



EUCHARIST AS THE MEDICINE OF LIFE

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Abstract: *The meaning of a symbol or imagery is not limited in itself. It radiates an immense level of meaning in accordance with the context within which it is interpreted. This is the way of Eastern theologization. The Eastern approach to theology is on the basis of the experience of God rather than an academic exercise. It is not based on dogmatic assertions rather it is the result of encounters with divine mysteries. It is liturgical, doxological, symbolic, iconic, pneumato-centric, and ecumenical. In this academic paper, we will study the Transcendental Leap of the imagery of the Medicine of Life on the basis of liturgy and teachings of the Fathers of the Church.*

Key Words: The Medicine of Life, Transcendental Leap, St. Ephrem, Liturgy of the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church

1. INTRODUCTION

The meaning of a symbol or imagery is not limited in itself. It radiates an immense level of meaning in accordance with the context within which it is interpreted. This is the way of Eastern theologization. The Eastern approach to theology is on the basis of the experience of God rather than an academic exercise.¹ It is not based on dogmatic assertions rather it is the result of encounters with divine mysteries. It is liturgical, doxological, symbolic, iconic, pneumato-centric, and ecumenical.² In this chapter, we will study the TL of the imagery of the Medicine of Life on the basis of liturgy and teachings of the Fathers of the Church. Now let us see how the imagery is used to denote Eucharist in St. Ephrem.

2. THE MEDICINE OF LIFE AS EUCHARIST IN ST. EPHREM

The epithet 'the Medicine of Life (*sam hayye*)' is found several times in the works of St. Ephrem and it is used to describe both Jesus Christ and his Eucharistic Body.³ Here we will study how St. Ephrem used this epithet to define the Eucharistic Body of Jesus Christ. In "Carmina Nisibena (46:8)" he explains the significance of Jesus Christ for humanity is. He says, "He [Jesus] baptized him [man] with the Holy Spirit; He nourished him with the medicine of life."⁴ Here Eucharist is considered as spiritual nourishment which prevents death in the supernatural life. That is why Ephrem says, "The (human) spirit receives for itself with discernment the Merciful One's Bread as the Medicine of Life (Hymns on Nativity 4:99)."⁵ If we take any hymn in which this imagery is used, it is used to symbolize Eucharist and Jesus Christ. According to Thomas Kalayil:

¹ A. Nariculam, *Church Liturgy: Towards an Understanding of Catholic*, 26.

² A. Nariculam, *Church Liturgy: Towards an Understanding of Catholic Worship*, 26.

³ Cf. T. Kalayil, "Saint Ephrem on the Eucharist," in S. Athappilly – P. Kochappilly (ed.), *The Mystery of the Eucharist: Essays on*

the Occasion of the Eucharistic Year (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2006), 117.

⁴ T. Kalayil, "Saint Ephrem on the Eucharist," 117.

⁵ T. Kalayil, "Saint Ephrem on the Eucharist," 118.



We may notice that an implicit idea of faith comes in here. Therefore, we may say that he who receives the Eucharist with faith receives the ‘Medicine of Life’. The Bread is the same for the one that receives it with faith and for the one who receives it without faith. But the salvific effects are produced only in the one that receives it with faith.⁶

Likewise, every use of this epithet is directed towards Eucharist and Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is clear that for Ephrem this imagery has only one end and that is Jesus Christ.

3. OTHER INTERPRETATIONS OF MEANING OF THE MEDICINE OF LIFE

Is the imagery limited to Eucharist alone? Is this imagery expressed differently anywhere? We are going to answer these questions here. The search for the use of the said imagery in the culture, Scripture, and liturgy will include different aspects of the imagery by which the salvific mystery is presented. This imagery is the cultural product of the time. Therefore, this imagery will have different layers of meaning.⁷ This epithet leads to different levels of TL. The imagery of ‘the Medicine of Life’ connects us to the existing fact though the accidents remain here. It brings us to the depth of reality. Now we are going to study the different uses of the said imagery in the teachings of the Fathers of the Church and the liturgy of the Syro- Malankara Catholic Church to analyze its meaning shift. First, we will see whether any fathers of the Church have used the epithet to denote Eucharist. It is to substantiate how the said imagery is used to express the mystery of the Eucharist along with its different dimensions of meaning. Apart from this, it is necessary to probe the *modus operandi* of a transcendental leap of the said Eucharistic imagery.

