'Justice's binding up presses hard upon her surgery; when she has smitten, she has pity, so that from the two actions she may give birth to healing'.<sup>781</sup>

Based on the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:34f.), Ephrem uses the verb ܚܕܝܬܐ twice in Eccl 33.3. In order to describe what happened in the parable briefly, Ephrem uses three verbs, ܚܕܝܬܐ together with ܠܡܢܐ and ܡܬܪܐ ܕܠܡܢܐ. In the following lines the suffix of ܡܬܪܐ ܕܠܡܢܐ, 'his/His mercies', which 'bound up the wounded man with wine and oil', is ambiguous and could refer either to the Good Samaritan, or to Christ.

In Iei 4.2, Ephrem speaks about the healing aspect of fasting. Here he uses the verb ܚܕܝܬܐ along with ܡܬܪܐ, with 'fasting' (ܡܬܪܐ) as subject. Fasting, which 'descended from Sinai to the smitten Israelite camp, bound up the 'great fracture of mind' (ܡܬܪܐ ܕܠܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ). Parallel with this is the phrase 'and He healed the soul's hidden pains'.<sup>782</sup>

Three human beings are also described as 'binding up'. In Virg 49.13-14, Ephrem contrast the behaviour of Jonah with that of some other biblical figures. He speaks of Moses' binding up (ܚܕܝܬܐ). Both Moses and Jonah are called physicians, but the results of their actions contrast with each other. In the case of Moses, 'he was upset because his binding up did not profit', whereas in Jonah's case, even though his medicine (ܡܬܪܐ) was victorious (ܡܬܪܐ), he became upset (ܡܬܪܐ ܕܡܢܐ).<sup>783</sup> In Nis 34.1, the verbs ܚܕܝܬܐ and ܡܬܪܐ are used together. The subject is Abraham, the medium is ܡܬܪܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ and the object is Haran, Canaan and Egypt. These three cities are described as a sick body,

<sup>780</sup> Eccl 5.2.

<sup>781</sup> Nis 11.7; cf. Nis 11.2-8.

<sup>782</sup> Iei 4.1: ܡܬܪܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ.

<sup>783</sup> Virg 49.13-14.



which he 'visited' (ܡܚܝܬܐ).<sup>784</sup> In Nis 14.2, Ephrem allots a line to each of the three famous bishops of Nisibis: the labour of bishop Jacob 'bound up the land [during] its affliction' (ܐܚܝܬ ܡܚܝܬܐ ܡܢ ܡܠܚܬܐ), and the 'speech' (ܡܠܠܐ) of bishop Vologeses 'made sweet our bitterness in affliction' (ܡܠܠܐ ܡܚܝܬܐ ܡܢ ܡܠܚܬܐ). Between them comes bishop Babu, whose 'bread and wine' bound up the town in its fractured state (ܡܚܝܬܐ ܡܢ ܡܠܚܬܐ).<sup>785</sup>

In Nis 2.17, Ephrem speaks of the defeat of the Persians and the saving of the city of Nisibis. He describes the 'breach' (ܡܚܝܬܐ) as a mirror through which both the enemies and the inhabitants of the city saw the 'power that wounded and bound up' (ܡܠܠܐ ܡܚܝܬܐ ܡܢ ܡܠܚܬܐ).<sup>786</sup> The object of the verbs is not explicitly mentioned: it seems both verbs ܡܚܝܬܐ and ܡܠܠܐ refer to the same people, namely, the inhabitants of the city Nisibis. Alternatively, ܡܚܝܬܐ could refer to the enemies and ܡܠܠܐ to the inhabitants. But as we saw above, God's mercy and His justice wound and bind up at the same time. Thus, it is likely that 'the power' (ܡܠܠܐ), which is God's power, is acting in a similar way here too.

In Nis 10, Ephrem expresses his disappointment at the hopelessness of the situation of the city. Probably he speaks about the war in AD 359. Waiting in hope for rescue took longer than expected. Ephrem uses the noun ܡܠܠܐ in parallel with ܡܚܝܬܐ to describe the help he was waiting for. But, instead of the ܡܚܝܬܐ he expected, there was ܡܠܠܐ, and instead of ܡܠܠܐ there was ܡܚܝܬܐ.<sup>787</sup>

The imperative ܡܠܠܐ is used once when Ephrem advises the bishop of Nisibis to act as a shepherd. The hymn reflects the language of Ezekiel when he speaks about the shepherds and sheep (Ez 34).<sup>788</sup> The bishop is to 'bind up that which is fractured'.<sup>789</sup>

<sup>784</sup> Nis 34.1; Gen 11:31.

<sup>785</sup> Nis 14.2.

<sup>786</sup> Nis 2.17.

<sup>787</sup> Nis 10.16.

<sup>788</sup> On Ezekiel, see chapter II, 3.1.8.

<sup>789</sup> Nis 19.4: ܡܠܠܐ ܡܚܝܬܐ ܡܢ ܡܠܚܬܐ.



### 3.2.5 **حج and Related Terms**

In the Syriac Gospel the action and salvation of God is occasionally described using the verb ܘܒܫܬܐ. Those who have been ‘visited’ or ‘healed’ are ‘His People’ (ܥܡܐܝܗ). Notable examples are Lk 1:68: ‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He visited His People and effected their redemption’,<sup>792</sup> and Lk 7:16: ‘And God visited His People’ (ܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܘܒܫܬܐ). While God (i.e. the Father) is the subject of ܘܒܫܬܐ here, Ephrem often specifies Jesus, the Son of God, as the One Who ‘visits’.<sup>793</sup> In Nat 3.1, the term ܬܪܡܝܬܐ applies to the ‘state of sickness’ of humanity (i.e.

<sup>793</sup> Cf. CDiat 6.13; Nat 3.1; Virg 25.13; Fid 36.1.



the result of the Fall).<sup>794</sup> The Son is the agent of healing the state of sickness. In Fid 36.1, Ephrem compares the Physician Who 'descended' with the other physicians before Him: while the other physicians healed a little and left much, 'the Son descended to visit the servants because their sickness continued and was long'.<sup>795</sup> While these objects, **ܐܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܡܝܢܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ** and **ܬܗܡܝܬܐ**, as mentioned above, have a general sense, in Virg 25.13 the verb **ܝܠܝܕ** is connected with a particular figure, namely Simon's mother-in-law (Mk 1:29-31 and parallel). Her Healer is called the 'Physician of the height' (**ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ**) Who 'descended to visit you' (**ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ**).<sup>796</sup>

'Visiting' does not only refer to human sickness but also to the suffering of the cities. Nis 4.16 illustrates the hope of the Church in Nisibis. The church addresses its prayer to the Lord Who is the Healer: 'You, the Healer of all, have visited/looked after me in my sickness'.<sup>797</sup> The verb **ܝܠܝܕ** describes the actions of **ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ**.

The imperative **ܝܠܝܕ** appears three times in the context of healing. In Nis 19.4, Ephrem advises bishop Abraham to act as a shepherd and serve the church of Nisibis: 'visit the one that is sick'.<sup>798</sup> The 'sick sheep' need to be 'visited', and the visitor is the bishop here - no longer the Lord. The parable of the Lost Sheep in the Syriac Gospel (Lk 15:1-7; Mt 18:10-14) does not use the verb **ܝܠܝܕ**, but it does appear in Ezekiel's advice to the Shepherds (Ez 34:12). Nevertheless, **ܝܠܝܕ** is used along with **ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ** in the

<sup>794</sup> Nat 3.1: **ܬܗܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ**.

<sup>795</sup> Fid 36.1:

**ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ**  
**ܐܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܡܝܢܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ**  
**ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ**  
**ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ**

<sup>796</sup> Virg 25.13.

<sup>797</sup> Nis 4.16: **ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ**.

<sup>798</sup> Nis 19.4: **ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ**.



episode about the Sheep and the Goats (Mt 26:31-46): 'I was sick and you have visited me'.<sup>799</sup>

In Nis 55.31 and 58.23, the imperative **ܝܚܠܝܬ** has a negative connotation, since death is the agent and subject of **ܝܚܠܝܬ**. In both hymns Ephrem lets Satan and death argue. As result of the dialogue, Satan advises death: 'you shall go and effect sickness, and I [will place] snares'.<sup>800</sup> Here **ܝܚܠܝܬ** means 'to effect sickness', or 'to place, put' along with **ܚܬܝܬ**. This becomes clear in Nis 58.23, where Satan reminds death about the snares which he had placed, and tells him to 'visit all those who are sick'.<sup>801</sup> The 'sick' are those who have to be visited, and the visitor is death.

The verb **ܝܚܝܬ** is also used in the sense of 'to effect' or 'to perform' in connection with Jesus. Using the verb **ܝܚܝܬ** with **ܕ** in the CDiat 6.13, Ephrem says: '[Jesus] has not effected any of the wounds that those before did towards the people'.<sup>802</sup> Here **ܝܚܝܬ** has the same meaning as **ܝܚܬܝܬ**, used in the same line. In turn, **ܝܚܝܬ** in the sense of 'to effect' or 'to perform' has a positive aspect in the CDiat 16.29 where it is used in the context of giving sight to the man born blind (Jn 9:1-38) when Naaman's healing from his leprosy (2 Kgs 5:1-27) is mentioned: here it is 'the commandment' which is said to have effected (**ܝܚܝܬ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܫܪܐܝܝܠ**) this (and not the clay or the water, the immediate agents).<sup>803</sup>

The subject of **ܝܚܝܬ** can also be the 'hand of the Lord's justice' or just 'His justice'. In Nis 11.3, Ephrem says: 'My Lord, the hand [of your justice] has visited the sick a great deal'.<sup>804</sup> This hymn emphasises the benefit of the Lord's punishment. The hand

<sup>799</sup> Mt 26:36: **ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܫܪܐܝܝܠ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܫܪܐܝܝܠ**. [H has **ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܫܪܐܝܝܠ** instead of **ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܫܪܐܝܝܠ** (Mt 26:36; cf. 25:43)].

<sup>800</sup> Nis 55.31: **ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܫܪܐܝܝܠ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܫܪܐܝܝܠ**.

<sup>801</sup> Nis 58.23: **ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܫܪܐܝܝܠ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܫܪܐܝܝܠ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܫܪܐܝܝܠ**.

<sup>802</sup> CDiat 6.13: **ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܫܪܐܝܝܠ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܫܪܐܝܝܠ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܫܪܐܝܝܠ**.

<sup>803</sup> CDiat 16.29; Jn 9:1-38 does not use the verb **ܝܚܝܬ**.

<sup>804</sup> Nis 11.3: **ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܫܪܐܝܝܠ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܫܪܐܝܝܠ**.



of the Lord's justice is described as the 'hidden physician (fem.) of their pains and the source of their life'.<sup>805</sup> Therefore, Nis 21.18, Ephrem 'praises the hand that visited [the world]'.<sup>806</sup> The object is **ܠܠܗ** which include all human beings, and no longer **ܡܢܗ** as in the Gospel (Lk1:68; 7:16). In the refrain of Nis 34, the Lord is praised for caring for humanity 'since He increased those who visited it in all generations'.<sup>807</sup> The 'visitors' are the patriarchs and prophets who were sent by God. In this context only Abraham is explicitly mentioned in connection with the verb **ܝܒܝܬ**: '[Abraham] visited the whole body' (**ܡܝܚܝܬ ܠܠܗ ܡܠܠܗ**).<sup>808</sup> Here the verbs **ܕܚܝܬ** and **ܡܚܝܬ** are used along with **ܝܒܝܬ**. With the term 'body' (**ܠܠܗ**) Ephrem primarily means Harran, Canaan and Egypt, but it also applies to the whole world (**ܠܠܗ**) and Nature (**ܠܠܗ**). The terms and phrases such as 'gangrene of idolatry' (**ܕܝܠܕܝܬ ܕܝܠܕܝܬ**),<sup>809</sup> 'wound' (**ܕܝܠܕܝܬ**)<sup>810</sup> and 'sick heel' (**ܕܝܠܕܝܬ ܕܝܠܕܝܬ**),<sup>811</sup> describe the sickness of the whole world that is the object of visiting. In order to emphasise this, Ephrem uses the term **ܠܠܗ**, and **ܠܠܗ** too.<sup>812</sup> Ephrem uses the term **ܠܠܗ** once to describe the actions of the 'great physicians'

<sup>805</sup> Nis 11.3: **ܕܡܝܚܝܬ ܡܠܠܗ ܕܡܝܚܝܬ ܕܡܝܚܝܬ ܕܡܝܚܝܬ**.

<sup>806</sup> Nis 21.18: **ܡܝܚܝܬ ܕܡܝܚܝܬ ܕܡܝܚܝܬ**.

<sup>807</sup> Nis 34: **ܕܝܠܕܝܬ ܕܝܠܕܝܬ ܕܝܠܕܝܬ ܕܝܠܕܝܬ ܕܝܠܕܝܬ ܕܝܠܕܝܬ**. In this hymn, the world (**ܠܠܗ**) is described as a 'body' (**ܠܠܗ**) that was sick with the 'fever of paganism' (**ܕܝܠܕܝܬ ܕܝܠܕܝܬ**), the source of sickness (**ܠܠܗ**). Here **ܠܠܗ** refers to Harran, Canaan and Egypt.

<sup>808</sup> Nis 34.1.

<sup>809</sup> Nis 34.5.

<sup>810</sup> Nis 34.5; 34.10; 34.12.

<sup>811</sup> Nis 34.8.

<sup>812</sup> In Nis 34.9, Ephrem speaks of **ܕܝܠܕܝܬ ܕܝܠܕܝܬ**, **ܕܝܠܕܝܬ ܕܝܠܕܝܬ**, **ܕܝܠܕܝܬ ܕܝܠܕܝܬ**. In Nis 34.10 the phrase **ܕܝܠܕܝܬ ܕܝܠܕܝܬ**, and in Nis 34.11 **ܕܝܠܕܝܬ ܕܝܠܕܝܬ ܕܝܠܕܝܬ** appear.



(ܠܬܝܝܬܝ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ)<sup>813</sup> who are called ‘visitors’ (ܠܚܝܬܝܢ) sent by God to ‘visit’ (ܠܚܝܬܝܢ) the world.<sup>814</sup>

Finally, in hymn 43 On Nisibis where Ephrem speaks about the benefits through the chosen and righteous people, he plays on the word ܚܝܬ in connection with the sick Elisha (2 Kgs 13:14-19): ‘It is a matter of wonder that the sickness of diligent people is a source of visiting for the body of those who visits him/it. Make me worthy, You Who visit those who visit You (ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܚܝܬܝܢ), of their actions (ܠܚܝܬܝܢ)’.<sup>815</sup> With the phrase ܚܝܬ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ Ephrem addresses the Lord, whereas ܠܚܝܬܝܢ describes the actions of God’s chosen people.

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<sup>813</sup> Nis 34.6.

<sup>814</sup> Nis 34.9.

<sup>815</sup> Nis 43.9-10:

ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܠܝܬܝܢ ܕܝܬܝܢ ܕܝܬܝܢ  
ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܝܬܝܢ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܝܬܝܢ  
ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܝܬܝܢ  
ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܝܬܝܢ  
ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܝܬܝܢ  
ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܝܬܝܢ







# 4

## EPHREM'S BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܢ ܩܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ  
 ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ  
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Because he caused discerning sayings to be written  
 which were like medicines,  
 which, although they are not all the same, in that they  
 all concerned hope  
 of health, are collected and come.  
 Whoever does not know their powers might kill with  
 them,  
 and whoever does know their powers  
 will win victory [over sicknesses] with them.

From this example of the medicines approach the  
 Scriptures.  
 There are people who are very ignorant about  
 medicinal herbs  
 and there are also those who are real strangers  
 to the reading [of Scripture].  
 Words are contentious in the mouths of learned fools.  
 The Scriptures are full of peace  
 but the learned [are filled] with disturbance.

*Fid 53.6-7*



These stanzas emerge in a context where Ephrem has accused the Arians of misunderstanding the Scripture and thereby the Son of God. All the contentious divisions which resulted in various factions forming within the church, are based on the misunderstanding of Holy Scripture. As in the above hymn, and in Fid 35.2 and 64.12, as well as in Virg 1.3-4, Ephrem understands Scripture as a healer and as an assistance for man, provided it is approached in the right way. In Fid 35.2, Ephrem rebukes the Arians for their misunderstanding of Scripture, in a similar way to the rebuke given to readers by Moses and John. This was intended to remind the reader that the correct interpretation of the Scriptures would enable them to avoid becoming unhealthy, and to proclaim that Nature suffered because of Adam's sin and that the Lord had also suffered.<sup>1</sup> False interpretations of Scripture causes disturbance, like someone using medicine and drugs without knowing their effects.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in this chapter a few themes and figures of Scripture are presented in order to illustrate Ephrem's biblical exegesis concerning sickness and healing.

The first part of this chapter includes certain healing aspects related to the Old Testament, whereas the second part presents healing imagery based on the New Testament.

#### 4.1 Old Testament

This part deals first of all with the health of Adam and Eve in Paradise and on the earth of thorns. Ephrem frequently refers to the immortal life of Adam and Eve in Paradise before the expulsion, and to their mortality after the fall. Here, I focus on Ephrem's perspective on the health of the inhabitants of Eden at the time they were created. Obeying or disobeying the Lord's commandment and the structure of Paradise were important influences concerning their well-being. The shift from immortality to mortality is caused through the persuasion of the Evil One and Serpent, whom they obeyed by their free will. The punishment is a consequence of their action, though even here there is a positive side in that death provides a limitation to pains and pangs. Although life on the earth includes sickness, pain and grief, the

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<sup>1</sup> Fid 35.2.

<sup>2</sup> Fid 53.7.



fragrance of Paradise appears as a Medicine and Physician for the earth, and so minimises its illness.

I then go on to illustrate Ephrem's use of medical imagery in connection with four biblical figures of the Old Testament to whom he often refers. As the fall of man was the consequence of sin, so too was the leprosy of Miriam, Gehazi and King Uzziah, which was caused by their evil will, speech or acts. While the Syrian Naaman and Miriam, the sister of Moses, were healed because they followed the commandments of the prophets, King Uzziah and Gehazi suffered from leprosy the rest of their life.

Finally, Ephrem draws attention to some women in the Old Testament. According to the genealogy of Jesus, Ephrem emphasises the acts of Tamar, Rahab and Ruth who risked their lives and transgressed the Law in order to participate in the Medicine of Life, whom Ephrem identifies with Jesus Christ.

#### **4.1.1 The Health of Adam and Eve in Paradise and on the Earth of Thorns**

In the hymns *On Paradise* Ephrem delineates his concept of Paradise where he considers it as an abode for its inhabitants. Starting in hymn 1 *On Paradise*, by reading the Genesis narrative of the creation, Ephrem is spiritually transported in his inner vision to the splendour of Paradise which is beyond comprehension. Here he describes, on the basis of the biblical narrative and his own vision of it, the creation of Adam and Eve, the position of the Tree of Knowledge and of the Tree of Life, as well as the seduction of Adam and Eve by the Evil One. In hymn 5 onwards, where Ephrem reaches the narrative of the Fall of Adam and Eve, he is transported back into the world of thorns, pains and griefs.

Since the hymns *On Paradise* above all discuss the life of Paradise, its inhabitants and their 'health', they will be used as the main source for this section. We find some other related passages in the *Commentary on Genesis*, the *Commentary on the Diatessaron*, the *Hymns On Faith*, *On the Church*, *On Nisibis*, *On the Nativity* and in some other places.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For instance CDiat 16.5; Fid 6.10-16; Nat 49.16; 8.4; Eccl 13.25; 20.6; 50.7-8; Haer 21.6; Nis 57.1-3; 69.4; Nat 1.27-27; 13.2; 26.9; etc.







ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ

God established the Tree as judge, so that if Adam  
should eat from it,  
it might show him that rank which he had lost through  
his pride,  
and show him, as well, that low estate he had acquired,  
to his torment.  
Whereas, if he should overcome and conquer, it would  
robe him  
in glory and reveal to him also the nature of shame,  
so that he might acquire, in his good health, an  
understanding of sickness.

*Parad 3.10*

Ephrem has the idea that Adam was created healthy, but in his intermediate state he lacked the knowledge both of his health and of sickness. Apparently, the ‘understanding of sickness’ (ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ) cannot be separated from ܡܠܟܐ, i.e. the state of good health. Adam was in ‘good health’ (ܡܠܟܐ) but he did not know this for he had not yet gained the understanding of sickness. Adam would have acquired the understanding of sickness, if he had obeyed the commandment of the Lord. In Parad 3.11-12, Ephrem explains the significance of knowledge of ‘good health’ (ܡܠܟܐ) and ‘state of sickness’ (ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ) and applies it to Adam:

ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ

ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ







awareness of Evil things through the Good. Even if Adam and Eve had been aware of pains, suffering and illness, their knowledge would have been just through the good things. In so far as they did not suffer before eating from the fruit, they just thought positively about griefs and pains, but yet they did not taste them in reality.<sup>7</sup> Their disobedience caused them to be stripped of the glory and to incur the curse. The knowledge and real discernment was hidden in the Tree of Knowledge (עֵץ הַדַּעַת).

#### 4.1.1.2 *The Tree of Knowledge and Its Fruit*

Ephrem calls the Tree of Knowledge (ܬܡܪ ܥܝܢܐ) the ‘tree of wisdom’<sup>8</sup> and the ‘wood/cross of knowledge’.<sup>9</sup> The Tree of Knowledge was established as ‘judge’ (ܩܕܝܫ) and is strictly linked with the commandment of the Lord.<sup>10</sup> Both the transgression and the keeping of the commandment had consequences and they would change the state of Adam and Eve. Therefore, the primordial state of Adam and Eve was not an eternal one, but a temporary one. The Tree of Knowledge, which is planted in the midst of Paradise in order to separate off ‘above from below, the sanctuary from the Holy of Holies’,<sup>11</sup> plays the same role as the sanctuary veil: Adam and Eve were not allowed to penetrate inside it yet. ‘The Tree was to him like a gate; its fruit was the veil

[illegible]

<sup>8</sup> Parad 12.15:  $\kappa\delta\eta\sigma\tau\alpha\kappa$  [ $\kappa\delta\eta\sigma$ ]

<sup>9</sup> Parad 3.3:  $\kappa\theta\lambda\mu\kappa\gamma$   $\kappa\mu\mu$  or  $\kappa\theta\lambda\mu\gamma$   $\kappa\mu\mu$ ; Parad 15.5:  $\kappa\theta\lambda\mu\gamma$   $\mu\alpha\alpha\theta\mu\kappa\gamma$   $\kappa\mu\mu$ .

<sup>10</sup> Parad 3.10; CGen 2.17.

<sup>11</sup> Parad 3.14:

[illegible]



covering the hidden Tabernacle. Adam snatched the fruit, casting aside the commandment.<sup>12</sup>

The Tree of Knowledge and its 'excellent fruit' (ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ) are not to be considered as poisonous, but when its fruit is picked out of season it has a bad effect.<sup>13</sup> Ephrem illustrates this by using the example of an ordinary, natural tree and its fruit. The fruit gives forth its sweetness if it is plucked in due season, but out of season it proves sour if it is plucked prematurely.<sup>14</sup> Adam died 'for taking the fruit prematurely'.<sup>15</sup> Adam did not wait for the season of the fruit for he did not obey the commandment of the Lord. If Adam and Eve had obeyed the divine commandment then their eyes would have been opened to the glory which the Creator had destined for them, and they would have been raised to a higher state so that they would have entered the Holy of Holies, the Tree of Life.<sup>16</sup>

#### 4.1.1.3 *The Tree of Life*

In Ephrem's view, the position of the Paradisiacal trees plays an important role. While the Tree of Knowledge is planted in the middle of Paradise and serves as a borderline between the lower/outer part of Paradise proper and its highest/innermost section, the Tree of Life is placed in the upper/inner circle of Paradise proper, in the Holy of Holies.<sup>17</sup> Both the Tree of Knowledge and that of Life were a 'source of every good', and they would lead Adam to become the likeness of God through life without death and error.

<sup>12</sup> Parad 3.13:

[ܐܝܬܐ] ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܡܠ ܐܕܡ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ.

N. Séd explains this symbolism quite fully in his important article 'Les Hymnes sur le paradis de Saint Éphrem et les traditions juives', *Le Muséon* 81 (1968), 455-501.

<sup>13</sup> Parad 15.12.

<sup>14</sup> Parad 12.3: ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܡܠ ܐܕܡ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ.

<sup>15</sup> Parad 15.8: ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ.

<sup>16</sup> Parad 3.2-8.

<sup>17</sup> Parad 3; 12.



חַיִּים חַיִּים כְּעֵץ הַחַיִּים  
 כְּעֵץ הַחַיִּים כְּעֵץ הַחַיִּים  
 כְּעֵץ הַחַיִּים כְּעֵץ הַחַיִּים  
 כְּעֵץ הַחַיִּים כְּעֵץ הַחַיִּים  
 כְּעֵץ הַחַיִּים כְּעֵץ הַחַיִּים  
 כְּעֵץ הַחַיִּים כְּעֵץ הַחַיִּים

Two Trees did God place in Paradise,  
 the Tree of Life and that of Wisdom,  
 a pair of blessed fountains, source of every good,  
 by means of this glorious pair  
 the human person can become the likeness of God,  
 endowed with immortal life and wisdom that does not  
 err.

*Parad 12.15*

The absolute image of God is the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who is represented by the invisible Tree of Life in Paradise. In hymn 6 On Faith, where Ephrem emphasises the participation of the Son in the creation of the world, he draws attention to the divine commandment in the plural form 'Let us make Man in our image'. The 'likeness' of the Lord is represented in 'one tree of life'.<sup>18</sup> After the fall, the way to the Tree of Life in Paradise was closed by the sword until Jesus opened it on the cross.<sup>19</sup> In hymn 49 and 50 On the Church, Ephrem describes the Tree of Life as the symbol (ܝܠܕܐ) of the Son of God<sup>20</sup> who gives life to all with its fruits.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Fid 6.10-16. Fid 6.14: ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ.

<sup>19</sup> Nat 8.4:

ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ  
 ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ  
 ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ  
 ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ

<sup>20</sup> Eccl 49.16:

ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ  
 ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ  
 ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ

<sup>21</sup> Eccl 50.7-8:

ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ  
 ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ



#### 4.1.1.4 *The Serpent*

Ephrem describes the Serpent as being 'subtle',<sup>22</sup> 'false',<sup>23</sup> 'lying',<sup>24</sup> 'deceitful'<sup>25</sup> and 'cunning'.<sup>26</sup> He also calls it a 'reptile/dragon',<sup>27</sup> a 'viper'<sup>28</sup> and a 'basilisk'.<sup>29</sup> The Serpent originally had a good nature; whereas evil is a matter of evil will. According to Ephrem, the Serpent belongs to the species of animals that God created on the fifth day at the beginning. Apart from the Evil One's use of it the Serpent was 'healthy'.<sup>30</sup> As Ephrem says in hymn 4 On Paradise, Adam was pure in Eden until 'the Serpent had breathed on him'.<sup>31</sup> Adam and Eve were created and formed by the mercy of God:

ܐܬܬܝܬ ܦܕܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ ܕܥܕܢ  
ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ.

The body was formed by wisdom, the soul was  
breathed by grace,  
the love was mixed in harmony, the Serpent divided it  
by evil.

*Nis 69.4*

In hymn 8 On Paradise, Ephrem discusses the relationship of the soul to the body. When Adam and Eve were created, they were 'pure and perfect' (ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܢ) with body and soul before entering the 'perfect place' (ܕܥܕܢ). When they became 'impure'

ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ  
ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ  
ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ  
ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ.

<sup>22</sup> E.g. Parad 12,6: ܕܥܕܢ.

<sup>23</sup> E.g. Parad 12.2: ܕܥܕܢ.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Eccl 48,9: ܕܥܕܢ.

<sup>25</sup> E.g. Iei 3.1: ܕܥܕܢ.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. Eccl 48.1: ܕܥܕܢ.

<sup>27</sup> E.g. CNis 62,3; Nat 1.28: ܕܥܕܢ; cf. Ex 7:11f.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. Crucif 8.14: ܕܥܕܢ.

<sup>29</sup> E.g. Iei 3.4: ܕܥܕܢ.

<sup>30</sup> Haer 21.6: ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ.

<sup>31</sup> Parad 4.4:

ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ  
ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ.



(ܐܬܚܡ), they left Paradise.<sup>32</sup> This happened because the Serpent served as an instrument of the Evil One and seduced Adam and Eve. Ephrem uses the verb ‘steal’ in connection with the term ‘cunning/crafty thief’:

ܐܕܡ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

Adam was heedless as guardian of Paradise,  
for the crafty thief stealthily entered;  
leaving aside the fruit - which most men would covet –  
he stole instead the Garden’s inhabitant!

*Parad 8.10*

The ‘crafty thief’ (ܐܬܚܡ) seduced Adam and Eve by the poison of the forbidden fruit. Hymn 26 On the Nativity links the biblical account of the seven days of creation with the incarnation of Jesus Christ. On the sixth day, Ephrem considers the poison of the forbidden fruit in contrast to the Medicine of Life:

ܐܕܡ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

Let the sixth day praise him who created  
on Friday Adam whom the Evil One envied.  
As a false friend he pleased him [by] offering him  
poison in [his] food.  
The medicine of life diffused himself to them both.  
He put on a body and was offered to them both.  
The mortal tasted him and lived by him.  
The devourer who ate him was destroyed.

*Nat 26.9*

<sup>32</sup> Parad 8.9.



The Evil One 'envied' (ܐܝܢܐ) Adam and offered them 'poison in food' (ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ). The reptile who is used by the Devil 'deceived' (ܐܝܠܐܢܐ) Eve and caused Adam to sin (ܐܝܠܐܢܐ).<sup>33</sup> Adam and Eve were wounded by the Serpent (ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ), and they were 'swallowed' by the Reptile.<sup>34</sup> Their wounds were healed by the Medicine of Life who came to 'crush the head of the Serpent'.<sup>35</sup> Through the 'impurity of the Serpent' (ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ)<sup>36</sup> Adam and Eve were harmed for they had been corrupted by sin.<sup>37</sup> In the Commentary on the Diatessaron Ephrem goes further and speaks of the Serpent killing Adam: 'The Serpent struck Adam in Paradise and killed him.'<sup>38</sup>

Through the Serpent Adam and Eve were seduced; they transgressed the divine commandment and so sinned. Therefore, they were expelled from Paradise to the land of thorns, while with them through the Serpent's agency sickness entered the land that is under a curse.<sup>39</sup>

#### 4.1.1.5 *The Transgression of the Divine Commandment*

The Fall of Adam and Eve was initiated by the poisonous advice of the Evil One, suggesting they would receive divinity, by eating from the Tree of Knowledge. Ephrem points out the twofold error of Satan, as well as his jealousy and envy of Adam and Eve. According to Ephrem, as also in the later Syriac Fathers, the

<sup>33</sup> Nis 57.1-3.

<sup>34</sup> Nat 1.27-28: ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܐܝܠܐܢܐ.

<sup>35</sup> Nat 13.2:

ܥܬܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ.

<sup>36</sup> Eccl 13.25: ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ.

<sup>37</sup> Eccl 20.6:

[ܐܝܠܐܢܐ] ܐܝܠܐܢܐ [ܐܝܠܐܢܐ] ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܐܝܠܐܢܐ.

<sup>38</sup> CDiat 16.15: ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ.

<sup>39</sup> Parad 11.9: ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܐܝܠܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ.



etymology of the name of Satan is based of its similarity to the verb **שׁוּב**, which means ‘turn aside, go astray, go wrong’:

**כִּי הִנֵּה שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה [שׁוּב] וְהוּא שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה  
וְהוּא שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה וְהוּא שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה.**

How this name of yours, O Satan, resembles you  
for You have gone astray from the [right] way,  
and you have led infantile Adam astray.

*Nis 54.9*

Satan fell from his rank and led astray Adam and Eve from Paradise.<sup>40</sup> The Evil One was jealous and greatly envious, because Adam and Eve had received so much, in that they had been created in the image of the Lord. The Evil One ‘proffered poison in food’ to Adam.<sup>41</sup>

The fruit was proffered through the Serpent to Eve and then to Adam. The Serpent persuaded Eve and deceived her into eating from the fruit. As we saw above, though the Serpent was ‘more crafty than any of the wild animals’ (Gen 3:1), in its nature it was originally good like the rest of the creation. While the Serpent led the inhabitants of Paradise to sin, it was used as an instrument of the Evil One.

The ‘Serpent’ became a symbol of all evil seduction; for instance Ephrem describes Amnon as a serpent/snake because of his desire and deceitful plan. In order to destroy the treasure of Tamar’s virginity, he clothed himself in the ‘attire of illness’.

**כִּי הִנֵּה שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה [שׁוּב] וְהוּא שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה  
וְהוּא שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה וְהוּא שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה.  
כִּי הִנֵּה שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה [שׁוּב] וְהוּא שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה  
וְהוּא שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה וְהוּא שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה.**

<sup>40</sup> Haer 26.4. For further information about the etymology of ‘Satan’ see T. Kronholm, *Motifs from Genesis 1-11 in the Genuine Hymns of Ephrem the Syrian with particular Reference to the Influence of Jewish Exegetical Tradition* (Lund 1978), 90-94.

<sup>41</sup> Eccl 48.11; Nat 26.9:

**כִּי הִנֵּה שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה [שׁוּב] וְהוּא שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה  
וְהוּא שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה וְהוּא שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה.  
כִּי הִנֵּה שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה [שׁוּב] וְהוּא שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה  
וְהוּא שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה וְהוּא שֶׁל הַיָּדָוָה.**



ḥṭḥṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭ  
 .ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭ

Hearts he was seeking –

O the rational one who made hearts for the heartless  
 one!

For he was a snake who in his cunning  
 clothed himself in the attire of illness,

so that she would fail to notice him, and he would  
 wound her.

Since desire deceived and defiled virginity,  
 rage deceived and destroyed desire.

*Virg 2.3*

Eve obeyed the advice of the Serpent and gave the fruit to Adam. Therefore, Ephrem calls her ironically the ‘diligent wife’ who made for Adam a garment of spots’.<sup>42</sup> As in Nis 54.9, Adam is called ‘infantile’ (ḥṭṭṭ),<sup>43</sup> so too in Nat 26.8, Ephrem calls Eve ‘infantile’ (ḥṭṭṭṭṭ),<sup>44</sup> and they were weak (ḥṭṭṭ).<sup>45</sup> Both Adam and Eve desired the excellent fruit, but disobeyed the divine commandment. Man’s free will was divided. Ephrem compares man’s free will with the uprightness of the Lord. Man’s free will in its craftiness approaches divine uprightness.<sup>46</sup> The free will with which man was created led Adam and Eve astray in error that is the cause of sickness.<sup>47</sup> Free will enables man to decide between good and evil matters. By free will the inhabitants of Paradise stretched their hands out to the fruit which was the ‘poison of death’, and they did not choose the fruit of the ‘Medicine of Life’.<sup>47</sup> So the

<sup>42</sup> Parad 4.5:

ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ  
 .ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ

<sup>43</sup> Nis 54.9; Nat 26.8.

<sup>44</sup> Eccl 11.10:

ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ  
 .ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ

<sup>45</sup> Eccl 2.11: ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ.

<sup>46</sup> Eccl 8.3:

ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ [ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ] ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ  
 .ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ [ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ] ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ ḥṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭṭ

<sup>47</sup> Eccl 19.7:



transgression of the divine commandment and the eating of the forbidden fruit was the first wrong decision of human free will, but not the last one. Ephrem describes the way of taking the fruit as stealing, for man's free will was divided against the Lord.<sup>48</sup> Adam did not trust the Lord by preferring to steal and so eat the fruit, when he wished to become divinised.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, Ephrem goes further and considers free will as a spring of all visible and invisible diseases:

ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

O Good One have pity on our wickedness  
 which is the spring of all kinds of harm.  
 Its thoughts [are] hidden diseases,  
 also its deeds [are] visible diseases.  
 For it is from it that the first transgression of all debt  
 comes:  
 of the middle as well as of the last [debts].  
 You who are serene make serene our free will,  
 the spring which muddled itself.

*Ecl 32.1*

Free will is a spring that muddled itself and acts against its creator. Ephrem illustrates this in connection with another biblical figure. In hymn 38 On Faith Ephrem compares Adam with king

ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

<sup>48</sup> Crucif 8.2:

ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

<sup>49</sup> Nis 69.12: ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ.



Uzziah who ministered in the holy sanctuary as a priest without being one (cf. 2 Chr 26:16-21). His will incited him to enter the Holy of Holies against the divine commandment.<sup>50</sup> Both Adam and King Uzziah lost their glory and kingship for their boldness. They were expelled because of their status as the lepers outside the Israelite camp.<sup>51</sup> So Adam lost the glory of Paradise and inherited the earth of thorns.

4.1.1.6 *The Expulsion from Paradise to the Earth of Thorns*

ܠܡܢܝܢ ܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܐ  
 ܠܡܢܝܢ ܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܐ  
 ܠܡܢܝܢ ܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܐ  
 ܠܡܢܝܢ ܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܐ  
 ܠܡܢܝܢ ܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܐ  
 ܠܡܢܝܢ ܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܐ  
 ܠܡܢܝܢ ܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܐ  
 ܠܡܢܝܢ ܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܐ

I was in wonder as I crossed the border of Paradise at  
 how

well-being, as though a companion, turned round and  
 remained behind.

And when I reached the shore of earth, the mother of  
 thorns (Gn 3:18),

I encountered all kinds of pain and suffering.

I learned how, compared to Paradise, our abode is but  
 a dungeon;

yet the prisoners within it weep when they leave it!

*Parad 5.13*

In contrast to hymn 1 On Paradise where Ephrem was transported spiritually to Paradise while he joyfully started to read the narrative of Paradise in Genesis, here in hymn 5 he is transported back to the world of pain and suffering, when he began reading the narrative concerning the earth, the mother of thorns (Gen 3:18). As Ephrem explains his feeling further in the following two stanzas,

<sup>50</sup> Fid 38.17: (it is quoted below with the translation in English)

ܠܡܢܝܢ ܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܐ  
 ܠܡܢܝܢ ܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܐ  
 ܠܡܢܝܢ ܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܐ  
 ܠܡܢܝܢ ܡܚܠܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܠܝܬܐ

<sup>51</sup> Parad 4.3-5.



he understands the earth as a prison, darkness and death in comparison with the well-being of Paradise.<sup>52</sup> Adam and Eve lost Paradise and their glory for they had sinned and did not confess.<sup>53</sup> The loss of the garment of Paradise (glory) is considered as the cause of their nakedness (Gen 3:7): 'It was also said that, when Adam sinned and was deprived of that glory with which he was clothed, he hid his nakedness with the leaves of the fig tree (cf. Gen 3:7)'.<sup>54</sup> The consequence of transgression of the divine commandment was not the divinisation that Adam and Eve had expected, but their 'humiliation in reality' (പിന്നാലാശം), with corporeal 'shame' (നഷ്ടമാ), 'sickness' (രോഗം) and 'suffering' (രസം). The Tree of Knowledge granted to them twofold knowledge: the knowledge that they had lost their glory and the realisation of their nakedness.<sup>55</sup> After his disobedience Adam became mortal,<sup>56</sup> leprous, repulsive<sup>57</sup> and subject to corruption.<sup>58</sup> Adam sinned and he gained all kinds of sickness and shame.<sup>59</sup> He caused death and sin to enter into the world,<sup>60</sup> so that the earth grew old (മുപ്പുകര) and it was accursed (മപ്പലകര).<sup>61</sup> Therefore, not only humanity suffered, became weak and ill,<sup>62</sup> but also the whole of nature.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Parad 5.13-15.

