

From the Writings of St. Yacoub of Edessa (Mor Yacoub D'Urhoi)

Mor Yacob of Edessa is considered a first-class great Syriac scholar. He worked hard in arranging the ecclesiastical liturgy. He wrote several beautiful poems. To follow is a sample of his writing:

سرا اهل حاکم و امامت . حکماء و علماء حکماء . سق لعل ختم
والمعالي . ولا تطل عهنا واماميه . معزو حسبه : سلا والامله : سما حني
فهم حقل مع عقل والمحب : الال مال حاكم وحده امه وبنو حاكم ولا
لاح.

Translation

When the Father noticed that the world became corrupt, and the creation forgot her creator. At that time, the merciful showed mercy through his several mercies, thus the beauty of His creation will not perish. He sent His Only Son, the strength of His existence saying:

Go, My Son salvage this world from the peg of ambiguity and uncertainty, thus came the heir of the vintage yard to His Father's house to salvage and free the world, and he will not be destroyed.

Source: Syriac Script—The Passion Week prayers—India, I Syriac, 1931 p 15 (published in The LIGHT Volume 13—issue 17)

St. Yacoub of Edessa (Mor Yacoub D'Urihay) And the Syriac Language

It is well known that the martyr saint Mor Ahodemeh (575+) Mapheryono of the East, wrote a book about the grammar of the Syriac language. However, the one who paid attention to the principals of the Syriac grammar the most was Mor Yacoub of Edessa. Therefore, Syriac language is indebted to this great scholar specifically, in relation to its grammar, spelling and the vowels. He was the first to introduce the principals for Syriac grammar thus people will not write Syriac erroneously.

He had exerted many efforts to safe keep the beautiful Syriac dialect that was spoken in Edessa, which continues to be spoken by our Syriac Orthodox Church brethren there. This dialect was described by yet another Syriac scholar Mor Gregorios Bar Hebrew (Bar 'Ebroyo) as the main dialect of the Syriac language. Mor Yacoub of Edessa authored books serving the language:

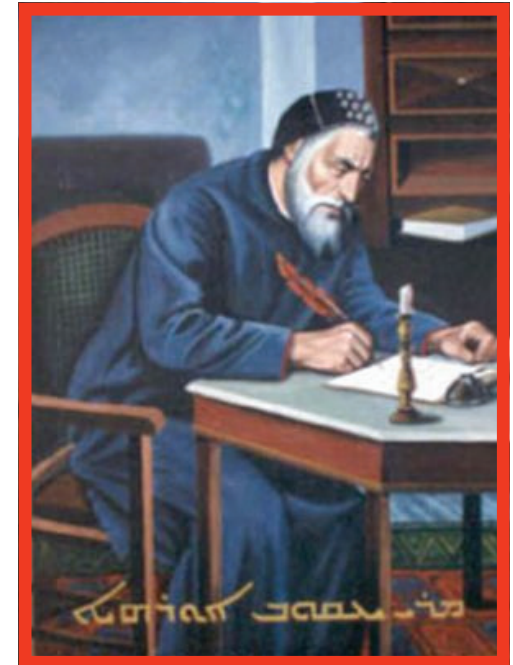
ܐܠܗܝܢ ܡܡܠܟܐ ܡܡܠܟܐ	Syriac Language Grammar
ܩܬܝܢܐ ܡܡܠܟܐ ܡܡܠܟܐ	People, races and times
ܡܡܠܟܐ ܡܡܠܟܐ ܡܡܠܟܐ	The Syriac handwriting and vowels

Mor Yacoub's aim from exerting all these efforts was merely to safe guard the Syriac language, and ensuring that people would read the Holy Bible in Syriac in the proper manner. However, and with regret, several of this great scholar's writings have been lost. Nevertheless we can notice that some of what he has written is already noted in the grammar book that was authored by Mor Gregorious Bar Hebrew (Bar 'Ebroyo). In addition, there are some writings of this great scholar that was kept in some of the libraries and the great museums.