3.1. PATRISTIC VIEW ON MEDICINE OF LIFE

We do not find any direct mention of the imagery of the Medicine of Life as imagery of the Holy Eucharist in the writings of the Fathers of the Church. St. Ignatius of Antioch writes extensively on Christology.⁸ According to St. Ignatius, the Eucharist is the Medicine of Immortality,⁹ but for St. Ephrem, it is the Medicine of Life. Ephrem presents even the incarnation itself as the Medicine of Life (Hymns on Nativity 13:2).¹⁰ According to St. Ephrem, Christ came as a physician, and he was with three medicines such as the Bread, Wine, and Chrism (Hymns on Virginity 37:3).¹¹ Though these two expressions seem similar there is a slight difference. That is very obvious in the Epistles to the Ephesians 20:2 of St. Ignatius of Antioch and this passage is quoted by Thomas Kalayil:

Meet in the common assembly in grace every one of you, man by man,... breaking one bread, which is the medicine of immortality (*pharmakon athanasias*) the antidote preserving us, that we should not die, but live forever in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 20:2).¹²

Here the imagery Medicine of Immortality stands for the end of Eucharist.¹³ That means Eucharist leads to immortality. Whereas the imagery medicine of life stands for both action and end and that is Jesus Christ. When we compare it in detail both these epithets indicate the same reality.

⁶ T. Kalayil, “Saint Ephrem on the Eucharist,” 118.

⁷ For example, When the meaning of the phrase “A Village on the Ganges” is analyzed, the following meanings will be derived out of the same such as ‘A village situated on the bank of the River Ganges,’ ‘A village near to the River Ganges,’ and finally ‘A prosperous village.’ Here the third level of meaning is the suggestive meaning.

⁸ Cf. J. Quasten, *Patrology I* (USA: Christian Classics, 1983) 63-75.

⁹ Cf. T. Paniker, “St Ephrem and the Eucharist,” 8.

¹⁰ Cf. T. Paniker, “St Ephrem and the Eucharist,” 8.

¹¹ Cf. T. Paniker, “St Ephrem and the Eucharist,” 8.

¹² T. Kalayil, “Saint Ephrem on the Eucharist,” 117.

¹³ Cf. B. J. Groeschel – J. Monti, *In the Presence of Our Lord: the History, Theology, and Psychology of Eucharistic Devotion*, 37-38.



3.2. THE MEDICINE OF LIFE IN THE MALANKARA LITURGY

Liturgy is the primary and official way of celebrating the salvific mysteries in the Church. Understanding what a community believes becomes very easy by analyzing its liturgy. This is the primary mode of preserving and transmitting the essentials of faith. According to Antony Nariculam:

Some of the distinctive liturgical features of the Eastern Churches compared to the Western tradition are the following; The emphasis on the mystery dimension, the great importance attached to signs and symbols, the repetitive nature of prayers and hymns, the use of icons, the consideration of the Divine Office as the prayer of the Church and not simply as a prayer of the clergy and the religious, and the emphasis given to the Temporal Cycle in the Liturgical Year.¹⁴

If it is the case, it is necessary to do a detailed search into the roots to find out the meanings of the imagery of the Medicine of Life. The imagery of the Medicine of Life is used abundantly in the Malankara Liturgy. Every liturgical service will be analyzed in detail to determine the use of the said imagery. The theology of the Syriac Fathers has influenced all the prayers in the Malankara Liturgy. I have chosen this section to prove the fact that even now, we are exploring the theological richness of the teachings of the Syriac Fathers. It also shows how we are connected to the FNCs of the Fathers of the Church. I try to analyze how the concept 'the Medicine of Life' is presented here.