53 CGen 2.27-29.

[illegible]

55 Parad 3.6-12.

<sup>56</sup> Parad 15.8; Crucif 8.14:  אנט.

<sup>57</sup> Parad 4.4: ചർമ്മനം നാ ചി.

58 Ecc1 20.6.

<sup>59</sup> Epiph 10.1; Nis 57.2; 60.29.

<sup>60</sup> Epiph 7.15; Nat 1.62:

דאס איז אים גוט

[Kohles] Kohles Kohles Kohles

<sup>61</sup> Nat 17.12; Nachträge, Serm II,154; Virg 26.10.

<sup>62</sup> Virg 37.3.

63 Fid 35.2.







Adam was killed by the Evil One and he died.<sup>75</sup> Ephrem understands the death of Adam as liberty from the curse of pains. Otherwise Adam would suffer all the time on the earth of thorns.<sup>76</sup>

#### 4.1.1.7 *The Relationship of Paradise to the Earth*

While pain and suffering exist outside Paradise, from within Paradise fragrance wafts like a 'physician to heal the ills of a land that is under a curse'.<sup>77</sup> In contrast to the land of thorns, the 'blossoms' (ܦܩܨܝܢ) and 'fragrance' (ܪܫܝܢ) of Paradise are like a 'physician' (ܪܫܡܢ) for this world. Ephrem contrasts the 'Physician' (ܪܫܡܢ) with 'pains' (ܕܠܐܝܢܐ), and the 'restorative' (ܪܫܡܢ) with the 'state of sickness' (ܕܫܝܚܐ), just as Paradise is contrasted with the earth.<sup>78</sup> Paradise is described as ܪܫܡܢܐ ܕܫܡܢܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ in contrast to the 'earth as the mother of pains' (ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܕܠܐܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ) related to 'pains and suffering' (ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܕܠܐܝܢܐ).<sup>79</sup>

Before the transgression the earth was not cursed, and therefore, in Paradise neither illness nor pains existed. Likewise, after the disobedience of Adam and Eve, Paradise was not cursed; instead the land of 'this diseased world that has been so long in sickness'<sup>80</sup> was cursed. The land of Paradise was created in a

<sup>75</sup> Crucif 8.14; Parad 15.8.

<sup>76</sup> CGen 2.35.

<sup>77</sup> Parad 11.9:

ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ  
ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ  
ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ  
ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ  
ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ  
ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ

<sup>78</sup> Parad 11.9. It should also be noticed that Ephrem refers to the sickness of the earth which is under the curse of the Serpent. The sickness entered the land through the Serpent.

<sup>79</sup> Parad 5.13.

<sup>80</sup> Parad 11.10:

ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ  
ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ



healthy state and remained so after the fall of Adam and Eve. The earth still benefits from Paradise which is the 'life-breath' (ܡܠܚܬܐ) of our earth.

Furthermore, a river flows forth out of Paradise into the world and divides up (cf. Gen 2:10). By the river 'the blessing of Paradise should be mingled by means of water as it issues forth to irrigate the world, making clean its fountains that had become polluted by curses - just as that »sickly water« had been made wholesome by the salt (cf. 2 Kgs 2:21)'.<sup>81</sup> As there is a river of water, so there is also a fountain of 'perfumes' which penetrates our souls through breathing: 'Our inhalation is healed by this healing breath from Paradise; springs receive a blessing from that blessed spring which issues forth from there.'<sup>82</sup>

The fragrance of Paradise is not just the air that we breathe because Ephrem does not mean this literally. It has, rather, a metaphorical sense that symbolises the 'Medicine of Life' (ܡܠܚܬܐ). Even Paradise serves as a fountain of 'restoratives'

ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ  
ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ  
ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ  
ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ

<sup>81</sup> Parad 11.11:

ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ  
ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ  
ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ  
ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ  
ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ  
ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ

In hymn 4 On Virg Ephrem compares the oil and the sacraments of the church with Eden's four rivers (cf. Virg 4.14).

<sup>82</sup> Parad 11.12:

ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ  
ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ  
ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ  
ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ  
ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ  
ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ ܡܠܚܬܐ



(ܫܠܝܚܐ) for life on earth, the fragrance/breath proclaims metaphorically the sending of the Medicine of Life.<sup>83</sup> The reason for the coming of the Medicine of Life is the ‘diseased world’ (ܠܚܝܒܐ ܕܐܪܥܐ), its ‘sickness’ (ܠܡܝܪܐ) and ‘our mortality’ (ܠܡܝܬܐ).<sup>84</sup> The function of the fragrant breath which symbolises the Physician and the Medicine of Life is described as follows: the Paradise ‘cures our sickness’ (ܠܡܝܪܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܐܪܥܐ) that entered into the world through the Serpent; the breath ‘gives sweetness to the bitterness of this region’ (ܠܚܝܒܐ ܕܐܪܥܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܐܪܥܐ); it ‘tempers that curse of our earth’ (ܠܡܝܬܐ ܕܐܪܥܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܐܪܥܐ); the blessing should ‘make clean the fountains of it [the world] that had become polluted by curses’ (ܠܡܝܬܐ ܕܐܪܥܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܐܪܥܐ).<sup>85</sup>

It will have been seen that, in his descriptions of the biblical narrative of Paradise and the Fall, Ephrem frequently introduces imagery from the sphere of medicine. In Paradise, Adam and Eve enjoy ‘good health’ (ܫܠܝܚܐ), and once the Fall has occurred the fragrant breath of Paradise is as a ‘physician’ (ܫܠܝܚܐ), since it can help heal the ‘pains’ (ܠܡܝܬܐ) that have resulted from the Fall. In the same way the health of Paradise is in contrast to the sickness, pains and griefs of the earth.<sup>86</sup> The verb ܡܝܬܐ describes the curing and dressing of the wound. Frequently Ephrem also uses the verb ܡܝܬܐ in parallel to ܡܝܬܐ.<sup>87</sup> The ‘curse’ (ܠܡܝܬܐ) is often related to the earth with its pains, thorns, and griefs, although man was not directly cursed in the biblical narrative.<sup>88</sup> While sickness entered the world through the Serpent, Ephrem links it also with free will (ܡܝܬܐ).<sup>89</sup> In the case of Eve the ‘pains’ (ܠܡܝܬܐ) refer to

<sup>83</sup> For the different terms used for the fragrance and breath of Paradise in Parad 11.9-13 see Chapter Two under ‘Medicine of Life’.

<sup>84</sup> Parad 11.10.

<sup>85</sup> Parad 11.9-10.

<sup>86</sup> Parad 5.13; 11.9-12.

<sup>87</sup> Parad 11.11-12.

<sup>88</sup> Gen 3:14; 3:17.

<sup>89</sup> Parad 11.9; Virg 2.3; Eccl 32.1.



birth-giving and in Adam's case, that he shall eat in pain, which is in contrast to the 'pleasing fruits' of Paradise. The pains and pangs of birth-giving have been multiplied for Eve and she became mortal, since she had sinned.<sup>90</sup> The pains, pangs and death do not belong to the primordial state of Adam and Eve, but to the mortal life which is a consequence of the fall and the punishment. All these belong to the limited curse which is in contrast to 'glory' and ends with 'death' (ܠܡܘܬܐ).<sup>91</sup> In Genesis 3:16-19, in the description of the punishment after the transgression, death was not explicitly mentioned as being decreed against Eve or Adam (cf. Gen 3:16-19). Before the expulsion, the possibility of immortality proclaims an eternal life without death. In Ephrem's view, while the pains and pangs are the prime consequence of the disobedience, death was invented in order to make the pains and pangs temporal.<sup>92</sup> Now that the humans have chosen to know evil as well as good, the gift of mortality is an act of mercy complementary to the aspect of punishment. In the Commentray on Genesis death as well as the pains refer to Adam and his posterity, whereas the pangs are reserved to Eve and her daughters.<sup>93</sup> Eventually mortal Adam tasted the Medicine of Life and was revived.<sup>94</sup> In the eschatological Paradise, Satan laments for there is no death and no growing old.<sup>95</sup> By contrast, in the eschatological Paradise the crippled, deformed, blind and deaf will be restored to good health, so that they will 'rejoice to behold the beauty of Paradise'.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Gen 3:17; CGen 2.30-31.

<sup>91</sup> CGen 2.32; 2.35.

<sup>92</sup> CGen 2.30; 2.35.

<sup>93</sup> CGen 2.32.

<sup>94</sup> Nat 26.9.

<sup>95</sup> Parad 7.22; 14.11.

<sup>96</sup> Parad 7.13:

ܕܢܝܡ ܡܡܝܬܐ ܫܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܚܐ  
 ܡܡܝܬܐ ܡܠܚܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܚܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܚܐ  
 ܡܠܚܐ ܡܠܚܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܚܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܚܐ  
 ܡܠܚܐ ܡܠܚܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܚܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܚܐ  
 ܡܠܚܐ ܡܠܚܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܚܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܚܐ  
 ܡܠܚܐ ܡܠܚܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܚܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܚܐ  
 ܡܠܚܐ ܡܠܚܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܚܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܚܐ



### 4.1.2 Leprosy

In the biblical tradition, healing is perceived as the work of Yahweh. It is God Who cures human ills and grants or restores health to the faithful people. God is also the One Who sends sickness to the erring and disobedient. One of the most notable biblical diseases which Ephrem deals with in his poetry is leprosy (ܠܥܝܢܐ). Ephrem frequently refers to the lepers Miriam, Naaman, Gehazi and King Uzziah. The Lord struck Miriam with leprosy for her audacity in claiming a role equal to that of Moses, as God's instrument (Num 12:13-15). While the Syrian army commander Naaman received a cure for his leprosy through the prophet Elisha, Gehazi was punished with leprosy for his deceitfulness and greediness (2 Kgs 7). Similarly, King Uzziah was cursed with leprosy for having presumed to enter the sanctuary of the Jerusalem temple and burn incense to the Lord as a priest without being one (2 Chr 26).

These instances of leprosy as punishment for presumption are brought together notably in hymn 28 of the cycle *On Faith*. Here Ephrem accuses the Arians of 'prying into' and 'seeking/demanding to know' about the Divinity. The Creator is unlimited while creation is limited, and there is a chasm between them that can only be crossed by the Creator. Therefore, in Ephrem's view, created beings should not pry into God, Who is incomprehensible. If they do this, it will be harmful. Ephrem illustrates the consequences with examples from Nature and Scripture. From Nature, he illustrates the power of thunder, lightning, earthquakes, storm and floods which are fearsome to man if they appear in their strength against the weakness of man.<sup>97</sup> Likewise, medicine, wine, and spices, as well as eating and sleeping, are harmful without proper order and moderation.<sup>98</sup> Using created things in an orderly way helps man, who can benefit from them.<sup>99</sup> The Creator put order, structure and limits on every thing, and also on man. While the limits of Nature are fixed, the freedom and mind of man has the Law.<sup>100</sup> Even though human nature is

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<sup>97</sup> Fid 28.1, 15.

<sup>98</sup> Fid 28.2, 15.

<sup>99</sup> Fid 28.3.

<sup>100</sup> Fid 28.4-5.



bounded well by Divine grace, the will of man can be disturbed by freedom and by his way of life.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, prying into God disturbs human nature. The Scripture as a 'pure mirror of the mind' reflects human willfulness and the result of the wrong use of free will<sup>102</sup> which results in leprosy. Since hymn 28 On Faith brings together three of the four biblical figures, it can conveniently serve as an introduction to a more detailed discussion of each individual in turn:

28.9

ܐܠܗܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
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 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ

Behold, leprosy, which reproved the talkative,  
 reproves the boldness of those who pry.  
 If, in the case of Miriam, who spoke against the humble  
 one [Moses],  
 her lips wove for herself a robe of leprosy (Num 12:1-  
 10),  
 [yet] her love of him had accompanied the baby in the  
 water (Ex 2:1-10):  
 she had made the heart of Pharaoh's daughter swim on  
 dry land,  
 for the child that had been floating  
 also supported his own mother with the wage [paid for]  
 him.

28.10

ܐܠܗܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
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 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ

<sup>101</sup> Fid 28.7.

<sup>102</sup> Fid 28.14.











They both wanted to be priests of God.  
 Their hidden heart is represented in their open  
 offering.

On account of their offerings  
 their hidden [thoughts] were openly laid bare.  
 28.15

חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד  
 חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד  
 חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד  
 חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד  
 חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד  
 חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד  
 חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד  
 חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד

From the Temple which makes all holy  
 the leper who makes all unclean came out.  
 And the doctrine which directs all  
 has brought forth for us disputation which disturbs all.  
 Rain, which helps everything, in excess harms us.  
 And the sun, which adorns everything, blinds us with  
 its power.

Even bread, which gives life to all,  
 is a killer for someone who eats [too] greedily.  
 28.16

חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד  
 חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד  
 חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד  
 חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד  
 חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד  
 חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד  
 חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד  
 חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד, חסד וחסד

His arrangement rebukes the impudent  
 because he has hedged the Temple around with fire.  
 And in the case of the 200 [sons of Aaron],  
 who dared and served as priests,  
 the fire, the lover of the holy, burst them out.  
 It devoured the sons of Aaron,  
 because they brought strange fire in like a harlot (Num  
 16:1-35).

The holy [fire] was jealous, and knowledge of truth



was zealous against profane inquiry.

*Fid 28.9-16*

#### 4.1.2.1 *The Leprosy of Miriam (Num 12:1-16)*

Miriam is mentioned by name in seven passages of the Old Testament.<sup>103</sup> She is presented as the sister of Moses and Aaron<sup>104</sup> and identified with the sister of Moses who watched from a distance what would happen to Moses in the ark of bullrushes (cf. Ex 2:1-10). As a 'prophetess', Miriam took a leading role in the wilderness community with Moses and Aaron (cf. Ex 15:20-21). According to Numbers 12, Miriam and Aaron had an argument with Moses during the exodus because of his Cushite wife and his authority in rendering God's word. They claimed to have the power of prophecy equal to that of Moses. Thus, they were rebuked, but the chief punishment fell upon Miriam (Num 12:9-10). When Aaron saw Miriam's leprosy, he regretted what he had said and prayed with Moses for her healing (cf. Num 12:10-15).

Ephrem uses the illustration of the punishment of Miriam (Num 12:1-10) as an admonition to the Arians. Because Miriam criticised Moses for his Cushite wife and reproved the humble man, the Lord punished her skin with leprosy. Ephrem is amazed, perturbed and full of wonder that the skin of Moses' older sister was diseased, when she had saved his life by approaching Pharaoh's daughter and advising her to find a wet-nurse for Moses (Ex 2:1-10). If this happened to Miriam because she spoke against the prophet, how much more severe would the disease be of those who pryingly seek to know the Lord of the prophets?<sup>105</sup>

In the Second discourse on Admonition, Ephrem deals extensively with Miriam as an example from the Scripture. He frames the biblical passage with the significance of speech or word.<sup>106</sup> The word granted life to the robber on the cross (cf. Lk 23:42), but the mocking speech of Miriam afflicted her with

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<sup>103</sup> Ex 15:20-21; Num 12:1-16; 20:1; 26:59; Dtn 24:9; 1 Chr 5:29 (6:3); Mic 6:4.

<sup>104</sup> Ex 15:20-21; Num 20:1; 26:59; 1 Chr 5:29 (6:3); Mic 6:4.

<sup>105</sup> *Fid* 28.10; I *Serm* 2.1213-16.

<sup>106</sup> I *Serm* 2.1203-1380.



leprosy.<sup>107</sup> As a prophetess, Miriam had the right to ask that God talk to her, but it was not right to be proud and arrogant, to rebuke and mock her brother in argument. Miriam spoke to God, she was near to him and she had the gift of prophecy, but because she thought that she was privileged, she became distant from the Lord.<sup>108</sup> Words of mocking and rebuking are evil in the eye of the Lord, and man has to give account on the day of the judgment for every careless word he has spoken.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, all ‘uprightness’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤋), ‘holiness’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤍), ‘purity’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤏), ‘faith’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤍𐤏), ‘concord’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤏𐤏), ‘gift/charism’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤍𐤏𐤏), ‘prayer’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤏), ‘fasting’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤏) and ‘pure love’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤏𐤏) are not ‘true’ and will be rejected and refused if they are mixed with ‘iniquity’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅), ‘impurity’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤏𐤏), ‘magical ablutions’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤏; variant: ‘defilement/abomination’=𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤏), ‘augury/divination’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅), ‘division’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤏), ‘pride’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤏), ‘haughtiness’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤏), ‘hatred of heart’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤏𐤏) or ‘jealousy’ (𐤊𐤏𐤅𐤏).<sup>110</sup> The same is true with natural substances. If poison is mixed with food then death will follow.<sup>111</sup> So it is with truth for Ephrem. Also, since what is visible is true and clear, because the mind and soul are invisible, the body serves as their mirror which reflects their role. The visible disease of the body reflects the invisible illness of mind. The leprosy of the body is equivalent to the rebuke of the mind. Moreover, the visible disease shows how hateful mocking and scorn is, and how impure as a result of it the mind and soul are.<sup>112</sup>

For Ephrem man is healthy if the relationship of the body, mind and soul is full of harmony and the ‘limbs’ are not acting against each other. Therefore, he includes another form of argument for the cause of the leprosy of Miriam’s body. The ‘division’ of the ‘limbs’ (body) against a person through diseases is a sign of impurity and defilement, and it is an evil. As a man rejects

<sup>107</sup> I Sermon 2.1207-16.

<sup>108</sup> I Sermon 2.1333-42.

<sup>109</sup> I Sermon 2.1377-80; Mt 12:36.

<sup>110</sup> I Sermon 2.1225-42.

<sup>111</sup> I Sermon 2.1247-59.

<sup>112</sup> I Sermon 2.1257-77.



the defiled part of himself, so God too rejects a man if he doubts, sins and is unclean; and as one part of a person worries about another part, so God also worries about his chosen people.<sup>113</sup>

While in Fid 28, Ephrem does not mention the healing of Miriam, he does so in the Second Admonition<sup>114</sup> and in Haer 43 where he presents God as the Creator of the body and Jesus as the healer of the body. Both are the same God who loves human nature. Among many other images of healing, Ephrem refers to the healing of Miriam and Naaman:

ܐܢܬܐ ܩܝܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܢܐ ܟܥ ܠܚܝܬܐ  
ܡܢܬܐ ܩܝܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܝܫܐ  
ܕܬܢܐ ܕܡܝܪܝܡ ܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܪܝܡ  
ܕܝܫܐ ܕܡܝܪܝܡ ܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܪܝܡ ܕܠܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ  
‘The one who loves the body’ cured Miriam [and] also  
Naaman.  
‘The one who hates the body’ cured the ten lepers (Lk  
17:12),  
so that they might reprove those who accused falsely;  
for, according to their word, the one who has increased  
should be blamed.

*Haer 43.16*

This text is in the context of hymns 42 - 44 of Against Heresies where Ephrem offers various arguments against the Marcionites and Bardaisanites who dared to separate the Son from the Father. For Marcion (ca. 70-150 C.E.) the Demiurge, as Creator of the body, ‘loves the body’, whereas Jesus represents the supreme good God, and so is seen as ‘hating the body’. Ephrem points out ironically the illogicality of Marcion’s separation between the Good God and the Creator. Therefore, unlike the heretics (Marcionites and Bardaisanites), Ephrem emphasises the love of Jesus for the human body which is the creation of the Father. Jesus loved the body of man and therefore He cured human bodies, just as His Father, the Creator of the body, did. Neither Jesus nor His Father hates the body. While in this hymn God is proclaimed as the Healer of man, and so also as the Healer of the leprosy of Miriam, in the Second Admonition Ephrem emphasises the method of

<sup>113</sup> I Serm 2.1277-92:

<sup>114</sup> I Serm 2.1315-44.



healing, which is man's purification from sin. Just as through sin and mocking speech disease afflicts the body, so through 'holiness' (ἁγιωσύνη) God granted Miriam health and made her pure from her leprosy. Both 'holiness' and sin have to do with the will of man and his use of free will, and at the same time with his relationship with God. The cursing of disease, or the healing or restoring of man is dependent on the relationship between man's body, mind and soul, as well as on a proper relationship to the Creator of human nature. The healing of leprosy is a symbol of the new birth; disease becomes cleansed from the body, just as sin from man at baptism.<sup>115</sup>

Therefore, the mind of man should be holy, and any investigation of the Lord implies a division of the mind. The tenor of the whole of hymn 28 On Faith is provided in the refrain which praises the Son Who cannot be known.<sup>116</sup> The Son of God is described as the 'Son of the bosom of devouring fire' which swallowed up the disputers and inquirers.<sup>117</sup> In the Second Admonition, Ephrem says:

ܦܪܡ ܠܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܥܡ ܠܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܥܡ [ܐܬܝ] ܦܪܡ  
ܕܝܥܡ

ܦܪܡ ܠܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܥܡ ܠܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܥܡ ܠܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܥܡ

If Miriam who was a prophetess was cursed with  
leprosy because of mocking,  
if another one mocks, for her even Gehenna is too  
small.

*I Sermon 1213-16*

#### 4.1.2.2 *The Cure of Naaman's Leprosy and Gehazi's Greed and Punishment (2 Kgs 5:1-27)*

Diseased with leprosy, Naaman visited the prophet Elisha in Samaria in the hope of being cured (cf. 2 Kgs 5:1-27). On his arrival Naaman was ordered to bathe himself seven times in the Jordan (2 Kgs 5:8-12). Obeying the word of the prophet, Naaman dipped himself seven times in the River Jordan and he was cured (2 Kgs 5:13-14).

<sup>115</sup> CDiat 16.13; I Sermon 2.1257-1335.

<sup>116</sup> Fid 28.Refrain: ܐܬܝ ܦܪܡ ܕܝܥܡ ܠܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܥܡ .

<sup>117</sup> Fid 28.11.



In a passage which was quoted above it was stated that 'the One Who loves the body cleansed Miriam and Naaman from their leprosy and the One Who hates the body cured ten'.<sup>118</sup> Ephrem here refers to the biblical narrative concerning Naaman to illustrate the unity of Jesus with his Father. As Jesus restored human bodies, so the Father cured people like Naaman, who believed that there is only one God, the God of Israel.<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, the body of man is the dwelling place of the body and blood of Christ and not the dwelling place of demons, as they dwelt in swine and the sea.<sup>120</sup> God loves the human body, He restores it, cures and purifies it. Jesus also loves it.

A further point is made in the CDiat 12.21, where attention is drawn to the fact that Jesus touched (Mt 8:3) the leper even though this was against the Law. Elisha followed the Law and did not touch Naaman while the Lord did 'in order to show that the Law was not an obstacle to Him Who had constituted the Law'.<sup>121</sup> In CDiat 16.31, where Jesus tries to explain rebirth to Nicodemus, Ephrem refers to Naaman. Without a womb, Naaman was renewed through the words of Elisha: 'He went and washed himself and was cleansed, and his flesh became like that of a little child.'<sup>122</sup>

The cleansing of the body of Naaman from leprosy through the few words of Elisha and through the water reminds us of baptism. According to Ephrem, it was not the water of the River Jordan which cured Naaman, but it was the 'command' (ܐܡܪܐ). The prophet of the Lord commanded Naaman to wash in the river as the Lord commanded the man born blind to wash in Siloam (cf. Jn 9). Therefore, it is not the element of water which effected the purification of Naaman, as it is not the 'water of atonement' (ܡܝܐ ܕܥܝܪܐܢܐ) which gives atonement to human beings, but the names pronounced over the water.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Haer 43.16.

<sup>119</sup> 2 Kgs 5:15; cf. Haer 43.16.

<sup>120</sup> Haer 43.3.

<sup>121</sup> CDiat 12.21; Mt 8:3.

<sup>122</sup> CDiat 16.13; 2 Kgs 5:14.

<sup>123</sup> CDiat 16.29. By the 'water of atonement' Ephrem means baptism.



Faith is certainly important. Commenting on the verses 'physician, heal yourself' (Lk 4:23) and 'a prophet is not accepted in his own town' (Lk 4:24), Ephrem refers to Elisha as an example. Likewise, Jesus refers to Elisha when He is rejected at Nazareth.<sup>124</sup> To those who believed in Jesus, He was like a 'fountain' (ܦܝܬܐ) for them. Elisha was a fountain in the thirsty land for thirsty people, but because they did not have faith in him, they could not drink from it. It sprang forth for the leper Naaman and granted him healing, because he believed.<sup>125</sup> Ephrem uses this as a part of his polemic against the Jews. Particular allusion is made to Judas Iscariot in Eccl 31.9: the majesty of Jesus is much more exalted than that of Elisha who healed Naaman, since the Lord healed many.<sup>126</sup> Therefore, Judas Iscariot should have had much more faith in the Lord than Naaman had in Elisha: Naaman trusted the prophet by obeying him and honouring him, while Gehazi reproached the prophet of the Lord.

In hymn 28 On Faith quoted above, Ephrem also uses Gehazi as an example in order to demonstrate the boldness of the Arians who 'pry into' God. The narrative of the cure of Naaman's leprosy (2 Kgs 5:1-27) described Gehazi as greedy and deceitful. Because Gehazi lied to Elisha over his having taken two talents of silver and two changes of clothing from Naaman, his skin became diseased with leprosy (2 Kgs 5:20-27). His leprosy was the result of his free will and wilfulness, for he had scorned his master freely, of his will.<sup>127</sup> The scorning of the servant of the Lord is like scorning God and lying to Him. Because of this Ephrem accounts Gehazi along with Cain, Pharaoh, Saul, Herod and Judas Iscariot. Their hatred precipitated the doing of iniquity and they thought to deceive God.<sup>128</sup> Like Achar (cf. Josh 7:1-26) and the Israelites in the desert during the Exodus (cf. Ex 32:1-35), Gehazi loved gold (2 Kgs 5:22-23) which clothed him with leprosy. The lying of Gehazi

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<sup>124</sup> Lk 4:27; CDiat 11.23-27.

<sup>125</sup> Nis 42.5.

<sup>126</sup> Eccl 31.9.

<sup>127</sup> Fid 28.12, 14.

<sup>128</sup> CDiat 3.5.







discusses King Uzziah's leprosy as an example of those who pry into God. The biblical narrative of Uzziah is one among many others. According to Ephrem, it points to the reproach of those who pry into the Lord by their wilfulness and free will, and do not obey the commandments of the Lord.<sup>132</sup> His argument is mainly against the Arians.<sup>133</sup> Disobeying the commandments of the Lord, King Uzziah entered the holy temple by his own wilfulness, just as Gehazi freely lied to the prophet Elijah. His wilfulness led him to act against the Law, just as Miriam had scorned the prophet. He was free to do this and had the freedom which enabled him to use deceit and to do whatever he likes, even if it is against God.<sup>134</sup> Ephrem draws a parallel with Adam who expected to be divinised by the eating of fruit. However, quite the opposite occurred and he lost his glory and was expelled from Paradise:

ܡܢ ܕܝܪܬܐ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ  
 ܕܝܪܬܐ ܕܝܪܬܐ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ  
 ܕܝܪܬܐ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ  
 ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ ܕܥܕܢ

Adam wanted to inherit the brightness,  
 but the earth became his inheritance.  
 Uzziah wanted to add priesthood for himself,  
 but he was given in addition an abominable leprosy.

*Fid 38.17*

For Ephrem, Adam's and Uzziah's wills manifestly contradict the will of God. Nevertheless, God had once granted free will to man who therefore is enabled to act freely. While it is the Evil One who is the prime rebel against God, man sins because he is persuaded by the Devil. The Devil deceived Adam and made him eat from the Tree of Knowledge and led Uzziah to enter the holy temple.<sup>135</sup> The Tree of Knowledge serves as a parallel to the holy sanctuary, as does Adam to King Uzziah. Adam dared to touch the fruit and Uzziah to enter the holy sanctuary. Both of them were

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<sup>132</sup> Fid 8.8-16; the 250 priests and Korah (Num 16:1-50), the priest Uzzah (2 Sam 6:1-8), the River Jordan (Josh 3:7-4:9), Daniel (Dan 8:15-27).

<sup>133</sup> Fid 28.13-15; 38.13.

<sup>134</sup> Fid 28.14; 38.17; Parad 12.4.

<sup>135</sup> Parad 12.4; 15.9.



disobedient and acted in boldness.<sup>136</sup> Adam and Uzziah demanded much more than what God had granted to them. Adam was in possession of the luxury of Paradise and Uzziah of that of kingship. Because of their boldness, they lost their rank.<sup>137</sup> However, if Adam and Uzziah had followed the commandments of the Lord they would not have sinned. As we have seen in the context of Gehazi, the free will of man is not limited in the way that nature is bounded, but it has the Law. Following the commandments of the Lord will save man from all harm, and prevent him from being influenced by the Evil One.

Furthermore, Ephrem contrasts the holiness of the sanctuary with the disease of leprosy. The expectations from the holy sanctuary are obvious: the king expected holiness and purification from it, but he received leprosy. 'The leper who makes all unclean came out of the temple which makes all holy'.<sup>138</sup> It is clear that the inner mind and thought of man are influential here, and that the 'holiness' or 'sinfulness' of man is dependent on the invisible mind. Man can sin even in the holy sanctuary which makes all holy if he is not pure in his mind. King Uzziah scorned and mocked the temple of the Lord while he was offering the incense, and 'he was not ashamed to treat with contempt the glory of the Holy One ...'.<sup>139</sup> To clarify his argument further, Ephrem refers to some examples from nature. Man benefits from rain and sun, but if they are too strong they become harmful. Although bread gives life to all, yet to the greedy it gives death.<sup>140</sup>

In all this, Ephrem warns against prying into the Lord. Man is liable to be persuaded by the Evil One, and so it is necessary to follow the Lord's commandments and to obey the Law. Otherwise, the consequences of disobedience are harmful. The disease of leprosy is a visible disease of the invisible human mind. Ephrem describes it as a punishment which is a consequence of man's own fault, seeing that he is free.

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<sup>136</sup> Parad 3.14.

<sup>137</sup> Parad 15.9-10; Fid 38.17.

<sup>138</sup> Fid 28.15; Parad 15.12.

<sup>139</sup> Fid 28.13.

<sup>140</sup> Fid 28.15.



### 4.1.3 Jesus Christ as the Hidden Medicine in the Seed of Abraham/David

The evangelist Matthew mentions explicitly three biblical women in the genealogy of Jesus, apart from Mary the Mother of Jesus: Tamar (Mt 1.3), Rahab and Ruth (Mt 1.5). They are not Jews, but they became a part of the genealogy of Jesus in a significant way: they had recognised the 'hidden messianic seed' in their husbands; they risked their own lives and wanted to participate in the new life, even if their actions were against the Law. In the cases of Tamar and Ruth, Ephrem specifically identifies this messianic seed as 'the Medicine of Life'.

By way of introduction I take Nat 9.7-16, where Ephrem brings together these three women who, out of their love, hoped for Jesus and wanted to partake in his ancestry. By bringing these three women of the genealogy together Ephrem implicitly identifies Rahab of Matthew 1:5 with the Rahab of Joshua 2 (see below):

9.7

ܠܚܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
 ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
 ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
 ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ

Because of You, women pursued men:  
 Tamar desired a man who was widowed,  
 and Ruth loved a man who was old.  
 Even Rahab, who captivated men, by You was taken  
 captive.

9.8

ܠܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
 ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
 ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
 ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ

Tamar went out and in darkness she stole the light,  
 and by impurity she stole chastity,  
 and by nakedness she entered furtively to You,  
 the Honorable One, Who produces chaste people from  
 the licentious.

9.9

ܠܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
 ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
 ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ  
 ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ



Satan saw her and was afraid and ran as if to hinder  
[her];

He reminded [her] of judgment, but she feared not,  
of stoning and the sword, but she was not afraid.

The teacher of adultery was hindering adultery to  
hinder You.

9.10

ሃዕለታ ነጋሐ፡ ጠገላ ነገ ሰዓ፡ ጸጸ፡  
ጸጸ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐዓ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሃ፡  
ሃዕለታ ጸ፡ ጠገላ ጸጸ፡  
ጸጸ፡ ጸጸ፡ ጸ፡ ሃዕለታ ጸጸ፡ ጸጸ፡

For the adultery of Tamar became chaste because of  
You.

For You she thirsted, O pure Fountain.

Judah cheated her of drinking You.

A thirsty fount stole Your drink from its source.

9.11

ሐ፡ ሰዓ ሃ፡ ሃዕለታ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡  
ጸጸ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡  
ሐ፡ ሰዓ ሃ፡ ሃዕለታ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡  
ሐ፡ ሰዓ ሃ፡ ጸጸ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡

She was a widow. For Your sake she desired You.

She pursued You, and even became a harlot.

For Your sake she longed for You.

She kept [pure] and became a holy woman, [for] she  
loved You.

9.12

ጸጸ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡ ሃዕለታ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡  
ጸጸ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡  
ጸጸ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡  
ጸጸ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡

May Ruth receive good tidings, for she sought Your  
wealth; Moab entered into it.

Let Tamar rejoice that her Lord has come,

for her name announced the Son of her Lord

and her appellation called You to come to her.

9.13

ጸጸ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡  
ጸጸ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡  
ጸጸ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡  
ጸጸ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡ ጸጸ፡ ሐ፡



By You honorable women made themselves  
contemptible, [You] the One Who makes all  
chaste.

She stole You at the crossroads,  
[You] Who prepared the road to the house of the  
kingdom.

Since she stole life, the sword was insufficient to kill  
her.

9.14

ከሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት  
ከሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት  
ከሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት  
ከሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት

Ruth lay down with a man on the threshing floor for  
Your sake.

Her love was bold for Your sake.

She teaches boldness to all penitents.

Her ears held in contempt all [other] voices for the sake  
of Your voice.

9.15

ከሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት  
ከሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት  
ከሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት  
ከሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት

The fiery coal that crept into the bed of Boaz went up  
and lay down.

She saw the Chief Priest hidden in his loins,  
she ran and became the fire for his censer.

The heifer of Boaz brought forth the fatted ox for You.

9.16

ከሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት  
ከሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት  
ከሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት  
ከሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት ሕይወት

She went gleanng; for Your love she gathered straw.  
You repaid her quickly the wage of her humiliation:  
instead of ears [of wheat], the Root of kings,  
and instead of straw, the Sheaf of Life that descends  
from her.

*Nat 9.7-16*



#### 4.1.3.1 *Tamar (Gen 38)*

According to the biblical account (Gen 38), Tamar was the wife of Er, the firstborn of Judah who was in the fourth generation in the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham onwards (cf Mt 1.3). God let Er die for his wickedness. When Onan the second son of Judah also died, Judah tried to save his youngest son Shelah by delaying giving Tamar to him as a wife. Tamar, however, took the matter into her own hands after Judah's wife died. Disguised as a harlot, she had relations with Judah and she became pregnant. The pledge, the seal and its cord, and the staff, which she took from him, bore witness that he was the father of her children. She gave birth to twin sons, Perez and Zerah, and Perez was an ancestor of David.

In the Commentary on Genesis Ephrem draws attention to the aim of Tamar. She was yearning for the blessing (ܠܒܪܟܬܐ)<sup>141</sup> and treasure (ܬܗܠܥܐ)<sup>142</sup> which were hidden in the Hebrew man. In order to fill her hunger and to make her poverty rich from the hidden treasure she dared to act against the Law. 'She who had been cheated out of marriage was held innocent in her fornication ...'<sup>143</sup>

In CGen 34.3, Ephrem does not specify further the 'blessing' and the 'treasure' which were hidden in the circumcised man.<sup>144</sup> From the context we may suppose that Ephrem implies a messianic interpretation. Ephrem expresses this clearly in his hymns.<sup>145</sup> In Virg 22.19-20, where Ephrem comments on the Samaritan woman, he says:

<sup>141</sup> CGen 34.2.

<sup>142</sup> CGen 34.3-4.

<sup>143</sup> CGen 34.6: ܠܒܪܟܬܐ ܬܗܠܥܐ ܠܒܪܟܬܐ ܬܗܠܥܐ ; cf. Nat 15.8.

<sup>144</sup> CGen 34.3.

<sup>145</sup> Nat 9.7-16; Virg 22.20. In his article 'Holy Adultery', Trygve Kronholm draws attention to Ephrem's interpretation of Genesis 38. He says that 'Ephrem explicitly advocates the idea that Tamar's adultery in reality was something holy, since the measures she was taking were performed solely with an end to the coming of the Messiah' (Kronholm, 150). Cf. T. Kronholm, 'Holy Adultery. The Interpretation of the Story of Judah and Tamar (Gen 38) in the Genuine Hymns of Ephraem Syrus (ca. 306-373)', *OS* 40 (1991), 149-63. H. Urs von Balthasar, 'Casta Meretrix' in



22.19

ḥṣṣṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣ  
 ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ  
 ḥṣ ḥṣ ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣ ḥṣ ḥṣṣṣ  
 ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ ...  
 ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣ  
 ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣ ḥṣṣṣṣ  
 ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣṣ ḥṣ ḥṣ ḥṣṣṣ  
 [ḥṣṣṣṣ].

Tamar saw that her consorts were dead  
 and she sat down to great reproach.  
 Judah feared that Shelah also would die  
 ... type, the Samaritans feared.  
 Tamar stole and made her reproach pass away,  
 and the Samaritan woman concealed her reproach.  
 Tamar's deceit was revealed for our benefit,  
 and hers for our advantage.

22.20

ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣṣ  
 ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣ  
 ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣ ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣṣ  
 ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣṣ  
 ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣ ḥṣṣṣ  
 ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣ ḥṣṣṣ  
 ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣ ḥṣṣṣ  
 ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣṣ ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣṣ.

Tamar trusted that from Judah  
 would arise the king whose symbol she stole.  
 This woman, too, among the Samaritans expected  
 that perhaps the Messiah would arise from her.  
 Tamar's hope was not extinguished,  
 nor was this woman's expectation in vain,  
 as from her, therefore, our Lord arose in this town,  
 for by her He was revealed there.

*Virg 22.19-20*

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his collection *Sponsa Verbi* (Einsiedeln 1961), 203-305, in the course of a long patristic study of Rahab and other biblical types, has a section on 'Thamar, die Dirnengestalt der Kirche' (pp. 280-89), but he did not know Ephrem's poetry and misses his much greater symbolic richness.



In CDiat 12.19, Ephrem also links the story of Tamar with that of the Samaritan woman. After Ephrem has discussed some of the faithful and righteous people in hymn 11 On the Church, he contrasts Tamar with Eve. Love of the 'new life' (ܟܬܝܢܐ) caused the prophets and the faithful to bear and suffer much in order to receive life. It is only in this context that Ephrem introduces the image of 'Medicine of Life' (ܟܬܝܢܐ ܚܝܐ). This 'Medicine of Life' was hidden in Judah. Tamar stole the Medicine of Life from Judah, for she recognised it hidden in Judah:

ܕܥܕܐ ܕܟܬܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܟܬܝܢܐ  
ܕܥܕܐ ܕܟܬܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܟܬܝܢܐ  
ܕܥܕܐ ܕܟܬܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܟܬܝܢܐ

ܕܥܕܐ ܕܟܬܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܟܬܝܢܐ  
ܕܥܕܐ ܕܟܬܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܟܬܝܢܐ  
ܕܥܕܐ ܕܟܬܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܟܬܝܢܐ  
ܕܥܕܐ ܕܟܬܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܟܬܝܢܐ

Amid the great tranquillity of Eden the glory of Adam  
was robbed.