Research by V. Rev. Fr. Boutros Touma Issa (published in The LIGHT Volume 13—issue 18) - Translation and design by Theodora, Touma, Tomayess and Theodore Issa—(Revised July 2009)

**ܣܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܦܪܝܡ ܫܚܝܬܐ ܕܢܨܪܝܬܐ ܕܩܝܡܬܐ
ܕܒܝܠܐ
ܕܩܝܡܬܐ - ܗܝܬܐ**

*St. Ephraim's Syriac Orthodox Church
Perth—Western Australia*



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**1300th Anniversary of His departure from this
earthly life to the heavenly chambers**

MOR YACoub D'URHOY'S (ST. YACoub
OF EDESSA'S) LIFE IN BRIEF
633-708+
708-2008 (1300th anniversary)

- ✚ He was born at the village of 'Endaba of the province of Antioch, approximately in the year 633. History books tell us that his father's name was Ishaq (Isaac).
- ✚ In his youth, and at the hands of Fr. Kuryakous, the pious who was at the time, the visiting cleric to the province of Antioch. He studied the principles of science, the books of the Holy Bible (the two Testaments). He also studied different books on the doctors and scholars of the holy church. He achieved the expert status in whatever he opted to study.
- ✚ He left his place of birth to the Kinishreen Monastery, where he was given the monastic habit. There also he studied Greek Literature at the hands of the great Syriac scholar Mor Severus Sabukht (667+). Simultaneously, he undertook more studies in different sciences, language, philosophy and theology. His studying companion was Athanasius of Balad, who later became Patriarch of Antioch. It is worthwhile to note here that in this monastery Mor Yacoub learned the basics of becoming a hermit, and became known of his great righteousness.
- ✚ From Qenneshreen Monastery, Mor Yacob moved to Alexandria where he studied philosophy.
- ✚ Then he went back home, became a hermit in Edessa. In addition to studying Syriac and Greek, he exerted efforts in studying Hebrew.
- ✚ His good reputation travelled fast, attracting several of those interested in science and literature. While others who were unable to reach him in person corresponded with him seeking solutions to their problems, and receiving his wise answers.
- ✚ In the year 672, he was promoted to the rank priest/monk (Ranbam).
- ✚ In the year 684 H.H. Mor Athanasious the second, ordained him bishop to the city of Edessa, to be known thereafter "Mor Yacob of Edessa". He lived in this city for four years.

- ✚ He was known to be very strict in relation to applying the church's laws and canons, especially when laws were neglected. This resulted in him facing rebellions bringing him difficulty for merely protecting laws. At which time Patriarch Yulian (Julian) and the Archbishops were urging Mor Yacoub to be tolerant and show some relaxation towards applying the laws and canons of the church. Mor Yacob was not happy with their intervention. This led him to burning the books of law. This resulted in him resigning his post and leaving the parish taking his two students; Daniel and Constantine with him to the monastery of Mor Yacoub in Keshum. At that time another bishop was ordained for Edessa named Habib.
- ✚ It was only a short time later that he was seconded to teach the Greek language at Ousebuna in Antioch. He lived there for eleven years, reviving his knowledge of the Greek language through the translation of the Holy Bible from the Greek text.
- ✚ It was only a matter of time, when some of the monks at that monastery, especially those who did not like the fact that the Greek language is being given this importance, expressed their dissatisfaction. This made Mor Yacob decide to leave this monastery heading this time to Telada Monastery. Seven of his students accompanied him on this leg of his journey in this earthly life.
- ✚ Mor Yacoub lived in Telada Monastery for around nine years. During these years he worked hard on the translation of the Old Testament of the Holy Bible.
- ✚ Towards the end of the year 707, Archbishop Habib who was at the time appointed for Edessa Archdiocese departed this earthly life. This happened at the time of Mor Yacob's sudden departure from Edessa.
- ✚ The parishioners requested the Patriarch, then, to bring back Mor Yacob to the archdioceses as they really recognised the great deeds that he had done to the parish.
- ✚ Mor Yacob returned to the archdioceses of Edessa for the second time towards the end of January 708.
- ✚ It was only four months that elapsed after this second return, and he went back to Telada Monastery to bring

his books to Edessa.

- ✚ While in Telada Monastery, he departed this earthly life. Yes, this great honourable archbishop, and great scholar departed this earthly life. He continued to give the church until the last day of his earthly life from the greatness of his mind and heart. He departed this earthly life on 5th June 708, which marks the day that we commemorate this great saint and scholar in the church's calendar. His body was laid to rest at this Telada Monastery.
- ✚ Mor Yacob is considered amongst our great forefathers, who are known of their zealotness towards the holy church, and all her laws and canons.
- ✚ It is worthwhile to note here that he was nicknamed as the work lover, and the book translator.
- ✚ He was known of his great abilities, he was a smart and hard worker, always displaying his wisdom and intellectual abilities. Yet, he was known of his sharp temper, and strong aptitude.
- ✚ Our great scholar, the thrice blessed H.H. Mor Afram I described him saying: 'In this regard he shares similar characteristics with the very wise Gregory Hazianzen. Nevertheless, his resignation provided him the opportunity to spend the ripest years of his life in the service of knowledge. Therefore, he benefited the church of God in ways he would have been unable to had he remained in his diocese.'



Photo Source: www.alepposuryoye.com