3.2.1. QURBONO

The imagery of the Medicine of Life is recurring in the Order of the Holy *Qurbono* of SMCC. The voice of the Lord is the Medicine of Life that brings the dead to life.¹⁵ The purpose of medicine is to give life by rejuvenating a human person physically and psychologically. In addition, the concept of medicine has another dimension of meaning: the rejuvenation of the soul. Therefore, all that gives Life or rejuvenates Life is the Medicine of Life. Related to the imagery of the Medicine of Life in the liturgy are the following:

a. Life-Giving Word: Jesus Christ is presented as the life-giving word in the Anaphora of Jacob.¹⁶ How does Jesus become the life-giving word? The incarnation and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is the answer. The same theology is presented with the Eucharistic imagery 'the Medicine of Life' in St. Ephrem.

b. Life-giving washing: All the filth accumulated in the soul will be removed with the life-giving washing by Jesus Christ (Anaphora of Jacob).¹⁷ The Holy Eucharist itself is the Medicine of Life that provides life-giving washing. It leads to a spiritual catharsis.

c. Life-Giving Bread: The consecrated Bread and Wine become the sources of Life. The transubstantiation of the same will be taking place with the hovering of the Holy Spirit.¹⁸ Therefore it is advised to take part in the life-giving body and the blood.¹⁹

d. Source of Eternal Life: Eucharist is defined as the source of eternal Life (Anaphora of Jacob).²⁰ It is another dimension of the Medicine of Life that is Jesus Christ.

¹⁴ A. Nariculam, *Church Liturgy: Towards an Understanding of Catholic Worship*, 25.

¹⁵ Cf. *The Order of the Holy Qurbono of SMCC* (Trivandrum: The Major Archiepiscopal Curia, 2015) 18.

¹⁶ Cf. *The Order of the Holy Qurbono of SMCC*, 26, 27, 34, 44-46.

¹⁷ Cf. *The Order of the Holy Qurbono of SMCC*, 39.

¹⁸ Cf. *The Order of the Holy Qurbono of SMCC*, 54.

¹⁹ Cf. *The Order of the Holy Qurbono of SMCC*, Anaphora of St Jacob 65, 68-69, St. John 95-96, Bishop Mar Dynisius 142-143, 155, Mar Ivanios 165-166, St. Peter 188-189, Mar Kusthos, the Patriarch of Rome 210-211.

²⁰ Cf. *The Order of the Holy Qurbono of SMCC*, 72-73.



e. Life-giving Passion: (Anaphora of St. John.)

We attain Life by the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.²¹ Medicine is made through a different process of crushing and mixing. Jesus is The Medicine of Life because he became such medicine to us by his passion and resurrection. Passion was not necessary for Jesus to be the Medicine of Life, but we needed to realize the value of the medicine that he brought to us. For through his passion, he showed how much he loved us. Therefore the Eucharist is the life-giving divine mystery.²²

f. Life-giving Death: One gets Life in Christ when he lives holy. Eternity is attained through death in Christ (Anaphora of Mar Osthathios of Antioch).²³

g. Sanctifying Sacrifice: It is prayed in the Holy *Qurbono* to purify the one who takes part in the Holy Mass with the sanctifying grace dispensed in the Holy Eucharist.²⁴

3.2.2. CANONICAL PRAYERS

All the individual Churches in the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches have canonical prayers. The canonical prayers are the official prayers of the Church. These prayers are deeply rooted in the Holy Scriptures and the teachings of the Fathers of the Church. The primary aims of these prayers are to teach the dogmas of the Church to prevent the heretical teachings of the time and at the same time for the sanctification of the hours. Therefore, people will learn the dogmatic teachings of the Church when they pray canonical or any other liturgical prayers. There are two types of canonical prayers in the West Syrian Ecclesial Tradition; a) *Penkisa* and b) *Sheemo* (Canonical prayers for ordinary days). Since the translation of *Penkisa* is not available, *Sheemo* is used here for reference. The canonical prayers of the Syro Malankara Catholic Church are divided into seven canonical hours, such as *Ramso* (Vespers- 6 pm), *Suthoro* (Compline- 9 pm), *Liliyo* (Matins & Lauds- 3 am), *Sapro* (Prime- 6 am), *Thos Soin* (Terce- 9 am), *Sheth Shoin* (Sext- noon) and *Tsha Shoin* (None- 3 pm). Though *Sheemo*

symbolizes the agricultural situation (This interpretation is made by Patriarch Mar Ignatius Bar Vahib of the 12th century.), its suggestiveness gets its perfection in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ.²⁵ The main thrust of this section in this dissertation is to find out whether there is any imagery that represents Eucharist in terms of ‘Medicine of Life’ and analyze the other sacraments and salvific mysteries to which the imagery of ‘Medicine of Life’ is referred.