For sin came out with a band of robbers  
and the snake and Eve became the instigators.  
Tamar, however, fell upon the merchant in the  
crossroads,

and she stole from him the medicine of life that was  
hidden in him.

The sin that stole, itself was stolen, and in the judgment  
in which it was victorious, it has been defeated.

Death was robbed while it was awake,  
because our Lord had emptied out its treasures.

*Ecl 11.10*

According to Ephrem, Jesus as the 'Medicine of Life' was hidden in the descendants of Abraham. Tamar realised this in Judah and she wanted to 'steal' it from him.<sup>146</sup> We find the same idea concerning the role of Ruth,<sup>147</sup> but the case of Rahab is more complicated (Josh 2; 6).

<sup>146</sup> Nat 1.12; 16.14: Ephrem often uses the verb 'steal' (ܠܥܕܐ).

<sup>147</sup> Nat 1.12-13; 9.7-16



4.1.3.2 *Rahab (Jos 2; 6)*

As is mentioned above, the name of Rahab is included in the genealogy of Jesus (Mt 1.5). Rahab is related to the ‘Medicine of Life’ only in as far as she appears in the context of Tamar and Ruth.<sup>148</sup> The story of Rahab is embedded in the account of the Israelite conquest of Jericho (Josh 2; 6). She is introduced as a harlot (𐤓𐤁𐤁) (Josh; 2:1; 6:17, 25). Rahab hides the two spies of Joshua from the ruler of Jericho. Rahab acknowledges the power of the Lord of Israel, and the spies promise her that she and her family will be saved when the Israelites overwhelm Jericho. The spies kept their promise and her household survived and ‘she dwelt in Israel to this day’ (Josh 6:25).

In the Christian tradition Matthew accords a certain Rahab a prominent position in the genealogy of Jesus. She is identified as the wife of Salmon who is in the 10th generation of the genealogy from Abraham onwards. She gave birth to Boaz, the husband of Ruth. Two other references in the New Testament to the Rahab of Joshua may have encouraged the identification of Rahab the harlot with Rahab the wife of Salmon.<sup>149</sup> It seems that by associating Rahab with Tamar and Ruth in Nat 1.33, Ephrem follows the Christian tradition. He counts Rahab among the significant figures of the Old Testament and links her to the prophecies concerning Jesus’ birth. The tying of a scarlet cord in the window was the sign for saving her household:

𐤓𐤁𐤁 𐤕𐤓𐤕 𐤕𐤓𐤕 𐤕𐤓𐤕 𐤕𐤓𐤕 𐤕𐤓𐤕 𐤕𐤓𐤕  
𐤕𐤓𐤕 𐤕𐤓𐤕 𐤕𐤓𐤕 𐤕𐤓𐤕 𐤕𐤓𐤕 𐤕𐤓𐤕 𐤕𐤓𐤕  
𐤕𐤓𐤕

Rahab beheld Him; for if the scarlet thread  
saved her by a symbol from [divine] wrath,  
by a symbol she tasted the truth.

*Nat 1.33*

Rahab symbolised the hope of salvation, because she and her family were saved through the Jews. Ephrem does not associate Rahab with Salmon as the evangelist Matthew does, but he

<sup>148</sup> Nat 9.7-16.

<sup>149</sup> Heb 11:31; Jas 2:25. This is not a tradition known to any Jewish sources: see H. L. Strack & P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash I* (München 1922), 20-23.



emphasises her attitude to the two spies. Even if Ephrem does not say explicitly that she had any relationship to them or later to another Jew, he gives her the same status as Tamar and Ruth: 'Because of You, women pursued men... Even Rahab who captivated men, by You, was taken captive.'<sup>150</sup>

#### 4.1.3.3 *Ruth (Ruth 3)*

In Ephrem's poetry Ruth is mentioned mainly in the hymns on the Nativity as a woman who saw the 'Medicine of Life' in Boaz. The Moabite woman Ruth returned as a widow with her mother-in-law Naomi from Moab to Bethlehem. Here her mother-in-law conceived a plan for securing Ruth a home. Obeying Naomi, Ruth went to Boaz at night and asked him to marry her. He married her and she bore a son Obed who was the father of Jesse (cf. Mt 1:5-6).

Ephrem draws a parallel between Tamar and Ruth. Tamar saw in Judah the coming Messiah; likewise Ruth was aware of the hidden 'Medicine of Life' in Boaz:

1.12

Since the King was hidden in Judah, Tamar stole Him  
today shone forth the splendour of the beauty whose  
hidden form she loved.

1.13

Ruth lay down with Boaz because she saw hidden in  
him the medicine of life;  
today her vow is fulfilled since from her seed arose the  
Giver of all Life.<sup>151</sup>

*Nat 1.12-13*

Ephrem used some other terms instead of 'Medicine of Life' as we saw above: treasure and blessing.<sup>152</sup> In Nat 9, he deals extensively with Tamar, Rahab and Ruth; and he emphasises the risks in their lives and their love for the coming Messiah who is

<sup>150</sup> Nat 9.7.

<sup>151</sup> Nat 1.12-13:

ܡܠܟܐ ܚܝܬ ܡܝܬ ܡܝܬ ܡܝܬ	ܡܠܟܐ ܚܝܬ ܡܝܬ ܡܝܬ ܡܝܬ
ܡܠܟܐ ܚܝܬ ܡܝܬ ܡܝܬ ܡܝܬ	ܡܠܟܐ ܚܝܬ ܡܝܬ ܡܝܬ ܡܝܬ
ܡܠܟܐ ܚܝܬ ܡܝܬ ܡܝܬ ܡܝܬ	ܡܠܟܐ ܚܝܬ ܡܝܬ ܡܝܬ ܡܝܬ
ܡܠܟܐ ܚܝܬ ܡܝܬ ܡܝܬ ܡܝܬ	ܡܠܟܐ ܚܝܬ ܡܝܬ ܡܝܬ ܡܝܬ

<sup>152</sup> CGen 34.2-4.



described as ‘light’ (ܠܝܡܐ), ‘holiness’ (ܠܝܡܡܐ), ‘pure fountain’ (ܠܡܝܐ ܬܝܒܐ), etc.<sup>153</sup>

## 4.2 New Testament

Ephrem refers to or comments on most of the healing miracles that Jesus and the Apostles performed during their ministry. Only the healing of two women, the sinful woman (Lk 7:36-50) and the woman with a haemorrhage (Lk 8:43-48), is extensively discussed here. As a third aspect, the miracles of giving sight to the blind are studied and presented.

### 4.2.1 The Healing of the Sinful Woman in the House of Simon the Pharisee (Lk 7:36-50)

The episode of the sinful woman who anointed and washed Jesus’ feet in the house of Simon the Pharisee is the most developed theme in Ephrem’s poetry. In the Commentary on the Diatessaron, Ephrem highlights her in sections 7.18 and 10.8-10 as a person who openly acted cleverly and, therefore, Jesus as the Physician Who heals everyone became her personal Healer.<sup>154</sup> The sinful woman appears as the central focus of the mimro On Our Lord where Ephrem contrasts her markedly with Simon the Pharisee.<sup>155</sup> II Sermon 4 delineates the inner thoughts of the sinful woman in a dialogue between her and the seller of unguents, Satan and Simon.<sup>156</sup> The first three subsections deal with these three works, while the last subsection takes in all the other relevant references.<sup>157</sup>

The various biblical narratives of the four Gospels<sup>158</sup> cause a problem. A considerable difference is to be seen between Luke and the other three Gospels, so that one can perhaps speak of two different women anointing Jesus’ feet. First of all, according to

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<sup>153</sup> Nat 9.7-16.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. CDiat 7.18; 10.8-10. Briefly, Ephrem also refers to the sinful woman in CDiat 8.15; 15.1; 22.5.

<sup>155</sup> The main chapters are in Dom 14-24; 42-44 and 48-49.

<sup>156</sup> See the whole II Sermon 4, including App I.A and I.B.

<sup>157</sup> See Virg 4.11; 26.4; 35.5-8; Fid 10.5; Nat 4.40; Epiph 3.2-3; Nis 60.1-8; Eccl 9.19; Azym 14.1-4; Haer 47.8; Hebdomada 2.1-265; I Sermon 8.196-97; I Sermon 7.229; III Sermon 4.636.

<sup>158</sup> Mt 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-9; Lk 7:36-50; Jn 12:1-8.



Luke, this drama is located in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Lk 7:36), and not, as Matthew and Mark state, in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper (Mt 26:6; Mk 14:3), or as John, who links it with the resurrection of Lazarus in Bethany (John 12:1-2). Secondly, Luke speaks of a 'sinful woman'; Matthew and Mark of 'a woman' (Mt 27:7; Mk 14:3); whereas John calls her 'Mary' the sister of Martha (Jn 12:3). Thirdly, according to Luke and John Jesus' feet are anointed (Lk 7:38; Jn 12:3) and not His head as Matthew and Mark say (Mt 26:7; Mk 14:3). And finally, a major difference concerns the reaction of the audience: according to Luke, the sinful woman is in the house of Simon the Pharisee, and Simon doubted Jesus' 'prophethood'; therefore Jesus told him the parable of the two debtors in order to explain to him the forgiveness of her sins (Lk 7:41-49). The biblical texts do not provide any healing imagery. The forgiveness of her sins provides Ephrem with the starting point for his healing theology, and it is only in Luke that this sentence occurs: 'Your sins have been forgiven' (Lk 7:48: **ܕܡܨܝܚܝܢ ܕܝܢܝܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ**).

In contrast, the other three Gospels present 'the costly oil' which could help the poor as the reason for the reaction (in Mt 26:8 they are the 'disciples' who are confused; Mk 14:4 does not define them ('some'); whereas Jn 12:4 attributes it to Judas Iscariot). In response, Jesus explains the importance of this anointing as signifying His burial, and referring to His death.

Since Ephrem mainly associates this episode with Simon the Pharisee and he uses the term 'sinful woman' (**ܕܡܨܝܚܝܢ**) as a common name, it is obvious that Luke's narrative is dominant. Certain passages, such as CDiat 8.17; Virg 4.11 and 35.8, may cause us to assume that Ephrem includes some elements from the other Gospels, i.e. he intermingled the different texts and identifies the four different biblical narratives as one historical event without differentiating between them. In the case of identifying them, Mary and the sinful woman would be the same person, otherwise Luke's narrative would be a different one from that of Matthew, Mark and John. However, studying the healing of the sinful woman, it is unlikely that Ephrem identifies them, rather he separates them.

#### 4.2.1.1 *The Sinful Woman in the Commentary on the Diatessaron*

In the Commentary on the Diatessaron, Ephrem mentions the sinful woman in five different passages. In CDiat 8.15, 15.1 and



Healing is illustrated primarily in CDiat 10.8-10. The tears, the washing of the feet and all the visible deeds of the sinful woman brought her invisible healing. Her faith contrasts with the faith of Simon the Pharisee. So because of her faith, Jesus was her

<sup>162</sup> Cf. CDiat 7.18.































physician is open to the sick, not to the restored' (Mt 9:12), and 'restoring the sick is the physician's glory'.<sup>181</sup> In Dom 49, Ephrem uses the term **ܠܫܠܡܐ** in connection with the woman with the haemorrhage, but **ܠܫܠܡܐ**, 'forgiveness', with the sinful woman. Thus, the woman with the haemorrhage drew near to the Physician and she stole 'restoration' from the edge of His cloak, whereas the sinful woman gained 'the forgiveness of debts'.<sup>182</sup>

In order to explain to Simon the action of the sinful woman, as well as her treatment by Jesus as the Physician Who healed her from sin, Ephrem refers to the behaviour of an ordinary physician, saying:

The physician who brings a hidden pain out into the open is not a supporter of the pain but its destroyer. So long as pain remains hidden, it reigns in the limbs, but once it is revealed, it can be uprooted by medicines.<sup>183</sup>

The revelation of a pain implies making it known: once it has been diagnosed, then it can be extirpated through medicine. Although this passage explicitly speaks of the physical pain, it can also refer to that of the mind. Ephrem indicates that Jesus did not only offer His medicine and remedies to the sinful woman, but also to Simon the Pharisee. While Ephrem compares the faith and attitude of Simon with that of the sinful woman, he described him in his ‘error’ (ܐܬܬܬܠܬ) as someone with ‘feeble love’ (ܕܐܝܬܐܢܐ ܡܥܬܐ), ‘without faith’ (ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܒܝܬܐ), with ‘doubt of mind’ (ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܢ) and speaks of ‘his blind mind’ (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܬܐ ܕܐܝܬܐ).<sup>184</sup> Because of Simon’s weak faith, the Lord reproached him (ܐܬܬܠܬ) in order to help him (ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܢ, ܡܥܬܐ ܡܥܬܐ).

<sup>181</sup> Dom 42: לחכרת און פארה אלע ליליטן ..... חבל  
רעדט און רעדט מענטשן.

[illegible][illegible]

<sup>184</sup> Cf. Dom 16-17.























Lord was able to show that He was persecuted by Saul.<sup>202</sup> In Dom 36, Ephrem says:

Any master who intends to teach a person something teaches either by deeds or by words. If he does not teach by words or deeds, a person could not be instructed in his craft. And so, although it was not with deeds that our Lord taught Paul humility, He taught him with the voice about that persecution of which He was unable to teach him with deeds. Before He was crucified, when He taught the persecution of humility to His disciples, He taught them by deeds. After He completed [His] persecution by the crucifixion, as He said, «behold, everything is completed» (Jn 19:30), He could not go back again and foolishly begin something that once and for all had been finished wisely.<sup>203</sup>

To the sinful woman Jesus also acted by words, saying ‘your sins have been forgiven’ (Lk 7:49). Thus, she was healed and revived to a new life.

#### 4.2.1.3 *The Sinful Woman in II Serm 4*

There is healing imagery in the narrative mimro on the sinful woman that is addressed to the listeners/readers. As the sinful

<sup>202</sup> Cf. Dom 32. In Dom 31, Ephrem explains the influence of the humble speech in the example of Saul's conversion. He contrasts the pride of Saul with the humility of our Lord. Ephrem also compares God's revelation to Moses with the one to Saul. The brilliant light became for Saul a blinding light, because his inner eyes were blind, while the eyes of Moses radiated with the glory he saw, because another power lovingly reinforced the eyes of Moses beyond their natural power.

[illegible]



woman heard that Jesus heals all through His medicine, she regretted her prostitution and decided to go to see Him in Simon's house (1-58). First, she goes to the unguent-seller<sup>204</sup> with her gold to fill her jar with oil (59-74). The seller is astonished by her appearance. By putting the words into the seller's mouth, and later in her speech, the author compares her former life with her current thoughts (75-134). Then Satan<sup>205</sup> intervenes in a dialogue between them. He tries to persuade her not to visit Jesus (135-223). When he fails, Satan thinks about telling Jesus about her sins and past life, so that He might reject her (224-61). Instead, Satan goes off to Simon to urge him to keep the sinful woman out of his house (262-75). Finally, after she appears and Jesus calls her to enter the house (276-323), He explains her situation to Simon by referring to the episode of the two debtors (324-65).

Healing imagery occurs at a number of points in the *mimro*: at the beginning of this *mimro*, by wondering how merciful the Lord is, the author refers to the sinful woman who is also called a 'prostitute' (ܐܬܝܬܐ) and 'lustful person' (ܐܠܠܐܝܬܐ).<sup>206</sup> In a similar way, the blind man whose eyes have been opened (Jn 9:6) and the paralytic are mentioned together with the sinful woman as a witness to the mercy and medical assistance of the Lord:

ܐܬܝܬܐ ܐܠܠܐܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܐ  
 ܐܬܝܬܐ ܐܠܠܐܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܐ  
 ܐܬܝܬܐ ܐܠܠܐܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܐ  
 ܐܬܝܬܐ [ܐܠܠܐܝܬܐ] ܐܬܝܬܐ  
 ܐܬܝܬܐ ܐܠܠܐܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܐ  
 ܐܬܝܬܐ ܐܠܠܐܝܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܐ

<sup>204</sup> The common name for the seller of unguent is ܐܬܝܬܐ; cf. II Serm 4.72; 4.113; 4.116; 4.134; 4.137.

<sup>205</sup> After the first third of the *mimro*, the name of Satan occurs frequently; cf. II Serm 4.135; 4.155; 4.182; 4.186; 4.195; 4.204; 4.222; 4.228; 4.252; 4.272.

<sup>206</sup> Cf. II Serm 4.52; 4.56; 4.78-88; 4.112-14; 4.133; 4.221-22; 4.242-43; 4.249; 4.295-99; 4.319; 4.333. Throughout the *mimro*, the terms ܐܠܠܐܝܬܐ, ܐܬܝܬܐ and ܐܠܠܐܝܬܐ are used; together with ܐܬܝܬܐ and ܐܠܠܐܝܬܐ denote the idea of the sinful woman as a prostitute. But frequently she is also called 'the sinful woman' (ܐܬܝܬܐ); cf. II Serm 4.3; 4.17; 4.180; 4.187; 4.276; 4.307; 4.314.



ܠܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ  
 ܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ  
 ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ  
 ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ  
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 ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ  
 ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܐ

- 1 Hear and be comforted, my beloved,  
how merciful is God:
- 3 To the sinful woman He forgave her debts;  
as well as, He upheld her for she was sad [weak].
- 5 In the case of the blind man, He opened his eyes  
with clay,  
and the pupils of his eyes beheld the light (Jn 9:6).
- 7 Also to the paralytic He granted restoration,  
he arose up to walk and carried his bed (Mt 9:2).
- 9 And to us He granted the pearls:  
His holy body and blood [for reconciliation].
- 11 He carried His medicines secretly,  
and He was healing with them openly.
- 13 And He was wandering round in the land of  
Judea  
as a physician carrying his medicines.<sup>207</sup>

The term ‘medicines’ (ܡܕܢܐ) occurs twice in this passage, but is not found again in the mimro; both times it is linked to the verb ‘to carry/bear’ (ܠܡܕܢܐ), the verb that is used for the paralytic carrying his bed. The miracle of forgiving the sinful woman her debts, together with that of opening the eyes of the blind man and granting ‘restoration’ (ܠܠܚܝܬܐ) to the paralytic, provide evidence for the medicine that Jesus bore with Him secretly. Since Jesus had visited the city of Judea, He took ‘His medicines’ (ܡܕܢܐ) with Him as a ‘physician’ (ܡܕܢܐ). The term physician is not used again, but it appears in the additional material after line 298,<sup>208</sup> where Jesus is described as the One Who is able to fulfill the needs of everyone. Since Jesus is described as the ‘Table of Life’ (ܐܬܝܠܐ)

<sup>207</sup> II Serm 4.1-14.

<sup>208</sup> The Appendix II.B is taken from Br. M. add. 17266.











haemorrhage who 'stole restoration from Him' (ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ), and 'He granted restoration to the stricken woman' (ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ), so that 'her strong pain' (ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ) ceased. Here, she is called 'the stricken woman' (ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ). Later on, Simon mentions further healing miracles: Jesus granted 'restoration' (ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ) to the debtor, He 'cleansed' (ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ) lepers, 'made firm' (ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ) the limbs of the 'paralytic' (ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ) and 'opened' (ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ) the eyes of the blind.<sup>212</sup> The way of her repentance and healing is alluded to in the dialogue between her and Satan. When Satan tried to persuade her and described her sadness and appearance as that of someone whose friend had died, she takes the idea of death literally and transforms it to her sin:

ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ

Well, rightly you have compared me

[183] with someone who is going to bury a dead  
person:

the sin of my thoughts has died,

[185] and I am going to bury it.<sup>213</sup>

The sin which will be buried is that of her 'thoughts' (ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ). In the mimro On our Lord, Ephrem illustrates the healing of the sinful woman as reviving her with a living spirit, while 'he drove off the deadly sin' from her.<sup>214</sup> Because of her sinful deeds, in the dialogue with Satan, she presents herself as someone who 'was blind' (ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ) and 'bound' (ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ).

ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ [ܚܝܬܐ] ܚܝܬܐ

<sup>212</sup> II Sermon 4.App I.B.31-38:

ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ

<sup>213</sup> II Sermon 4.182-85.

<sup>214</sup> Cf. Dom 42.



ארבעת הים, יאמא  
 חסם נחם לא חסם נחם  
 נחם יאמא חסם לא חסם  
 ארבעת יאמא, יאמא  
 חסם נחם לא חסם נחם  
 נחם יאמא חסם לא חסם  
 ארבעת יאמא [יאמא], יאמא

The eye-paint blinded my eyes,<sup>215</sup>

209 and with my blindness I blinded many.

I was blind and knew not

211 that there is One Who gives light to the blind.

Behold, I am going to enlighten my eyes,

213 and with my light I will give light to many.

I was bound fast, and knew not

215 that there is One Who releases those who are  
bound.

Behold, I am going to untie my bonds,

217 and with my untying I will untie many.<sup>216</sup>

In order to explain her goal to Satan, she argues that through Jesus Who ‘binds up those who are broken/shattered’ (ܥܕ ܕܕܚܝܬܐ) she is able to bind up her wounds; through Him Who ‘gives light to the blind’ (ܡܠܝܡܝܐ ܕܠܡܚܕܐ) she will give light to her eyes; and through Him Who can ‘loose the bonds’ (ܕܥܠܡܝܐ ܕܥܡܝܬܐ) she will loose her own bonds. These three points have the same form and structure, so that their texts are parallel. If she has been able to receive healing from Jesus with her actions, then she will also be able to bind up the broken, enlighten the eyes and untie the bonds of many.

[illegible]

<sup>216</sup> Cf. II Sermon 4.208-17; in 217 A's, **ⲡⲓⲛⲁ** must be a corruption of B's **ⲡⲓⲛⲁ**.



The verb 'to heal' (ܠܫܠܡ) appears twice: here, with the object 'sick', (ܠܡܚܝܬܐ) Jesus intervenes as the Healer, whereas in the first passage quoted above it illustrates the general effect of Jesus' medicine. Jesus acts as a Physician.<sup>217</sup> Both sentences 'healing the sick' and 'binding sickness' have a chiasmic structure. The verb 'to bind up' (ܠܥܒܕ) is used another three times. Here it is connected with the term 'pains' (ܠܥܒܕܐ), whereas in the middle of the mimro it occurs together with shattered people' (ܠܥܒܕܐ).<sup>218</sup> The sinful woman rejects Satan's advice and feels very sad and depressed because of her past life. Since she knows that Jesus is the One Who 'binds up the shattered people' (ܠܥܒܕܐ ܠܥܒܕܐ), she decides to go to Jesus:

ܫܡܥ ܕܡܢ ܠܐ ܫܡܥ ܠܥܒܕܐ  
 ܠܥܒܕܐ ܕܥܒܕܐ ܡܢ ܫܡܥ  
 ,[ܫܡܥ] ܠܥܒܕܐ ܕܥܒܕܐ ܕܡܢ ܠܥܦܐ  
 ܠܥܦܐ ܕܥܒܕܐ ܕܥܒܕܐ

I was shattered and knew not

219 that there is One Who binds up those who are shattered.

Behold, I go to bind up my shattered state.

221 and through my binding I will bind up many.

The idea of the 'binding up' of the sinful woman as an example for the healing of others is found in the Commentary on the Diatessaron where Ephrem compares the gentile women of the New Testament with the gentile women at the time of Solomon.<sup>219</sup> In the Commentary on the Diatessaron the sinful woman was called 'a physician to her own wounds' (ܠܫܠܡܐ ܠܡܚܝܬܐ),<sup>220</sup> whereas here she has the function 'of binding up' (ܠܥܒܕܐ) her own broken state, and through this, providing an example for the 'binding up' of many other broken people. Her healing will heal many who are shattered (ܠܥܒܕܐ), when they believe in Jesus. With the form of the first person singular in line 220, specific attention is

<sup>217</sup> Cf. II Sermon 4.11-14; II Sermon 4.App.I.B.7-8.

<sup>218</sup> Cf. II Sermon 4.218-21.

<sup>219</sup> Cf. CDiat 7.18 (on the sinful woman, see chapter IV, 2.1.1).

<sup>220</sup> Cf. CDiat 22.5.



drawn to her motivation, in that she took the initiative to go to Jesus and so cured herself.

It is important to keep in mind that the healing of the sinful woman consists in the forgiveness of her sins, as stated at the beginning of the mimro: ‘to the sinful woman He forgave her debts’.<sup>221</sup> Whereas she is a sinner full of debts ( **ሕረግ ጸሐፊ** **ጸሐፊ**),<sup>222</sup> Jesus, as the one who forgave the two debtors,<sup>223</sup> is the One Who forgives sins and debts ( **ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ**).<sup>224</sup> In her dialogue with the perfumer, she tells him that the new person that she has met was a rich Merchant:

**ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ**

**ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ**

**[ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ] ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ**

He has robbed me and I have robbed Him;

[131] He has robbed me of my debts and sins

and I have robbed Him of His wealth.<sup>225</sup>

The wealth of the Lord is capable to forgive, ‘to rob/steal away’, sins. She received forgiveness by His mercy<sup>226</sup> and put on the garment of reconciliation.<sup>227</sup> Finally, because of her deeds Jesus asks Simon rhetorically:

**ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ**

**ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ**

Simon, is it appropriate for her to leave

361 before receiving forgiveness<sup>228</sup>

Jesus grants her forgiveness of her debts and transgressions because of His mercy and her repentance. Her words with the

<sup>221</sup> II Sermon 4.3. The term **ጸሐፊ** is also used in II Sermon 4.131; 4.276; 4.307; 4.321; 4.340.

<sup>222</sup> Cf. II Sermon 4.276; 4.307.

<sup>223</sup> Cf. II Sermon 4.342: Here the term ‘debt’ is in singular and feminine (**ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ**) instead of masculine plural (**ጸሐፊ**).

<sup>224</sup> Cf. II Sermon 4.321.

<sup>225</sup> II Sermon 4.130-32.

<sup>226</sup> Cf. II Sermon 4.1-4.

<sup>227</sup> II Sermon 4.53-54: **ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ ጸሐፊ** **ጸሐፊ** [**ጸሐፊ**].

<sup>228</sup> II Sermon 4.360-61.











symbolic effect of oil occurs in hymn 3 On Epiphany - the authenticity is doubtful - which praises the sinful woman because she had anointed her Lord's feet. The oil served as an offering that gave pleasure to her Creditor. Thus, the forgiveness of her sins is achieved through oil. Because the sinful woman was in need of forgiveness, oil served as an offering, with which she pleased the Lord.

ܐܬܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ  
 ܕܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ  
 ܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ  
 [ܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ] ܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ

Because the sinful woman  
 was in need of forgiveness,  
 oil became for her an offering  
 and with it she reconciled the Lord of her debts [the  
 Creditor].

*Epiph 3.3*

In hymn 26 On Virginity where Ephrem characterises a series of women from the Gospel as spiritual brides of Christ, the forgiveness of the sinful woman's debts is associated with her kissing His holy feet:

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4.7-8) describe the 'symbol' (ܐܝܬܝܢ) of oil as the Anointed One, the Messiah. While oil is visible like a shadow, Christ is a secret, hidden mystery. Ephrem illustrates the effect of shadow with some examples from Scripture: the disciples were sent out in order to anoint and heal (ܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ) by oil (cf. Lk 10:9; Jas 5:14), and their shadow caused healing (ܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ). Likewise, the shadow of Jesus fell upon the sick and they were healed. Oil helps in all cases. It filled the place of lineage for strangers, it is the sceptre for old age, and the armour for youth (Virg 4.9-10). Particularly significant is the following sentence in Virg 4.10: 'It supports sickness and is the bulwark of health' (ܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ). Stanza 13 stresses the power of oil against the diseases which are described as a 'second demon' (ܐܝܬܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ). As the Lord persecuted and punished the demon (cf. Mk 5:1-20 and parallels), so too, the power of oil acts against 'pains' (ܐܝܬܝܢ). According to stanza 14, this power is still available in the sacraments of the church, and it is flowing as Eden's four rivers in order to gladden the body and enlighten the holy church (Virg 4.13-14).



ܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܡܝܬܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ  
 ܕܗܘܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ  
 ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ  
 ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ  
 ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ  
 ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ  
 ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ  
 ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ

Blessed are you, woman, most enviable of women,  
 who kissed the holy feet (Lk 7:38,39)!

Your hands anointed the Anointed One of the  
 Sanctuary

Whose horn had anointed priests and kings.

Blessed are your sufferings that were healed by the  
 word

and your sins that were forgiven by a kiss (Lk 7:45-48).

He taught His church to kiss in purity

[His] all-sanctifying body.

*Virg 26.4*

Jesus' anointing by the sinful woman is put in the context of priestly and royal messiahship, and of the forgiveness of sins. While the sins of the sinful woman were forgiven by kissing His holy feet, her 'pains' (ܕܚܡܝܬܐ) were 'healed' (ܕܡܫܝܚܐ) by His word (ܕܡܫܝܚܐ). Ephrem draws attention to the holiness of Jesus, when he speaks of His 'holy feet' (ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ) and His 'all-sanctifying body' (ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ), and Jesus as the 'Anointed One of the Sanctuary' (ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ).<sup>233</sup> In hymn 35 On Virginity, Jesus' holiness is contrasted with the impurity of the sinful woman. Since the sinful woman, as the 'impure one' (ܕܡܫܝܚܐ), drew near to the Holy One, Ephrem encourages sinners to draw near to the Lord so that their sins will be forgiven and they will be cleansed.<sup>234</sup> Likewise, he considers himself as a

<sup>233</sup> In Haer 47.8, Ephrem emphasises that the sinful woman touched the real body of Jesus in contrast to those heretics who defined his humanity as a 'shadow': ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ.

<sup>234</sup> Virg 35.5-7:







sinner who fears to approach the Eucharist of bread and wine, but prays for his fear to be healed as the the sinful woman and the woman with haemorrhage were healed.<sup>235</sup>

of Olives (Virg 35.10). Lk 7:36-50 and Jn 12:1-8 are not conflated, and so the sinful woman is not identified with Mary.

<sup>235</sup> Cf. Fid 10.1-5. Fid 10.5-7 (Lk 7:37ff; cf. Mk 5:25ff; Lk 8:43ff):

Դժուար է ասել, թե որտեղ է հայտնաբերվել առաջին անգամ  
 լույսը, որտեղ է առաջին անգամ հայտնաբերվել ջուրը, որտեղ  
 է առաջին անգամ հայտնաբերվել օդը, որտեղ է առաջին  
 անգամ հայտնաբերվել հողը, որտեղ է առաջին անգամ  
 հայտնաբերվել մարդը, որտեղ է առաջին անգամ հայտնաբերվել  
 լույսը, ջուրը, օդը, հողը, մարդը։

While the repentance of the sinful woman reconciled the Lord and pleased the faithful people, the changing of her life caused the Evil One to worry, for he saw her repentance as betrayal. This theme of the Evil One becoming despondent and full of despair is developed in Nis 60.1-8. With the repentance of the sinful woman who was the ‘head of the impure’ (ܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܕܝܡܝܢܐ) and of Zachaeus the ‘head of the greedy people’ (ܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܕܝܡܝܢܐ), Ephrem dramatically illustrates the fall of the Evil One whose two wings have been broken (Nis 60.9, see below). However, this hymn does not include any healing imagery. It is worth mentioning that Ephrem emphasises the influence of teaching. Since the sinful woman received Jesus’ leaven (ܬܡܝܠܐ), she dispelled the evil knowledge (ܬܡܝܠܐ ܕܝܡܝܢܐ), teaching (ܬܡܝܠܐ) and love (ܠܡܥܢܐ) from her mind, so that she renounced her relationship with the Evil One and rejected his image from her thoughts.

Nis 60.1-10:

ආයතනික අනුමැතියෙන් යුතුව පවත්වා ගැනීමට අවශ්‍ය වන අතර [1]  
 මෙම අවස්ථාවේදී, අනුමැතිය ලබා ගැනීමට අවශ්‍ය වන අතර  
 අනුමැතිය ලබා ගැනීමට අවශ්‍ය වන අතර [2]  
 අනුමැතිය ලබා ගැනීමට අවශ්‍ය වන අතර









because of their faith. In his interpretation and analysis of the episode of the woman with a haemorrhage, Ephrem delineates the healing's character and the power of the 'Healer of all' (**ܕܠܝܬܡܢܐ**).

The biblical narrative of the woman with an issue of blood occurs in all three synoptic Gospels. Matthew's shorter version provides the essence of this healing miracle,<sup>237</sup> whereas Mark and Luke include more information. Since Ephrem comments in his Commentary on the Diatessaron on elements which only appear in Luke or Mark, one can assume that they will have been combined in the Diatessaron. Because Luke and Mark are very similar, the discussion will be mainly based on Luke.<sup>238</sup> The following phrases from Luke, absent from Matthew, are given attention in Ephrem's commentary:

'She who had spent all her living upon physicians, and could not be healed by anyone, ...'<sup>239</sup> Ephrem contrasts Jesus' healing power with that of ordinary physicians and their remedies/medicines.<sup>240</sup> The woman showed her affliction to many physicians, to whom she gave payment, but neither their medical skill nor their medicines could cure her. In contrast, the stretching of her empty hand to Jesus restored her to health.<sup>241</sup>

‘And Jesus said, who is it that touched me?’<sup>242</sup> By repeating this question twelve times, Ephrem illustrates his healing theology on the basis of this sentence that serves as a guideline to prove

<sup>237</sup> Mt 9:20-22: .ኣገዛዘኩኻ ምዚ ክኸገሥ ኣመ ኣገዛዝ ኣኸህሩ ኣመ  
 ኒኒ ዕመ ኣገሩ .ጠጠሪኦ ኣገሪ ዕገጠጦ .ጠገዘዘ ኦ ዕከሩ  
 ረዓዔ .ኣሩ ኣመዕኡ ኣሩ ኣገጦ ጠረኢ ጸሐይ ሞ :ጠጠሪ  
 .ኣህዳሩ ኣኸገዘዎ .ከከገ ዘለኩ .ጠገ ከሩዕ ጠዔ ምዕሩ ሞ  
 ኣኸገዘ .ጠ ኦ .ጠ ኣኸህሩ ዕመዕኩዕ.

<sup>238</sup> Cf. CDiat 7.1-27. For instance the name Simon is mentioned only in Lk 8:45.

<sup>239</sup> Lk 8:43: **ከገጽ ላይ ፡ከገጽ ጠመጠረ ጋር ተሳታፊ ሆኖ ፣**  
**ሰውነቱን ይገዛል።**

<sup>240</sup> Cf. CDiat 7.2; 7.7; 7.12.

<sup>241</sup> Cf. CDiat 7.1-23.

<sup>242</sup> Lk 8:45: ܠܗ ܡܢ ܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ.



Jesus' divinity and hidden knowledge, as well as, the way that He treats people for the sake of their health.<sup>243</sup>

'I perceived that power had gone forth from me.'<sup>244</sup> Since Jesus is aware of everything, His hidden power contrasts with the physicians' visible remedies.<sup>245</sup> The divine power is like fire capable of purifying everything, whereas it cannot be polluted. This invisible power performs its actions for the sake of humanity.<sup>246</sup>

'And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling ...'<sup>247</sup> For Ephrem, this sentence refers to Jesus' divinity that nothing can be hidden from it. When she saw that she had not escaped Jesus' attention, she realised that He, as the 'Healer of visible wounds' (ܐܠܗܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ) and as the 'Searcher of the mind's hidden things' (ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ), is the 'Lord of the body' (ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ) and the 'Judge of the mind' (ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ).<sup>248</sup>

Finally, Jesus' encouraging words: 'My daughter, be encouraged, your faith has saved you, go in peace.'<sup>249</sup> With these words that caused her healing by means of her faith, Jesus, as the Lord of the crown, granted to her the 'crown' (ܕܠܝܬܐ) of victory.<sup>250</sup>

The opening paragraph of section 7 of the Commentary on the Diatessaron introduces the reader to the theme of the healing of the woman with the haemorrhage, together with the next paragraph, and goes on to mention the most important aspects and terms that are extended and commented on later. It starts by praising the 'hidden Offspring of Being' (ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ) Who granted health to the hidden suffering/affliction.

<sup>243</sup> Cf. CDiat 7.2-3; 7.6-7; 7.9-12; 7.15-16; 7.21.

<sup>244</sup> Lk 8:46: ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.

<sup>245</sup> Cf. CDiat 7.2.

<sup>246</sup> Cf. CDiat 7.7-9; 7.12-13; 7.15-16; 7.20; 7.24-25.

<sup>247</sup> Lk 8:47: ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.

It should be noticed that the verb ܡܝܬܐ can also be translated 'to escape the attention of'.

<sup>248</sup> Cf. CDiat 7.9.

<sup>249</sup> Lk 8:48: ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.

<sup>250</sup> Cf. CDiat 7.10-12.



- [1] Glory to you, hidden Offspring of Being, because Your healing was proclaimed through the hidden suffering of her that was afflicted (Lk 8:43-48; et par). By means of a woman whom they could see, they were enabled to see the divinity which cannot be seen. Through the Son's Own healing His divinity became known, and through the afflicted woman's being healed her faith was made manifest. She caused Him to be proclaimed, and indeed she was proclaimed with Him, for it is true that His heralds will be proclaimed together with Him. Although she was a witness to His divinity, He in turn was a witness to her faith.<sup>251</sup>
- [2] She poured faith on Him by way of remuneration, and He bestowed healing on her as the reward for her remuneration. Since the woman's faith had become public, her healing too was being proclaimed in public. Because His power had become resplendent, and had magnified the Son, the physicians were put to shame with regard to their remedies. It became manifest how much faith surpasses the [healing] art, and how much hidden power surpasses visible remedies. Beforehand, however He already knew her thoughts, even though they were imagining that He did not know her appearance. Nor did our Lord allow to be harmed those who were seeking a reason to harm, in that He had asked [who touched me]. Although He may have given the impression of not knowing, through asking who touched Him (Lk 8:45), but He was aware nonetheless of the hidden [realities], since He only healed the one whom He knew believed in Him. First of all, He saw the woman's hidden faith, and then He gave her a visible healing. If He could thus see a faith

[illegible]







to health: 'it added pain to pain' (ܬܫܡܪܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܥܠܐ).<sup>256</sup> In order to be healed, this suffering had to be uprooted from its root. But unfortunately during the twelve years, the physicians caused the opposite. The sickness of the woman with the haemorrhage was not just physical, but gradually also became mental. Because of the many physicians her thoughts were scattered and not gathered together. The 'scattering of her thoughts' (ܠܬܝܬܬܪܥܝܬܐ ܕܬܝܠܕܬܐ) parallels the flow of her blood and faith that had flowed for twelve years.<sup>257</sup> In CDiat 7.20, Ephrem compares her treatment by the physicians to treating a wild beast, because of her affliction. The physicians hastened to run away from her wound, even though she paid them well to heal her affliction.<sup>258</sup> And in CDiat 7.21, Ephrem says: 'These physicians were adding pain after pain, so that she could not be healed. [These] physicians were deceiving the minds of every one by cunning persuasion, lest [their] healing art be reproached by anyone.'<sup>259</sup>

The term **ḥṣṣiṣ** of Luke 8:44 (and Mk 5:25) which Ephrem also uses,<sup>260</sup> describes the kind of illness she had. Blood flowed out of her, and therefore in contrast to the virgin's womb her womb was 'unclean' (**ḥṣṣiṣ ḥṣṣiṣ**) according to the Law.<sup>261</sup> The impurity according to the Law can be varied and changed by means of faith. Thus, because of her faith the Lord sent His power to her impure womb, and it was not polluted by touching the womb.<sup>262</sup>

<sup>256</sup> Cf. CDiat 7.16.

