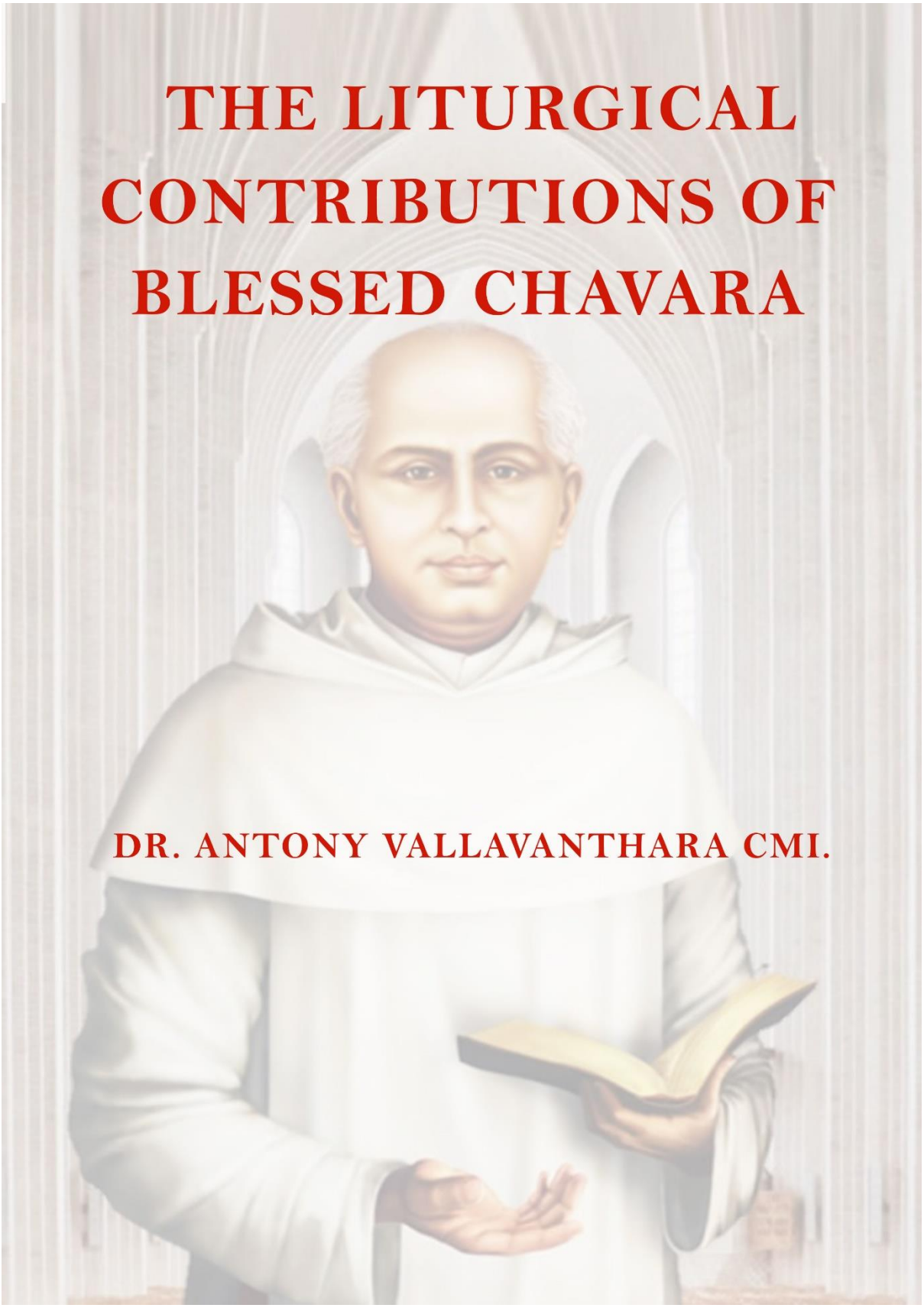
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# THE LITURGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF BLESSED CHAVARA



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# The Liturgical Contributions of Blessed Chavara

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(Unpublished Manuscript. Source: The Author)