There are many prayers in the canonical prayers in which the faithful prays to Jesus to make them alive out of death.²⁶ In addition, there are various imageries used to portray the importance of the Medicine of Life. The following are some examples.

a. Jesus as the Medicine of Life²⁷: The *Qolo I* of the prime on Tuesday (*Subho*) conveys that Jesus is the ‘Medicine of Life’. Here it is prayed that the Samaritan woman was reluctant in providing water to Jesus because there is no Medicine of Life in that water carried by that woman. In contrast, Jesus has given her the source of the Medicine of Life. And the prayer further explains it (water) as the blood of Jesus. It means that there is a direct indication of the Eucharist in the said prayer.

b. Eucharist as Tree of Life: In Tuesday, Prime, *Qolo II*,²⁸ Eucharist is interpreted as ‘Tree of Life’ with the explanation of the incident of the thief who was crucified at the right hand of Jesus. It is instructed to observe vigilance and fasting for receiving the fruits of the Tree of Life. This ‘Tree of Life’ is Jesus himself, who was crucified on the Cross.²⁹ The Cross also symbolizes the risen Christ. The prayer states that the Cross is the ‘Tree of Life’ that grants us the fruit of the resurrection of Christ. A tree that gives death and curse completely turns to be the source of life and grace through the paschal mysteries.

c. Eucharist as the life-giving Water: According to Nariculam, “The primitive Judaeo-Christian testimony

²¹ Cf. *The Order of the Holy Qurbono of SMCC*, 91.

²² Cf. *The Order of the Holy Qurbono of SMCC*, 93.

²³ Cf. *The Order of the Holy Qurbono of SMCC*, 219, 234-235.

²⁴ Cf. *The Order of the Holy Qurbono of SMCC*, 241.

²⁵ Cf. *Sheemo* (Pattom: The Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the Syro Malankara Catholic Church, 2009) iii.

²⁶ Cf. *Sheemo*, 23.

²⁷ Cf. *Sheemo*, 102.

²⁸ Cf. *Sheemo*, 107

²⁹ Cf. A. Nariculam, *Church Liturgy: Towards an Understanding of Catholic Worship*, 42.



attests to the use of ‘living water’.³⁰ In the *Qolo* (*Subho*, Wednesday, 6th Hour),³¹ St. Mary is compared to the tabernacle founded by Moses because she bears Jesus, who is the life-giving water in her womb. When the Israelites were about to die, Moses struck the rock, and water came out of it, and it was life-giving water for them. The divine intervention through the Holy Spirit enabled Mother Mary to bear Jesus, the life-giving water. This *Qolo* represents Mary as the tabernacle. The Eucharistic presence of Jesus is sacredly kept in the tabernacle. Therefore, this *Qolo* has a Eucharistic dimension. It also indicates that the incarnation of Jesus itself is a medicine of Life.

d. Eucharist as Elixir of Life³²: The tenth stanza of the II *Qolo* of the vespers of Thursday conveys the message that those who eat and drink the Body and Blood of the savior will live after death. It is a direct indication of the Eucharist as Medicine of Life.

3.2.3. PERUNNAL KRAMAM

The *Perunnal Kramam* of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church uses the word “Life” in many prayers of the major feasts. Here we try to find out the similar imageries of the imagery of the Medicine of Life.

a. The voice of the Lord: The voice of the Lord is defined as the life-giving voice in one of the prayers of the *Yelda*.³³ The imagery ‘the voice of the Lord’ suggests the meaning of the imagery. As if the medicine is used for curing the sick person, the voice of the Lord gives life to the people.

b. Dew of Life: In the prayer of the *Yelda*, it is prayed that the dew of Life be showered upon the dead in the lamenting abode of Hades.³⁴ This indicates that the nativity of Jesus brings hope to the demised people. Here the imagery of the dew of Life resembles the imagery.

c. Life-Giving Cross: In the prayers of the *Sleeba Aghosham*, in the prayers of every feast, the Cross is identified as a life-giving one because Jesus was crucified on the Cross.³⁵ Therefore the Cross symbolizes the Risen Jesus. Moreover, the Cross heals our wounds.³⁶

d. Life-Giving Water: In one of the prayers of the *Denha*, Jesus is identified as the life-giving water from the rock.³⁷ The event from the Exodus influences this prayer. In the prayers of *Vade Dalmeede*, it is advised to accompany the life-giving water.³⁸