[illegible]

258 CDiat 7.20.

[illegible]

<sup>260</sup> Cf. CDiat 7.7; 7.19; 7.24.

<sup>261</sup> Cf. CDiat 7.13; CDiat 7.7:  $\text{מחלל} \text{העם} \text{של} \text{העם} \text{הזה}$   
 $\text{העם} \text{הזה}$ . Cf. Lev 12:1-8.

<sup>262</sup> Cf. CDiat 7.7; 7.13; 7.15.







whom He knew believed in Him'.<sup>272</sup> With His question, Jesus wanted to reveal her 'faith that had touched Him' and not the identity of the person who had touched Him. Physically He was touched by many, but faithfully just by her.<sup>273</sup> Revealing her faith did not just happen because of the Lord's glory, but mainly because of the perfection of her healing. Ephrem distinguished between 'physical healing' ( **ܕܡܪܝܬܐ - ܕܝܠܥܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ** ) and 'spiritual' or 'mental healing' ( **ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ - ܡܢܗܝܐ** ). Because of her faith, she was healed physically, and by showing her faith through Jesus' words, she was enabled to be spiritually or mentally cured:

[6] If the afflicted woman had been healed and had gone away secretly, apart from the fact that the miracle would have been hidden from many people, she too would have become spiritually sick, although bodily healed. Even if she believed that He was a Righteous man because He had healed her, she would have doubted that He was God, because He would not have been aware [of her]. In fact, there were people who were touching the righteous and they were being healed, but these righteous did not know which among those who had touched them were healed. So that the mind of the one who had been healed in her body might not be sick, He took care also with regard to the healing of her mind, since it was for the sake of the healing of minds that He also drew near to the healing of bodies. This is why [He asked], »Who touched my garments?» (Mk 5:30). He revealed that someone had definitely touched Him, but He did not wish to reveal

[illegible]

<sup>273</sup> CDiat 7:3: **ܐܝܢ ܡܠ ܕܥܝܢ ܗܘܬܐ ܕܥܝܢ ܕܥܝܢ**  
**ܕܥܝܢ ܡܠ ܕܥܝܢ ܗܘܬܐ ܕܥܝܢ ܕܥܝܢ ܕܥܝܢ**. The name of Simon is only mentioned in Lk 8:45.







Furthermore, at the end of this paragraph, Ephrem plays on the terms ‘to forget/deceive’ (~~ܠܚܝܬ~~) and ‘error/deceitfulness’ (~~ܠܬܬܠܝܬ~~). The same idea is continued further in CDiat 7.9, where the verb ‘to reveal’ (~~ܠܚܝܬ~~) contrasts with the term ‘to forget/go astray’ (~~ܠܚܝܬ~~) that is used in Luke.<sup>275</sup> Since Jesus is the divine Being, nothing can be hidden from Him. His divine plan denounces ‘error/deceitfulness’ (~~ܠܬܬܠܝܬ~~) which most probably means the denouncement of Satan’s leading in error. Therefore, the revealing of her faith, instead of its being forgotten, manifests her healing and makes His divine knowledge known.

- [9] Why then did our Lord say, »Who touched me?» (Lk 8:45). [It was] so that she who had become aware of her healing might know that He too was aware of her faith. By means of her restored health she knew that He was the Healer of everyone, and by His question she knew that He was the One Who searches everyone, »when she saw that even this was not hidden from Him« (Lk 8:47). In that she saw that even this was not hidden from Him, - she had indeed thought to herself that she would be able to hide it from Him - consequently, our Lord showed her that nothing was hidden from Him, lest she go away from Him deceived. She learned through this therefore that he healed visible afflictions. Moreover, she learned that He was also aware of hidden realities. She believed that He, Who healed bodily afflictions and probed the hidden realities of the mind, is the Lord of the body and Judge of the mind.

Wherefore, [as though] for the Lord of the body, she subdued the body with its passions, and [as though] for the Judge of the mind, she refined the mind and its reflections. For she was afraid to commit any offence, since she believed that He could see her, He Who saw her when «she touched His cloak from behind Him» (Mk 5:27). And she was afraid to transgress, even in thought, for she knew that nothing was hidden from

<sup>275</sup> Lk 8:47: ጠሐርቲ ቢ፡ ዓይኑ ኣልደረገውን ይ፡ጥ ....







the crown of her victory. But, so that it be known who the Lord of this crown was, when He said, »Go in peace« (Mk 5:34), He did not end here, but also added, »Your faith has saved you« (Mt 9:22), so that it would be known thus that the peace which His mouth wove was the crown with which He crowned her faith, »Your faith has saved you« (Mt 5:30). For, if it was faith that restored her to life, it is clear that it was also her faith that He crowned with a crown. ...<sup>278</sup> Because of Jesus' words addressed to this woman, Ephrem speaks of an 'eloquent crown' (ܠܬܗܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ) that He granted to her. Her faith was victorious in the hidden agony of her life; and because of its perfection it was necessary to crown her faith publicly. Here for the first time, Ephrem quotes the sentence 'your faith has saved you'. As she was saved, she was also crowned because of her great faith. Faith is capable of bringing life as well as victory. Although her faith approached Jesus in a hidden way that is called 'stealing' (ܠܚܥܝܬܐ), because of the good will of faith, Ephrem gives a positive aspect to the negative association of stealing:

- [11] »I know that someone has touched me« (Lk 8:48). Why did He not bring into the middle by force the one who had touched Him? Because he wished to teach concerning freedom of speech in relation to faith, for faith was stealing in secret and boasting its theft in public. Because He let go of His treasure in the presence of faith He was teaching faith to steal. Because He praised it after its theft He was enticing it to boast over its theft. For it stole and grew rich. It got

[illegible]







from me?» (Lk 8:45-46). Would not He, who knew that power had gone forth from Him, know upon whom the power which had gone forth from Him had rested? Or why would His power have been divided against Him? Or his healing stolen without His [consent]? But, because there are roots which give helpful [remedies] without being aware of this, our Lord wished to show the one receiving [healing] that He was aware of what He was giving. He showed that it was not like a medicine, which by its nature heals all who take it, but rather He was healing with discernment and willingly all those who love Him.<sup>280</sup>

The effect of faith's stealing contrasts with ordinary stealing which when found out brings blame and reproof on robbers. In contrast, faith steals and as a result becomes rich and can boast. Ephrem concludes this viewpoint by saying that faith has to steal in order to get rich and should be revealed to be honoured; otherwise it will become poor and abashed. To illustrate this, Ephrem refers to the Scriptures. He uses the example of Rachel who stole the idols of her father (cf. Gen 31:19-35), and of Michal saving David by lying (cf. 1 Sam 19:11-17). Stealing and lying can have a positive aspect if they occur because of faith.

God opens His treasure for the faithful to come and steal whatever they need from it. Ephrem contrasts ‘those who are lazy in [their] faith’ (ܐܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܡܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܥܝܠܐ) with ‘those whose faith is diligent’ (ܐܡܢܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܐܠܥܝܢܐ).

[illegible]







[15] ... Our Lord knew indeed that He had come forth from a womb, and He also knew those who did not believe that He had come forth from the womb. Consequently, He sent forth His power into an unclean womb, that perhaps by means of an unclean [womb] they might believe in His Own coming forth from a pure womb.<sup>284</sup>

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 ၁၀။ အကျဉ်းချုပ် အကျဉ်းချုပ်

[illegible]







blood stopped flowing.<sup>287</sup> Heavenly faith is ‘hidden faith’ (අභිමුඛ අභිමාන - අභිමාන ධර්ම අභිමාන) and results in spiritual heavenly gifts. The woman with the haemorrhage could not be cured as long as she offered visible fees instead of invisible faith. She was healed when she showed her heavenly faith by stretching out her empty hand. The hidden faith contrasts with the ‘visible fees’ (අභිමාන අධර්ම); as well as අභිමාන ධර්ම අභිමාන with අභිමාන අධර්ම. The consequence of ‘public faith’ (අභිමාන අභිමාන) is the ‘secret health’ (අභිමාන අභිමාන). What she offered is also called ‘stolen fees’ (අභිමාන අධර්ම) that contrasts with ‘hidden healing’ (අභිමාන අභිමාන).<sup>288</sup> Here her faith was revealed publically for it is worthy to be highly esteemed by every one,<sup>289</sup> whereas in other miracles Jesus told those who He healed to remain silent, so as to teach the disciples that they should not boast or become exalted.<sup>290</sup> He taught them to remain silent for He ‘was drawing them towards faith’ (අභිමාන අභිමාන අභිමාන), ‘so that the darkness of error might be driven away by the light of His miracles’.<sup>291</sup>

[illegible]

288 CDiat 7.20.

<sup>289</sup> Cf. CDiat 7.21: **ഇലക്കിരി പന ച പാ പലി പ നരിയുന.**

<sup>290</sup> Cf. Mt 6:1; 6:5; 6:16; 23:5; Mk 1:44; 5:19; 5:45; 7:36.

291 CDiat 7.27b:

ආගමික සංවිධානවලට සහයෝගයක් ලෙසින් සේවය කිරීමට සූදානම් වෙමු. ආගමික සංවිධානවලට සහයෝගයක් ලෙසින් සේවය කිරීමට සූදානම් වෙමු. ආගමික සංවිධානවලට සහයෝගයක් ලෙසින් සේවය කිරීමට සූදානම් වෙමු.









speaks about the physicians' helplessness in contrast to the Lord's being ready to heal this woman. For twelve years she suffered among the physicians who 'stripped her naked' (ܡܠܝܬܐ). Ephrem plays on two senses of the verb ܡܠܝܬܐ: 'stripping' her of clothes, and put to shame. Therefore, at this point Ephrem emphasises the negative effect the physicians had. If they had healed her physically, it would have been ignominious - how much more so since they could not heal her. In order to heal her, the physicians stripped her naked and failed, whereas she was healed just as she touched Jesus' garment instead of His body. Consequently, Ephrem describes Jesus' garment as a 'physician' (ܦܠܝܬܐ):

ܦܠܝܬܐ ܡܠܝܬܐ ܝܚܐܐ ܦܬܝܬܐ ܦܠܝܬܐ  
 ܐܝܬܐ ܠܐ ܡܠܝܬܐ ܡܠܝܬܐ ܦܠܝܬܐ ܦܠܝܬܐ  
 .ܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܐ ܫܡܐ ܦܠܝܬܐ ܡܠܝܬܐ ܦܠܝܬܐ ܦܠܝܬܐ  
 ܡܠܝܬܐ ܫܡܐ ܦܠܝܬܐ ܡܠܝܬܐ ܦܠܝܬܐ ܦܠܝܬܐ  
 ܦܠܝܬܐ ܠܐ ܦܠܝܬܐ ܫܡܐ ܦܠܝܬܐ ܦܠܝܬܐ  
 .ܡܠܝܬܐ ܡܠܝܬܐ ܦܠܝܬܐ ܦܠܝܬܐ ܦܠܝܬܐ

For twelve years the physicians stripped [of clothes]  
 the woman with the blood; they stripped her, but they  
 did not help.

Although if they had healed her, [it would [have been a  
 matter of shame]; but how much more the fact  
 that they did not heal her?

Whereas they stripped her [of clothes],  
 You acted in modesty and healed her.  
 While she was covered,  
 she touched Your garment, but not Your body.  
 The garment that makes all chaste, became a physician  
 to her.

*Nis 27.2-3*

With the insult and disgrace to this woman, Ephrem illustrates the historical situation of the church in Edessa. The church, naked and insulted, is looking forward to be covered and healed by the Lord. The six years of the 'new pain' (ܫܡܐ ܦܠܝܬܐ) of Edessa is







of the Sea of benefits.

*Virg 26.6*

In *Virg 34.1*, Ephrem presents the fear, faith, will and love of the woman with the haemorrhage. Likewise, Ephrem speaks about Jesus as being willing to meet her in order to dry up her wound.

ܐܠܐ ܕܠܗܐ ܕܐܝܡܗܐ ܕܐܝܡܐ ܕܠܗܐ ܕܐܝܡܐ  
 ܕܠܗܐ ܕܠܗܐ ܕܐܝܡܐ ܕܠܗܐ ܕܠܗܐ  
 ܕܠܗܐ ܕܠܗܐ ܕܐܝܡܐ ܕܠܗܐ ܕܠܗܐ  
 ܕܠܗܐ ܕܠܗܐ ܕܐܝܡܐ ܕܠܗܐ ܕܠܗܐ  
 ܕܠܗܐ ܕܠܗܐ ܕܐܝܡܐ ܕܠܗܐ ܕܠܗܐ  
 ܕܠܗܐ ܕܠܗܐ ܕܐܝܡܐ ܕܠܗܐ ܕܠܗܐ  
 ܕܠܗܐ ܕܠܗܐ ܕܐܝܡܐ ܕܠܗܐ ܕܠܗܐ

The woman with the haemorrhage feared to approach  
 the Lord of all.

She was encouraged by the One Who encourages  
 sinners.

In her wish He perceived that she wanted to delight in  
 Him

He happened upon her faith [but] He was present since  
 He willed it.

Her blood flowed, but her love was restrained.

As to her blood, she rejoiced that He dried it up,  
 but as to the fount of her love, [she rejoiced] that He  
 made it flow.

*Virg 34.1*

In hymn 10 *On Faith*, Ephrem honours Jesus as the Incarnate-Divine-Logos, Who is present as fire and spirit in the church's sacraments. Ephrem shows the right attitude and way of approaching the Divinity: he asks in humility for the help and will of God in order to be enabled to start in the lowest rank. He wonders about the many explanations of the one divine nature.<sup>294</sup> Ephrem wants to start as John did undoing the straps of the Lord's sandals, and as the woman did approaching (touching) His robe, so that the Eucharist of bread and wine can be wondered at.<sup>295</sup> Ephrem dares to go further, from the robe to the body of Christ. But he prays for his fear to be healed in the same way as the curing

<sup>294</sup> Cf. *Fid 10.1-3*.

<sup>295</sup> *Fid 10.4-5*.















In order to put to shame once more those who were saying that human beings were formed from the four elements, behold, He restored the deficiency of the members/limbs [of the body] from the earth and from spittle.<sup>305</sup>

[He did] these things for their benefit, since miracles [were effective] in inciting them to believe. »The Jews ask for miracles« (1 Cor 1:22). It was not [the pool of] Siloam that opened [the eyes of] the blind man, just as it was not the waters of the Jordan that purified Naaman (cf. 2 Kgs 5:14). It was [the Lord's] command which effected it. So too, it is not the water of our atonement that cleanses, rather, it is the names pronounced over it which give us atonement.<sup>306</sup>

[illegible][illegible]











attention to the Sabbath. In Fid 41.7, Ephrem compares the scribes with Balaam who ignored the miracle of the Lord:

ܠܬܝܠܬ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ  
 ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ  
 ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ  
 ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ  
 ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ

When the ass spoke all of a sudden,  
 Balaam saw a wonder but neglected the miracle.  
 As though the mouth of the ass was capable of  
 speaking,  
 he went astray, persuading his donkey (Num 22:15-35).  
 The scribes let a miracle go, the blind whose [eyes]  
 were opened,  
 and they set forth on an inquiry into the Sabbath and  
 mud.

*Fid 41.7*

In hymn 35 On Virginity, in contrast to the priests' jealousy, Ephrem expresses his wonder about Jesus as a Physician Who heals in unexpected ways. Through the elements which make the eyes blind, like 'the place where He spat' (ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ), 'the clay/mud' (ܕܥܡܐ), 'dust' (ܕܥܡܐ) and 'speck' (ܕܥܡܐ), He granted sight to the man born blind.

ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ  
 ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ  
 ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ  
 ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ  
 ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ  
 ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ  
 ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܥܡܐ

A wonder sprouted in the place where He spat  
 that from clay He made salves for the eyes (cf. Jn 9:6-7).

He took and cast dust on the eyes, and they were  
 opened.

O Healer Who opened [the eyes of] the blind man with  
 a speck!

The priests were jealous that He had broken the  
 Sabbath,

for the breaking of it bound them (cf. Jn 9:16ff):















We will answer You as did Lazarus.

*Ecl 27.8*

The example of Bartimaeus is significant for the glory of Jericho as were Zachaeus (Lk 9:1-10) and Rahab (Josh 2). Because of them Ephrem stimulates Jericho to praise the Lord:

ܡܠ ܐܝܬܝ ܕܠܝܠܐ ܡܠ ܝܪܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ  
 ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ  
 ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ  
 ,ܡܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ  
 ,ܡܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ  
 ,ܡܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ  
 ,ܡܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ ܕܝܚܐ

Let Jericho worship Him; offer Him a crown.

By the mouth of the short Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10),

let her extend praise,

and by the voice of Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46-52)

let her extend thanksgiving,

and with the splendid thread of Rahab (Josh 2)

let her gird on His crown.

By means of Rahab who was saved, let her sing His  
 praise;

by Bar Timaueus, who saw, let her glorify Him,

and in Zacchaeus who conquered, let her crown Him.

*Virg 35.1*

Bartimaeus is a character who signifies faith and trust in God. Therefore, he became a figure to be imitated. In Iei 6.4-8, Ephrem goes further and prays to the Lord to open our inner eyes as He opened Bartimaeus' corporeal eyes.<sup>319</sup>

#### 4.2.3.3 *The Healing of the Interior and Exterior Blindness*

Apart from the miracles of giving sight to the man born blind and to Bartimaeus, Ephrem also uses the metaphor of the eye and blindness in the context of 'light' (ܕܝܡܐ), 'sun' (ܕܝܡܐ) and 'brightness' (ܕܝܡܐ) to illustrate the interior sight of man. In Fid 45.1-2, the mind (ܕܝܡܐ) is compared to the eye, and the light

<sup>319</sup> Cf. Iei 6.4-8.



with truth. As the light is essential to the eye, so too, the truth, which is identified as Scripture, is to the mind:

ሕይወት እና ልብ ወለድ ለሕይወት  
 ሕይወት እና ልብ ወለድ ለሕይወት  
 ሕይወት እና ልብ ወለድ ለሕይወት  
 ሕይወት እና ልብ ወለድ ለሕይወት  
 ሕይወት እና ልብ ወለድ ለሕይወት  
 ሕይወት እና ልብ ወለድ ለሕይወት

Let the eye and the mind teach one another  
 because [even] a little thing, if it falls into your eye,  
 upsets and disturbs it, and likewise for your mind.  
 Scripture and light will make you wise:  
 light is fitting for the eye and truth for the mind.  
 Choose light for your eye and the Scriptures for your  
 mind.

ሕይወት እና ልብ ወለድ ለሕይወት  
 ሕይወት እና ልብ ወለድ ለሕይወት  
 ሕይወት እና ልብ ወለድ ለሕይወት  
 ሕይወት እና ልብ ወለድ ለሕይወት  
 ሕይወት እና ልብ ወለድ ለሕይወት  
 ሕይወት እና ልብ ወለድ ለሕይወት

How the eye hates something that falls in it!  
 It is [like] an evil thought cast into our mind;  
 a crumb is hard for [our] eyes. How hard, indeed, for  
 the soul  
 is a thought which corrupts everything all the time!  
 It does not benefit the eye [for] a finger to probe it,  
 and it is no help for the mind for inquiry to attack it.

*Fid 45.1-2*

The eye is sensitive to the smallest thing, likewise the mind to an evil thought. Because evil thoughts disturb the mind as a crumb injures the eye, thoughts should be held under control. To attack the Scripture, which means to inquire and ‘pry into’ the divinity which can not be comprehended, is like probing the eye with a finger and hurting it. In hymn 65 On Faith, the inquiry refers to ‘prying into’ the Son of God. The inquiry of the mind about the divinity of the Son, is like a blind person inquiring about the light and the sun. The blind one is just able to imagine the beauty and essence of light, if he believes those who tell him about it. Concerning the holy divinity, faith is requested to believe the



‘utterance of God’ (למלה דאלה). If a blind man inquires and does not believe, he is considered as doubly blind: both physically and mentally:

65.10

ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ

Therefore, if a blind man inquires into light,  
although he is not able to depict the sun and its rays  
in the heart of his thoughts, could he be capable  
of seeing its ray and the generation of the sun  
unless he only trustingly believed  
someone who told him [about it].

65.11

ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ

Therefore, if a blind man wants to resist what he hears  
and not believe, he would fall into a multitude of evils  
because he inquires but does not understand; and he  
was willing  
to be found blind in two [respects]: in the eyes and in  
the mind.

But if he were willing and believed,  
just persuasion would enlighten his blindness.

65.12

ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
ܐܚܕ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ

Why are we harassed by questions?  
Why are we upset by investigations?  
Our mind is too blind to look at the Begotten



and to inquire into what sort [of being] He is, because  
there is  
no other way [for us to find Him]  
except only for a person really to believe the voice of  
the True One.

65.13

ܡܢ ܕܠܐ ܢܬܬܝܬ ܕܐܝܬܝܗ ܡܚܝܬܐ  
ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܠܠܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ  
ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܠܡ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ  
ܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ  
ܠܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ  
ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ.

Who would not be afraid because, if a blind man is  
censured  
because he hears and does not trust the word of a  
human  
who wants to tell him what light is like,  
how much would someone be judged who heard and  
did not believe  
the utterance of God? For the voice of His Begetter  
proclaimed:  
'this is my Son' (Mt 3:17).

*Fid 65.10-13*

Consequently, Ephrem asks the reader to 'believe the voice of the True One', so that the mind should not be blind. Blindness of mind appears not just by inquiry, but also with any sin. In hymn 13 On the Church, Ephrem compares sin to darkness which only through the ray of God can be enlightened. The inner darkness is compared to a house with closed windows which can be illumined by the light of the Lord. Therefore, Ephrem prays to the Lord to open his interior blind eye as He opened the eyes of the blind man:

13.7

ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ  
ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ.

13.8

ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ  
ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ.

13.9

ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ  
ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ ܕܝܥܬܐ.



13.10

መስመረ ሰዓት ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ  
ከገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ

13.11

እርሱም ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ  
እርሱም ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ

13.12

እርሱም ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ  
እርሱም ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ

13.13

እርሱም ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ  
እርሱም ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ

13.14

እርሱም ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ  
እርሱም ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ

13.15

እርሱም ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ  
እርሱም ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ ለገሰ

13.7

Like darkness my debts dwell in me.

The house withheld

its windows; through you let its senses be enlightened.

13.8

With his single ray when the sun comes it overwhelms  
the darkness that the seas are not able to wash away.

13.9

My Lord, Your [deed] is admirable for you have given  
light

to the blind with the two windows

which were victorious over the sun that overcome the  
darkness.

13.10

So [the sun] is weak, that if the door of the eye is closed  
it cannot open it and enter because of its weakness.

13.11

Also it does not have a key to open the blindness  
to rebuke its worshippers seeing how blind they were.

13.12

Your brightness opened the eyes that were stopped up.  
You daubed them with clay (Jn 9:6)

[and] opened the double plastering.

13.13



Your light crept in and rent asunder the pair of the  
door's curtains

of that ant which lives in darkness.

13.14

In Shiloah (Jn 9:6), the clay which cleansed the eyes  
sank,

and poured and filled them (with) abundance of light.

13.15

Jesus, enlighten the hidden eye which is blind in me;  
for Shiloah is far away, your cup is full of light.

*Ecl 13.7-15*

In hymn 6 On the Fast, Ephrem contrasts the opening of Bartimaeus' eyes with that of Adam who was hurt and injured when his eyes were opened. When Adam was created, he wore the garment of light and glory, although he did not recognize it as such as long as he was in Paradise. After the fall, Adam's eyes were opened to see the loss of his glorious garment, as he found himself naked. Although his eyes were opened, in actual fact they were closed and blinded. Adam was hurt and injured when his eyes were opened, and through him darkness and error entered into human life. Ephrem emphasises that man's physical eyes are not strong enough to see God's gift that is provided for us: because they are fixed on passing wealth, he calls them 'the blind who see just gold'. The free will is capable of giving sight or making blind.<sup>320</sup> In order to give sight to the inner eye, Ephrem invites God to spit on 'our face', and not on the ground, as He did for the man born blind. The reason for the blindness is not just the free will alone, but also the Evil One who opened Adam's eyes for his disaster.

6.4

ܐܝܢܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ  
ܐܝܢܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ  
ܐܝܢܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ  
ܐܝܢܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ  
ܐܝܢܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ  
ܐܝܢܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ

The gift which is thrown in front of our blindness is  
great.

Even though all of us have two eyes,

<sup>320</sup> Ecl 7.5: ܐܝܢܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ  
ܐܝܢܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ ܕܥܕܐ



few are those who saw the gift,  
 what it is and to whom it belongs.  
 My Lord, have mercy on the blind who see just gold.  
 6.5

ܡܥܕ ܕܥܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ

Jesus Who opened Bartimaeus' eyeballs (Mk 10:46) –  
 You opened them which were blind against his wish.  
 My Lord, open the eyes which are blind,  
 while we wish this, so that Your grace might increase.  
 My Lord, Your clay taught [us] that You are the  
 Son of the Creator.

6.6

ܡܥܕ ܕܥܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ

Who is like You Who honour our face:  
 You spat on the ground,  
 and not on the face, to magnify our image.  
 In our case, our Lord, spit on our faces,  
 and open the eyes which our free will has closed.  
 Blessed  
 is He Who granted the eye of mind that we have made  
 blind.

6.7

ܡܥܕ ܕܥܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܥܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ

Who does not wonder about Adam and the opening  
 [of his eyes].  
 The opening of his eyes hurt Adam a lot;  
 but with us, our Lord, the opening of the eyes helped a  
 lot,  
 since the Evil One shut them.







are blind.<sup>323</sup> However, those who are physically blind will rejoice to see the beauty of Paradise.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> Cf. CDiat 8.6.

<sup>324</sup> Cf. Parad 7.13.



# 5

## SALVATION HISTORY AS A PROCESS OF HEALING

It is noticeable that Ephrem frequently uses imagery from the sphere of medicine in the context of salvation. In Paradise, Adam and Eve enjoy good health, but after the Fall they come under the curse and suffer pains because they had sinned. There are two agents that cause sin and sickness: one of them is external to human beings, namely Satan, also called the Evil One and the Devil; and the other is internal, namely, man's free will. Thus, sin is the result of the influence of the Evil One and the misuse of man's free will. Ephrem personifies sin and considers it to be the poison of death which the Evil One offered to the inhabitants of Eden. Sin caused man to fall from Paradise where neither sickness nor death, nor suffering, pains or grief exist. In turn, the fallen state, life on earth, introduced mortality and afflictions of different illnesses and pains. At the beginning of mankind's history, sin persuaded man through a particular action, namely through disobedience and eating from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge; later sin continues its poisonous actions to wound man in many different ways. Disobedience to God, as well as desire, gluttony, idolatry, etc. can be ways in which mankind is affected spiritually, morally and physically.

Secondly, man needs to be healed and restored. Attention is drawn to the salvation of man as restoration from his diseased state into good health. The fragrance of Paradise appears as a Medicine and Physician for the earth, and so minimises its illness. During the Old Covenant, God provided medicine and physicians for His people. God sends chosen people, like the patriarchs and prophets, to act as physicians and to heal His people from their sickness. Finally, God sends His Son, Jesus Christ Who personifies the whole revelation of God, to save man from the wound of sin. Jesus Christ, as the best Physician, Healer of All and Medicine of Life, is



capable not only of healing individual sicknesses, such as the prophets did, but He was able to heal Adam's wound and rescue humanity from its sick state to health.

This universal restorative process continues, as it has been made accessible to individual people through Jesus Christ's presence in the sacraments of the church. Everyone can be restored to health through faith in the Lord and following His divine commandments.

## 5.1 The Cause of Sickness

### 5.1.1 The Expulsion from Paradise into a State of Sickness

As we have seen in the exegetical chapter about the creation of Adam and Eve, Ephrem considers life in Paradise to be a companion of well-being (ܐܬܝܠܐܝܐ ܐܬܝܠܐܝܐ)<sup>1</sup> in which Adam and Eve were created healthy and pure. In Paradise, the inhabitants of Eden could not suffer any pain or experience the effect of sickness. Understandably, they could not know what it means to be cursed with pains and afflicted with sickness. The knowledge of the real meaning of sickness was missing, and therefore Ephrem speaks of 'hidden knowledge' (ܐܬܝܠܐܝܐ ܐܬܝܠܐܝܐ). In their good health Adam and Eve did not possess, as Ephrem says, the 'discernment of what suffering is' (ܐܬܝܠܐܝܐ ܐܬܝܠܐܝܐ), and they did not have the knowledge of 'what good health is' (ܐܬܝܠܐܝܐ ܐܬܝܠܐܝܐ);<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Parad 5.13; cf. Parad 4.4: ܐܬܝܠܐܝܐ ܐܬܝܠܐܝܐ; Parad 5.14: ܐܬܝܠܐܝܐ ܐܬܝܠܐܝܐ; Parad 15.10: ܐܬܝܠܐܝܐ ܐܬܝܠܐܝܐ.

<sup>2</sup> Parad 3.11-12: A man, indeed, who has acquired good health in himself,

and is aware in his mind of what sickness is,  
has gained something beneficial and he knows something profitable;

but a man who lies in sickness,  
and knows in his mind what good health is,  
is vexed by his sickness and tormented in his mind.  
Had Adam conquered, he would have acquired  
glory upon his limbs, and discernment of what suffering is,  
so that he might be radiant in his limbs and grow in his discernment.



i.e. in their intermediate state they lacked the knowledge both of their health and of sickness.<sup>3</sup>

The same could be said of the created intermediate state between mortality and immortality. The Lord's commandment played an essential role; both the keeping and the transgressing of the divine commandment would lead the inhabitants of Eden from their temporal intermediate state to another state.<sup>4</sup> Life was a 'contest' (מלחמה) so that Adam might receive a crown that befitted his actions.<sup>5</sup> If the inhabitants of Eden had obeyed the Lord's commandment, they would have been led via the Tree of Knowledge to the Tree of Life and so to a permanent state. They would be totally in the presence of God where they would glorify and praise Him for ever. Sickness and pain do not exist in the created world of Paradise, or in the expected state of eternal life.

Now, we will focus on the fact that the inhabitants of Eden disobeyed their Creator. In Ephrem's view, the divine commandment was not too difficult to keep; it was very easy and simple. Even after failing to keep it, God was merciful and was waiting to hear Adam confess his sin and repent. Thus, because

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But the serpent reversed all this and made him taste  
abasement in reality, and glory in recollection only,  
so that he might feel shame at what he had found and weep at  
what he had lost.

<sup>3</sup> Parad 3.10: God established the Tree as judge, so that if Adam  
should eat from it,  
it might show him that rank which he had lost through his pride,  
and show him, as well, that low estate he had acquired, to his  
torment.

Whereas, if he should overcome and conquer, it would robe him  
in glory  
and reveal to him also the nature of shame,  
so that he might acquire, in his good health, an understanding of  
sickness.

<sup>4</sup> Parad 3.10; CGen 2.17:

מלחמה חיה וזנה כזאב: לרעהו חבנה חסד. ולא דל חסד  
חלל חסד.  
דקם אדם חלל חסד אה חכו חסד. נפלא חק עז חק  
אמלא אנה דחל חסד.

<sup>5</sup> Parad 3.9: ונעבד כדמנא, חלל דאני חלל.



they did not acknowledge their sin they were expelled from their healthy Paradise into the cursed land of thorns and thistles that signifies the fallen state, the sick state of mankind.<sup>6</sup>

The transgression of the Lord's commandment took place because of man's wickedness that harms humanity both spiritually and physically. 'Our wickedness' (ܐܬܡܢܬܐ) is able to produce visible and invisible pains.<sup>7</sup> The transgression of the divine commandment was leading Adam and Eve to eternal death; not to the physical death that people experience in their life on earth, but to something similar to a (second) death at the final judgment, for if God had not expelled Adam and Eve from Paradise, they would have stretched their hand to the Tree of Life and would have eaten the cause of eternal death and pains that are irreversible. Thus, humanity would have been tortured eternally by pains.<sup>8</sup>

Explicitly, Eve and the Serpent are mentioned as the cause of death. In Parad 11.9, Ephrem speaks of the 'state of sickness that entered through the Serpent';<sup>9</sup> whereas it is said that Eve became the source of death,<sup>10</sup> and she has been the 'vine' (ܐܬܡܢܬܐ) of death and the 'vine-twigs' (ܐܬܡܢܬܐ) that brought the first pains.<sup>11</sup>

Both Adam and Eve also serve as representatives of all mankind. Death enslaved Eve and Adam,<sup>12</sup> but also their

<sup>6</sup> CGen 2.19; 2.23.

<sup>7</sup> Eccl 32.1 (cf. Nat 23.3):

ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ  
ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ  
ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ...

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Parad 4.1-2; CGen 2.35 (see Gen 3:22).

<sup>9</sup> Parad 11.9: ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ.

<sup>10</sup> Dom 3: ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ... ܐܬܡܢܬܐ. For ܐܬܡܢܬܐ see also Dom 42; Eccl 13.18.

<sup>11</sup> Virg 23.9: ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ. In Virg 34.2, therefore, Ephrem speaks of 'Eve's death' (ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ).

<sup>12</sup> Sog 1.11: ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ ܐܬܡܢܬܐ. Further about death see Dom 3; Nat 3.18; 4.33; 13.4; Epiph 11.7; Sog 1.11; 1.28; Virg 5.8; 5.11; 23.9; 26.6; 30.12; 34.2; 34.12; 35.6;



descendants. Consequently, Ephrem refers the cause of death to all mankind who caused death, the curse and thistles to enter into the world and dwell in it.<sup>13</sup> For instance, before her repentance Ephrem considers the sinful woman as the cause of death for everyone.<sup>14</sup> Generally speaking, humanity is badly affected by death that ‘swallows us up’ (طلم)<sup>15</sup> and ‘absorbs us’ (هؤ لم).<sup>16</sup> Sadly, ‘we’ often enjoy our death for we do not recognise it as such.<sup>17</sup> Thus, mankind became an object of death and can be described as *ܠܡܡܬܐ*,<sup>18</sup> particularly the body.<sup>19</sup> Because after the Fall God intervened and introduced physical death to limit Adam’s pains and suffering,<sup>20</sup> physical death is seen as mercy and not as condemnation. Nevertheless, pains and suffering are the curse put upon man due to the fact he is living on earth and not any more in the Garden of Eden.

Here, on earth, on the cursed land, Adam and Eve tasted the reality of sickness and gained the knowledge about pain and suffering. Likewise they realised that they had lost the paradisiacal abode where they were pure and perfect. Instead they became impure, leprous and poisoned,<sup>21</sup> as well as wounded and stained.<sup>22</sup> In other words, Adam lost his garment of glory (Gen 3:21)<sup>23</sup> and in

43.11-12; 48.5; 51.8; Nis 35.1; 35.19; 42.8; 52-59; Fid 10.18; 46.1; 64.12; 67.14; Azym 14.1; Parad 5.14; 7.19; Eccl 1.6; 11.10; 17.2.

<sup>13</sup> Sog 1.28: ಕಡೂರ ಕಡಲೆಗೆ ನೆಲೆ ಬಿಟ್ಟು ಕಡಲೆಗೆ ಬಂದೆ. ನೆಲೆ ಬಿಟ್ಟು ಕಡಲೆಗೆ ಬಂದೆ. ನೆಲೆ ಬಿಟ್ಟು ಕಡಲೆಗೆ ಬಂದೆ.

<sup>14</sup> Virg 35.6: *ḥāṣṣ ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣ ḥṣṣ*.

<sup>15</sup> Nat 3.18: ಕೂಡು ಕೂಡು.

<sup>16</sup> Fid 10.18:  $\mu$  ಫಿಡ್ ಕಮ್ ಕರ್ನಾಟ.

<sup>17</sup> Eccl 1.6: חֲסִידֵי לֵבָב

18 Fid 15.1.

19 Fid 80.2.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. CGen 3:25. The role of death is well illustrated in the dialogue between death and Satan in Nis 52-59; particularly see Nis 52.8; 52.13; 53.5; 54.7.

<sup>21</sup> Parad 4.4; 8.9; Nat 26.9.

22 CDiat 16.15.

<sup>23</sup> CDiat 16.10; Nat 23.13; Virg 16.9. See further S. P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye. The Spiritual World Vision of St Ephrem* (Rome 1985), 65-76.



his nakedness became subject to sickness.<sup>24</sup> Along with his nakedness, Adam also realised his sick state. Through the Fall, the life of Adam, representative of all human beings, changed radically: on the earth he faced a totally different world, a world where man can be afflicted with any kind of sickness. Therefore, Ephrem also speaks of the fractured state of Adam/man (ܐܰܕܡܰܐ) <sup>25</sup> and of the darkness of error.<sup>26</sup> The fallen state set in motion a long life of pain and suffering that could affect not just individuals, but also larger groups within the nation or the nation as a whole. And the Fall affected not just human beings, but the earth and the whole world of nature as well.<sup>27</sup>

Ephrem describes this general human condition after the expulsion of Paradise with the term ܠܰܫܰܡܰܐܰܝܰܐ, state of sickness, that has been brought about by the Serpent.<sup>28</sup> Likewise Paul uses ܠܰܫܰܡܰܐܰܝܰܐ with the same sense when he denotes humanity's spiritual fallen state as a state of sickness.<sup>29</sup>

Because of this universal human condition of spiritual sickness, other sicknesses, diseases and pain can take place in human life and affect man spiritually as well as physically. Because of the 'state of sickness' (ܠܰܫܰܡܰܐܰܝܰܐ) error could grow strong in the world<sup>30</sup> and remain with people.<sup>31</sup> Thus with Simon the Pharisee, his thoughts concerning Jesus went astray because 'error had entered him'.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, the city of Nineveh as a whole fell into error,<sup>33</sup> and the Chaldeans are called the 'heralds of error'.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>24</sup> CDiat 16.10; Parad 3.13 (cf. Gen 3:7); 4.3-5; Iei 6.8.

<sup>25</sup> CDiat 2.25.

<sup>26</sup> CDiat 5.17; cf. CDiat 11.6.

<sup>27</sup> Fid 35.2; Epiph 7.15; Nat 1.62; 17.12; Virg 26.10; Nachträge Serm 2.153-154.

<sup>28</sup> Parad 11.9. See also Parad 3.11; Nat 3.1; Fid 60.13; 75.18; Virg 4.10; 11.13; 39.7.

<sup>29</sup> Rom 5:6; 6:19; 8:18; 8:26; Gal 4.13; cf also Hebr 4:15.

<sup>30</sup> Fid 60.13: ܠܰܫܰܡܰܐܰܝܰܐ ܕܰܠܰܠܰܡܰܐܰܝܰܐ ܕܰܠܰܠܰܡܰܐܰܝܰܐ.

<sup>31</sup> CDiat 11.6.

<sup>32</sup> Dom 16: ܕܰܡܰܚܰܕܰܐ ܕܰܠܰܠܰܡܰܐܰܝܰܐ ܕܰܠܰܠܰܡܰܐܰܝܰܐ ܕܰܠܰܠܰܡܰܐܰܝܰܐ; cf. Lk 7:39.

<sup>33</sup> Virg 45.9: ܕܰܠܰܠܰܡܰܐܰܝܰܐ ܕܰܠܰܠܰܡܰܐܰܝܰܐ ܕܰܠܰܠܰܡܰܐܰܝܰܐ.