The Malabar Church is immensely indebted to Blessed Chavara for the promotion and preservation of its ancient liturgical traditions. The work of Blessed Chavara for the renewal of the Malabar Liturgy in the 19th century is a great landmark in the history of the Malabar as well as of the East Syrian Liturgy. But unfortunately, there is a mass of ignorance among the specialists of Malabar liturgy and among the general public about the liturgical contributions of Blessed Chavara. In recent past, certain people who pretend or profess that they are the prophets and promoters genuine Malabar and East Syrian traditions, seem to present Blessed Chavara as some one who never had any love for the traditions of his own Church. They tend to equate his liturgical contributions solely to the introduction of certain rites and rituals which he borrowed from the Roman liturgical traditions. On that score, they consider him or rather brand him as a promotor of romanization of the Malabar Liturgy in the last century. What we can detect at the root of this negative evaluation, is nothing but sheer ignorance of the facts of history and lack of acquaintance with the genuine historical documents related to Blessed Chavara's work for the renewal of the Malabar liturgy and his visions and dreams regarding the development and future of the Malabar Church. It is quite regrettable that the Malabar Church has not yet realized the value of the liturgical contributions of this great genius of all centuries. This article attempts to present two very important liturgical contributions of Blessed Chavara that will throw much light on the liturgical genius of Blessed Chavara and the greatness of his work for the renewal of the liturgy in the Malabar Church in the 19th century.

Blessed Chavara's basic concern was the renewal of the Malabar Church and the transformation of the society. That is what made him to launch many of his projects that he realized, like the founding the congregations, starting the schools or establishing the printing press. He very well realized that the renewal of the liturgy is the first step towards the spiritual renewal of the Malabar Church. Hence, when he was made the Vicar General of the Syrians (St.Thomas Christians) in the second half of the 19th century, he initiated a series of efforts for liturgical renewal. In all the liturgical renewal efforts, as Dr. Lucas Vithuvattickal CMI points out, the basic concern of Blessed Chavara was that "the liturgical celebration be made with decorum and solemnity so that it generates true devotion in the participants." Proper celebration and proper participation in the liturgical celebrations were the twin motives that prompted the renewal efforts of Blessed Chavara.

Proper liturgical rites and proper liturgical books were the basic needs for such a renewal of liturgy. Hence his attention was turned first to them. In this work he had to define the rites and prescribe texts for all liturgical functions. His work was in two lines. For the liturgical rites for which printed liturgical books existed, he prescribed and prepared the rubrics. For example the proper text for the Eucharistic celebration was already established and was availabe in the 1844 edition of the Missal. What was needed

for the proper celebration "with decorum, solemnity" and "unity in celebration" was the rubrics and instructions. To meet this need he prepared the Thukasa, the book of rubrics and instructions for the celebration of the Eucharistic. On the other hand, where liturgical books and rites were lacking, Blessed Chavara prepared them anew and prescribed proper rubrics for them. In this work he had followed two directions.

The first direction was one of restoration. Being a true son of the Syro-Malabar Church in love with its ancient traditions, the first step he took was of restoring the liturgical books according to the ancient traditions. That made him to launch the great project of the restoration and reorganization of the Malabar Breviary and the Office of the Dead.

The second direction was one of complementing. For example, the Malabar lectionary was already romanized and was fixed with the lectionary of 1775 and the Missal of 1844. Though well established, still it had many lacunae. Reading were lacking for certain feasts and other occasions introduced from the Roman tradition for which readings were not given in the missal. Blessed Chavara attempted to complement or fill in this lacunae by borrowing the readings from the Roman lectionary and prepared a complementary lectionary. A similar position complementing by borrowing texts or rites from the Roman tradition when certain rites or texts were lacking in the Malabar and East Syrian traditions. We have the examples of the office of our Lady, Rites for the Holy Saturday, the rites for the forty Hours Adoration which he introduced into the Malabar Liturgy by translating them into Syriac.

We find Blessed Chavara taking a third direction which in fact is a combining of the first two directions of restoring and complementing. The liturgical calendar was such an attempt. Influenced perhaps by the roman calendar and following its model he established the calendar integrating Anno Domini and the Malayalam Era on the one side and presenting side by side both the romanized Malabar Liturgical Year and the East Syrian Liturgical Year as it was lived in Malabar. Perhaps the way he realized restoration and complementing was through juxtaposition or preserving them side by side.

Here he was faced with two realities. On the one hand, we find his love for the ancient tradition and at the same time, he had to accept the actual existing reality of established romanised Missal and Lectionary. His love for the tradition prompted him to reorganize the breviary according to the ancient Malabar traditions and thereby restore the ancient liturgical year. However, he could not but accept the existing romanized liturgical year and feastal system established through Missal and Lectionary. Hence he has taken a position of restoring and complementing by juxtaposition. One is prone to think of the validity and rationale of Blessed Chavara's approach. We shall discuss it at the end of this article. Here let us learn more details about his actual work and contributions.

