



[AP 281/AP2-06 - BAR MARYAM. Chaldean Syrian Church of the East, India. Fr. A. Kaitharan](#)

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Call Number	AP 281/AP2-06
Part Number	Part II - The Assyrian Church of the East
Title	BAR MARYAM . Chaldean Syrian Church of the East, India. Fr. A. Kaitharan
Duration	3:47
Place of Recording	
Date of Recording	
Youtube URL	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHdt8FadGXA
Video Segment(s)	

Notes

Is [BAR MARYAM](#) a catechetical song?

Here is another sample of Bar Maryam from the Chaldean Syrian Church of the East, India. This recording is unique for many reasons. First, Fr. Kaitharan sings the text exactly as it appears in Paul Bedjan’s book (1893). In the Bedjan version, the song appears in two parts: Verses 1-14 fall under the heading, Sogita d’yalda (Dialogue song for the Nativity), and the rest of the verses under Sogita d’danha (Dialogue song for Danha). Fr. Kaitharan sings the first fourteen verses. Second, the melody we hear in the video is from the Chaldean Syrian Church of the East, India, and is different from the melodies we have in our digital library. Third, the song does not begin with the famous refrain, Bar Maryam. Instead, the refrain comes at the end of the first couplet. This is how the text appears in the printed source (Bedjan 1893). Fourth, the melody of the strophe is complete only in two verses. This is different from the practice among the other East Syriac communities in Kerala, in which the melody is complete in one verse. In comparison, in P.U. Luka’s version ([1910/2002: 234-236], the song starts with the refrain (Bar Maryam), and the melody is complete in one verse. It seems that P. U. Lukas followed the performance practice in the Knanaya community. Bar Maryam, a Catechetical song? There is reason to believe that the anonymous author intended the song as a means to reinforce the life story of the Son-of-Mary-the-Son-of-God. At a time when printed editions of the Bible were non-existent, songs were the best means of teaching the sacred scripture. The first part of the song (verses 1-14), which is intended for the Nativity season, contains the infancy narrative from the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem to the massacre of the innocent children by King Herod. The second part of the Denha season narrates the baptism of Jesus, His forty days in the desert followed by the temptation of the devil (verses 15-26), transfiguration (verses 27-28), solemn entry into Jerusalem, the passion and crucifixion (verses 29-35), Resurrection and Ascension, and Pentecost (verses 36-42). From here, the narrative changes to the finding of the wood of the Cross and the espousal of the Son of Mary to the Holy Church, Jesus taking the Church as His bride through Simon Cephas, and finally, the song ends with glorifying Christ. It may be noted that the shortlisting of scenes from the public ministry of Jesus does not include the first miracle at the wedding at Cana. The various song samples, both text and melody, continue to fascinate us, and we look forward to documenting as many samples as possible in our digital library. We hope future researchers will make good use of these primary source materials for an enlightened discourse. References: Bedjan, Paul. [1886] 1893. Manuel de piété ou livre de prières, de méditations et des offices: en langue chaldéenne [Manuel of Piety or Book of Meditations and Offices in the Chaldean Language]. 2nd edition. Paris: Maisonneuve et Leclerc. Palackal, Joseph and Felix Simon, eds. "Bar Maryam." Encyclopedia of Syriac Chants. <http://www.thecmsindia.org/encycoped...> Accessed 31 May 2022. P.U. Lukas [Puthenpurackal Uthup Lukas]. [1910] 2002. Purātanappāṭṭukaḷ [Ancient Songs] of the Syrian Christians of Malabar. 10th edn : Kottayam: Jyothi Book House.

[Joseph J Palackal, CMI](#)
New York - 2 June 2022



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