Paradise and Adam's health and 'glory' (كبره) in it remain only in memory after he sinned, and he 'weeps at what he had lost'.<sup>39</sup> Likewise Adam/man and 'our soul' (نفسه) are considered as having become 'lost' and 'perished' (مهلكه).<sup>40</sup> Humanity lost Paradise and became a prisoner on earth<sup>41</sup> which is a dungeon compared to Paradise.<sup>42</sup> People on earth are 'captives' (مأسورين)<sup>43</sup> and in 'confinement' (سجنه).<sup>44</sup> Earth is the place of 'suffocation' (مضيقه)<sup>45</sup> and humanity is drowned in it.<sup>46</sup> Earth is also described as ظلمة وحر,<sup>47</sup> for gloom, darkness and night have taken power over it.<sup>48</sup> Darkness affects humanity badly for it is full of suffering.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> CDiat 17.2: **ⲕⲉⲩ ⲛⲁ ⲕⲁⲩⲩ**. For **ⲕⲁⲩⲩ** see further Virg 5.2; 5.8; 52.1; Epiph 7.22; Eccl 13.7-9.







Mankind can become physically and spiritually blind,<sup>71</sup> and be deficient in its nature. Ephrem speaks of ‘our deficiency’ (ܐܘܪܝܬܐ)<sup>72</sup> and ‘what is lacking in our creation’ (ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܢ ܡܝܢܐ).<sup>73</sup> Compared to the angels, man’s nature is weak and is liable to produce ‘pus’ (ܐܘܪܝܬܐ).<sup>74</sup> Likewise, it can be afflicted with ‘pains’ (ܐܘܪܝܬܐ),<sup>75</sup> ‘sicknesses’ (ܐܘܪܝܬܐ),<sup>76</sup> ‘suffering’

<sup>76</sup> Parad 3.10-11; 8.5; 11.10; Eccl 8.3; 17.2; Virg 2.1-3; 4.4; 36.1; 39.7; 68.22; Fid 35.4; Sog 1.29; Iei 10.7.



(ܣܬܐ),<sup>77</sup> ‘scars’ (ܐܬܡܐܪܐ),<sup>78</sup> ‘marks’ (ܐܬܡܐܪܐܗܘܢ)<sup>79</sup> and ‘harms’ (ܐܬܡܐܪܐܗܘܢ).<sup>80</sup> Humanity is surrounded by ‘iniquity’ (ܐܬܡܐܪܐ),<sup>81</sup> ‘dirt/foulness’ (ܐܬܡܐܪܐ),<sup>82</sup> ‘debts’ (ܐܬܡܐܪܐ)<sup>83</sup> and the ‘curse’ (ܐܬܡܐܪܐ),<sup>84</sup> where moral and medical terminology are more or less used interchangeably. People such as ‘lepers’ (ܐܬܡܐܪܐ),<sup>85</sup> the ‘deaf’ (ܐܬܡܐܪܐ), ‘crippled’ (ܐܬܡܐܪܐ) and ‘dumb’ (ܐܬܡܐܪܐ),<sup>86</sup> or ‘blind’ (ܐܬܡܐܪܐ),<sup>87</sup> ‘paralysed’ (ܐܬܡܐܪܐ),<sup>88</sup> ‘sick’ (ܐܬܡܐܪܐ)<sup>89</sup> and ‘wounded’ (ܐܬܡܐܪܐ)<sup>90</sup> point to signify the weakness and deficiency of humanity after the Fall.

In this context, the question of theodicy can be understood: God created a good world, and planted human beings in it bearing His image. Mankind caused a gap between itself and its Creator. Thus, actually mankind must bear the responsibility for pain and suffering in the world, but God in His mercy offers medicine and healing to restore human beings. Ephrem does not understand all that happened to man after the Fall as a just God’s punishment and curse, but rather as the consequence of sin, the effect of the Evil One, man’s free Will and his actions. The presence of sickness and suffering in the fallen state of the human condition is the gift of the

<sup>77</sup> CDiat 17.2; Nat 22.1; Virg 4.13; 38.4; Parad 5.13-14.

<sup>78</sup> Virg 46.25-27; Fid 5.19.

<sup>79</sup> Fid 5.19; Epiph 5.6-8.

<sup>80</sup> CDiat 16.9; Parad 12.4.

<sup>81</sup> Nat 3.19.

<sup>82</sup> Virg 35.6; Eccl 13.25.

<sup>83</sup> Virg 7.9; 49.16; Eccl 5.2-6; 5.16; 13.7-8; Epiph 5.6-8.

<sup>84</sup> Nat 3.15; Epiph 8.2; Sog 15.8; Virg 24.11; 31.14; Parad 3.5; 6.8; 7.8; 7.14; 9.1; 9.12; 11.9-11; Iei 6.8; Eccl 28.16.

<sup>85</sup> Nat 17.17-18; CDiat 8.1; Epiph 3.16-17; 5.6-8; 6.2; Fid 28.13; 38.17; Parad 4.3-5; 12.4; 12.9-14; 15.12; Eccl 5.22; 11.5.

<sup>86</sup> Nat 17.13-18; Virg 19.2; Parad 6.8; 7.13; 8.5.

<sup>87</sup> CDiat 10.7; 16.28-33; Virg 16.7; 35.3; Fid 41.7; 56.11-12; 65.10-13; Nat 6.8; 17.13-18; 26.7; Epiph 7.22; Parad 7.13; Azym 13.12; Eccl 1.5; 9.8; 13.7-15.

<sup>88</sup> Parad 7.13.

<sup>89</sup> Virg 5.11; 19.2; Fid 2.16; 19.10-12; 35.4; 47.1; Virg 52.3; Iei 10.7; Eccl 38 Refrain.

<sup>90</sup> Nat 4.24; Dom 42; Virg 37.1; Iei 4.1.



Evil One,<sup>91</sup> Death and Satan who enslaved and humbled Adam.<sup>92</sup> The reason for the radical change in the early history of man is sin; and the main source of sin is fallen Satan and man's free will.

### 5.1.2 Satan, Evil One and the Devil

The reason for the radical change in the life of mankind is sin; and the main source of sin is the fallen Satan as an external power, and man's free will as an internal and essential part of human creation. In this section we will look closer at the former, namely Satan who fell from his rank and led Adam and Eve astray in Paradise and continues to affect man. Significantly, in the dialogue between Satan and death, in Nis 52-59, Ephrem emphasises that Satan did not only cause Adam and Eve to sin, but also caused all mankind to become sinners.<sup>93</sup> Ephrem plays with the name 'Satan' (ܫܬܢ) and associates it, through a popular etymology, with the verb ܫܬܢ, 'to turn aside, go astray'.<sup>94</sup> Satan turned himself aside from God and causes humanity to turn aside too.<sup>95</sup>

As a 'dragon' (ܕܪܝܬܐ),<sup>96</sup> Satan is 'cunning' (ܕܠܝܢܐ),<sup>97</sup> a 'liar' (ܕܠܝܐ)<sup>98</sup> and 'false' (ܕܠܝܐ).<sup>99</sup> As if in a 'contest' (ܕܠܝܐܬܐ),<sup>100</sup> Satan 'fights' (ܕܠܝܐܬܐ)<sup>101</sup> against humanity which he 'hates' (ܕܠܝܐ),<sup>102</sup> 'deceives' (ܕܠܝܐ)<sup>103</sup> and 'laughs at' (ܕܠܝܐ).<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, through 'jealousy' (ܕܠܝܐ),<sup>105</sup> 'deceit' (ܕܠܝܐ),<sup>106</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Eccl 48.11; Virg 31.14.

<sup>92</sup> Nat Sog 1.11.

<sup>93</sup> Nis 52.2; 53.7; 53.9; 53.26; 57.1.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Haer 26.4. For information about this popular etymology of 'Satan' see chapter IV, 1.1.4.

<sup>95</sup> Nis 54.9; 59.12.

<sup>96</sup> Nis 57.3.

<sup>97</sup> Nis 54.11; cf. Eccl 1.3.

<sup>98</sup> Nis 55.5.

<sup>99</sup> Nis 56.8. In Fid 38.7, ܕܠܝܐ is considered as ܕܠܝܐ ܕܠܝܐ.

<sup>100</sup> Nis 56.1; cf. Parad 3.9.

<sup>101</sup> Nis 55.24.

<sup>102</sup> Nis 55.9; Virg 3.5.

<sup>103</sup> Nis 57.3.

<sup>104</sup> Nis 57.5.

<sup>105</sup> Nis 57.15; Fid 50.5-6; Eccl 1.2.



‘contention/controversy’ (ܠܒܝܢܐ),<sup>107</sup> ‘iniquity’ (ܠܚܡܐ),<sup>108</sup> ‘desires/lusts’ (ܠܚܝܬܐ),<sup>109</sup> ‘cupidity/greediness’ (ܠܚܝܬܐ),<sup>110</sup> ‘theft’ (ܠܚܝܬܐ),<sup>111</sup> ‘godlessness/impiety’ (ܠܚܝܬܐ),<sup>112</sup> ‘gluttony/debauchery’ (ܠܚܝܬܐ),<sup>113</sup> as well as through ‘oracle, augury and divination’ (ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ),<sup>114</sup> Satan causes man ‘to sin’ (ܠܚܝܬܐ),<sup>115</sup> ‘destroys man’s hope’ (ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ) and ‘becomes victorious’ (ܠܚܝܬܐ).<sup>116</sup> Likewise, he wins over man by means of ‘habit, ease, advantage and persistence’ (ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ).<sup>117</sup> Considering all these, Ephrem customarily describes Satan with the term ܠܚܝܬܐ, ‘Evil One’, and uses it as a name for Satan.<sup>119</sup>

Satan, the ‘Evil One’ (ܠܚܝܬܐ), is ‘divided’ (ܠܚܝܬܐ)<sup>120</sup> in himself, and his name is ‘hated’ (ܠܚܝܬܐ).<sup>121</sup> The Evil One acts in his free will and thus has authority over himself; but whatever he does and performs is hidden and invisible. In Virg 20.4, Ephrem says: ‘the Evil One sang in them [using] hidden deceit’ (ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ). The Evil One dwells in mankind and is invisible so that the ܠܚܝܬܐ is unable to perceive him. He cannot be

<sup>106</sup> Nis 52.2; 57.3; Virg 20.4.

<sup>107</sup> Nis 53.3; Virg 14.3.

<sup>108</sup> Nis 56.10; 57.26.

<sup>109</sup> Nis 52.20; Virg 1.6-8; 32.8.

<sup>110</sup> Virg 14.11; Nat 22.17.

<sup>111</sup> Nis 57.22.

<sup>112</sup> Nis 57.18.

<sup>113</sup> Virg 14.11.

<sup>114</sup> Nis 55.11; 57.16.

<sup>115</sup> Nis 53.9; 53.26; 55.11; 57.1-2.

<sup>116</sup> Nis 52.23.

<sup>117</sup> Nis 53.7; 53.15; 54.13; cf. Virg 52.1.

<sup>118</sup> Nis 55.27. For ܠܚܝܬܐ see also Eccl 1.6.

<sup>119</sup> Nis 35.8; 52.19; 53.6; 57.1; cf. Fid 38.7; 50.6-7; C.Jul 1.9; Nat 13.5; 21.11; 22.17; 22.30; 22.34; Virg 1.4-6; 10.4; 20.4; 30.7; 48.12; 52.1.

<sup>120</sup> Nis 53.20; cf. Nis 56.18.

<sup>121</sup> Nis 52.15; 52.19; 54.17; 55.9; 57.26; Fide 38.7.



seen or touched, neither can his bitterness be tasted.<sup>122</sup> Therefore, the Evil One is able to say: 'some of my breath was in them, the lump of dough of humans (cf. 1 Cor 5:6) is a companion of our heaven'.<sup>123</sup> The Evil One can dwell in man by means of 'devils and demons' (צְרוּרִים וְדֵמוֹנִים) which are described as the children of sin.<sup>124</sup>

The Evil One became victorious and thought never to be defeated.<sup>125</sup> He ruled in the world as a god,<sup>126</sup> ‘swallowed the whole creation’,<sup>127</sup> misled and harmed everyone.<sup>128</sup> In Virg 1.3, it is explicitly said that ‘Satan wounds’ (ܩܠܥܐ ܫܬܐܢ).<sup>129</sup> The Evil One does not have to do this, but he chooses to.<sup>130</sup> He knows how to ‘harm’ (ܠܥܡܐ), ‘blind’ (ܥܥܡܐ), or ‘injure us’ (ܥܠܡܐ), and to hold people as if in prison.<sup>131</sup> The Evil One ‘intoxicated’ (ܐܝܬܐܢ), ‘perturbed/disturbed’ (ܐܬܐܬܐܢ) and rent mankind in pieces (ܬܬܥܬܡܐ); but the foolish who have been torn in pieces did not realise their pains.<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, through his ‘arrow’ (ܩܝܬܐܢܐ) and poisoned food,<sup>133</sup> or through ‘strangling’ (ܬܬܥܬܡܐܢܐ),<sup>134</sup> and his ‘snares and noose of subtlety’ (ܩܬܝܬܐܢܐ ܬܬܥܬܡܐܢܐ ܩܬܝܬܐܢܐ ܩܬܝܬܐܢܐ),<sup>135</sup> Satan

<sup>122</sup> Fide 50.6-7.

<sup>123</sup> Nis 35.8: **כִּי יִשְׁכַּח אֶת הַמִּצְוָה וְיִשְׁכַּח אֶת הַמִּצְוָה**  
**וְיִשְׁכַּח אֶת הַמִּצְוָה וְיִשְׁכַּח אֶת הַמִּצְוָה**

<sup>124</sup> Nis 35.2: **סִימָהּ כִּי חָלַח לְחַיֵּי לְקִרְיָהּ הַלְּזִתָּהּ**. Cf. Virg 4.13.

<sup>125</sup> Virg 52.1: וְהָאֵלֵּל הַזֶּה לְדָמָךְ אֶשְׁחָדֶיךָ וְלֵךְ נִסְתָּר.

<sup>126</sup> Nat 21.11: ಕರ್ತೃ ಸ್ವರ ಮುಖ್ಯವಾದ ಕಥನ ಪ್ರಸಂಗ.

<sup>127</sup> Nat 22.30: *ḥuḥ ḥuḥ ḥuḥ*.

128 Virg 1.4-6.

<sup>129</sup> Virg 1.3: **ἄλκιμονα Κρονίων**.

<sup>130</sup> Nat 22.34.

<sup>131</sup> Nat 22.17.

<sup>132</sup> C.Jul 1.9. For **sin** see further Virg 27.2. In Virg 37.5, sin is considered as a wild animal that has secretly torn man in pieces. Drawing attention to the invisibility of the Evil One, Ephrem says that the Evil One cannot be depicted with any pigments (Fid 33.7).

<sup>133</sup> Virg 14.11; Virg 14.11-14.

<sup>134</sup> Nis 53.17; cf. Nat 3.19; Parad 5.14.

<sup>135</sup> Nis 52.4; 58.23; cf. Eccl 1.5.



‘strikes’ (ܠܚܝܬ) <sup>136</sup> and kills mankind, <sup>137</sup> as he killed Adam through the Serpent. <sup>138</sup> In contrast to death who kills physically, Satan kills spiritually as well. <sup>139</sup>

The Fall of Adam and Eve was initiated by the advice of the Evil One who is described as having ‘proffered poison in food’ to Adam. <sup>140</sup> The ‘poison’ (ܠܚܝܬ) was offered to Eve through the Serpent. The term ܠܚܝܬ is in itself a neutral word: only by response to it does it prove to be ܠܚܝܬ ܡܪܝܬ, ‘poison of death’, or, alternatively, ܠܚܝܬ ܚܝܬ, ‘Medicine of Life’. The Serpent was used by the Devil and became a symbol of evil seduction, <sup>141</sup> for it, as a reptile, ‘deceived’ (ܠܚܝܬ) Eve and caused Adam ‘to sin’ (ܠܚܝܬ). <sup>142</sup> Apart from being an agent of the Evil One, the Serpent was ‘healthy’. <sup>143</sup> Nevertheless, Adam and Eve were wounded by the Serpent (ܠܚܝܬ ܡܪܝܬ), and, as Ephrem says, they were ‘swallowed’ by the Reptile. <sup>144</sup> Adam was pure in Eden until ‘the Serpent had breathed on him’, <sup>145</sup> and it was through the Serpent that Adam’s healthy state was changed into a ‘state of sickness’ (ܠܚܝܬ ܡܪܝܬ). <sup>146</sup> The Serpent did not only wound Adam (Gn 3:1-18), but also the Israelites in the camp (Num 21:4-9): ‘the Serpent struck Adam in Paradise and killed him, and the Israelites in the

<sup>136</sup> Virg 1.3.

<sup>137</sup> Nis 53.9; 54.7; 54.16; 55.9.

<sup>138</sup> CDiat 16.15: The Serpent struck Adam in Paradise and killed him.

<sup>139</sup> Nis 54.7; 54.16; 55.11.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. Eccl 48.11; Nat 26.9; Virg 10.4; 13-14.

<sup>141</sup> For Amnon who is described as a serpent/snake (Virg 2.3) see chapter V, 1.4.1.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Nis 57.1-3.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Haer 21.6: although the Serpent was ‘more crafty than any of the wild animals’ (Gen 3:1), in its nature it was originally good like the rest of the creation and like the Tree of Knowledge.

<sup>144</sup> Nat 1.27-28.

<sup>145</sup> Parad 4.4.

<sup>146</sup> Parad 11.9.











### 5.1.3 Free Will (ආරාධනා)

rhetorical patterns in early Syriac Literature', in R. H. Fischwer (ed.), *A Tribute to Arthur Vööbus* (Chicago 1977), 109-31.

[illegible][illegible]

<sup>169</sup> Haer 49.7. See also N. El-Khoury, *Die Interpretation der Welt bei Ephrem dem Syrer* (Mainz 1976), 111-20.

170 Virg 30.5-6.







At the beginning man's free will was divided, and in its craftiness it sought to approach divine righteousness.<sup>187</sup> In their free will, both Adam and Eve failed for they desired the excellent fruit and ignored God's commandment. They were 'infantile' (ܐܕܡܝܬܐ/ܐܕܡܝܬܐ)<sup>188</sup> and 'weak' (ܐܕܡܝܬܐ).<sup>189</sup> The free will with which man was created led Adam and Eve astray in error that is the cause of sickness.<sup>190</sup> By free will the inhabitants of Paradise stretched out their hands to the fruit which was the 'poison of death'.<sup>191</sup> Adam did not trust the Lord, preferring to steal<sup>192</sup> and so

192 Crucif 8.2.



eat the fruit, when he wished to become divine.<sup>193</sup> In consequence he became leprous.<sup>194</sup> Therefore, Ephrem goes further and considers free will as a spring of all visible and invisible diseases that 'muddled itself' and acts or thinks evil against its Creator.<sup>195</sup> As Adam, so too King Uzziah was misled by his free will that incited him to enter the Holy of Holies against the divine commandment.<sup>196</sup> The result was the loss of kingship and leprosy.<sup>197</sup>

Not only did Adam and King Uzziah undergo the testing of their free will, but so does everyone born on earth. Ephrem uses the Hebrews as an example in that they, as a nation, fell into idolatry and into the sickness of error because of their free will.<sup>198</sup> In the hymns *On Faith*, Ephrem often rebukes the Arians, who are considered as a sick limb, for trying to investigate the Son of God. They are able to do so because of their free will.<sup>199</sup> Mankind with its free will might also criticise God for bestowing free will upon humanity. Ephrem condemns those who rebuke Divinity through

<sup>193</sup> Cf. Nis 69.12.

<sup>194</sup> Parad 4.4.

<sup>195</sup> Eccl 32.1: O Good One have pity on our wickedness  
which is the spring of all kind of harm.

Its thoughts [are] hidden diseases,  
also its deeds [are] visible diseases.

For it is from it that the first transgression of all wrongdoings  
comes,

of the middle as well as of the last ones.

You who are serene make serene our free will,  
the spring which muddled itself.

<sup>196</sup> Fide 38.17: Adam wanted to inherit the brightness  
and the earth became his inheritance.

Uzziah wanted to add priesthood for himself

and he was given in addition an abominable leprosy (2 Chr 26:16-  
21).

The Syriac text is given in chapter IV, 1.2.3.

<sup>197</sup> Fid 28.14: Behold they are both depicted for the knowing  
in the pure mirror of thought,  
for they had put on the same image of the will  
and the same seal of anger coming from free will.

<sup>198</sup> CDiat 11.6.

<sup>199</sup> Fid 28.16 (for the effect of investigation see chapter V, 1.4.7).



their free will.<sup>200</sup> Free will, the gift of God, is misused by man through his evil actions and thoughts, and it became like a soul for the desires that live by it.<sup>201</sup>

In Virg 48.13-15, Ephrem contrasts free will with the grace of the Lord. He emphasises the responsibility of free will that repeatedly acts mistakenly, leads into error and sickness, and in this way caused Adam's beauty to become ugly; whereas divine grace continually corrects free will's mistakes and re-establishes man from his fallen ways.<sup>202</sup> Although Jesus, making us free from the slavery of sin, granted us true free will as the Father did at the beginning,<sup>203</sup> nevertheless people still sin because of their free will. In Parad 6, the Church corresponds to Paradise;<sup>204</sup> i.e. as Adam and Eve, everyone is required to obey the Lord's commandment and let his free will act in a proper way as the just do. In contrast to Adam and Eve, 'the effort of free will adorns the church with all manners of fruits'.<sup>205</sup>

#### 5.1.4 Sin (ܥܬܝܢܐ)

In Ephrem's view, Sin is the result of the Evil One's deceit and of man's wrong use of free will. Sin, by means of disobedience, jealousy, lust, rebellion, crime, etc., causes a great gap, a chasm, between Creator and Creation and alienates human beings from God and their original created state. In many cases it does not matter whether sin is committed intentionally or unintentionally: the consequence can be the same, such as pain, grief, sickness and even death.

Ephrem personifies sin and considers it as something which kills (ܥܬܝܢܐ ܡܪܝܬܐ)<sup>206</sup> and swallows up people.<sup>207</sup> It tries to gain

<sup>200</sup> Dom 30.

<sup>201</sup> Virg 3.8.

<sup>202</sup> Virg 48.13-16.

<sup>203</sup> Virg 6.12.

<sup>204</sup> Parad 6.7-8.

<sup>205</sup> Parad 6.10: ܡܠܚܬܐ ܗܝ ܥܬܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ.

<sup>206</sup> Dom 21; 42; cf. Haer 18.3: ܥܬܝܢܐ ܗܝ ܥܬܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ... ܗܝ ܥܬܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ

<sup>207</sup> Virg 43.15.























































The sickness of paganism caused pain, and it could not be healed with the Egyptians' medicine, because it was a disease of the 'soul' (ܠܢܦܫ), not of the body.<sup>293</sup> Paganism was hidden in the mind of the People.<sup>294</sup> The People were blinded (ܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ) with the 'delight of idolatry' (ܠܬܚܠܝܬܐ) and wounded by the calf as they went astray (ܠܬܬܠܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܢܚܠܝܬܐ).<sup>295</sup> The engraved calf was dead and could not move, but as a wild animal with its horn, it wounded and killed by its paganism.<sup>296</sup> Therefore, Ephrem speaks of the Hebrew People who had become sick and were broken by paganism (ܠܬܬܠܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܕܢܚܠܝܬܐ), but they bandaged their wound

<sup>296</sup> Iei 10.5: **ᲛᲠ ᲙᲗ ᲕᲟᲗ᲏Ბ ᲕᲗ᲏ Ვ᲏ ᲕᲗᲗ ᲕᲟ ᲙᲟᲗ᲏ᲗᲗ᲏ ᲕᲟᲗᲗ᲏ ᲕᲟᲗᲗ᲏ ᲙᲗ ᲕᲟᲗ᲏ ᲕᲟᲗ᲏ᲗᲗ᲏.**  
**ᲕᲟᲗ᲏.**







<sup>309</sup> Fid 35.8-9; 59.11.



of believing, like certain ‘teachers’ (ܡܚܩܝܢ)<sup>310</sup> or some of Jesus’ contemporaries.<sup>311</sup> Ephrem calls them ܡܢܬܚܝܢ, their wisdom is vanity.<sup>312</sup> Sometimes Ephrem uses ‘investigation’ (ܡܚܩܡܐ) and ‘disputation’ (ܡܚܩܐ) together, without any clear distinction.<sup>313</sup>

The verb ܡܚܩ is used often and means ‘to pry into, inquire, investigate, examine’. The nouns ܡܚܩܐ and ܡܚܩܝܢ mean ‘prying in, inquiry, search.’ Ephrem speaks of ‘defiled inquiry/prying into’ (ܡܚܩܐ ܡܚܩܝܢ),<sup>314</sup> the ‘boldness of those who pry into’ (ܡܚܩܐ ܡܚܩܝܢ)<sup>315</sup> and the ‘prying of the audacious’ (ܡܚܩܐ ܡܚܩܝܢ),<sup>316</sup> who try to pry into the ‘Nature and Birth’ of Jesus,<sup>317</sup> or into the ‘Devouring Fire’,<sup>318</sup> like a blind person prying into the light.<sup>319</sup> Prying means dishonouring the Lord of All.<sup>320</sup>

The term ܡܚܩܐ can mean ‘to meditate, muse upon, think upon’, as well as, ‘to seek, tempt, probe and attack’. Ephrem uses the noun ܡܚܩܐ, ‘probing’ or ‘idea’,<sup>321</sup> in a negative sense, and it is totally different from ܡܚܩܐ, ‘process of thought’, and ܡܚܩܐ, ‘mind’. He says: ‘an evil idea lies in the thought (ܡܚܩܐ); ... an [evil] idea (ܡܚܩܐ) disturbs everything at

<sup>310</sup> Fid 35.2; 35.8-9.

<sup>311</sup> Fid 54.10; 87.10.

<sup>312</sup> Fid 54.10: ܡܢܬܚܝܢ ܡܚܩܐ ܡܚܩܐ. See also Fid 28.11.

<sup>313</sup> Fid 68.22.

<sup>314</sup> Fid 28.16.

<sup>315</sup> Fid 28.9.

<sup>316</sup> Fid 28.11.

<sup>317</sup> Fid 5.19; cf. Fid 28.10.

<sup>318</sup> Fid 28.2: ܡܚܩܐ ܡܚܩܐ ܡܚܩܐ.

<sup>319</sup> Fid 65.10.

<sup>320</sup> Fid 28.13: ܡܚܩܐ ܡܚܩܐ ܡܚܩܐ.

<sup>321</sup> The translation of ܡܚܩܐ into English is very difficult, for there is no term in English that can be used constantly. In the context of the eye (ܡܚܩܐ), the term ‘probing’ is closer to ܡܚܩܐ; whereas in the context of the process of thought (ܡܚܩܐ, ܡܚܩܐ) has the meaning of an evil idea. Therefore, I prefer to use both terms, probing and [evil] idea.



any time'.<sup>322</sup> In a different sense, Ephrem uses ܐܝܢ in the context of the eye: 'it is not helpful for an eye if a finger probe it'.<sup>323</sup>

Let us look closer into Ephrem's theological understanding of prying into, investigating or meditating about God. It is clear that Ephrem does not mean that one should not seek and look for God, in terms of believing, praying and praising Him. Ephrem challenges and begs mankind to understand Scripture and Nature correctly, for these give evidence about God's existence and Majesty. But since Divinity and humanity differ in both name and nature, and a 'chasm' (ܚܕܐ) exists between them, human beings cannot go beyond creation and pry into and investigate the Only-Begotten-One, with the aim of defining and explaining Him, beyond what He has revealed to humanity by His grace. The boundary of humanity is defined as the boundary of a fish in water: just as the natural sphere of a fish is water, so Scripture provides an invisible boundary for humanity, particularly for the human intellect. Beyond the boundary, just as beyond the water, is death.<sup>324</sup> In Fid 64.12, Ephrem says:

ಕುರಿತೂಲೆ ಕಿಲೆ ತಮಾ ಕಿಂ ಕಿನ್  
 ಕುರಿಹೂಲೆ ಕುಲೆ ತಮಾ ಪಿ ಕಿತ್ತಿ  
 ಕುರಿ [a] ಹಿ ಲಿ ಕಿ ಕುಲೆ ಕು ತಮಾ  
 ಅಂತ ಕು ಅಂತಿಂ ಆ ಅಂತಿಹಿತ್ತಿ ಕುಡುಕಿ  
 ಕಿತ್ತಿಹಿ ಕುಡುಕಿ ಕುಲೆ ಕಿಂ ಕಿತ್ತಿ ಕಿ  
 .ಅಂತಿಹಿತ್ತಿ ಅಂತಿಹಿತ್ತಿ

He created water and gave it to fish for [their] benefit.  
He wrote the Scriptures and gave them to humans for  
an assistance.

[illegible]

<sup>323</sup> Fid 45.2: See further  
Fid 5.19; 46.1.

324 Fid 46.1:

[illegible]



They witness each one for [the truth of] the other. If  
 fish cross over  
 the boundary of their course, their leaping is a cause of  
 suffering,  
 and if human beings passed over the bounds of the  
 Scripture,  
 their investigation is a cause of death [for them].

*Fid 64.12*

The difference between divinity and humanity is real and always present. Divinity is hidden and invisible so that it cannot be investigated. If the Devil cannot be depicted with any pigments, how would it be possible for human beings to investigate the Divinity?<sup>325</sup> Ephrem prefers the simplicity of Faith instead of the profane wisdom that 'gains death'.<sup>326</sup> Faith brings humanity near to God, whereas prying into and inquiry cut humanity away from the Life-Giver.<sup>327</sup> Truth can also be learned through practising faith and it does not need 'investigation' (ܠܚܚܩܐ).<sup>328</sup> Prying into God is like a blind person prying into light.<sup>329</sup>

The consequence of investigation is immensely dangerous. Referring to the Old Testament, Ephrem demonstrates the incapability of human beings to investigate God. One of the examples he uses is the uplifted serpent of Moses' time (cf. Num

<sup>325</sup> *Fid 33.7*:

ܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 . Cf. *Fid 50.7*: ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

<sup>326</sup> *Fid 67.14*: ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

<sup>327</sup> *Fide 72.2*: ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

<sup>328</sup> *Fid 67.17*: ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

<sup>329</sup> *Fid 65.10-13*.



21:4-9). Investigation of the serpent did not heal the people, only the faithful gazing upon it as a type for Christ.<sup>330</sup> Such inquiry dishonours the Son of God, as did the stretching out of Uzzah's hands. Uzzah was cast down, because he did not obey the command of the Lord when his hands reached out and he held the Ark of the Lord (cf. 2 Sam 6:1-8).<sup>331</sup>

As a warning against prying into the divine Nature, Ephrem is fond of introducing Old Testament examples involving leprosy as a punishment for impiety. In Fid 28.9, Ephrem uses the illustration of the punishment of Miriam (Num 12:1-10) as an admonition to the Arians. Because Miriam criticised Moses for his Cushite wife and reproved him who was humble, her skin became diseased with leprosy: 'behold, leprosy, which reproved the talkers, reproves the impudence of inquirers; but Miriam, who spoke against the humble one, wove with her lips a robe of leprosy for herself'.<sup>332</sup>

Other examples used by Ephrem are Gehazi who lied to Elisha (2 Kgs 5:20-27)<sup>333</sup> and King Uzziah who entered the sanctuary in order to burn incense to the Lord as a priest. They were struck with leprosy for they scorned the Lord (2 Chr 26:16-

<sup>330</sup> Fid 9.11: **ሕመሩ ስለዚህ ሕመሩ ሕዝቡ ለሰላም ሲሆን**.

<sup>331</sup> Fid 8.10-11. Instead of dishonour, we should show honour to the Ark. As the Ark was honoured (1 Sam 5:1-5), we should honour the Gospel which heals our wounds. Fid 8.12:

**ሕመሩ ስለዚህ ሕመሩ ሕዝቡ ለሰላም ሲሆን**  
**ሕመሩ ስለዚህ ሕመሩ ሕዝቡ ለሰላም ሲሆን**  
**ሕመሩ ስለዚህ ሕመሩ ሕዝቡ ለሰላም ሲሆን**

<sup>332</sup> Fid 28.9: **ሕመሩ ስለዚህ ሕመሩ ሕዝቡ ለሰላም ሲሆን**  
**ሕመሩ ስለዚህ ሕመሩ ሕዝቡ ለሰላም ሲሆን**  
**ሕመሩ ስለዚህ ሕመሩ ሕዝቡ ለሰላም ሲሆን** (Num 12:1-10). Since Miriam, as a prophetess, was afflicted with leprosy because of her words, Ephrem says: 'who will be blameless if he inquires into the Only-Begotten of Him Who exacts revenge from talkers?' (Fid 28.10: **ሕመሩ ስለዚህ ሕመሩ ሕዝቡ ለሰላም ሲሆን**). In this context, Ephrem says: 'the inquiry of the insolent is like stubble before it [the fire], and disputation and strife are swallowed up [in it] like chaff and briars' (Fid 28.11: **ሕመሩ ስለዚህ ሕመሩ ሕዝቡ ለሰላም ሲሆን**).

<sup>333</sup> Fid 28.12.







**පැවැත්මේ අර්ථය.**

Disputers, is it not enough for you  
that you have disturbed the clear springs?  
Our sin has disturbed Nature  
and our disputation has upset Scripture.  
The innocent flock that came to drink has been  
disturbed  
because we have watered it [with our] confused voices.  
It came to Nature, but we have corrupted it;  
it came to Scripture, but we have disturbed it.  
My Lord, clear up the streams  
which the disputers who are disturbers have disturbed.  
35.9

[illegible]

Ezekiel depicted beforehand  
this disputation [which] troubles everyone,  
this strife [which] disturbs everyone,  
when he rebuked the shepherds:  
»My sheep graze [on] pasture which your feet have  
trampled  
and they also drink water your feet have disturbed« (Ez  
34:19).

Behold, the voices, behold, the actions  
with which the haughty have disturbed creation!  
Let us give thanks that, before the disputers,  
the fountains were clear for the Apostles!  
My Lord, clear up the watercourse  
which the shepherds have disturbed in the face of your  
flock.

*Fid 35.8-9*







45.1

[illegible]

The eye and the mind teach one another because [even] a little thing, if it falls into your eye, upsets and disturbs it, and likewise your mind. Let Scripture and light make you wise: light is fitting for the eye and truth for the mind. Choose light for your eye and the Scriptures for your mind.

45.2

חסד מלך חסד לחסד וחסד  
 חסד מלך חסד לחסד וחסד  
 חסד מלך חסד לחסד וחסד  
 חסד מלך חסד לחסד וחסד  
 חסד מלך חסד לחסד וחסד  
 חסד מלך חסד לחסד וחסד

How the eye hates something that falls in it!  
But an evil thought exists in our mind.

Ը. Կրտսեր եղբայրներ, Կրտսեր քույրեր, Կրտսեր  
 քույրեր, Կրտսեր եղբայրներ, Կրտսեր քույրեր, Կրտսեր

[illegible]











(ܡܚܝܐ) of Paradise are understood as the ‘life breath’ (ܡܚܝܐ) of this world, so that man was not just kept alive in the hope of full recovery, but also the wind soothed his pains and kept him safe from the real curse and consequence of his prodigal action.

Based on Scripture (Gen 2:10), the metaphor of the river, which issues from Paradise and divides into the four rivers of the world, also explains the remedies of Paradise. The function of the river is to ‘restore the fountains of it [the world] that have become polluted by curses’ (ܡܠܟܐ ܠܚܒܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ). Ephrem compares this way of the restoration of the world’s fountains to the sickly water that had been made wholesome by salt, mentioned in 2 Kgs 2:21.<sup>350</sup> Likewise, Ephrem compares the river of Paradise to the oil that is used in the sacraments of the church. While the function of Eden’s river is the penetration of Paradise water into the sphere of earth, such as into the gardens and trees of the world, the oil illuminates the church and human bodies, by consecrating the churches and the altars, and anointing those baptised with oil.<sup>351</sup>

Finally, in Parad 11.12, the breath of Paradise mingled with ‘our soul’ (ܢܦܫܐ) so that ‘our inhalation might be restored by this restored/sound breath from Paradise.’<sup>352</sup> Here the act of healing is

ܡܠܟܐ ܠܚܒܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܠܚܒܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܠܚܒܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܠܚܒܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ

<sup>350</sup> Parad 11.11:

ܡܠܟܐ ܠܚܒܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܠܚܒܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܠܚܒܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܠܚܒܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ

<sup>351</sup> Virg 4.14:

ܡܠܟܐ ܠܚܒܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܠܚܒܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܠܚܒܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܠܚܒܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ

<sup>352</sup> Parad 11.12:



related to humanity, so that among all creation, human beings in particular might benefit from Paradise. All these metaphors, fragrance, breath, fountain and water, represent the remedies of the Medicine of Life, Who, as the Physician par excellence, is supposed to come and heal Adam's wound and the whole of creation.

### 5.2.2 The **אֱלֹהִים** of the Medicine of Life and His Presence in the Old Covenant

Although the righteous of the Old Covenant did not see the Son of God personally, they did participate in Him through their hope and through the symbols for He was invisibly present in their days. In the exegetical chapter we saw that the Medicine of Life was hidden in the seed of the descendants of Abraham. Particularly, in the context of Tamar (Gen 38), it is said that she stole the Medicine of Life that was hidden in Judah.<sup>353</sup> Likewise, Ruth (Ruth 3) saw the hidden Medicine of Life in Boaz.<sup>354</sup> They risked their life, to benefit from the invisible Medicine of Life.

This hope of the messianic salvation is shared by some other Old Testament figures. Rahab (Jos 2; 6), for instance, risked her life too, to save her family in the hope of the final salvation through the Medicine of Life.<sup>355</sup> Sarah could see the birth of the Son of God in the birth of her own son, namely Isaak (Gen 22).<sup>356</sup> Furthermore, all the righteous people in the Old Testament perceived and desired to see the Medicine of Life and taste His sweetness.<sup>357</sup> The Lord was perceived by the prophets so that they could see His function as the Medicine of Life and Healer. Malachi

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
 नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
 नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
 नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

<sup>353</sup> Eccl 11.10: כֹּחַ נָתַן לְעוֹלָם וְכֶסֶף מִן הַמָּוֶה א.

<sup>354</sup> Nat 1.13: **ጸሐፊው ይህ ምን ስላለው ይባላል ለሁሉም ሰዎች**

<sup>355</sup> Nat 1.33; 9.7; Virg 18.7; cf. Fid 87.3.

<sup>356</sup> Nat 20.1-4; Eccl 11.3. In Eccl 51.5, Joseph is described as the symbol of the Son of God like Isaak.

<sup>357</sup> Nat 1.52: 𐤊𐤍𐤁 𐤌𐤍, 𐤍𐤁𐤁𐤊𐤏 𐤏𐤁𐤁 𐤍𐤁 𐤁𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏 𐤏𐤏𐤊𐤏𐤏 𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏  
𐤍𐤁𐤁𐤏𐤏 𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏 𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏 [𐤁𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏] 𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏.