## The Liturgical Works of Blessed Chavara

Blessed Chavara had taken utmost care for the proper preparation of the liturgical

structural ortion it follows the ancient East Syrian tradition. However, in its organization of the commemorations we find the influence of the romanization that began in the Synod of Diamper and culminated in the two editions of the Thakasa in 1774 and 1844 and the Lectionary of 1775.

The volume consists of three sections, the first section contains the Psalms and the hymns of Moses. The second section contains the order of the different offices Ramsa, Suvaya, Lelya, Sapra and Kuthaya with the common for the Sundays and week days with the variations of the pair and impair weeks. The fourth section is the Hudra part of the volume and contains the prayers for the Sundays, Feasts and Commemorations and the ordinary days that come within it.

The following are the three sections of the book.

Section 1.

| | |
|---|---|
| Pages 1-249 | The Psalter: 150 Pslams and the Hymns of Moses |
| Pages 259-252 | Prayers before the Canonical Offices |

Section 2. The Common of the different Offices

| | |
|---|---|
| Pages 253-276 | Office of Ramsa |
| Pages 276-282 | Office of Suvaa |
| Pages 282-309 | Office of Lelya |
| Pages 310-331 | Office of Sapra |
| Pages 332-338 | Office of Quthaya |

Section 3 Ordinary for the seven days of the week

Sundays

| | |
|---|---|
| Pages 348-365 | Lelya of Sunday |
| Pages 365-372 | Qala d'Sahara |
| Pages 373-384 | Sapra of Sundays |

Mondays of the Weeks

| | |
|---|---|
| Pages 385-389 | Ramsa of Mondays of the Pair week |
| Pages 390-398 | Ramsa of Mondays of the Impair week |
| Pages 398-407 | Lelya of Mondays |
| Pages 407-412 | Sapra of Mondays |

Tuesdays of the Week

Pages 413-417 Ramsa of Tuesdays of the Pair week
Pages 417-425 Ramsa of Tuesdays of the Impair week
Pages 425-434 Lelya of Tuesdays
Pages 434-439 Sapra of Tuesdays

Wednesdays of the Weeks

Pages 440-448 Ramsa of Wednesdays of the Pair week
Pages 448-459 Lelya of Wednesdays of the Pair week
Pages 459-463 Sapra of Wednesdays
Pages 463-467 Ramsa of Wednesday of imprair week
Pages 467-475 Lelya of Wednesday of the Impair week

Thursdays of the Week

Pages 475-479 Ramsa of Thursdays of Pair Weeks
Pages 479-487 Ramsa of Thursdays of Impair Week
Pages 487-899 Lelya of Thursdays
Pages 499-503 Sapra of Thursdays

Fridays of the Pair Week

Pages 503-506 Ramsa of Fridays of Pair Week
Pages 506-509 Ramsa of Friadays of the middle week
Pages 509-517 Ramsa of the Fridays of the Imprair week
Pages 517-526 Lelya of Firdays
Pages 526-531 Sapra of Fridays

Saturdays of the Week

Pages 531-534 Ramsa of Saturdays of the Pair Week
Pages 535-541 Ramsa of Saturdays of the Imprair Week
Pages 541-550 Lelya of Saturdays
Pages 550-554 Sapra of Saturdays

Section 4: Choices for the Commemorations

Pages 554-558 Commemaration of many martyrs
Pages 558-559 Commemoration of one martyr
Pages 559-559 Commemoration of Virgin and Martyr

Commemoration in the month of January

Pages 563-565 January 13: Marios, Martha and Audipas
Pages 565-566 January 23: St. Emaranthina, Virgin and Martyr
Pages 566-568 January 26: St. Agnes

3rd Sunday of Annunciation
Monday-Saturday of the 3rd week of Annunciation
4th Sunday of Annunciation
Monday-Saturday of the 4th week of Annunciation

The Period of Nativity

Feast of the Nativity of the Lord
St.Stephen, the first Martyr
John the Evangelists
Feast of the Slain Children
Sunday within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord
Feast of Silvester the Pope
Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord:the Octave of Nativity
Octave of St.Stephen
Octave of the Slain Children