3.2.4. PROEMION & SEDRO

The incarnation of Jesus Christ is considered as life-giving medicine. The incarnation is for the rejuvenation of humankind. Therefore the priest prays, “Protect us, who eat your body and your blood with your seal of life.”³⁹ The people of God are given a new life with the death of Christ.⁴⁰ The passion itself is considered life-giving, and therefore the priest prays that the passion of Jesus Christ may wash away the trespasses and sins from the people of God.⁴¹ The commandment given at the Last Supper is the fulness of the salvific history because his commandment is life-giving, and at the same time, it stands for the Eucharist.⁴² The entire content of the *Proemion Sedra* consists of the salvific mystery of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3.2.5. SACRAMENTS AND SACRAMENTALS

Sacraments are the visible signs that impart the grace of God.⁴³ Sacraments impart the Grace of God to all the faithful. The Church is the sacrament of Christ. The Eucharistic presence of Jesus always heals. Likewise, all the sacraments share the touch of the healing of Christ on

³⁰ A. Nariculam, *Church Liturgy: Towards an Understanding of Catholic*, 39.

³¹ Cf. *Sheemo*, 149.

³² Cf. *Sheemo*, 156, 355, 381.

³³ Cf. The Synodal Commission for Liturgy, *Perunnalukal* (Trivandrum: The Major Archiepiscopal Curia) 16.

³⁴ Cf. *Perunnalukal*, 18.

³⁵ Cf. *Perunnalukal*, 79.

³⁶ Cf. *Perunnalukal*, 32.

³⁷ Cf. *Perunnalukal*, 95.

³⁸ Cf. *Perunnalukal*, 177.

³⁹ Cf. *Perunnalukal*, 21.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Perunnalukal*, 7.

⁴¹ Cf. The synodal Commission for Liturgy, *Hasa Azhchayile Prumion Sedra* (Trivandrum: The Major Archiepiscopal Curia, 2018) 9, 11, 17, 26, 41.

⁴² Cf. *Hasa Azhchayile Prumion Sedra*, 48.

⁴³ Cf. E. Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1980) 96-97.



different levels. The explanation on the presence of ‘Medicine of Life’ in the sacraments is given below.

a. Baptism: Baptism grants new Life in Christ. As if medicine gives rejuvenation to the body, through Baptism, one is born in Christ.⁴⁴ Jesus, the one who sanctifies the Seraphs, purified the water with his Baptism, and thereby the Children of Adam lived again in water and Spirit.⁴⁵ Just as medicine cleanses the body and grants new Life, through Baptism, one is born in Christ.

b. Anointing of the Sick: According to Metzger Anointing of the Sick has therapeutic effects. He quotes from chapter five of the *Apostolic Tradition* to prove his argument as follows:

If anyone offers oil, (the bishop) shall render thanks in the same way as for the offering of bread and wine, not saying it word for word, but to similar effect, saying: “O God, sanctifier of this oil, as you give health to those who are anointed and receive that with which you anointed kings, priests, and prophets, so may it give strength to all those who taste it, and health to all that are anointed with it.”⁴⁶

Forgiveness of sins is indirectly considered as Medicine of Life in the prayers of the Anointing of the Sick and at the same time, it is directed towards Jesus Christ (James 5:15,16). Sin persecutes the soul as if infirmity to the body. Therefore it is requested to Jesus to provide an apt medicine for the same.⁴⁷ Here both the doctor and Medicine are Jesus Christ.⁴⁸

c. Funeral: It is prayed that Jesus would give Life to those who have died with the Faith of Resurrection in Christ.⁴⁹ The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is presented as the

Medicine of Life. Jesus promises that those who received the Holy Eucharist with Faith would receive eternal life.⁵⁰ The second coming of Christ gives life to the dead as if medicine brings back one from the mortal infirmity.⁵¹