In the context of healing the most developed symbol is the fixed serpent (Num 20:4-9). In contrast to the Serpent in Paradise that deceived Adam and Eve and symbolizes Evil, the fixed serpent symbolizes the Son of Man. Ephrem quotes from John's Gospel: 'Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, the Son of Man will be lifted up' (Jn 3:14). Both the Son of Man and the fixed serpent performed healing to those who believed: 'Just as those, who looked with bodily eyes at the sign which Moses fastened on the cross, lived bodily, so too, those who look with spiritual eyes at the body of the Messiah nailed and suspended on the cross, and believe in him, will live [spiritually]'.<sup>364</sup> As life granted by the fixed serpent was physical, so too, its healing was only physical. The healing was not as complete as that of Jesus: 'Moses saw the fixed serpent that healed the stings of basilisks, and he anticipated he would see the Healer of the first Serpent's wound'.<sup>365</sup> 'The fixed serpent is considered as the symbol of the First-Born ( **ܐܪܡܝܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ** ) and it healed the wounds of those bitten by the other serpents'.<sup>366</sup> The symbol of the Son of Man, namely the fixed serpent, could heal the present wounds of some individual people

364 CDiat 16.15:

<sup>365</sup> Nat 1.28: **ሥጋኛ ዕቅድ ሙሉ ነው የሆነ ሥጋ  
የሚለይ በእርሱ አንድ ሰው ቢሆንም፡**

[illegible]







the power of the miracles and visions God had revealed to them.<sup>370</sup> Ephrem also calls them the ‘great physicians’ (ܠܗܘܬܐ ܕܠܗܘܬܐ ܕܠܗܘܬܐ)<sup>371</sup> of the world, that is described as a ‘sick body’. The patriarchs and prophets are sent by God as the ‘famous visitors, physicians, of it [nature]’ (ܠܗܘܬܐ ܕܠܗܘܬܐ ܕܠܗܘܬܐ).<sup>372</sup> They are the just (ܠܕܝܢ) whose medicine was divine and their ministry was spiritual.

Each of the prophets or patriarchs, was sent to a particular place to heal a particular part of the sick body of the world. In Nis 34, Ephrem draws a picture of the world in the form of a body; Babel as the head, Judaea as the middle part and Egypt forms the feet. For example, while the physician Joseph was sent to Egypt, Daniel was sent to Babel and other prophets visited Judaea to heal the body of the world. Nis 34 serves as a good illustration of the function of some of the patriarchs and prophets, and of their healing ministry.<sup>373</sup>

34.1

ܕܐܡܪ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܪܐܢ ܠܝܢ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܪܐܢ  
ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܪܐܢ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܪܐܢ  
ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܪܐܢ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܪܐܢ  
ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܪܐܢ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܪܐܢ  
ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܪܐܢ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܪܐܢ

The glorious physician Abram came to Harran that was sick.

He explored it and was amazed, and turned to the land of Canaan.

He reached Egypt; he visited the whole body and went down,

<sup>370</sup> Haer 11.11:

ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܪܐܢ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܪܐܢ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܪܐܢ  
ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܪܐܢ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܪܐܢ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗܪܐܢ

<sup>371</sup> Nis 34.6; cf Nis 34.7; 34.10.

<sup>372</sup> Nis 34.9; cf. Nis 34.1.

<sup>373</sup> Before dealing individually with those biblical figures who are explicitly described as physicians, it must be said, that in Nis 34 Ephrem speaks not only about the time of the prophets, but also about early Christianity in the region of Harran, Babel, Egypt, etc.



he bound up and healed with the word of truth. Since  
Abram was not sufficient for you, who will be

sufficient for you,

Harran, who enjoyed its sickness (Gen 11:31-13:18).

Refrain:

ድምፅ ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው  
ድምፅ ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው

ድምፅ ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው

Blessed is He who never abandoned humanity

for He increased its visitors in all generations.

34.2

ድምፅ ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው  
ድምፅ ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው  
ድምፅ ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው  
ድምፅ ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው  
ድምፅ ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው

The famous physician Jacob came to Harran to gaze  
upon it.

He explored, rejected and left it so that he might not  
come

to nought in it. Twenty years (Gen 31:38) he was  
moderating it;

and when he saw that it went on madly and thought  
evil about him,

he left it and moved away. Behold, your waters are  
bitter

and your children are cut off. Harran, become sweet by  
the cross.

34.5

ድምፅ ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው  
ድምፅ ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው

ድምፅ ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው  
ድምፅ ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው

ድምፅ ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው

ድምፅ ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው

ድምፅ ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው ስላለው

Behold, sick Egypt has been restored by the Healer-of-  
All,

[but] the gangrene of idolatry crawled in Harran.

And even if it is restored, there is no reliance in its  
restoration



for its wound breaks open from any cause.  
O Babel, as well as, Harran and Egypt, all three,  
be baptised and put on the Three Names!

34.6

כח דנח דגם חלמא לילמא זכא דבבא נבזי  
זעמא חבא משיחא דזכא דמסמא  
חלמא דנח דלמא משיחא דנח  
למא דמא דזכא דמשיחא דזכא דמא  
למא דמא דמשיחא דמא דמא  
דמא דמשיחא דמא דמא

How the world is similar to a great statue the tyrant  
saw (Dan 2:31): Babel is its head, the land of Judaea its  
middle part,

Egypt is constituted in the type of the feet.

It is a great body on which great physicians laboured.

The Good One extended the visitation through His  
servants,

as a Great Physician, to all sides of the world.

34.7

דמא דמשיחא דמא דמא דמא דמא  
דמא דמשיחא דמא דמא דמא דמא  
דמא דמשיחא דמא דמא דמא דמא  
דמא דמשיחא דמא דמא דמא דמא  
דמא דמשיחא דמא דמא דמא דמא

As the physician Abraham healed from the head and  
went

down, also Moses healed it from its feet. Behold,  
the sick one whose physicians are surrounding him  
from all sides,

[but] instead of restoration, it enjoyed the fall.

Blessed is He Who never abandoned humanity

for He increased in all generations help for it.

34.8

דמא דמשיחא דמא דמא דמא דמא  
דמא דמשיחא דמא דמא דמא דמא  
דמא דמשיחא דמא דמא דמא דמא  
דמא דמשיחא דמא דמא דמא דמא  
דמא דמשיחא דמא דמא דמא דמא



And as a sick heel, Joseph healed the land of Egypt.  
 the prophets healed Zion as the heart,  
 Daniel, as well, moderated Babel as the head  
 which went mad in the desert and was restored and  
 gave thanks.  
 The pains of the physician Egypt, famous in its  
 medicines,  
 became grievous by its own free will.  
 34.9

ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā  
 ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā  
 ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā  
 ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā  
 ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā  
 ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā

All nature became sick as a body with the sickness  
 of error. Its visitors, the famous physicians, pressed  
 hard,  
 so that it might be healed from the invisible sickness of  
 the soul,  
 and rise up to give thanks to the Physician Who had  
 mercy on it.  
 Glory be to Him Who guided the just in all sites of the  
 world,  
 so that He might visit the sick world.  
 34.10

ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā  
 ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā  
 ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā  
 ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā  
 ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā  
 ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā ḥiḥāḥā

The physicians were not sufficient for the world  
 with their medicines.  
 The Physician Who is sufficient for everything saw it  
 and had mercy.



He cut off<sup>374</sup> from His body and put it on its [world's]  
 pain.  
 And He healed our suffering with His body and blood.  
 He restored our wound. Glory be to the Medicine of  
 Life  
 for He was sufficient and healed the pain of souls.  
 with His teaching.

*Nis 34.1-10*

### 5.2.3.1 *The Physician Abraham*

Only in Nis 34 does Ephrem speaks of Abram, or Abraham, as a physician, giving him this title, in stanzas, Nis 34.1 and 34.7. In the former, Ephrem describes Abraham as the ‘glorious physician’ (ܐܒܪܗܡ ܕܥܠܡܐ) (ܐܒܪܗܡ ܕܥܠܡܐ). In contrast to the other physicians, Abraham is considered to be a physician of the whole world for he lived in Harran, Judaea and Egypt. This is clearly said in both stanzas: while in Nis 34.1 attention is drawn to the regions where Abraham has been, resulting in visiting the whole body (ܐܒܪܗܡ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ); in Nis 34.7 Ephrem says that Abraham ‘healed from the head and went down’ which implies Egypt (Gen 12:10) as the feet of the sick body. His healing activity is illustrated by three medical verbs: ‘he visited’ (ܐܒܪܗܡ), ‘bound up’ (ܥܒܕ) and ‘healed’ (ܐܪܡ). The verb ܐܪܡ, ‘to touch, explore’, might also be considered medical - it is also used in the context of Jacob.<sup>375</sup> Abraham performed his healing with the ‘word of truth’ (ܐܒܪܗܡ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ) that indicates God’s instruction. Without God’s help, none of the prophets or patriarchs would have served as spiritual physicians for the soul. Being chosen by God, it is Abraham’s duty to proclaim the truth in the world of error so that error might not grow stronger, so that those who have been led astray might believe and be restored.

<sup>374</sup> There is a contrast to what is said in Dom 11 where Ephrem says that the Lord did not need to cut off from His body to heal humanity.

<sup>375</sup> Nis 34.1; 34.7; cf. Nis 34.2.



### 5.2.3.2 *The Physician Jacob*

The patriarch Jacob is described as the physician of Harran for he spent twenty years with Laban in Harran (cf. Gen 27:43-31:38). No medical terms are used to describe his healing activity, apart from the verbs ܡܠܬ, 'he explored it [Harran]', that is also used in the context of Abraham; and ܚܠܐ, 'to moderate', that is used in the context of Daniel.<sup>376</sup> Both Abraham and Jacob left Harran for they could not heal it, in contrast to Abraham, Jacob is only described as a physician of one region, namely Harran. While in the context of Abraham, Ephrem says that Harran enjoyed its sickness, in the context of Jacob, he says: Harran went mad. Thus, the 'famous physician Jacob' (ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܚܕܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ) went to Harran to look after it and moderate it, but his labour was in vain.<sup>377</sup> He served as a physician of the Lord in his time, but what he restored was partial and only relevant to his time.

### 5.2.3.3 *The Physician Joseph*

Joseph is the physician of Egypt which was famous for its medicines, but spiritually sick. Egypt is described as the 'sick heel' (ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ) or 'feet' (ܕܠܬܐ) of the body. While at the beginning of Nis 34.8, Ephrem uses the verb ܫܠܡ, 'to heal', and explicitly says that Joseph healed Egypt, at the end of the same stanza he emphasises that Egypt's pains were increased by its free will which implies that Egypt was not healed at all. Ephrem does not contradict himself here: in the former he describes Joseph's activity and service, whereas in the latter, Ephrem refers to the reaction of Egypt. Egypt might have been healed for a while, but its restoration did not last for long. Furthermore, Ephrem draws a contrast: Egypt was famous for its medical skills, as it is called the 'physician Egypt famous for its medicines' (ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ), but it could not heal itself and it did not let itself be healed by others, for example by Joseph; in turn, it increased its pains as did Harran. Although Egypt was not healed,

<sup>376</sup> Nis 34.8. Jacob is also mentioned in Virg 20.2 where Ephrem refers to the emigration of Jacob to Harran (cf. Gen 27:43).

<sup>377</sup> Nis 34.2.







healed them, and rescued them from corruption'.<sup>384</sup> The term **ܡܠܬܐ**, 'His word', that is sent from God, is intriguing here. It seems Ephrem - probably based on Ps 107:20 - uses it for Moses, whereas in the New Testament, influenced by the prologue of John (Jn 1:1ff.), the term 'word' (**ܠܘܠܐ**) is a well-known title for the Son of God. Obviously, Moses has a high rank among the prophets. Therefore, Moses is a type of the Son of God par excellence. He was the man chosen by God to heal the Israelites. He was chosen and his eyes were illuminated supernaturally by the grace and power of the Lord that he saw on mount Sinai.<sup>385</sup> From there he took medicines for the invisible pain of the soul in the form of the Law written on the stones<sup>386</sup>, as well as in that of fasting. Moses rejected the treasure of the Egyptians' medicine, and instead he used 'spiritual herbs' (**ܚܒܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ**) which he had received from God through his fasting on mount Sinai in order to heal the soul secretly.<sup>387</sup> In hymns 4 and 10 On Fasting, this medicine is described as 'fasting' (**ܚܕܝܬܐ**). Ephrem says:

ܠܥܣܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ  
 ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ  
 ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ  
 ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ  
 ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ  
 ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ  
 ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ  
 ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ

This is the fasting that heals, let us love his remedies  
 and enjoy his medicines. It is the fasting  
 that came down from mount Sinai to the wounded  
 camp, and healed the invisible pains of the soul

<sup>384</sup> CDiat 11.7: **ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ**  
**ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ**.

<sup>385</sup> Dom 31: **ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ**  
**ܚܕܝܬܐ ܕܥܣܬܐ**.

<sup>386</sup> For healing through the Law see the sub-section about 'Healing through the Law and the Commandments of God'.

<sup>387</sup> Iei 10.6.



and bound up the great wound of mind.  
 Fasting helped the fall of the People in the desert.  
 Let us give praise to the Grace,  
 for good fastings became like medicines for us.

*Iei 4.1*

Moses himself abstained and fasted while he was on mount Sinai. At the same time the Israelites were worshipping the golden calf.<sup>388</sup> Through his fasting, he learned the power of fasting so that, for example, he could divide the Red Sea and make a path through it.<sup>389</sup> Ephrem says: fasting acted as medicines for those who were led into error and were wounded by the calf.<sup>390</sup>

Furthermore, Moses did not only divide the Red Sea and offer fasting as medicines, but he also made sick/bitter water sweet through a piece of wood (Ex 15:25),<sup>391</sup> and his stick caused the rock to issue water for the People (Ex 17:6; Num 20:11).<sup>392</sup> Both of these aspects serve as a symbol for Jesus from whose side a fountain of the Medicine of Life issued for the pains of the

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<sup>388</sup> Iei 10.4:

ܐܠܗܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ

<sup>389</sup> Nat 14.19:

ܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ

<sup>390</sup> Iei 10.4.

<sup>391</sup> Virg 44.15: ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ

<sup>392</sup> Epiph 5.13: ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
 ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ







Thus, Moses was a physician and healer for the People (and for Egypt). He also served as a mediator of healing through the miracles and symbols that revealed the coming Messiah. He offered the Law, fasting, water, the lamb and the unleavened bread to the Israelites as remedies and medicine for their sickness. Some of them were healed, - at least for a while.

The title physician is never used for the prophet Elisha, but he occurs as the subject of the verb ‘to heal’ (شفي). Elisha is also

[illegible]







Finally, Nis 43.9-10 provides another aspect of healing in the context of Elisha putting his sick hands on the hands of King Jehoash who gained power. Ephrem is amazed that the hands of the prophet, even though they were sick and weak, became a 'fountain of restoration for the body of those who visited him'.<sup>411</sup> Ephrem goes further and says that the 'sickness [of the prophets] gave power to the kings'.<sup>412</sup>

David is mentioned in only two passages in the context of healing. The most relevant passage is I Sermon 7.109ff. - probably not genuine Ephrem - where David is presented as a physician. In this sermon about repentance, the author includes many healing aspects and refers to Jesus' healing ministry to indicate that through repentance humans can be healed.<sup>413</sup> The author also refers to some other biblical figures; Paul, Peter, Aaron and David. Among them, David is the only one who is described as a physician: he is a 'wise physician' (ܕܚܝܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ) who 'spoke, believed and

<sup>409</sup> Virg 4.8: למ ילד מן חמור חליליך חזקתו.

411 Nis 43.9: **ጽሁፍ ላይ** ለጽሁፍ፣ ጽሁፍ ላይ ያለው ምን ምን  
 ጽሁፍ፣ ጽሁፍ፣ ጽሁፍ ላይ ያለው ጽሁፍ፣ ጽሁፍ ላይ ያለው ጽሁፍ፣  
 ጽሁፍ ላይ ያለው ጽሁፍ፣ ጽሁፍ ላይ ያለው ጽሁፍ፣ ጽሁፍ ላይ ያለው ጽሁፍ፣  
 ጽሁፍ ላይ ያለው ጽሁፍ፣ ጽሁፍ ላይ ያለው ጽሁፍ፣ ጽሁፍ ላይ ያለው ጽሁፍ፣

<sup>413</sup> I Serm 7.81-82: መጽሐፍ ሥፍራ ጽሕፈት ሁሉ ላይ  
ከሌሎች; cf. I Serm 7.136.



was healed' (ܡܠܟܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܢܐ).<sup>414</sup> Unlike the other prophets and patriarchs, the object of David's healing activity is himself. He sinned and healed himself through his repentance. Later his sin is described as sickness. Although he was victorious over the lion (1 Sam 17:34-36),<sup>415</sup> David was defeated by sin and was wounded on the roof when he saw Bathsheba the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah (2 Sam 11:2-5).<sup>416</sup>

In Virg 30.2, David is mentioned in a totally different context. Hymn 30 On Virginity disproves Marcion's concept of an Alien coming into the world. Ephrem does this by referring to three harps, namely the Old and New Testament and Nature. Referring to the Old Testament, the harp of David played sound music which 'the sick ears of Saul' (ܟܝܠܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܢܐ) could not understand. Ephrem goes further saying that the harp of David illustrates the Son of David, whereas the sick spirit of Saul caused the ears of the 'tares' (ܚܝܬܐ) and 'scribes' (ܟܬܝܒܐ) to become sick.<sup>417</sup>

#### 5.2.3.7 *The Physician Jonah (Jonah 1-4)*

Ephrem refers to Jonah and the city of Nineveh in several places, notably in the hymns On Nisibis, On Faith, On Paradise, Against Julian, I Sermo 8 and in the Commentary on the Diatessaron.<sup>418</sup> A developed discussion of the theme is to be found in the hymns On Virginity and in II Serm 1.<sup>419</sup> First, the latter will be discussed, then the former. In both, Ephrem speaks of the role of Jonah as physician sent to the sick town of Nineveh to heal the sickness and

<sup>414</sup> I Serm 7.113-114: ܡܠܟܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܢܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܢܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܢܐ.

<sup>415</sup> Cf. Haer 13.11; Nis 39.14.

<sup>416</sup> I Serm 7.193-194: ܟܝܠܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܢܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܢܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܢܐ.

<sup>417</sup> Virg 30.2: ܟܝܠܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܢܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܢܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܢܐ.

<sup>418</sup> Nis 35.3; 43.22; 46.13; 55.3; Fid 20.9; 81.16; Epiph 3.19; 8.20; Parad 13.14; CJul 4.16-17; SFid 6.224; I Serm 8.135; 8.309-15; CDiat 11.1-4; 11.23-28.

<sup>419</sup> Virg 42-50; II Serm 1.







‘thieves’ (ܠܚܩܐ), the ‘infatuated’ (ܥܠܝܬܐ), ‘sinners’ (ܫܠܝܬܐ), the ‘wicked’ (ܫܬܪܐ), the ‘lawless’ (ܠܚܕܐ), etc.<sup>426</sup>

The commission and function of Jonah and his preaching to save the Ninevites from the ‘punishment’ (ܠܗܝܬܐ) of God allowed Ephrem to give him the title of ‘physician’ who was sent to Nineveh, ‘the city full of pains/illnesses’.<sup>427</sup> Altogether in the long mimro ‘On Nineveh and Jonah’ the term ‘physician’ appears eight times,<sup>428</sup> where it refers not only to Jonah, but also to the king and to all the Ninevites. The health of Nineveh has been achieved through the efforts of these three different participants: the prophet of the Lord was sent as a surgeon to the disturbed city and he preached the judgment;<sup>429</sup> the king realised the truth of the physician and announced repentance as the medicine and the way of healing for all Ninevites;<sup>430</sup> finally, health is achieved when

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<sup>426</sup> Cf. II Serm 1.165-226. In the end of this mimro where the Ninevites praise the Lord, Ephrem contrasts their former status with that after their repentance. Before their repentance, there were among the inhabitants of Nineveh ‘plunderers’ (ܫܠܝܬܐ), the ‘filthy’ (ܥܝܠܝܬܐ), the ‘grasping’ (ܠܚܩܐ), ‘drunkards’ (ܠܚܕܐ), the ‘insolent’ (ܠܚܕܐ), the ‘lustful’ (ܠܚܩܐ), ‘cursed people’ (ܠܚܩܐ), and those who commit ‘adultery’ (ܠܚܩܐ), ‘gluttons’ (ܠܚܩܐ) and ‘fornicators’ (ܠܚܩܐ) (cf. II Serm 1.1973-2000). Later, when some of the Ninevites went with Jonah to his homeland, they saw many sinful deeds among the Israelites. In their astonishment they put the question: did the ‘wickedness’ (ܠܚܩܐ) of Nineveh flee and come to the promised land? (cf. II Serm 1.1735-1914). When the Ninevites find sinful deeds among the blessed people, they were reminded of the deeds that were practised in Nineveh before the Ninevites’ repentance: ‘idol-worship’ (ܠܚܩܐ), ‘oblations’ (ܠܚܩܐ), ‘Tammuz-worship’ (ܠܚܩܐ), ‘astrology’ (ܠܚܩܐ), ‘divination’ (ܠܚܩܐ), ‘paganism’ (ܠܚܩܐ), ‘star-worship/zodiacal signs’ (ܠܚܩܐ), ‘rebelliousness’ (ܠܚܩܐ), ‘lasciviousness’ (ܠܚܩܐ), ‘sun-worship’ (ܠܚܩܐ), ‘calf-worship’ (ܠܚܩܐ), ‘hateful things’ (ܠܚܩܐ) and other forms of ‘evil’ (ܠܚܩܐ) and ‘sins’ (ܠܚܩܐ) (cf. II Serm 1.1819-42).

<sup>427</sup> II Serm 1.117-120.

<sup>428</sup> II Serm 1.117, 143, 151, 153, 164, 715, 737, 921. In II Serm 1.740 the plural form ܠܚܩܐ appears.

<sup>429</sup> Cf. II Serm 1.117-20.

<sup>430</sup> Cf. II Serm 1.918-24.



everyone becomes a physician to themselves and to each other.<sup>431</sup> They heal and were healed by each other.<sup>432</sup> Although the Ninevites had been healed through their own penitence, they accepted Jonah as their healer, who brought about the cure.<sup>433</sup>

While in II Sermon 1.111-20, the title ‘physician’ describes the function and commission of Jonah,<sup>434</sup> later it is applied to everyone who heals himself.<sup>435</sup> There is an important process of development in the text. In the beginning, Jonah is the physician who heals through his words, whereas at the end, everyone who ‘rebukes his own desires’ will be his own physician. Jonah starts the healing process and points out the sickness through proclaiming the judgment of the Lord, but all those who had realised the truth in Jonah’s words fulfilled the healing through their own deeds.<sup>436</sup>

While the healing method of an ordinary physician is soothing, Jonah uses the rigours of the sword and the ‘rod of wrath’ (עֶבֶר רוֹד הַחַיִּים).<sup>437</sup> He appears in Nineveh as a herald who ‘disturbed’ (דִּלְסַס) the city with his preaching and filled Nineveh with sadness and gloom.<sup>438</sup> Jonah is the ‘fearful physician’

<sup>431</sup> Cf. II Serm 1.117-154; 1.163-64; 1.921-24.

<sup>432</sup> Cf. II Serm 1.147-8.

<sup>433</sup> Cf. II Sermon 1.1357-58: ἡμεῖς ὁμοῦ ἐκείνους καὶ οὐκ ἴσμεν  
καὶ οὐκ; 1.1579-81: ὅτι καὶ ἰδοὺ καὶ ἔστι καὶ  
ἐκεῖ.

<sup>434</sup> II Serm 1.111-20: ‘When Jonah was sent to that city full of debts,  
Justice armed him. She (justice) commissioned him with fearful words;  
she gave to him a stern decree for the pains with sharp medicines. The  
fearful physician was sent to the town full of pains. He opened and  
displayed to them his medicines, they were frightening and powerful.’  
( ሐላግ ጳውሎስ ተቀዱሲት ጽዮን ከተማ ይህን ሁኔታ በመለየት  
እርሷም ስለሆነች አዋጃትና የደብዳቤ መልእክት ለሕዝቧ ለመስጠት  
በጣላቸው ጊዜ ለአዋጃትና የደብዳቤ መልእክት ማግኘት ጀመሩ  
በሆነችበት ጊዜ ለሕዝቧ ለመስጠት ጀመሩ )

<sup>435</sup> II Serm 1.163-64: ‘Every one rebuked his own desire and became a physician to himself’ (**mæd̃ ræor nam nra ur la mdyio nam nam**).

<sup>436</sup> II Serm 1.111-20; 1.153-64.

<sup>437</sup> Cf. II Serm 1.160.

<sup>438</sup> Cf. II Serm 1.11-14.



(ܩܠܐ ܕܫܬܠܐ) who received ‘fearful words’ (ܩܠܐ ܕܫܬܠܐ) and ‘sharp medicine’ (ܫܬܠܐ ܕܩܠܐ) from divine justice as a surgical instrument for pains (ܫܬܠܐ ܕܩܠܐ ܕܫܬܠܐ).<sup>439</sup> Therefore, the justice of the Lord armed Jonah with severity and medicine for the ‘pains’ (ܫܬܠܐ) of Nineveh and sent him to the ‘town full of pains’.<sup>440</sup> In contrast to an ordinary physician who ‘soothes and heals’ (ܫܬܠܐ ܕܩܠܐ [ܫܬܠܐ]), Ephrem describes the voice of Jonah as a ‘sword’ (ܫܬܠܐ) and his visiting, as harsh preaching and rebuking.<sup>441</sup> Thus, Jonah cut away the ‘pains of long-standing’ and healed the ‘sickness of the city’.<sup>442</sup> Ephrem used particular images of human diseases metaphorically in order to illustrate the healing of the sick Ninevites. Jonah shows a sword to the ‘sick’ (ܫܬܠܐ); ‘the people lying sick’ (ܫܬܠܐ ܕܩܠܐ) arose and hastened to repentance; ‘the sick one left his bed’ (ܫܬܠܐ ܕܩܠܐ ܫܬܠܐ).<sup>443</sup> Because the Ninevites were really sick, they were in need of a true physician.

After the king had examined Jonah, he draws attention to the consistency of the prophet’s message. Fear, praise, wealth or force could not change Jonah’s mind, for his preaching was not ordinary human skill.<sup>444</sup>

ܕܡܢ ܕܫܬܠܐ ܕܩܠܐ ܕܫܬܠܐ  
ܕܫܬܠܐ ܕܩܠܐ ܕܫܬܠܐ  
ܕܫܬܠܐ ܕܩܠܐ ܕܫܬܠܐ  
ܕܫܬܠܐ ܕܩܠܐ ܕܫܬܠܐ  
ܕܫܬܠܐ ܕܩܠܐ ܕܫܬܠܐ  
ܕܫܬܠܐ ܕܩܠܐ ܕܫܬܠܐ  
ܕܫܬܠܐ ܕܩܠܐ ܕܫܬܠܐ  
ܕܫܬܠܐ ܕܩܠܐ ܕܫܬܠܐ

<sup>439</sup> Cf. II Serm 1.113-120.

<sup>440</sup> II Serm 1.113-18.

<sup>441</sup> Cf. II Serm 1.149-156. Concerning rebuking, the same idea appears in Dom 16-17: Jesus heals Simon the Pharisee through ‘rebuking’ (ܫܬܠܐ); the Lord ‘rebukes’ (ܫܬܠܐ) Simon in order to help him.

<sup>442</sup> II Serm 1.149-50; 1.924.

<sup>443</sup> II Serm 1.144-162.

<sup>444</sup> Cf. II Serm 1.657-704.



- 715 A physician, who is entirely truthful,  
speaks the truth to the sick.  
717 He proclaims a stern decree to the sick one  
in his house, as he enters.  
719 He prescribes in his room  
bitter cauterization with fire.  
721 He does not fear the one who is weak,  
prescribing for him the extraction of a molar  
tooth.<sup>445</sup>

In this context, where the king of Nineveh gives evidence for the truth of Jonah's prophecy, he also compares Jonah's behaviour as a physician to that of other ordinary physicians and considers his rank higher than the other physicians.<sup>446</sup> It is interesting how Ephrem points out the fearlessness and truth of the good physician. The excellent physician always tells the 'truth' (ܠܗܝܬܐ) to the sick. Since he is a true and good physician, he does not fear proclaiming their present sicknesses, even if they are dangerous.<sup>447</sup> Jonah, described as 'this Hebrew', fulfils the conditions of being a good physician who risks his life for the truth. Jonah cannot be subdued with wages, wealth or any other profit. He acts because of God's judgment, the cause of which is the sin and iniquity of man.<sup>448</sup>

Sin caused the sickness of Nineveh, as sinful deeds cause punishment. The king of Nineveh realised this, and he became ‘the physician who healed his city and knew the medicine that it needed’. He recognised that the punishment was proclaimed because of the ‘folly’ (כחלשות) of man.<sup>449</sup> When he cut out the source of evil deeds, he also put an end to the punishment and to the sickness, healing it with a declaration of fasting: ‘he is the

<sup>445</sup> II Serm 1.715-22. See further II Serm 1.723-735.

<sup>446</sup> II Serm 1.737-40: ‘Although a physician is fearless, he is subordinate because of [his] wage. This Hebrew is more exalted than the rank of physicians’ (**חַדְשׁוֹת הָרִפְיָא נֶלְכָּה לְמַעַן שְׂכָרוֹ וְזֶה הָעִבְרִי מְרֻבָּה עַל רֵירוֹת הָרִפְיָא**).  
**נֶחְסְמוֹתָ לְיִי מִן הַמַּלְאָכִים כִּי חֲבוֹבִי אֲנִי**).

<sup>447</sup> II Serm 1.715-18; 1.737-40.

<sup>448</sup> Cf. II Serm 1.715-48; 1.917-18.

[illegible]







their dead' (ܐܡܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܝܢܝܐ), Jonah just proclaimed the overthrowing of the city, causing its inhabitants to fear. As a result, Ephrem emphasises that the pagan Ninevites repent, whereas the circumcised Hebrews, as blind people, did not believe in the Lord of the prophet.<sup>454</sup> But, according to Ephrem, both Jonah and the Ninevites fulfilled their repentance: the prophet in the whale at sea; and the Ninevites on the dry land, in the city of Nineveh. Both of them 'offered' (ܡܢܝܢ) 'repentance' (ܬܝܬܝܬܝܬܐ) to the Lord, and they were 'saved' (ܡܢ ܡܪܬܝܬܐ). Jonah's repentance was performed first and he was revived, he understood through the grace of the Lord that through repentance penitents would be 'revived' (ܡܢ ܡܪܬܝܬܐ). Thus, Jonah himself was an example for Nineveh.<sup>455</sup> The Ninevites found the 'key of repentance' through Jonah, so that they received good hope from the 'treasury of God'.<sup>456</sup> Their sustained repentance had an extraordinary power and brought about peace and reconciliation. The sea grew still because of prayer, so too did the dry land as a result of repentance.<sup>457</sup>

After Jonah had proclaimed the judgment of the Lord, the Ninevites ‘strove’ with the judgment of the Lord and ‘dissolved it to show how much repentance is capable of reconciliation, and how much the penitent compels the bestowal of mercy through persistence’.<sup>458</sup> Through their repentance the Ninevites appeased the Lord so that he had mercy on them. Ephrem describes the repentance and supplication of the Ninevites as ‘real’, whereas the

454 Cf. CDiat 11.1.

[illegible]

<sup>456</sup> II Sermon 1.1345-48: [ܐܚܝܡܢ] ,ܘܠܥܠܡܬܗ ܕܥܡ ܩܪܬܝܢ  
ܠܡܠܟܗ ܕܫܡܝܐ ܕܒܪܗܡܢܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ ܕܒܪܗܡܢܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ .

<sup>457</sup> II Sermon 1.15-16: **ኢህል ናይ ስብእ ኣዲ ኣበጃ ይ  
ከላኸታ.**

[illegible]















In the *mimro*, Ephrem often uses the term ‘prayer’ (ܠܬܦܝܠ) <sup>487</sup> in the context of repentance and fasting, but he never links it explicitly to healing. In the beginning of the *sermo*, Ephrem relates the salvation of Jonah to prayer, whereas he relates the salvation of the Ninevites to ‘supplication’ (ܠܬܦܝܠܐ). <sup>488</sup> Later, Ephrem personifies Nineveh as a penitent. The Ninevites were motivating each other to pray and to repent, for no one could be saved alone. <sup>489</sup> Like the limbs of a single body they prayed for each other. <sup>490</sup> The king also motivated the Ninevites to win the invisible war and to defeat Satan with prayers. <sup>491</sup> So prayer guided the Ninevites in the process of repentance. Even the infants were saved for they learned fasting and prayer in the bosom of their mothers. <sup>492</sup> Everyone cried out with prayers and took refuge in them. <sup>493</sup>

Also significant concerning healing is hymn 49 On Virginity. In this hymn, Ephrem contrasts the behaviour of Jonah with a

<sup>485</sup> II Sermon 1.957-58: ܠܗ ܕܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ.

<sup>486</sup> II Sermon 1.1139-40: **କନ୍ଧା କନ୍ଧା ଯାହାକି କାନ୍ଦା ନୟନ**  
**କାନ୍ଦାକ.**

<sup>487</sup> Cf. II Serm 1.15-20; 1.202; 1.209; 1.212; 1.226; 1.242; 1.483; 1.802; 1.808; 1.865; 1.960; 1.974; 1.1009; 1.1231, 1.1331.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

491 II Sermon 1.801-02: **حَقِّقُوا لِحَقِّقِهِ إِحْسَانَهُ لِهَيْلِكِهِ إِحْسَانَهُ**  
**حَقِّقُوا.**

<sup>492</sup> II Sermon 1.973-74: ܠܡܕܢܐ ܕܝܚܝܕܐ ܕܡܚܬܐ ܕܠܚܐ  
ܕܡܚܠܐ.

<sup>493</sup> II Sermon 1.807-08: **ክብሩ ለመላክ ለክብሩ ለመላክ ለመላክ**;  
1.1231-32: **አመላክ ለመላክ ለመላክ ለመላክ**.







One comes across different terms here: Jonah, as well as Moses, is described as a ‘physician’ (ܪܫܝܢ) whose ‘medicine proved successful’ (ܕܠܝܬܐ ܬܚܝܬܐ). The ensuing ‘Medicine of Penitents’ (ܬܚܝܬܐ ܕܬܝܢܝܬܐ) refers to Jesus rather than to Jonah. In Virg 42.5-6, where Ephrem discusses the entire narrative of Jonah, Ephrem speaks of the healing of Nineveh by the ‘good one’ (ܬܚܝܬܐ). Neither the subject of the second sentence, nor the meaning of ܬܚܝܬܐ is clear. The subject of this sentence can be both God and Jonah. The word ܬܚܝܬܐ can be read as ܬܚܝܬܐ (good), as well as ܬܚܝܬܐ (message, news) which would refer to the single sentence of Jonah’s preaching in Nineveh (cf. Jonah 3:4).

ܬܚܝܬܐ ܕܬܝܢܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܬܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܬܚܝܬܐ ܕܬܝܢܝܬܐ ܕܬܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܬܚܝܬܐ ܕܬܝܢܝܬܐ ܕܬܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܬܚܝܬܐ ܕܬܝܢܝܬܐ ܕܬܚܝܬܐ

[5] In Nineveh that he healed, thousands without  
 limit

poured upon him all kinds of praises.

[6] By means of one message he healed them,  
 and the cloud of mouths distilled his glory.<sup>497</sup>

However, in the first part of this passage it is very clear that Jonah is the healer of Nineveh: ‘he healed it [Nineveh]’ (ܬܚܝܬܐ). Since he had healed them, the Ninevites gave him praise and glory. It is very likely that the term ܬܚܝܬܐ also means ‘news’ or ‘message’ (ܬܚܝܬܐ) so that it would make sense that Jonah healed the Ninevites by his message.<sup>498</sup>

In contrast, in hymn 45 the idea of healing is introduced once. This time it is not Jonah who has healed the Ninevites, but rather the Ninevites who have cured Jonah: ‘on the ship all the sailors

<sup>497</sup> Virg 42.5-6.

<sup>498</sup> Hymn 43 On Virginity compares Jonah with Peter. Both of them are described as ‘fishermen’ (ܬܝܢܝܬܐ), Peter willingly, Jonah against his will, who are to catch sinners for life. Ephrem does not use the word healing in this hymn; instead, he draws attention to ‘life’ (ܬܚܝܬܐ).











Instead of investigating the divine Essence, in SFid 3 Ephrem advises the Arians to study the ‘commandments’ (ܩܡܥܝܬܐ) and ‘Law’ (ܩܕܝܫܐ) of the Lord, and he also asks them to distinguish between the commandments. A commandment tells human beings ‘what to do and what to leave’.<sup>507</sup> Ephrem considers the commandment of the Lord as ‘sound/restorative’ (ܩܠܝܬܐ) and ‘true/sound/firm’ (ܩܝܡܐ).<sup>508</sup> The Law, given by God, requires faith from human beings<sup>509</sup> in order to cure their pains.

The commandments were issued when they were required. Ephrem attributes the commandments not only to God, but also to the voices of the prophets which proclaimed medicine for the weakness, sickness and feebleness of their time.<sup>510</sup> All of the commandments did not exist at the beginning, and after their time some of them are not relevant either, for some of them were only temporary and just served for the pains of their times.<sup>511</sup> Some of the commandments by means of medicines are not relevant any more, for the relevant sickness has ceased and no longer exists.<sup>512</sup> Thus, some of the pains are universal, while others exist only in certain periods of time. Therefore, the commandments of the universal pains are always valued and are able to perform healing, whereas those of the past pains are irrelevant nowadays and, instead of healing, they can do much harm. Ephrem illustrates this by referring to the ‘commandment of do-not-steal’ (ܐܠܐ ܠܫܠܥ ܕܡܢ ܚܒܪܐܝܬܐ) and the ‘commandment of circumcision’ (ܐܠܐ ܠܥܝܪܥܘܬܐ):

<sup>507</sup> SFid 3.89-90: **සුභ ආරාධනා සහ ප්‍රතිපත්තිය මගින්**

<sup>508</sup> Haer 32.2: **כיִּינָא כְּשֵׁלָא כְּמִנְהִי יֵלֵךְ**.

<sup>509</sup> Fid 70.13: ಕಡು ಅನು ಕರೂ ಅನು ಕರೂ ಅನು  
ಕರೂ ಅನು ಕರೂ.

510 SFid 3.145-148.

511 SFid 3.91-120.

<sup>512</sup> SFid 3.149-152: כהן הוֹדָה וְהַלְלוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
מִבְּתוֹכָם כֹּהֵן אֶחָד מִבְּתוֹכָם וְהַלְלוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.







the ‘wounded’ (ܠܡܬܬܝܠܥܝܢ),<sup>514</sup> or for those ‘wounded by paganism’ (ܠܡܬܬܝܠܥܝܢ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܥܝܢ).<sup>515</sup> The remedies of the commandments are not only useless for the ‘healthy in faith’ (ܠܡܬܬܝܠܥܝܢ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܥܝܢ), or for those who are ‘healthy in knowledge’ (ܠܡܬܬܝܠܥܝܢ ܠܡܬܬܝܠܥܝܢ),<sup>516</sup> but they will hurt, strike and wound the healthy. For this, both Nature and Scripture provide examples:

Today, he who is using the commandments as  
instruments  
is the partner of that killer who cuts off the healthy  
limbs.  
Jeremiah might teach you this: ‘the commandments are  
iron’ (Jer 23:29),  
they were useful for the wounded; do not harm the  
sound person with them.  
They are formed because of the pains, do not strike the  
healthy with them;  
they are worse than visible surgical operations, for they  
harm the invisible soul.  
As they were helping the sick, so too, they harm the  
healthy.  
Do not torment the sound/firm body, just because  
there are medicines.  
Also at their times, the commandments ceased in  
certain places.<sup>517</sup>  
Where health existed, bandaging and medicine were  
deadly.  
Even nature’s healing is useless among the healthy;  
if even during the time of pains medicine ceased in  
certain places,  
the fact that the People passed over along with their  
sicknesses, [so too] their medicines are useless.  
A pain ceases, [another] pains exists; a medicine ceased,  
[another] medicine exists.