The Period of Epiphany

The day before the Feast of Epiphany
The Feast of Epiphany of the Lord
Monday to Saturday
Sunday within the Octave of Deneha
The Octave of Deneha
Monday-Saturday of the 1st week
2nd Sunday after Epiphany
Monday - Saturday of the 2nd week
3rd Sunday after Epiphany
Monday-Saturday of the third week
4th Sunday after Epiphany
Monday-Saturday of the 4th week
5th Sunday of Epiphany
Monday-saturday of the 5th week
6th Sunday after Epiphany
Bausa d'Ninevaye :Prayer of the Ninevites
Monday of the Prayer of the Ninevites
(Ramsa, Subaya, Lelya, Qala d'Sahara, Sapra and Kuthaya)
Tuesday of the Prayer
Wednesday of the Prayer
Thursday-Saturday of the 6th week
7th Sunday after Epiphany (Hadb'samba Sabiaya)
Monday-Saturday of the 7th week
Eighth Sunday after Epiphany (Hadbsamba Sthiyaya)

The volume ends with the eighth Sunday after Epiphany. We have not been able to find a copy of the other volumes. We presume that there were two other volumes. But

Thomas Paremmackal and Joseph Kariattil, who felt that borrowing something from the Roman Church is not against the traditions of the Malabar Church, but whatever it be, it has to be celebrated in the liturgical language. Hence just as Joseph Kariattil and Paremmackal had translated the Roman Pontifical so has blessed Chavara introduced many things from the Roman traditions but introduced it in the context of the Malabar Church.

Similarly we have to understand Chavara in his living context as regards his borrowing devotional practices from the Roman traditions. There had been a lot of devotional practices in the Malabar Church, borrowed from the Roman tradition, and introduced by the western missionaries in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, which nourished spiritual life of the laity, religious and priests alike. Blessed Chavara, like any other lay man or priest of his time, nourished his spiritual life from his early childhood from such practices. He has also promoted such practices very ardently and even introduced such practices in the Malabar Church.

Blessed Chavara Preserved the most Ancient Malabar Tradition

In the organization of the Breviary and the Calendar Blessed Chavara has contributed to the preservation of an ancient Malabar Tradition. The structure of the Liturgical Year that has been preserved in the Malabar Church through the Calendar of Blessed Chavara, as we have mentioned above, is one of the two ancient traditions of the structural organization of the East Syrian Liturgical Year.

The study of the ancient manuscripts of lectionaries and breviaries in the East Syrian tradition reveals different structural models. All the models found in them can be reduced to two very ancient models, which in all probability existed prior to the reorganization of the East Syrian Liturgical Year attributed to Iso Yahb III (7th cent). If we compare the structural model of the Liturgical Year in the Calendar and Breviary of Blessed Chavara with the model in the Breviary edited by Paul Bedjan, or of the Trichur Breviary of the Church of the East or of the Supplementum Mysteriorum, we find that they are different. In Supplementum, as in the other two breviaries, we have the following model of the Liturgical Year.

Annunciation,
Nativity,
Epiphany,
Fast,
Resurrection,
Apostles,
Qaitha,
Elia,
Finding of the Cross (Sliva),
Moses
Qudas Edtha.

This pattern with different variations can be seen in many manuscripts of the East Syrian lectionaries and breviaries dating from the 7/8th centuries. However, there are few rare manuscripts, dating from 8/9th century, like Vatican Syriac 22 dated 1301 from the Malabar Coast, which show a different model. They reveal a structural model which is different from the above as given below .

Annunciation,
Nativity,
Epiphany,
Fast,
Resurrection,
Apostles,
Qaitha,
Elia,
Finding of the Cross (Sliva),
Qudas Edtha.

The difference in structural and nomenclature is from the period of Qaitha onward. They have periods of Elia, Finding of the Cross, Qudas Edtha ( this we call EFQE model) whereas the Supplementum Mysteriorum, has Elia-Finding-Moses-Qudas Edtha (this we call EFMQE model).

Our study of the East Sryaic manuscripts of breviaries and lectionaries, including Malabar manuscripts, has brought us to the conclusion that the different structural models that we find in the different manuscripts is a mixture of two earlier traditions that existed in the East Syrian traditions. Of these, the first begins with the seven weeks of Moses and ends with seven weeks of Elia and the periods of Annunciation, Nativity, Epiphany, Fast, Resurrection, Apostles and Qaitha coming in between as follows

Moses
Annunciation
Nativity
Epiphany
Fast
Resurrection
Apostles
Qaitha
Elia

The second, on the other hand, begins with the period of Annunciation and ends with Qudas Edtha and the periods of Nativity, Epiphany, Fast, Resurrection, Apostles and Qaitha coming in between. The first has no period of Qudas Edtha and the second has no period of Moses and Elia. Thus we have the following models

Annunciation
Nativity

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