

From: Joseph Palackal

Date: Wednesday, July 10, 2013

Subject: Fwd: Raza Text Out!

To: Varghese Pathikulangara <[pathikulangarav@gmail.com](mailto:pathikulangarav@gmail.com)>, Thomas Kalayil <[thomaskalayilcmi@gmail.com](mailto:thomaskalayilcmi@gmail.com)>

Priya Varghese acha,

Thank you so much for mailing the PDF version of Raza. I was getting ready to go to India at that time, hence this delayed response. I am in Kerala now on a project of documenting Syriac melodies especially from the older generation of Pallippaattukkar. Shall share more about it when we meet in Bangalore.

I went through the first few pages of Raza. Wish we had discussed this before publication. There are quite a few things that sound sour. The English translation of Puqdaankon is clumsy! it would have been better to retain the original Syriac form. Puqdaankon is a classic example of polysemic poetic texts that assume layers of meanings over an extended period of time across geographical and cultural boundaries. By translating, you made a disservice by way of legitimizing one layer of meaning.

We could have learned from the English speaking people from Europe who encountered such problems, but later were humble enough to accept their linguistic limitations. For example, in the early literature on Indian music, we find the Sanskrit term Raaga, represented as "scale". It took almost a century for them to realize that scale is but only one of many aspects of the concept of raaga. Once they realized that, they corrected themselves by adopting the term into the English vocabulary. Today, in music literature in English, the term is written even without the diacritical marks.

By the way, we are celebrating the English version of our Mass that I co-composed at the National Shrine and Basilica in Washington, D. C. on Sept. 7, this year. Our Major Archbishop is the main Celebrant. We are singing Puqdaankon. The hundred member choir will sing the response in Syriac. They are excited about it. We are also singing the trisagion in Syriac.

It is disappointing to see the reference to "Annappesahaa" as a model melody. By printing the musical transcription, you gave legitimacy to that song which should not have been in our liturgy as the opening dialogue between the Celebrant and the congregation. It is a song that I want to run miles away from. The lyrical and musical structure, as well as the performance practice of that song are against all that you taught us in the liturgy class. As it is sung today, it is the main musical event that lasts for several minutes at the beginning of the mass. You taught us that the nativity hymn is the main event at the beginning of the Mass!

The translation of Qaddis qaddis qaddisath as "holy, holy, holy are You!" ending with an exclamation mark, is tricky. With a slight change in vocal inflection, the semantics could lead to an entirely different and even opposite meaning. Why couldn't we write "holy, holy, thou art holy" for the English-speaking congregation?

I did not go through the rest of the text. Maybe, we shall discuss more when we meet. Thank you again for sending me the text. It is great that you are so active and keep contributing to the Church. You are indeed an inspiration for me.  
Joseph Palackal

On Friday, June 28, 2013, Varghese Pathikulangara <[pathikulangarav@gmail.com](mailto:pathikulangarav@gmail.com)> wrote:

> Dearest Father Joseph, Prayerful greetings from Dharmaram! It is long since we heard each other. Hope you are doing well & busy with your plans. Wish you all the best. Here I forward an attachment that I sent to the website (already posted). Kindly go through the staff notation of the melodies given in it. With warm regards, varghesachan.  
> Finally our book is completed printing & attached here the pdf form. Please give it in such a way that 2 pages could be seen together. You may give it also in our online book store. The details as follows:

>  
> 1. PATHIKULANGARA V. (Arranged & ed.), Raza: The Most Solemn Celebration of Holy Qurbana in the Mar Toma Nasrani (Syro-Malabar) Church, in English with most important parts also in Aramaic/ East Syriac and with staff notation of all the melodies used in the celebration, Kottayam: Denha Services 83, 2013, 1/8 crown, pages 192, price: HB US \$ 10/--; Rs 100/--(in India); PB US \$ 6/--; Rs 60/--(in India); ISBN 978-93-81207-04-8

>  
> Online price may be given as follows: H.B. Euro 10/-- and P.B. Euro 07/--  
> With regards, varghesachan.

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