4. TRANSCENDENTAL LEAP OF THE MEDICINE OF LIFE TO EUCHARIST

Whatever we experience through our senses is coded with cultural code, and that is language. Every impression in our mind is transmitted to the other person through language. The language here means that which mediates in transferring a message from one person to another. It means that language cannot be confined within the limits of written or spoken words alone. It also includes illustrations, gesticulations, expressions, and so on. Here we give prominence to the verbal language and try to analyze how the phenomenon of transcendental leap takes place. The transcendental leap of the Eucharistic imagery- of the Medicine of Life results from the expansion of the context of the reader by associating the qualities of the said imagery to the divine realities. This expansion resulted from the association of the context of the reader takes place with the interpretation of the divine revelations in the light of faith. Preliminarily St. Ephrem was born and brought up in a place where Christianity was rooted well. From his writings, it is very evident that he was well versed with the Old Testament and New Testament. He lived in a situation where Arianism was propagated by heretic teachers (Arianism⁵²). The poetical works of St. Ephrem are an attempt to teach the true Faith. Therefore, we can say that the imagery symbolizes not only the Eucharist but also the salvific mystery itself. St. Ephrem tried to bring forth all the teachings and doctrines on faith to the Eucharistic imagery, the Medicine of Life. He considers even the incarnation of Jesus Christ as the

⁴⁴ Cf. The Synodal Commission for Liturgy, *Koodashsakal* (Trivandrum: The Major Archiepiscopal Curia, 2015) 7.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Koodashsakal*, 9.

⁴⁶ M. Metzger, *History of the Liturgy: The Major Stages* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1997) 61.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Koodashsakal*, 97.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Koodashsakal*, 97.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Koodashsakal*, 104.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Koodashsakal*, 162.

⁵¹ Cf. *Koodashsakal*, 169.

⁵² Arianism was propagated by Arius (250-). It is a doctrine that denied the divinity of the LOGOS. It originated in Alexandria. Arius taught that Jesus is the supreme of all the creatures of God and he refused that LOGOS was from the same substance as God the Father. Therefore, there was a time when Son was not.



Medicine of Life in his “Hymns on Nativity”.⁵³ He expresses the soteriological aspect of the imagery, the Medicine of Life, by stating that those who consumed the ever-living Bread of the Son will be raised to the heavens to welcome him.⁵⁴ These expressions show that St. Ephrem was well aware of the doctrines of faith, and therefore he used imagery familiar to the people to explain the Eucharistic mysteries. When we analyze the imagery of ‘Medicine of Life’, it is evident that St. Ephrem was highly influenced by the scriptural analysis.

Now the transcendental leap of this epithet to the eschatological meaning will be discussed in this paragraph. If the Church is the mystical Body of Christ, the congregation that takes part in the Eucharist is also part of the mystical Body of Christ. If the Holy Eucharist is Christ, when we receive the Holy Eucharist with the proper disposition of heart, we are partaking in the divine Life which is already but not yet. In the same way, St. Ephrem has incorporated the potentiality of transcendental leap in this imagery. It is very evident from the writings of Ephrem that there is a kind of sequential progress of meaning. He did not mix the contradictory ideas at a sudden, whereas he explains one aspect clearly at first and then gradually makes a silent leap to the next. For example, see the table below;

Water asked from the Samaritan woman ⁵⁷	Lifeless	The water of life offered by Jesus Christ	LIFE
Ordinary Food ⁵⁸	Physical Life	Ordinary Food blessed by Jesus	Medicine of Life
Buried people ⁵⁹	Lost Hope	Burial of Jesus	Hope for all

When we analyze this table, it is obvious that Ephrem is not concerned with history. He uses the prehistoric narrative as well as the historical narrative of the Old Testament as a means of expressing the soothing of a reality that lies beyond human understanding.⁶⁰ That means all symbols and imageries used by Ephrem not only direct towards the reality but also contain within itself the actual presence of which it signifies. Thus TL is very evident in the works of Ephrem. The imagery of the Medicine of Life is not only points to the Eucharist, but also its very existence as Eucharist in the semantic level as a result of TL. The expanding nature of the cognition of the reader brings a change in TL. It is because of the incapability of the human person to comprehend the entire meaning of divine revelation. Therefore, when we analyze the works of St. Ephrem, it is clear that he has not defined anything with a precise definition that is beyond experience and human intellect. According to Brock, “Indeed, the search for precise definitions on topics that belong to areas beyond the experience and capacity of the human intellect is, in Ephrem’s eyes, something that only prying rationalists (in his case the Arians) indulge in, and their example should not be imitated.”⁶¹ Here all the ideas seem the same, but they became entirely different semantically. The transition of

Idea A		Idea B		Difference
Action	Result	Action	Result	
Eating unleavened bread ⁵⁵	Death	Eating Life-Giving Bread	LIFE	Though both actions seem similar, they are substantially different
The bread which was given by Eve ⁵⁶	Tiredness and then Death	The bread which was given by Mary	LIFE	

⁵³ Cf. G. Chediath, *Mar Aprem: Manushyavathara Geethangal*, 159.