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<sup>514</sup> SFid 3.195; cf. Jer 23.29.

<sup>515</sup> SFid 3.188.

<sup>516</sup> SFid 3.184-86.

<sup>517</sup> Ephrem might have a particular biblical passage or historical event in his mind where, what ever the reason, some commandments were not considered as relevant.











outside the camp for seven days (Num 12:14-15). Moses and Aaron followed the instruction of God, and so Miriam was healed. Ephrem, however, refers to the affliction of Miriam with leprosy in I Serm 2.1203-1342 and in Fid 28.10, but he mentions her healing only once, along with that of Naaman, in Haer 43.16. Here, the subject of healing is the Lord of the Law, namely God, and not just the Law.<sup>522</sup>

Finally, worth mentioning are the aspects of purification and cleansing through water/baptism and sprinkling of blood. Neither of them is directly linked with healing in the context of the Law, but since purification and cleansing are related to the forgiveness of sin, so they can be considered as spiritual healing from sin. As an example I just refer to Nat 17.16-17 and CDiat 16.13. In the former, based on the healing of Naaman who followed the commandment of the prophet Elisha to wash in the river (2 Kgs 5:1-17), Ephrem invites all lepers to be cleansed from their leprosy. Naaman serves as a type and example in that, when he was obedient to the word of the prophet and washed in the river, healing was achieved. Without any doubt, according to Ephrem, the power of healing is not in the substance of water, but in the name evoked upon them. However, through the water, or as Ephrem says, through the 'seven times' of his plunging in the water, the healing of Naaman was carried out.

Likewise, sprinkling with blood (Lev 14:1ff), not the element of blood itself, but the priestly ritual act performed in faith, had power to cleanse man from sin. Thus, in the Old Covenant, following the Law, burnt offerings and performing the sprinkling of blood, and washing in the water, had the power of cleansing and curing. For Ephrem all these served as symbols for Christ and they were replaced by Christian baptism.<sup>523</sup>

### **5.2.5 Healing through the Ark of God (1 Sam 6:1-12).**

Only in Haer 51.4, does Ephrem use the Ark of the Covenant in the context of healing. The healing and medicine of the Ark are not attributed to the People, but rather to the Philistines. The historical background is depicted in 1 Sam 6:1-12, where the Philistines were

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<sup>522</sup> On Miriam, see further chapter IV, 1.2.1.

<sup>523</sup> CDiat 16.13; Nat 17.16-17.







### 5.3 Jesus as the Medicine of Life: Healing in the Light of the Incarnation

While the healing achieved in the Old Covenant by the chosen people, or through the Law, Ark and the **ἄϊκ** of the Medicine of Life, was partial and limited to individuals or to a particular time, Jesus performed complete healing for both individuals as well as for the whole of humanity and creation. With His healing ministry, Jesus made it clear that it is not just comparable to that of the prophets, but, as the ‘Lord of the prophets’ (**ἄϊκ ἡγεμῶν**),<sup>528</sup> He is the Healer of everything, as He came down from heaven as the Medicine of Life to heal humanity from its state of sickness which no one else was able to heal. Jesus, as the ‘Medicine of Life’ (**ἄϊκ ὁ ζωῆς**)<sup>529</sup> and the ‘Physician’ (**ἰατρός**)<sup>530</sup> par excellence is the heavenly Medicine, the ‘Word’ (**ῥῆμα**) and the ‘Son of the Father’ (**ἱὸς τοῦ πατρὸς**),<sup>531</sup> Who is sent to fulfill what was deficient in human nature. With His ‘good news’ (**εὐαγγέλιον**), ‘compassion’ (**ἰκελευσμός**)<sup>532</sup> and ‘concern/caring’ (**ἰκελευστότης**),<sup>533</sup> Jesus performed healing, being ‘our Lord’ (**κύριος**),<sup>534</sup> ‘Saviour’ (**σωτήρ**)<sup>535</sup> and ‘Creator’ (**κτίστης**).<sup>536</sup> He healed humanity from its ‘state of sickness’ (**ἰκελευσμός**),<sup>537</sup> ‘wound’ (**ἡλῆος**)<sup>538</sup> and ‘sores’ (**ἡλῆες**)<sup>539</sup> that were effected by the enemy of humanity<sup>540</sup> and so

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<sup>528</sup> Dom 42.

<sup>529</sup> CDiat 10.7; Dom 3; 15; 44; 42; 44; Nat 1.52; 3.19-20; 4.24; 6.8; 13.2; 24.27; Virg 49.16; Fid 36.1; Eccl 38 Ref.; 38.4; Nis 21.18; 34.10; 74.14; Haer 44.1ff.

<sup>530</sup> CDiat 10.10; Dom 44; Nat 3.20; Nis 6.1; Eccl 12.9; 28.16.

<sup>531</sup> CDiat 11.7; Eccl 38 Ref.; 38.4.

<sup>532</sup> CDiat 13.1; Fid 8.12; Virg 26.6; 26.10; 31.13; Eccl 31.1; 38.4; Epiph 10.12.

<sup>533</sup> CDiat 16.24; Nis 46.8; Haer 21.11; 33.3.

<sup>534</sup> CDiat 16.10; Dom 21.

<sup>535</sup> CDiat 16.32; Eccl 41.4.

<sup>536</sup> CDiat 21.12.

<sup>537</sup> Fid 79.7 (on **ἰκελευσμός**, see further chapter III, 1.1).

<sup>538</sup> Nis 19.11; 34.10; Nat 22.1-3; Fid 15.1; Epiph 10.12; 46.15.

<sup>539</sup> Haer 33.1; 33.11.



through ‘sin’ (ܐܬܡܢܐ). Thus, as Jesus granted perfect ‘healing’ (ܐܬܡܝܐ)<sup>541</sup> and ‘restoration’ (ܐܬܡܠܐ)<sup>542</sup> to humanity, He also changed the ‘bitterness’ (ܐܬܡܝܐܝܐ) of the world into ‘sweetness’ (ܐܬܡܠܐ).<sup>543</sup>

The healing of individuals serves as evidence that Jesus is the Son of God Who came as the Medicine of Life to heal not only some individuals, but also the whole of humanity. It can be divided into those who were healed from physical sickness, those from demons and evil spirits, and those who were healed spiritually. All three sections are based on the Gospel. Here they are presented from a different aspect to those dealt with in the exegetical chapter. The aim here is to show the variety of Jesus’ healing, as seen through Ephrem’s eyes; they bear witness to His healing capability and to His divinity, He being One with the Father, the Creator of the World. Likewise, the healing of individuals shows the different sicknesses and man’s need of the heavenly Medicine. Ephrem attributes healing not just to Jesus’ word and hand, but also to His passion, cross, and even His garment.<sup>544</sup> Furthermore, Jesus’ healing activity has not stopped with Him, but continues through His disciples, saints and martyrs, as well as being found in the sacraments of the Church through the priesthood and in acts of piety.

### 5.3.1 The Physical and Spiritual Healing of Individuals

In the context of salvation, this section includes most of the healing miracles that Jesus performed during His ministry (the miracles of giving sight to the blind and raising the dead have been left out). The exegetical chapter of this thesis covered three different aspects of Jesus’ healing ministry. First, when Ephrem comments extensively on the woman with the haemorrhage, while he emphasises her physical healing, he goes beyond the biblical text

<sup>540</sup> Nat 4.33; 13.2; 18.27; 26.9; Virg 37.8.

<sup>541</sup> CDiat 12.24; 13.6; 16.31; Dom 13-14; Haer 38.13; 43.9; I Sermon 6 App 3.13.

<sup>542</sup> Virg 50.25.

<sup>543</sup> Dom 4; 25; 44; Nat 1.52; Virg 31.13; Fid 5.16.

<sup>544</sup> CDiat 4.13; 13.6; 13.24; Dom 49; Nat 19.15; 23.11-12; Fid 4.4; 10.6; 28.11; Nis 4.20; 27.3; Virg 34.3; Sog 1.22; Crucif 8.1.



#### 5.3.1.1 Physical Healing

<sup>545</sup> In order to avoid duplication, these three examples are not discussed again here.

[illegible][illegible]







Jesus must be the Son of God and have ‘activity/power’ (ܐܬܬܝܠܬܐܢܝܬܐ) according to His Nature, as well as according to the Law.<sup>551</sup> Obviously, perfect healing could not be achieved without spiritual healing, i.e forgiveness of sins. Furthermore, it seems Ephrem attributes the physical sickness to the fact that the paralytic sinned through ‘his body’ (ܡܝܬܬܐ). Based on the Gospel, Ephrem refers both the spiritual and physical sickness of the paralytic to his sin. Since the cause of both the spiritual and

<sup>550</sup> CDiat 5.20a: **אבסמ לל לל שפטי. אבסמ לל לל שפטי. אבסמ לל לל שפטי.**  
**אבסמ לל לל שפטי. אבסמ לל לל שפטי. אבסמ לל לל שפטי.**  
**אבסמ לל לל שפטי. אבסמ לל לל שפטי. אבסמ לל לל שפטי.** (cf. Mt 9:5-6).

<sup>551</sup> This passage is very obscure, and it is difficult to understand. It seems some of the sentences are not completed, or are corrupted. Therefore, it is particularly difficult to analyse exactly what the teaching of the Marcionites was, or how they interpreted the healing of the paralytic. Ephrem uses the healing of the paralytic to illustrate the relationship of Jesus with the God of the Law, namely the God of the Old Testament. The Marcionites (see Chapter Four, 4.1.2.1; Chapter Five, 5.3.1.2a) separated strongly between the God of the Law and Jesus. According to the Marcionites, because of this fundamental difference, Jesus would not have been able to forgive sins committed against the God of the Law. Thus, Ephrem refutes this and must have held no difference between ‘the God revealed as Father by Jesus’ (the one Marcion misrepresented as ‘Stranger’ or ‘Alien’, ܠܝܨܬܐ) and ‘the God of the Law’. Jesus has healed the paralytic from his sins, although they were committed against the God of the Law, and not just against Jesus.







<sup>560</sup> CDiat 13.6: .ṣwlyx l'ysr nšr mšl ḥmō ḥmlō  
 ml ḥmō, ḥmlō ḥmō qly l' ḥmō. In Nis 39.9-10,  
 Ephrem compares the deed of Joshua, the son of Nun, with the miracles  
 of Jesus. While the former killed people (Jos 12:24) and filled Sheol with  
 bodies, the latter emptied Sheol and filled up heaven with the raised  
 bodies. In this context Ephrem mentions the healing of the paralytic and







c) Peter's Mother-in-law (Mt 8:14-15; Mk 1:30; Lk 4:39)

Ephrem refers to the healing of Peter's mother-in-law in several passages. In Virg 25.13-14, her fever is considered as 'hidden fire that cannot be seen' (ܩܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܘܣܐ ܕܢܗܝܬ ܕܠܐ ܚܪܝܬܐ), whereas the body of Jesus, her Physician, contains the 'fire of the height that only spiritual [beings] can see' (ܩܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܘܣܐ ܕܢܗܝܬ ܕܠܐ ܚܪܝܬܐ). Jesus is the 'Physician of the height' (ܩܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܘܣܐ) Who descended to visit her.<sup>568</sup> The

[illegible]

<sup>566</sup> CDiat 6.22b: ,ന രതേഃ വാഘ്വേന തതഃപരേണ രഥേണ  
തതഃപരേണ തതഃപരേണ.

568 Virg 25.13-14:

[illegible]







Ephrem comments on the healing of the Leper in CDiat 12.21-24. All four paragraphs start with the biblical verse: 'if You are willing Lord, You can cleanse me'.<sup>572</sup> A part of this verse is also repeated in paragraph 22, and the whole verse is repeated three times in paragraph 23.

As examples for this kind of healing, Ephrem mentions Moses who carried Joseph's bones (Gen 50:23-24; Ex 4:6), Samson who ate honey from the dead body of an impure animal (Judg 14:9) and drunk water from the jawbone of a dead ass (Judg 15:15-19). Ephrem confirms his argument with the words of St Paul: 'the Law

<sup>572</sup> CDiat 12.21-24; Mt 8:2: **ሕዝብ ሕይወት ከእኛ ይጠቅማል፡፡**

<sup>573</sup> CDiat 12.21: **ചി** .നരകപുരി ന്നു ചില അളവു വെ  
ന്നു പഴയ കടം .നരകപുരി ന്നു അളവു ,നരകപുരി അളവു ന്നു  
നരകപുരി ന്നു ചി.







e) The Soldier's Ear (Mt 26:51; Mk 14:47; Lk 22:50-51; Jn 18:10, 26)

If the High One bent down and took the ear, which Simon cut off and threw away, and He fixed it lest it got lost, how much more He will search after all [the body] at the resurrection, so that nothing of its dust might stay away. Neither in the furnace did [the care of the Lord] forget a hair of the head (Dan 3.27), to indicate the care that He will show at the resurrection.<sup>579</sup>

[illegible][illegible]







Ephrem refers to the narrative of the Gadarene demoniac in the context of arguing against Marcion's teaching. The Marcionites associated the God revealed as Father by Jesus with the Alien/Stranger god (ܐܠܗܐ ܐܝܪܐܢܐ). In order to disprove the Marcionite theory that the Creator is different from the Marcion's Alien, Ephrem uses the miracle of casting out the demons and causing them to enter into the swine which drowned in the sea.

According to Ephrem, if Jesus was not the Son of the Creator, He would not be able to cast out the demons which the Creator of the universe had created. The fact that Jesus cast the demons out and made them enter the swine, indicates that Jesus had power over them in the same way as He had the right to rebuke the wind and calm the sea (Lk 8:24),<sup>583</sup> or as He had the power to heal the paralytic (Mt 9:1-10).<sup>584</sup> Ephrem's logical argument is based on the supposition that no one can have authority over something that does not belong to him. Jesus drowned the swine of the Gadarenes to show His authority and force the Gadarenes against their will to come and see His miracles.<sup>585</sup> Since the legion had no choice about where to go, except with the permission of the Lord, and since the Lord commanded him to go into the swine instead of letting him dwell in human beings, Ephrem considers the Lord as the preserver and keeper of humanity: He saved the Gadarenes from the legion.<sup>586</sup> Jesus fights against the legion who symbolizes the

583 CDiat 6.25: .ṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣṣ ṣṣ ṣṣṣṣ ṣṣ  
.ṣṣṣ ṣṣ ṣṣṣṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣṣṣ  
ṣṣṣ, ṣṣ ṣṣṣ ṣṣ .ṣṣṣṣṣ ṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣ ṣṣ ṣṣṣ  
ṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣṣ .ṣṣṣ ṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣṣṣ  
ṣṣṣṣṣ ṣṣ ṣṣṣṣ, ṣṣ ṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣṣṣ .ṣṣṣṣṣ

<sup>584</sup> CDiat 5.19-20 (see above, chapter V, 3.1.1.a).

[illegible]

<sup>586</sup> CDiat 6.26: **הַלְלֵה לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַיּוֹם וְהָאֵתָנָה**  
**וְהַלְלֵה לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַיּוֹם וְהָאֵתָנָה**  
**וְהַלְלֵה לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַיּוֹם וְהָאֵתָנָה**  
**וְהַלְלֵה לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַיּוֹם וְהָאֵתָנָה**







b) The Daughter of the Canaanite Woman (Mt 15:21-28; Mk 7:24-30)

Ephrem uses the terminology of Mk 7:24-30 in describing both the type of sickness and the healing.<sup>591</sup> He goes beyond the biblical text and draws a parallel between the impure spirit of the Canaanite woman and the impure spirit of the Canaanites at the time of Joshua, son of Nun (Num 13:32-14:38):

Here Ephrem alludes to the faith of the Canaanite woman in contrast to the faith of the priests and the Pharisees. Her faith and

[illegible]







To heal people is not just a skill. Ephrem makes clear that Jesus performs His healing miracles not as a result of medical skill, but because He is the Son of the Creator, the heavenly Physician. Those who believe, like the twelve apostles and the seventy-two, are also able to heal in a miraculous way through the name of Jesus.<sup>598</sup> The healing of individuals continues. Healing is linked with salvation. As salvation has no end, so too healing did not come to an end with the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ to heaven.

Nicodemus' spiritual healing (Jn 3:1-21), Zebedee's sons (Mt 20:20-23; Mk 10:35-40), Saul (Acts 9:1-9) and the virgin Mary, the Mother of the Lord, illustrate healing from sin and error. In different ways, each of them were sick and in need of healing. Nicodemus was unable to understand the spiritual aspect of baptism for he was blind in his mind. Zebedee's sons were poisoned by the evil of greed. Likewise Saul (Paul) was 'sick' due to his pride and so blind, for he considered himself to be the persecutor of the Lord of heaven. The case of Mary is obscure for there is no clear evidence of her spiritual state before conceiving the Son of God.

For Ephrem faith is a source of all help, healing and understanding. Nicodemus considered Jesus Christ as a Rabbi, Master and good Teacher, but he is sick in his mind and unable to understand what Jesus says. Therefore, the Lord enlightens and heals him step by step. First of all, it is difficult to believe in heavenly things, if someone does not believe in earthly things. This is a general theory which Ephrem, referring to Jn 3:12-13, mentions at the beginning of this chapter.<sup>599</sup> Ephrem illustrates the inner

598 CDiat 14.15.

[illegible]







Furthermore, Ephrem refers to Scripture to illustrate how rebirth can take place. In CDiat 16.13, Ephrem demonstrates some examples from the Old Testament: Jacob acquired the right of the first-born (Gen 25:25) without entering his mother's womb a second time; Naaman was renewed and his flesh was cleansed through the word of Elisha (2 Kgs 5:14) without being born again; likewise Miriam was cleansed from her leprosy (Num 12:9-15) without receiving a new body. Ephrem considers Nicodemus' further questioning of Jesus as a sign of his sickness. In turn, Jesus' final answer and explanation indicates again the care of the Lord and His wish to heal Nicodemus. For Nicodemus was not completely healed at first, not understanding the revelation; Jesus, Ephrem says, 'did not abandon him in his weakness, but gave him a clear argument, »unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God« (Jn 3:5). Furthermore, 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which [is born] of the spirit is spirit' (Jn 3:6).<sup>605</sup> According to Ephrem, Jesus was

[illegible]







## c) Saul (Acts 9:1-9)

The healing process of individuals has not come to an end with Jesus' death and resurrection. A good example of spiritual healing after the resurrection, is Saul's (Paul's) conversion (Act 9:1-9). Referring to Saul's vision on the way to Damascus, Ephrem emphasizes the significant role that Jesus' words play and the light of the vision. Ephrem explains the influence of Jesus' humble speech in Saul's conversion. He contrasts Saul's pride with the humility of our Lord. Ephrem also compares God's revelation to Moses with the revelation to Saul. The brilliant light was blinding Saul, because his inner eyes were blind; while the eyes of Moses radiated with the glory he saw. Another power lovingly reinforced the eyes of Moses beyond their natural power.<sup>608</sup> While the light struck Saul's weak eyes, injuring and blinding them, the voice passed through his ears and opened them, because through the speech our Lord was able to show that He was persecuted by Saul.<sup>609</sup> Ephrem does not speak of healing in this context, but he speaks of 'help' through humble speech:

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ܐܢܝܢ ܕܝܗܘ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ  
 ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ  
 ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ  
 ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ

In some other passages, Ephrem refers to the request of Zebedee's sons positively. In Virg 15.7, Ephrem illustrates the twelve disciples as a body, of which Simon Peter is the head and the sons of Zebedee are the eyes (ܡܠܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ). Here Ephrem combines Mt 20:20-23 (Lk 10:35-40) with Mt 17:1-3 (Mk 9:2-4) saying, that they have asked for the thrones for they have seen the transfiguration of the Lord on the mountain (Mt 17:1-3; Mk 9:2-4). In Virg 34.8, Ephrem praises the place for which the sons of Zebedee asked the Lord. In the following stanzas, he explains the negative aspect of their request. The throne belongs only to the Lord and no one else; neither are the angels allowed to sit on the throne of the Lord. Here Ephrem does not consider the possibility of being seated on the other thrones, namely to the left and right side of the Lord. Generally, the divine grace and mercy have granted a high rank to man (cf. Virg 34.9-12).

<sup>608</sup> Dom 31.

<sup>609</sup> Dom 32. In Virg 30.2, Ephrem refers to David and Saul and emphasises that the playing of the harp made harmonious music pleasing







d) Mary's Healing

Most of all those healed, He causes me to rejoice, for I  
conceived Him;  
most of all those magnified by Him, He has magnified  
me, for I gave birth to Him.  
I am about to enter into His living paradise  
and in the place in which Eve succumbed, I shall  
glorify Him.<sup>612</sup>

In Virg 25.8, Ephrem speaks of her ‘sick womb’ ( **ܪܥܘܒܐ ܕܥܡܐܐ**) in which the High One dwelt,<sup>613</sup> although it is compared

[illegible]

612 Nat 2.7:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
 नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
 नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥







### 5.3.2 The Spiritual Healing of Human Nature and the Whole of Creation

God is the source of healing. He sent His Son into the world to heal humanity and fulfil what was lacking in nature. The fulfilling and healing of the world is considered to be a second creation (ܡܬܬܝܬܐ ܕܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܕܡܝܢ ܕܐܬܐ).<sup>619</sup> Healing is a divine act, so that Jesus' Healing shows that He is the Son of God,<sup>620</sup> Who has been sent as the 'Healer of all' (ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ),<sup>621</sup> and as the 'Medicine of Life' (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ).<sup>622</sup> Jesus is the Physician Who heals everything by His 'medicine' (ܡܕܝܢܐ),<sup>623</sup> 'pity' (ܡܝܬܐ),<sup>624</sup> 'mercy' (ܡܝܬܐ) and 'compassion' (ܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ).<sup>625</sup>

ආර්ථිකයේ ස්ථාවරත්වය සහ වර්ධනය සඳහා  
 අපි සමස්ත ජාතික ආර්ථිකයේ ස්ථාවරත්වය සහ  
 වර්ධනය සඳහා අපි සමස්ත ජාතික ආර්ථිකයේ  
 ස්ථාවරත්වය සහ වර්ධනය සඳහා අපි සමස්ත  
 ජාතික ආර්ථිකයේ ස්ථාවරත්වය සහ වර්ධනය  
 සඳහා අපි සමස්ත ජාතික ආර්ථිකයේ ස්ථාවරත්වය  
 සහ වර්ධනය සඳහා අපි සමස්ත ජාතික ආර්ථිකයේ

<sup>618</sup> The doctrine of the immaculate conception is based on a conception of what happened at the Fall which is considerably different from that of Ephrem and Syriac tradition - and indeed Eastern Christian tradition as a whole.

619 Haer 43.9.

<sup>620</sup> CDiat 16.31: **אם תבין איך תהיה אדם חכם**  
**והיה.**

<sup>621</sup> Eccl 28.16; 31.1; Fid 12.9; 15.7; Nis 4.16; 4.20; 34.5.

<sup>622</sup> For ‘Medicine of Life’ see chapter III, 2.2.3.

<sup>623</sup> Nis 4.16; 4.20.

<sup>624</sup> Eccl 31.1: **כִּי יִשְׁכַּח אֶת הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֶת הַמַּלְאָכִים וְאֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְאֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ**  
**וְאֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְאֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ**

<sup>625</sup> Virg 26.10; CDiat 13.1: **መልክ ቢሉ ለጠላ ነጥረውኝ ሕመሩ  
ኃላጭ ኃላፊው ነጥረኝ፡**







Jesus' incarnation and becoming a man like us plays an essential role in the healing of humanity. He lived among mankind in the manner of a human being to present Himself as Medicine of Life that they could understand Him. For example, His teaching

,ጤጤ ለሚገኝ ሕዝብ ስሜት ለመጠቀም ለሚሞከሩ ሰራተኛ  
 ሰራተኛ ለሚሰሩ ሰራተኛ ለሚሰሩ ሰራተኛ ለሚሰሩ ሰራተኛ  
 ሰራተኛ ለሚሰሩ ሰራተኛ ለሚሰሩ ሰራተኛ ለሚሰሩ ሰራተኛ  
 ሰራተኛ ለሚሰሩ ሰራተኛ ለሚሰሩ ሰራተኛ ለሚሰሩ ሰራተኛ







The prophets worked all [sorts of] signs, but nowhere [is it recorded that] they filled up a deficiency in the parts of the body. Physical deficiency waited to be filled up by our Lord, so that souls would realise that every deficiency is filled up by Him.<sup>651</sup>

In Dom 11, Ephrem speaks of ‘what was lacking in [human] nature’ (ܠܚܝܒܐ ܡܢ ܬܠܡܝܬܐ). The man born blind was without eyes. The Lord created eyes for him and fulfilled what was lacking in his body. The deficiency of his body symbolises the deficiency of the whole of human nature and God’s creation, that was caused by Adam’s fall. Just as the Lord fulfilled what was lacking in the man born blind, He made known that He is the One Who fulfills the whole of nature.<sup>652</sup> Literally, the Lord’s spittle (In 9:6; Mk 7:33), as

[illegible][illegible]











world to become the ‘Fountain of Medicine of Life’ ( **ܠܚܝܬ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ** ).<sup>661</sup> Nat 3.18-19 gives some details of how the Medicine of Life affected mankind. The author refers to some essential aspects of Jesus’ ministry and mentions the defeat of man’s enemy:  
Nat 3.18

**ܠܚܝܬ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܠܚܝܬ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܠܚܝܬ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܠܚܝܬ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܠܚܝܬ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܠܚܝܬ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ**

Let us thank Him Who was beaten and Who saved us  
by His wound.

Let us thank Him Who took away the curse by His  
thorns.

Let us thank Him Who killed death by His dying.

Let us thank Him Who was silent and vindicated us  
(Mt 27:14). Let us

thank Him Who cried out in death that had devoured  
us (Mt 27:50).

Blessed is He Whose benefits have laid waste the left  
[enemies of God].

3.19

**ܠܚܝܬ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܠܚܝܬ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܠܚܝܬ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܠܚܝܬ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܠܚܝܬ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܠܚܝܬ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ**

Let us glorify Him Who watched and put to sleep our  
captor.

Let us glorify the One Who went to sleep and awoke  
our slumber.

Glory to God the Healer of humanity.

Glory to the One Who plunged/was baptised in and  
sank

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<sup>661</sup> Nat 3.15: **ܠܚܝܬ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
ܠܚܝܬ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ**



our evil into the depth and drowned our drowner. Let  
us  
glorify with all our mouths the Lord of all means [of  
salvation].

3.20

ܒܝܪܟܬܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ  
ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ  
ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ  
ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ  
ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ  
ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ

Blessed is the Physician Who descended and cut  
painlessly<sup>662</sup>  
and healed the sores with a mild medicine.  
His nativity was the medicine that takes pity on sinners.  
Blessed is the One Who dwelt in the womb, and in it  
He built  
a palace in which to live, a temple in which to be,  
a garment in which to be radiant, and armour by which  
to conquer.

The first person plural includes everyone, all human beings. While stanza 19 glorifies God as the ‘Healer of humanity’ (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ), stanza 20 blessed Jesus as the Physician Who descended and healed our sores with His medicine, and He became Medicine for sinners. The ‘curse’ (ܕܡܕܝܢܐ) ‘death’ (ܕܡܕܝܢܐ), ‘our captor’ (ܕܡܕܝܢܐ), ‘our slumber’ (ܕܡܕܝܢܐ), ‘our drowner’ (ܕܡܕܝܢܐ) as well as ‘our iniquity’ (ܕܡܕܝܢܐ) have been taken away; all of these were a part of man’s fallen state.

Hymn 19 On Faith deals with Jesus’ incarnation. The divine nature is invisible and cannot be touched by human beings. However, the Hidden One revealed Himself in the clothing of human nature. He was revealed in robe and body, and is revealed in the Eucharistic bread. Ephrem describes the clothing of divinity in human nature (and in the Eucharistic bread) as the protection of mankind coming from the true strength of divinity, and so he emphasises the weakness of human nature, in which the Logos was

<sup>662</sup> Cf. Nis 26.3-7; 27.1; 34; also see Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom, Symbols*, 89-91; 199-204.







healing Sin was dead, so too Jesus' healing power killed 'our enemy' (ܐܝܢܐ).<sup>665</sup> By His fasting, Jesus defeated Satan and destroyed the 'gluttony' (ܚܝܠܐܝܬܐ)<sup>666</sup> and 'deceit' (ܬܪܝܬܐ)<sup>667</sup> that the Evil One put into human life.

Jesus' humanity was helpful for humans, but not for the Evil One. When the Evil One saw Jesus in a 'weak body' (ܦܝܠܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ) and in 'sick nature' (ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ), he erred, was disgraced and defeated for he treated Jesus just like the first Adam.<sup>668</sup>

The visible healing of sick bodies indicates Jesus' capability of healing spiritually and forgiving sins. Ephrem links the healing of the limbs with the forgiveness of sins in order to demonstrate the divinity of the Son.<sup>669</sup> As an example, Ephrem mentions the healing of the paralytic (Mt 9:1-8). Spiritual healing can only be

<sup>665</sup> Nat 18.27:

ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

<sup>666</sup> Virg 14.11:

ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

<sup>667</sup> Fid 38.7:

ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

Cf. Fid 50.7; Haer 42.1.

<sup>668</sup> Virg 14.13:

ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

<sup>669</sup> Dom 21: ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ















It was also said that, when Adam sinned and was deprived of that glory with which he was clothed, he hid his nakedness with the leaves of the fig tree (cf. Gen 3:7). Our Lord came and endured sufferings for him, to heal the wounds of Adam, and provide a garment of glory for his nakedness.<sup>683</sup>

### 5.3.3 The Continuity of the Process of Healing in the Church

#### 5.3.3.1 *Healing through the Disciples and their Successors*

<sup>683</sup> CDiat 16.10: ստեւոյ . քա յլ ի վն իստիկոն յօժ  
մա մարտագ թծիտ լգէլոյ . դառ ձգւա . ու թծուածի խ  
քարէ տծեսոյ կարէ . տալել թն իստոյ չն թծի . դառ  
յծա մարտալ ըստ ծաւառի.

684 S.Fid 3.153-160:

ಕುಳಿ, ಕುಳಿ ಕುಳಿ, ಕುಳಿ ಕುಳಿ, ಕುಳಿ	ಕುಳಿ, ಕುಳಿ ಕುಳಿ, ಕುಳಿ ಕುಳಿ, ಕುಳಿ
--	--









Obviously, the Lord is the main Healer, and not the disciples. They perform healing through His Name, and the Name of the holy Trinity which accompanies the anointing at baptism.<sup>688</sup> Furthermore, the disciples did not only heal when they baptized and preached, but some people were also healed by just being physically close to the disciples. Ephrem demonstrates this on the basis of Acts 5:14-16 where the sick were carried out into the streets and laid there in order to be healed by Peter's shadow when he passed by: 'the shadow of Simon fell upon the sick, and they recovered'.<sup>689</sup> Thus, the disciples were able to heal in the Name of

שׁוּבָה אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִשְׁכַּח אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂינוּ  
 וְנִשְׁכַּח אֶת־כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ וְנִשְׁכַּח אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתֵינוּ  
 אֲשֶׁר־לֹא־עָשִׂינוּ וְנִשְׁכַּח אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתֵינוּ  
 אֲשֶׁר־לֹא־עָשִׂינוּ וְנִשְׁכַּח אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתֵינוּ  
 אֲשֶׁר־לֹא־עָשִׂינוּ וְנִשְׁכַּח אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתֵינוּ  
 אֲשֶׁר־לֹא־עָשִׂינוּ וְנִשְׁכַּח אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתֵינוּ  
 אֲשֶׁר־לֹא־עָשִׂינוּ וְנִשְׁכַּח אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתֵינוּ

689 Virg 4.8:

[illegible]



the Lord when they preached the good news, called on the name of the Trinity, and when people believed through them.

Furthermore, this healing capability is not just limited to the disciples, the seventy-two and those who were contemporaries of Jesus, but it is also given to their successors and everyone who truly walks in the steps of Jesus. In Fid 2.15-16, Ephrem refers to those who gained the truth and justice of the Lord, so that they are able to sing songs that can heal the listeners. The words of the one who gained the truth becomes a lyre and sings songs that can heal the minds of weak people.<sup>690</sup>

With regard to individuals, Ephrem refers to the deeds of his bishops who served in Nisibis as spiritual healers. The truth and healing of bishop Abraham was guided by the words of Ez 34, to care and protect the healthy, to visit the sick and to bind up the wounded.<sup>691</sup> Therefore, Ephrem let Nisibis give praise to the Lord for the good deeds of its bishops Jacob, Babu, Vologeses and Abraham who served as medicine for the pains of the city.<sup>692</sup> Without their spiritual deeds, the faithful of Nisibis would suffer enormously under the circumstances of their time. It seems the bishops increased the people's faith, and provided spiritual remedies, restoring them spiritually.<sup>693</sup>

<sup>690</sup> Fid 2.15-16:

ܠܥܡܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ	ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ
ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ	ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ
ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ	ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ
ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ	ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ

Truth contrasts with error; knowing truth and living according to it, is like being spiritually saved and healed from the error that the Evil One caused to exist in the world. See Fid 2.16; Dom 15; Nis 34.10; I Sermon 2.189.

<sup>691</sup> Nis 19.4:

ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ	ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ
ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ	ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ

<sup>692</sup> Nis 16.21:

ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ	ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ
ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ	ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ

<sup>693</sup> In Nis 17.12, Ephrem uses the term **ܕܝܚܝܐ** in the context of referring to two of the bishops; but here **ܕܝܚܝܐ** has the meaning of



Finally, healing might also be attributed to the priesthood. Although it is not explicitly stated that the priests are physicians or healers, their function is compared, for example, to that of Moses who is called a physician. Their ministry can be described as a ministry of spiritual healing, for they provide the eucharistic bread as the Medicine of Life for the faithful, or they purify the soul from sins in baptism.<sup>696</sup> Through the priesthood the faithful can take part in Jesus' healing ministry so that they can be healed totally.

In several passages, certain aspects of baptism are mentioned in the context of healing. In Epiph 5.6 (Ephrem's authorship is doubtful), it says explicitly that the healing capability of baptism is always present so that the priests can grant it to the needy at any time.<sup>697</sup>

<sup>694</sup> I Serm 6.447-52:

<sup>695</sup> I Serm 6 App 5.1f:

<sup>696</sup> Epiph 5.8; 11.6.

සභාගේ සේවයේ සහභාගීත්වය ලබාදීම සඳහා  
 සහභාගීත්වය ලබාදීම සඳහා









and purifies the filth of Adam's wound.<sup>704</sup> When Jesus was baptised, rays flashed out from the water, so that everyone can be clothed with light.<sup>705</sup> Therefore, everyone is invited to be baptised and take part in this saving act of restoration.<sup>706</sup> Since Mary, the mother of the Lord, was baptised, no one can be sanctified without the spiritual rebirth at baptism.<sup>707</sup> As the blind man received sight from Shiloah, so too everyone baptised puts off darkness and puts on light.<sup>708</sup> Baptism cleanses man from sin as Elijah cured Naaman from leprosy (2 Kgs 5:10).<sup>709</sup>

In addition to water, oil is another important element for the sacramental process of baptism. The significant role of oil and its symbolic character is extensively illustrated in the hymns 4, 5 and 7 On Virginity. In particular, hymn 4 deals with both the natural restorative properties of oil and spiritual healing in the sacramental anointing at baptism. Playing with the terms **ܡܫܚܐ** (oil) and **ܡܫܫܚܐ** (the Anointed One, Christ), oil is considered to be the shadow of Christ. As Jesus Christ granted remedies and served as

<sup>704</sup> Epiph 10.12:

ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ  
ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ  
ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ

<sup>705</sup> Nat 23.12:

ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ  
ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ  
ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ  
ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ  
ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ

In Nat 19.15 the sweat of Jesus is considered as the water of baptism: ܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ.

<sup>706</sup> Epiph 8.23: ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ.

<sup>707</sup> Epiph 8.23-24.

<sup>708</sup> Epiph 7.22:

ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ  
ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ  
ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܫܚܐ

<sup>709</sup> Epiph 5.6-8; 8.23; Haer 2.3; Heb 3.157; Nat 17.16f.



Medicine to heal the needy, so too oil heals those anointed with it. Oil is compared to an ocean on which all kinds of help and benefits, as in a ship, are driven to the harbour to grant healing. The disciples' words are fulfilled by actions and the use of oil.<sup>710</sup> Both oil and Christ sacrifice themselves, so that the sick may obtain help and healing.<sup>711</sup> Christ is a secret, hidden mystery, while His symbol, oil, is visible. Oil is a symbol and a shadow of the name of Christ and it portrays Him on those being anointed at baptism.<sup>712</sup> The shadow of the Name of Christ is able to heal, as the sick were restored by Peter's shadow (Acts 5:14-16),<sup>713</sup> for it is given by the Lord to His disciples as His pledge (ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ). When people are anointed at baptism, 'sin is stolen from their bodies,<sup>714</sup> and sustains them in their youth like armour, in old age

<sup>710</sup> Virg 4.4. It is already quoted, see above.

<sup>711</sup> Virg 4.5:

ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ

<sup>712</sup> Virg 4.7:

ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ

<sup>713</sup> Virg 4.8:

ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ

<sup>714</sup> Virg 4.9:







Although it is the water and oil that are the vehicles of baptism, the main agent is not the material element, but the 'invisible Name' (ܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ) evoked upon the water.<sup>720</sup> The significant role of the holy Names is found also in other texts. In CDiat 16.29, the author explicitly says that 'it is not the water of our atonement that cleanses us, but rather it is the Names pronounced over it which give us atonement.'<sup>721</sup> The effect of the holy Names is compared to the creation of the world by the word of God. Creation sprang forth, light from darkness by the divine words (Gen 1:2-3),<sup>722</sup> in the same way the holy Names invisibly perform the spiritual act of baptism. The three Names are also mentioned in Virg 7.5 where Ephrem says that baptism portrays a new image and gives birth with the three names of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,<sup>723</sup> in place of the corrupt image of the old Adam,

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ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܥܡ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ, ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ  
ܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ  
ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ  
ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ  
ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ.

<sup>719</sup> Virg 7.9.

<sup>720</sup> Epiph 6.12:

ܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ  
ܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ  
ܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ.

<sup>721</sup> CDiat 16.29: ܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ  
ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ  
ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ  
ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ.

<sup>722</sup> CDiat 16.28.

<sup>723</sup> Virg 7.5:

ܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ  
ܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ  
ܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ  
ܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ  
ܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ  
ܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܬܝܢܐ.



while sin has died in baptism.<sup>724</sup> Each of the three names of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is active in baptism.<sup>725</sup> Finally, in Virg 4.14, the Names of the holy Trinity are compared to the metaphorical four rivers flowing out of Eden into the world (Gen 2:10-14). As the rivers serve as remedies for the world, so too the Names of the holy Trinity are called the ‘trumpets of baptism’ (ἡδυνασταν ἡδῆσῃ).<sup>726</sup>

### 5.3.3.3 *The Eucharistic Bread and Wine as the Medicine of Life*

According to the biblical narrative of Genesis, at the beginning of human history, man was deceived and poisoned by the food offered by the Evil One. As a result, man fell into the state of sickness. Besides fruit, bread is a typical element of food. Through Jesus, the symbolic character of bread, representing the venom of the Evil One, particularly in the form of greed, has been reversed and changed.<sup>727</sup> At the Last Supper, Jesus offered Himself in the

<sup>724</sup> Virg 7.9:

ἡδῆσῃ [ἡδῆσῃ] ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ  
 ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ  
 ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ  
 ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ  
 ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ  
 ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ

<sup>725</sup> Fid 67.10: ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ  
 ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ

<sup>726</sup> Virg 4.14:

ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ  
 ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ  
 ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ  
 ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ  
 ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ

On remedies from Paradise, see chapter IV, 1.1.7.