⁵⁴ Cf. G. Chediath, *Mar Aprem: Pesaha Geethangal*, 36.

⁵⁵ Cf. G. Chediath, *Mar Aprem: Pesaha Geethangal*, 6.

⁵⁶ Cf. G. Chediath, *Mar Aprem: Pesaha Geethangal*, 7.

⁵⁷ Cf. G. Chediath, *Mar Aprem: Pesaha Geethangal*, 13.

⁵⁸ Cf. G. Chediath, *Mar Aprem: Pesaha Geethangal*, 28.

⁵⁹ Cf. G. Chediath, *Mar Aprem: Manushyavathara Geethangal*, 10.

⁶⁰ Cf. S. Brock, *Studies in Syriac Spirituality*, 55.

⁶¹ S. Brock, *Studies in Syriac Spirituality*, 53.



meaning from idea A to idea B is the result of a Transcendental Leap. The analysis of the Eucharistic imagery of the Medicine of Life probes the same phenomena.

It is very evident from this study that the transcendental leap of the imagery is not merely the result of one's effort, but because of the revelation of God. A person who is open to revelation will experience the transcendental leap. It is very evident from the use of the Eucharistic imageries by St. Ephrem. The same imagery makes another leap in the same person by his/her openness to the divine revelation. Therefore, the transcendental leap of the imagery of the Medicine of Life is not complete from the human perspective. The maximum of the transcendental leap will be possible with the beatific vision.

Now let us include the different explanations of the imagery used in the Scripture and liturgy of the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church. When these sources are analyzed it becomes very clear that the said imagery has got different levels of meaning such as mercy, purification, medicinal, the promise of God, Word of God, the voice of God, the elixir of life, ransom, tree of life in the garden of Eden and so on. All these qualities get a significant semantic leap when it is introduced to a faithful. It does not mean that the TL of the imagery is final. Though its finality is clear in an extended sense (i.e. the imagery stands for Jesus Christ), the leap will be completed with the beatific vision. That is why St. Ephrem advises the faithful to receive the Holy Eucharist with the proper disposition of the heart. Because Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist. In other words, Jesus is visible to our naked eyes through the Eucharistic presence. Therefore, the Medicine of Life is Jesus Christ.

5. CONCLUSION

The human brain is a storehouse. It has the internal mechanism to create new ideas with the available memories through association and dissociation. This leads to TL. One person understands a new thing within the context. It means TL is dynamic. Thus, the phenomenon of the transcendental leap of a word takes place by a person's disposition to divine revelation. At this time, the meaning of a concrete reality will be shifted to a metaphysical meaning. When we

analyzed the imagery it is clear that the epithet 'the Medicine of Life' is used with different dimensions of meaning in the Bible, in the teachings of the Fathers of the Church, the Holy *Qurbano* text, and the other liturgical texts of the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church as in the works of St. Ephrem. When all these aspects are examined closely, it is clear that all those meanings are directed towards different qualities of the Eucharistic Presence of Jesus. The Eucharist is the commemoration of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. If it is so, all those said aspects of meaning focus on the Eucharistic Mystery. Each episode in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ is meditated upon and prayed daily. Therefore, it is helpful for the faithful to ruminate over the actual teachings of the Church and to take part in the Holy *Qurbano* sincerely. St. Ephrem's theology has influenced the Antiochian Liturgy. We analyzed the Transcendental Leap of the Eucharistic imagery, the Medicine of Life. It is evident from this chapter that all uses of the concept are directed towards Jesus Christ and the economy of salvation. Due to the scriptural influence, St. Ephrem has developed the concept with a Eucharistic dimension to show that Jesus is continuously present in the Church and to our naked eyes through the Holy Eucharist.

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