<sup>727</sup> Virg 14.11; Dom 15: ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ  
 ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ  
 ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ ἡδῆσῃ







says that the holy blood of Jesus has been mixed with both unleavened and eucharistic bread: 'the one who has received It in the eucharist (ܠܡܚܠܐ) has received the medicine of life, the one who has received It with the People has received the poison of death.'<sup>731</sup>

In the Church, the 'living body' (ܠܝܒܐ ܚܝܐ) is offered to be consumed by its children.<sup>732</sup> In Virg 37.3, Ephrem refers to the natural products of wheat, olives and grapes that are used in the ܠܝܒܐ of the Church. He says: 'With three medicines you bound up our sickness. Humankind had become weak and sorrowful and was failing. You strengthened her with your blessed bread, and you consoled her with your sober wine, and you made her joyful with your holy oil'.<sup>733</sup> Obviously, the wheat, olives and grapes imply their significant role and use in the Church. The medicine and healing that once Jesus provided continues to exist in the church through the use of these elements. As Jesus healed our pain through His body and blood when He was crucified,<sup>734</sup> so too His

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ܠܡܚܠܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܠܝܒܐ ܚܝܐ  
ܠܡܚܠܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܠܝܒܐ ܚܝܐ

Azym 19.22:

ܠܡܚܠܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܠܝܒܐ ܚܝܐ  
ܠܡܚܠܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܠܝܒܐ ܚܝܐ

<sup>731</sup> Azym 19.23-24:

ܠܡܚܠܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܠܝܒܐ ܚܝܐ  
ܠܡܚܠܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܠܝܒܐ ܚܝܐ  
ܠܡܚܠܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܠܝܒܐ ܚܝܐ  
ܠܡܚܠܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܠܝܒܐ ܚܝܐ

<sup>732</sup> Azym 21:25; Virg 16.5.

<sup>733</sup> Virg 37.3:

ܠܡܚܠܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܠܝܒܐ ܚܝܐ  
ܠܡܚܠܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܠܝܒܐ ܚܝܐ  
ܠܡܚܠܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܠܝܒܐ ܚܝܐ  
ܠܡܚܠܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܠܝܒܐ ܚܝܐ  
ܠܡܚܠܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܠܝܒܐ ܚܝܐ  
ܠܡܚܠܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܠܝܒܐ ܚܝܐ  
ܠܡܚܠܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܠܝܒܐ ܚܝܐ

<sup>734</sup> Nis 43.10:



holy body and blood in the form of the eucharistic bread and wine possess the power of spiritual healing.

In Virg 31.13, Jesus is considered to be the Cluster of mercy, full of sweetness, 'which was trampled and gave the medicine of life to the people'. Ephrem blesses him 'who has drunk from the sober grape and was not despised in secret'.<sup>735</sup> The Lord 'soothes its eaters with the tastes of all remedies'.<sup>736</sup> In Nat 3.15, Jesus is the Vine-shoot (ܟܝܬܐ) of the 'cup of our salvation' (ܟܥܒܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ), the 'Cluster' (ܟܥܒܐ) of the 'source of the Medicine of Life' (ܟܥܒܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ), and the 'Ploughman' (ܟܝܬܐ) Who planted Himself as Wheat (ܟܥܒܐ) to become for us the Bread of Life.<sup>737</sup>

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ܠܐ ܡܥܡܐ ܡܠ ܕܡ ܠܠܗܐ ܟܥܒܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
 ܡܡܡܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ

<sup>735</sup> Virg 31.13:

ܟܥܒܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ

<sup>736</sup> Virg 5.11:

ܟܥܒܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ

<sup>737</sup> Nat 3.15:

ܟܥܒܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
 ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ



In Fid 12.8-9, the cup of the Medicine of Life sprung from the vine of Egypt (Ps 80:8-13). Jesus is the ‘Sprig’ (ܩܡܥܝܢ) of the vine from which sprouted the ‘Vineshoot’ (ܩܝܢܐ) that brought the ‘blessed Bunch [of grapes]’ (ܩܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ).<sup>740</sup> The cup of the Medicine of Life refers to the eucharistic cup of the holy blood of our Lord. Likewise, Jesus is the ‘Sheaf full of new Bread’ (ܩܦܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢ ܬܡܪܝܬܐ), the ‘sweet Fruit’ (ܩܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢ ܬܡܪܝܬܐ), and the ‘Physician Who healed all’ (ܩܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܢ ܬܡܪܝܬܐ).<sup>741</sup>

<sup>739</sup> Nat 19.16: am skw lm swr xstx dnd rdx rda.

עבדמא אבא דאמא נא, אבא דאמא נא  
 דאמא דאמא נא, דאמא דאמא נא  
 דאמא דאמא נא, דאמא דאמא נא  
 דאמא דאמא נא, דאמא דאמא נא.

741 Fid 12.9:

מה שיש לי לומר  
 נאמר לי מה שיש לי לומר  
 מה שיש לי לומר  
 מה שיש לי לומר



#### 5.3.3.4 Faith

[illegible][illegible]

حجۃ حرامہ صحتہ و عجزہ معلوم حکم لیتا کہ اس وقت  
فصل ہفتاد کا انتظام ہے، میں جلیل جان کے انتظام  
کا حال کہتا ہوں۔ فیذا سے ہم سے دلدار ہو۔

ዕለታዊ ስራ ማረጋገጥና ልማት  
 መብታዊ መብታዊ ስራ ማረጋገጥና  
 ልማት ስራ ማረጋገጥና ልማት  
 መብታዊ መብታዊ ስራ ማረጋገጥና  
 ልማት ስራ ማረጋገጥና ልማት



Faith is something divine and it is provided by the merciful God. Because of man's wickedness, God granted faith instead of questioning (ܠܫܬܝܠܐ), as He provided the Law instead of investigation (ܠܫܬܝܠܐ).<sup>747</sup> For Ephrem, faith is often contrasted with investigation and inquiry into the heavenly God, and doubt. Arguing against the inquiry of the Arians, Ephrem refers to the fixed serpent of Moses. As those who looked faithfully at the fixed serpent and lived (Num 21:4-9), likewise, faithfully looking on Jesus will give life and healing: 'Behold, the symbol of the First-Born! It was not inquiry into it that healed; it was the sight of it alone that healed. Look with faith on Him, the Lord of symbols, so that He can give you life'.<sup>748</sup>

<sup>746</sup> CDiat 16.5: നരിയായന ഹോ നന്തരി ന: .....

748 Fid 9.11:

[illegible]

<sup>749</sup> Fid 80.1: *ἡ δὲ ἀρχὴ τῆς πόλεως ἐστὶν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς πόλεως*







just persuasion would enlighten his faith.<sup>755</sup> Ephrem advises everyone to have faith in God Who is capable of everything, and there is no reason to doubt. In this context the role of faith is not the healing of physical sickness, but rather protecting and healing man from the sickness of inquiry and investigation.

Like oil, faith is compared to a ship on which one can travel into Scripture and the right understanding of God, as a ship can travel on the ocean.<sup>756</sup> Faith is indeed better than a ship on the sea.<sup>757</sup> Faith enables man to approach Scripture and God in the right way.<sup>758</sup> Truth can be gained through experiment and faith.

ܕܢܝܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
Fid 65.13:

ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

<sup>755</sup> Fid 65.11:

ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

<sup>756</sup> Fid 69.6: ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

<sup>757</sup> SFid 4.73:

ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

<sup>758</sup> Fid 65.12:

ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ  
ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ







One Who heals everyone'.<sup>765</sup> Her faith contrasts with the faith of Simon the Pharisee. She shows her faith on entering Simon's house by pouring oil, drying and anointing Jesus' feet.<sup>766</sup>

Faith needs to be constant, otherwise future hope is lacking. Even though a man is healed for a while, later he can become sick and suffer. In the context of the unclean spirit (Mt 12:43-45), Ephrem says: 'Of what advantage is it to you if you are healed for a moment, but do not believe? For, if you are still in doubt after you are healed, something worse than the original pain may befall you'.<sup>767</sup>

Approaching Jesus with faith, man might be healed not only physically but also spiritually. Faith also achieves, along with the perfect healing of soul and body, perfect faith in order to sustain health. Thus, Jesus rewards perfect faith, as Ephrem says about the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (Mk 8:25): ‘when a little light had arisen in his eyes, a great light arose in his mind; his faith was made perfect within and his sight was crowned without’.<sup>768</sup> Along with sight, the blind man’s faith was perfect and our Lord strengthened his weak faith ( **ܐܬܝܪܥܘܬܗ ܕܡܢ ܩܠܬܗ ܕܚܝܬܗ**).<sup>769</sup>

<sup>765</sup> CDiat 10.10: ཨ་རྒྱུད་ལའགས་ཤིང་མེད་པའི་རྒྱུད་ཀློང་།

[illegible]

<sup>767</sup> CDiat 11.5: ἡ . κῆρυξ . ἀποστολὴν καὶ εἰδικτὸν λόγον  
ἀγγελοῦ καὶ ἀποστολῶν· ὅτι ἵνα . ἀπὸρ πνεύματος δι-  
ὰ τοῦ νόμου κατανοήσῃς τὸν νόμον.

<sup>768</sup> CDiat 13.13: ጠ ዓላ ፡ጠሕይ ላኦ ጽገላ ጽጠላ ጠ ዓላ ፡ጠ  
፡ጠሕይ ላኦ ጽገላ ጽጠላ ጠ ዓላ ፡ጠ  
፡ጠሕይ ላኦ ጽገላ ጽጠላ ጠ ዓላ ፡ጠ  
፡ጠሕይ ላኦ ጽገላ ጽጠላ ጠ ዓላ ፡ጠ

<sup>769</sup> CDiat 13.13. In CDiat 14.14, Ephrem refers to Mt 14-20, when Jesus was asked about His disciples' inability to heal the possessed man







holy Trinity, which are fundamental at baptism.<sup>773</sup> Faith is also required for the holy eucharistic communion.<sup>774</sup>

Faith is not limited to God's chosen People any more, but is open to gentiles alike who might believe in God and achieve complete healing through their faith. The gentiles are represented by the Syro-Phoenician woman. Through her faith her daughter was healed: 'from afar your faith (Mt 15:28) healed your daughter in your house' (Mk 7:30).<sup>775</sup>

The woman with the haemorrhage (Mk 5:25-34) was afraid to approach Jesus, but she was encouraged to draw near to him because of her faith. The Lord recognized her will and faith and so went out to welcome her faith.<sup>776</sup>

<sup>773</sup> Fid 18.3:

ԺԻՅԱԺԻՐ ԺԱՐԺԱԼԻ ԱՅԱՆ ԿԱԼԵ ԿԱՌԻՈ ܦܩܬܐ ܕܕܝܢܐ	ԿԺԱՅԱՆԱՌ ԶԿՈ ԿԻՅՈ ԿԱՐԱԾ ԿԺԱՌԻՈՅ ԺԱԳԵ ՈՐ Բ ԿԱՏԻՆ ԿԱՆԵ
--	---

Fid 67.10: ԵՄ ԻԺՈ ԵՄ ԱՅԱԺԼԻՆ ԿԱՆԵ ՄԵՆ  
 ԿԺԱՆԱՅԱԼ ԿԺԱՅԱՆԱՌ.

Also see Hebđ 2.181: ԿԺԱՅԱՆԱՌ ԿԱՆԱ.

<sup>774</sup> Hebđ 4.105:

ԿԺԱՅԱՆԱՌ ԱԼԱՐ ՆԾՈ ՄԱՆԱՄԵԼ ԿՄ ԿՈՄՆ  
 ,ԻՉ ԿՈՄՆ ԱՅԼԻԺԻԺ ԿԼՈ  
 ԿԺԱՅԱՆԱՌ ՈԼ ԼԱՐՈ  
 .ՈՐ ԼԱՐ ԿԱՌԻՈ ԿԻՆ

<sup>775</sup> Virg 26.9: ԱՉ ԺԺԻԼ ԺԱՐ ՈՐ ԿԱՌԻՈ Բ ԺԺԱՅԱՆ  
 ԺԺԱՌ.

<sup>776</sup> Virg 34.1:

Լ ԿԻՆ ԶԱՌԺԻՆ ԺՈՐ ԺԼՆ ՄԵՆ  
 ԿԵԼ ԶԱԼԵՆ ՈՐ Բ ԺԺԻԺԻՐ  
 ՈՐ ԿԵԼՆ ,ՈՐ ԿԱԾՆ ԶԻՐ ՄԵԼՆ  
 ԿԵ ՈՐՆ ԶԱԺԻՐ ԼԱԺԺԱՐ ԿԺԱՅԱՆԱՌ  
 ԿՈՐ ՄԵԺԻ ՄԱՆԱՌ ԿԻՐ ՄԵՆ  
 ՄԱՆԱՐՆ ԺՈՐ ԺԱՄ ՄԵՆ  
 .ՄԱՆԻՐՆ ՄԱՆԱՌ ԿԱԼԵՈ















Although fasting (صوم) contrasts with eating and food, actually in their nature both of them are pure and fine. Eating and food are not defiled, if they are balanced.<sup>786</sup> While it is natural to eat, it is supernatural to fast, or as Ephrem says: 'it is according to nature to eat, [but] according to free will to fast'.<sup>787</sup> If eating and drinking are not balanced, they affect the body, as fire and flame affect wood;

See also *Abr Kid* 5.22:

See further Haer 11.14: **ഒന്നു പല രൂപം, നൂറു വർഷം നൂറു വർഷം.**

Haer 18.2:

II Serm 4.151:

IV Serm 1.479:

786 Fide 79.7:

<sup>787</sup> Iei App 4.4; ,ם רהיזכר ןמלס ,ם דעבא .



and so they disturb the mind and defile it.<sup>788</sup> Eating can be a sign of gluttony. Through eating man's fall was caused. Jesus healed the gluttony by His fasting (ἡσυχία). When Jesus was fasting, Satan confronted and tempted Jesus with bread, the symbol of gluttony, as he tempted Eve with the fruit. In this context, Ephrem says:

ἡσυχία ἡσυχία ἡσυχία  
 ἡσυχία ἡσυχία ἡσυχία  
 ἡσυχία ἡσυχία ἡσυχία  
 ἡσυχία ἡσυχία ἡσυχία  
 ---ἡσυχία---

ἡσυχία ἡσυχία ἡσυχία  
 ἡσυχία ἡσυχία ἡσυχία  
 ἡσυχία ἡσυχία ἡσυχία

The arrow he shot at you was the bread for which he asked,

symbol of the greed of Adam.

With bread he tempted the Sustainer of all,

Who by His fasting healed gluttony.

--- Satan ---

His disciples --- the Bridegroom was reclining

He Who did not want to change stones

changed water at Cana (Jn 2:1-12).

*Virg 14.11*

Since the human body is weak and human nature sick, Satan saw Jesus as a man and tried to tempt Him; but Jesus defeated the Evil One by fasting.<sup>789</sup> Jesus fasted and prayed for He was born as

<sup>788</sup> Iei App 1.9:

ἡσυχία ἡσυχία ἡσυχία  
 ἡσυχία ἡσυχία ἡσυχία  
 ἡσυχία ἡσυχία ἡσυχία

<sup>789</sup> Virg 14.13:

ἡσυχία ἡσυχία ἡσυχία  
 ἡσυχία ἡσυχία ἡσυχία  
 ἡσυχία ἡσυχία ἡσυχία  
 ἡσυχία ἡσυχία ἡσυχία



Ephrem considers fasting to be a teacher (ܡܠܝܬܐ) that teaches one how to fight, just as Jesus' fasting shows us how to fast and defeat the Evil One. In the context of healing, Ephrem does not describe how and from what to fast, but he mentions eating

790 Eccl 13.21-25:

<sup>791</sup> Dom 15: ⲁⲓⲛ ⲙⲉⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲙⲉⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲙⲉⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ

<sup>792</sup> Iei 1.1: **למנוח, שלך תחמק חמק חק חל**.

793 Iei 1.2:

מִתְּחִלָּה חֲסִידֵי מַלְכוּת נִשְׁמָרִים לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ ... כִּי הֵם מֵבִינִים לִמְדָּתוֹ לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ  
 וְהֵם מֵבִינִים לִמְדָּתוֹ לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ

In Abr Kid 4.1, fasting is described as the ‘treasury of help’:

ԵՐԵՎԱՆԻ ԿԻՆ ԿՅՈՐԴՆԵՐ  
 ԿԼԱՅԻՆ ԿԵՆՏՐՈՆԻ  
 ԿԱՐԵՎԱԿԱՆ ԿԱՐԵՎԱԿԱՆ  
 ԿԱՐԵՎԱԿԱՆ ԿԱՐԵՎԱԿԱՆ







Ephrem explicitly attributes healing terminology to fasting. He considers fasting to serve as a ‘healer’ (רפואה) that possesses a heavenly medicine (תרופה). Referring to Moses’ time, fasting descended from mount Sinai to restore the wounded camp: ‘it healed the hidden pains of the soul and bound up the great wound of the mind’. Fasting supported God’s People when they fell in the desert. Ephrem describes ‘good fastings’ (צום טוב) as ‘medicines’ (תרופה) that God provides for the faithful.<sup>802</sup> Moses rejected the Egyptian’s ordinary medicine, for he had to deal with spiritual pain that needs a spiritual medicine, namely fasting. His own fasting on mount Sinai is illustrated as a ‘fasting of atonement’ (צום כיפור), and the ‘fastings’ (צומות) of the People served as ‘medicine’ (תרופה) for those who were wounded by the golden calf.<sup>803</sup>

801 Virg 40.8:

802 Iei 4.1:

[illegible][illegible]







In Virg 7.1, repentance is compared to diligence (κδοιμια). As diligence is capable of doing business in the world to achieve wealth, so too repentance is required to achieve spiritual success to be victorious. In order to be successful in both worlds both diligence and repentance are needed.<sup>813</sup> Referring to other passages, diligence and repentance can be used only in this world, but they benefit both. In I Sermon 5, the author personifies repentance:

[illegible][illegible]

<sup>810</sup> Virg 3.10, I Sermon 7.81; 7.249; 7.355; II Sermon 1.197; cf. III Sermon 4.599; IV Sermon 3 (Epistola, p. 30).

<sup>812</sup> Eccl 34.1f. The whole hymn 34 is on repentance. For example Eccl 34.1:

ԿԱՆ ԺԱՆԻՍ ԵՎ ԴԱՆԻԵԼ ԶԵՆՈՒՄ  
 ԵՎ ԴԱՆԻԵԼ ԶԵՆՈՒՄ ԵՎ ԴԱՆԻԵԼ  
 ԶԵՆՈՒՄ ԵՎ ԴԱՆԻԵԼ ԶԵՆՈՒՄ  
 ԶԵՆՈՒՄ ԵՎ ԴԱՆԻԵԼ ԶԵՆՈՒՄ

ለግልጽ ጥራት ማረጋገጫ ስርዓት ማስፈጸም ለሚችል ሁሉም ሰራተኛችን ምስጋናችንን ያቀርባለን።























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Ժամ Ժամ Բժիշկ ԿԺԱՅԻ ԺԼ  
ԿԱՅԵ ԽՈՒՄՆ ԿԲՉԻ  
ԿԱՄԵՈ ԽՈՒՄ ԲԺՏՈ  
ԿԱԼԼՈ ՄՈ ՈՂՈՒ ԲԷՄՈ







# 6

## CONCLUSION

Summarizing, one can say that Ephrem's works portray a comprehensive theology of healing, where God is the ultimate Healer Who cares about humanity in general, and about the individual in particular. God is the only One Who is capable of healing mankind totally, spiritually, physically and mentally; and He does it as He cares and provides medicine for man. Since the creation of the world God provides the Medicine of Life, first hidden in the paradisiacal Tree of Life that was placed in the centre of Paradise. The eating of the Tree of Knowledge opened man's eyes to see the loss of his healthy state (i. e. Paradise) and almost total separation from the Medicine of Life. In order to keep man alive, in the hope of being healed and restored to good health, God acts in His mercy and invents physical death to limit man's suffering and pains in his Fallen state, the state of sickness. He also sends the fragrance of Paradise into earth's air to act as a physician on behalf of the true Medicine of Life for man's life on earth. The fragrance from the Garden of Eden minimizes pains and suffering, but it does not heal and restore, for it was not the Medicine of Life Himself. Furthermore, God sends His mediators, the patriarchs and prophets, to act as physicians, to visit and heal the sicknesses of their time with His medicine, but their healing was temporary and limited. God's commandments that particularly took shape in Moses' Law have a medical function. Likewise, God's creation, visible to man, proclaims the right way in which to benefit from divine medicine.

Since all of these metaphors and **ܡܝܕܝܢܐ** of the real Medicine of Life were not sufficient for humanity, God sends the Medicine of Life in person, His beloved Son, into the world, so that mankind may eat from this Tree of Life and be healed and totally restored. This Medicine of Life is Jesus Christ Himself. Through His birth, baptism, crucifixion and resurrection, He has healed humanity as



such, and in His ministry He granted perfect healing to particular individuals, to those who approached Him with faith and truth. Jesus has not limited His medicine to those in His time, to those who could see Him clothed in a human body, but He granted healing power to His disciples and their successors to heal in the Name of the Trinity. In addition, He makes Himself, as the Medicine of Life, present in particular in the Church's sacraments. For example, consuming Him in Holy Communion means, for the faithful, consuming the Medicine of Life.

This healing is basically spiritual, it is the restoration of man into his primordial state before the Fall; and beyond this, it is a restoration to good health that man will be aware of (unlike Adam and Eve, who were in good health, but did not know it until it was too late, having been expelled from the Garden of well-being). In other words, this is the ideal eschatological restoration into a perfect state of good health. Humanity as such is restored, because the process, as the process of salvation, has started and the way is open, and Medicine is provided. The Medicine of Life has acted against man's enemy and defeated the source of man's sickness, i.e. sin. With His Bread of Life, He has neutralized the poison and venom of the Evil One, and has defeated Satan who poisoned humanity with his deceitful advice. The Medicine of Life has healed the first wound that affected everyone. Mankind does not live anymore under the curse that was the consequence of the disobedience of the divine commandment, but everyone can live in participation of the eschatological restoration, that is the destiny of humanity.

Even though humanity is still in its fallen state, the condition of life has fundamentally changed. As mankind was condemned to death after the Fall, but did not die totally, so too God has restored humanity, but this restoration will be realized totally in the eschaton, in the second coming of Christ, and not in this world. This spiritual healing will be complete, including mental, psychological and physical healing - all visible and invisible. Restoration of man means total restoration and taking him into a state of good health. This process starts with the Medicine of Life that is provided for believers. Everyone can take part in Him, consume Him in faith and be spiritually healed. Jesus Christ healed individuals from various sicknesses, evil spirits, visible and invisible sicknesses. In most of these cases, although Jesus healed physical



sicknesses, He indicates the healing of the mind and soul as well. Thus, total spiritual healing cannot be separated from physical healing. Equally, total physical healing cannot be achieved without spiritual healing.

Jesus Christ's healing action and His healing miracles were the result of His will to heal man and the faith of those who believed in Him. The healing actions were carried out in response to the faith of individuals as they believed that He was capable of healing. Ephrem makes this relevant to his time, and implies its relevance to all times. Divine healing power was given to the Apostles and they healed. Likewise, their successors are able to heal, such as the bishops of Nisibis who provided spiritual medicine for the spiritual wound of their times. Ephrem goes further and challenges all shepherds to look after and visit the sick sheep, as he challenges the sick to have faith in God and in the Medicine of Life that is present in the Church, that can be taken by faith, accompanied by repentance, fasting and praying. In both baptism and the Eucharist, the Medicine of Life is present at any time for anyone.

Even though the Lord's medicine is free and accessible to everyone, healing can only be achieved if man approaches Him in the right way: this is faith, with repentance, fasting and prayer, including charitable work. Pious acts can serve as medicine that man is able to bring with him in order to be healed; such as in the case of the sinful woman: her oil, tears and real repentance served for her as medicine that she took with her to visit the heavenly Physician; and He healed her through the medicine that she brought with her. Although perhaps shocking for us, Ephrem makes it clear that the wrong approach to the Medicine of Life may result in the poison of death, such as was the case with Judas Iscariot; or relating to Ephrem's contemporaries, the Marcionites and Arians who are described as a sick limb in the body, because they misunderstand Scripture and the essence of the Incarnated Logos.

So far, it is clear that spiritual sickness is caused by sin that is the result of the Evil One and man's free will, and God's intention is to heal man from this sickness. Where would Ephrem place physical sickness and disease? Are the physical afflictions also caused by sin? The answer is yes and no. In Ephrem's theology, physical sickness can be an expression of spiritual sickness. If the soul is sick, the body cannot remain healthy, for they are related to



each other. As an example we need just to refer to the leprosy of King Uzziah, the prophetess Miriam and Gehazi. All three were afflicted with leprosy because their mind and soul were sick. Thus physical sickness can be the consequence of spiritual sickness. However, Ephrem also accepts the fact of pure natural sicknesses, such as the fever of Peter's mother in law which was natural. The fact that man can become physically sick is attributed to the general condition of humanity after the Fall. Humanity's fallen state is a state of sickness where individual sicknesses, pains and suffering can be experienced by individuals. Had the Fall not taken place, pain and suffering would not be a part of human life. Since the Fall is real, all kinds of sicknesses, pains and suffering, along with natural death, indicate the imperfect situation of humanity and the need for salvation (i.e. healing and restoration).

Presenting Ephrem's theology of healing like this, one might leave a wrong impression, namely, that his concept of sickness and healing is purely abstract and irrelevant for practical life. Probably if we look at the contexts where Ephrem makes use of his healing terminology, this might give us a different view. Thus, often aspects of healing theology occur in the form of prayers and giving praise to God. Likewise they appear when he comments on and explains certain biblical passages. Again, he uses healing imagery to argue against heresies and to illustrate the correct understanding of Scripture and the Divinity. In other words, he is concerned about right faith in God, how to believe and how to worship the Creator of humanity Whose healing activity is considered to be a second creation. In Christianity there has always been a tension between 'orthodoxy' and 'orthopraxy' (the two cannot be separated). Ephrem's concept of sickness and healing served as an answer to this problem in his time, and it can equally be considered as an answer to some of our questions today, such as how does God allow so much pain for mankind.

The description above of Ephrem's theology of healing has been pieced together from all his writings. There is no single work that just presents the concept of sickness and healing in its totality. Elements are to be found in all his works, commentaries, madroshe and mimre. It is a significant theme, but not the only one through which he speaks about the inter-relationship between divinity and humanity, and explains their different natures. Other themes may characterise Ephrem's theology of salvation too. When Ephrem



makes use of the imagery of sickness and healing, he rarely means it to be taken literally. For him, this image, like many others, is an approach to explain the incomprehensibility of the supreme God, His supernatural existence and His merciful acts, as He reveals Himself to man in their ways, i.e. allowing Himself to be spoken of in their language insofar as they can comprehend. All images and metaphors, as used by Ephrem, aim to delineate a way to explain the salvation of man that is initiated by the grace of the heavenly God. For example, the key term 'chasm' serves to distinguish between the state of humanity and divinity, and implies that only divinity could cross over to humanity and bring mankind salvation in the sense that man may be enabled to cross over to divinity. Or the imagery of the garment of light - put off during the Fall and put on in baptism through Christ, and to be realized at the second coming of Christ - encompasses the whole process of salvation too. And many other examples can be found. However, the healing imagery is readily accessible to readers and easy to follow, for almost everyone experiences pain and suffering in this life and values health. It is a natural metaphor taken from everyday life, understandable, and it has its place in the life of every individual.

Saying this, it is easy to assume that Ephrem's healing imagery is based on Nature.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand this is true, but at the same time Ephrem also uses Scripture, and so it is equally a biblical theology, incorporating all the divine revelations. Throughout his work, we see that Ephrem refers frequently to both Scripture and Nature, and he brings examples from both to illuminate his arguments. This can be found not only in the concept of sickness and healing, but also in the other metaphors and theological aspects.

Ephrem's healing terminology is biblical, based on both the Old and New Testaments. From the instances that have been

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<sup>1</sup> Ephrem's 'book of Nature' is something quite different from 'natural theology' that is the philosophical investigation of how far the human mind can argue to the existence of God and other transcendental truths without appeal to divine revelation or grace. Ephrem does use arguments of this kind in his prose controversial works, but obviously he preferred to contemplate the 'two books' of Nature and Scripture as full of **ܐܝܬܐ**.







excellence. As Jesus was sent into the world to heal mankind, so too the Acts of Thomas presents the mission of the Apostle, as being sent to India to heal the people there. And indeed he heals them in the Name of the Lord. This is comparable with Ephrem, as he considers all of God's mediators, both the patriarchs and prophets, and the Apostles and their successors as physicians. In the Acts of Thomas, the title Medicine of Life occurs once, but is not given the same attention as in Ephrem. As in Ephrem, the author of the Acts of Thomas highlights the aspect of spiritual healing and restoration from spiritual sickness. In common also is the teaching that spiritual medicine is free, without payment. However, the main concern of the Acts of Thomas is the mission of the Apostle, and his healing miracles, like those of Jesus, are part of his ministry. Thus, it can be said that the Acts of Thomas is biblical, but its healing theology is not as developed as that of Ephrem.

Aphrahat's Demonstrations display Aphrahat's healing theology in the context of repentance and the metaphor of 'battle' that is used to explain the seriousness of penitence and its effect. The idea of the healing power of repentance can also be found in Ephrem, but it is not at all a central point of his healing theology, or healing terminology. The metaphor of war and battle for describing the life of Christians also introduces a distinctive terminology, and one that cannot be found nearly so dominantly present in Ephrem. This is characterized by the terms gangrene, scars, wound, and repentance as medicine. The spiritual medicine is also free here, and those with authority are provided with heavenly medicine and are enabled to act as physicians. Aphrahat's Demonstrations are referring to his contemporary Christians, probably in particular to the **ܕܢܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ**, and he encourages them to be strong in their spiritual life. Aphrahat makes them aware that their enemy is invisible, it is the Evil One, and if they are not awake to fight against Satan, he will harm and hurt them greatly.

Theologically, Ephrem would agree with both the Acts of Thomas and Aphrahat's Demonstrations, as well as with the Odes of Solomon. However each of these is different. While their healing theology is limited in its range (probably it could be described as one-sided), Ephrem has a much wider spectrum of the concept of



healing which is developed so that the whole history of salvation can be covered by it.

Ephrem's texts, both the authentic and non-authentic, reveal different aspects of healing theology. It is very difficult to discern any development of the healing terminology or the healing imagery in Ephrem's writing. His various works seem to complement each other, and those which are not authentic often display similar healing imagery. It is not the main concern of this dissertation to answer questions about the authenticity of Ephrem's works, in particular, of the Commentary on the Diatessaron, but as far as the aspect of healing is concerned, there is nothing that can be said definitely not to be Ephrem's, and there is nothing obvious that would disagree with the genuine Ephrem. Although the Commentary on the Diatessaron sometimes approaches some biblical narratives in a different way and draws attention to other issues than those which occur in Ephrem's certainly genuine texts (such as the healing miracle of the sinful woman), it does not mean that it is definitely not written by Ephrem. The biblical narratives are used differently in different contexts and different genres, and the author highlights different aspects of the same narrative. Likewise concerning the other texts which are questionably genuine Ephrem, on the basis of their healing theology, it cannot be said that they differ markedly from those which are genuine Ephrem. Thus, it appears that judgments on questions of authenticity need to be based on criteria other than those of healing terminology and theology.

Does Ephrem reveal anything about the role of an ordinary physician in Syrian Christian society? Can we find any hellenistic influence in his theology, such as the incorporation of Graeco-Roman scientific medicine into his theological thought, or does he reject ordinary medicine, as Tatian, Arnobius and Marcion do? Certainly it can be said that ordinary medicine is not a part of Ephrem's concern, and he does not comment on it as such. However occasionally he mentions it, in two ways: either by comparing or contrasting spiritual medicine and the heavenly Physician with the role and function of an ordinary physician and herbal medicine. Once he also speaks about the book of medicine in which people put their trust and believe totally in what it says. The use of herbal medicine and its power is used as a metaphor to describe the importance and effect of a right understanding of



Scripture. This might possibly indicate one of Galen's medical books and how he illustrates the power of herbs and plants, and emphasises the importance of correct usage. Almost certainly Ephrem did not read Greek, and it is unlikely that hellenistic medical works were translated into Syriac by Ephrem's time, but nevertheless Ephrem was living under the rule of a western power that went back there over half a millennium before him, and the famous Galen lived two centuries before him. Even though he has not read Hippocratic medicine, surely he might have heard of it.<sup>2</sup> The question of how much hellenistic medicine was practised in Syrian Christian communities remains unsolved. However, in general, it can be said that this is not relevant for Ephrem, for he is concerned about spiritual sickness and its medicine. When Ephrem speaks about the fame of Egyptian medicine, he says that Moses rejected it and went to Sinai, for the People were afflicted with a spiritual sickness, not a physical one. So here, when Ephrem contrasts the effect of spiritual medicine with that of ordinary physicians, he limits their function and considers their medicine as useless. Likewise, in such comparisons he shows a negative attitude towards ordinary physicians, for they are unable to heal certain sicknesses, even though they are physical sicknesses, such as the haemorrhaging woman. Finally, it can be said that all in all Ephrem distinguishes radically between the role of the heavenly Physician Who is able to heal everything, both spiritual and physical, and the function of the ordinary physician who can only treat a certain number of physical diseases. Certainly an ordinary physician does not have a mediatory function in Ephrem's healing imagery, such as some scholars attribute to Ben Sira. In his theology, Ephrem is certainly concerned about both the body and soul. Ephrem defines Peter's mother-in-law's fever as a natural sickness, and the healing of the ear that was cut off was physical. Jesus healed both of these for He is the Healer of all mankind, and the destiny of man is the perfect restoration of both body and soul.

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<sup>2</sup> U. Possekkel's recent study *Evidence of Greek Philosophical Concepts in the Writings of Ephrem the Syrian* (CSCO 580; Subsidia 102; Louvain 1999) has shown that Ephrem must have had a more extensive knowledge of Greek philosophy than was previously thought.



The usage of oil in the context of healing can be found in the Bible. Oil is also used in the Church's sacraments. For Ephrem, 'oil' (ܐܝܠ) represents 'Christ' (ܡܫܝܚܐ), because it has many functions and different powers, as Christ does. Beside the sacramental use of oil and its symbolic spiritual power, Ephrem also speaks of the natural power of oil. This indicates that oil was used to treat sick people. L. Wells says: 'Anointing with (olive) oil (Mk 6:12-13) was a common therapeutic practice in the ancient world. It had several functions. If the skin was broken it served as an antiseptic by providing an effective barrier against harmful bacteria, and as an emollient, preventing bandages sticking to the wound. Also it was used extensively to treat skin disorders, and as the emollient agent for massage, particularly in the treatment of muscular complaints and bruising'.<sup>3</sup> Beside playing with the terms ܐܝܠ and ܡܫܝܚܐ Ephrem uses oil in both senses: sacramental and natural. The natural aspect is a sign of his natural theology, that Nature in general, just as Scripture, gives evidence about Divine existence.

A further minor aspect might be worth mentioning. Ephrem uses the serpent as a symbol for the Evil One, not because it is evil in its nature, but because it was misused by the Evil One to deceive humanity. In turn, in a number of cult legends the serpent is associated with healing. In particular, Asclepius, who is described as the pagan 'Saviour and Healer', appeared in the shape of a serpent and possessed extraordinary healing power. In the second and third century, Arnobius scorns and reviles Asclepius who, while he was supposed to be a god and the giver of health, 'is enclosed in the shape and compass of a serpent, crawling along the ground after the fashion of worms which spring from mud'.<sup>4</sup> It is conceivable that Ephrem's development of the theme of the bronze serpent was aimed at countering the attractions of the

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<sup>3</sup> Wells, 128. See the bibliography given there.

<sup>4</sup> Arnobius of Sicca, *Arnobii Adversus Nationes*, libri VII, 44f.; R. Arbesmann, 'The Concept of »Christus Medicus« in St. Augustine', *Traditio* 10 (1954), 1-28. For Asclepius and his representation in the form of a serpent, see E. Küster, 'Die Schlange in der griechischen Kunst und Religion', *Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten* 13.2 (Giessen 1913), 133-37.



pagan cult of Asclepius, but this must remain very hypothetical since there does not seem to be much evidence for this cult in Syria.

Finally to conclude, Ephrem's healing imagery and the healing terminology in the Odes of Solomon, Acts of Thomas and Aphrahat's Demonstrations give clear evidence about the popularity of the theology of healing in early Syrian Christendom. The fact that each of them - and very likely independently - expresses his healing imagery in a different way, shows how much this theme was widespread among Syrian Christians. Although we do not know when and where the Odes of Solomon and the Acts of Thomas were written, we know that Aphrahat wrote his Demonstrations in the first half of the fourth century in the Persian Empire, and Ephrem wrote in Nisibis and then in Edessa, during the last ten years before his death in 373 A. D. Thus, Aphrahat represents healing imagery that was probably familiar to the Syrian Christian under the Persian Empire, and Ephrem shows a concept of healing that, at least partly, might have been well known to the Syrian Christians under the Western rulers. It is particularly interesting that Ephrem should have paid so much attention to precisely the same three Gospel healing narratives that feature so commonly on fourth-century sarcophagi:<sup>5</sup> though there is obviously no direct influence either way, their common interest in these episodes indicate that a concern with the Gospel's healing miracles was very much 'in the air' in Ephrem's time.

Ephrem's much more developed theology of healing has had great influence on the Syriac writers after him. In particular, Jacob of Serugh must have studied Ephrem's texts very well, as he often reflects Ephrem's phraseology, including features of his healing imagery. Healing terminology, not very different from that of Ephrem, can also be found in the prayer books of the West Syrian Church, such as in the weekly prayer book, or breviary (ܩܠܝܠܐ).

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<sup>5</sup> P. D. E. Knipp, *'Christus medicus' in der frühchristlichen Sarkophagskulptur: ikonographische Studien der Sepulkralkunst des späten vierten Jahrhunderts* (Leiden 1998). Knipp studied these three biblical miracles: giving sight to the man born blind (Jn 9), healing the haemorrhaging woman (Lk 8:43-48), and healing the man sick for 38 years in Bethsaida (Jn 5:1-9).



It needs further research and careful study in order to define the extent of Ephrem's true impact and great influence on the Syriac liturgy and on Syriac writers in general. Such a study would reveal how Ephrem's healing imagery has been understood and how it has been developed in later Syriac tradition. It would also indicate the value given to the healing imagery among Syriac writers and in Syriac theology in general.

Further work should also be carried out to compare Ephrem's concept of healing with that of other early Christians writers, above all Greek and Latin, but also Coptic and Armenian as well, to see how their healing imagery compares with or is different from that of Ephrem. One could mention in particular here the Cappadocian Fathers, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, Jerome and Augustine, all from the fourth and beginning of the fifth century. It is to be hoped that this work opens up a way to such studies by presenting the significance of Ephrem's healing imagery and how it is characteristic of the early Syriac theology of healing in general.



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### **Printer's Note**

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