

Hymn XV for Epiphany

By St. Ephraem (d. 373)

1. In the Birth of the Son light dawned, and darkness fled from the world, and the earth was enlightened; then let it give glory to the brightness of the Father Who has enlightened it!
2. He dawned from the womb of the Virgin, and the shadows passed away when He was seen, and the darkness of error was strangled by Him, and the ends of the earth were enlightened that they should give glory.
3. Among the peoples there was great tumult, and in the darkness the light dawned, and the nations rejoiced to give glory to Him in Whose Birth they all were enlightened.
4. His light shone out over the east; Persia was enlightened by the star: His Epiphany gave good tidings to her and invited her, " He is come for the sacrifice that brings joy to all."
5. The star of light hastened and came and dawned through the darkness, and summoned them that the peoples should come and exult in the great Light that has come down to earth.
6. One envoy from among the stars the firmament sent to proclaim to them, to the sons of Persia, that they might make ready to meet the King and to worship Him.
7. Great Assyria when she perceived it called to the Magi and said to them, "Take gifts and go, honour Him the great King Who in Judea has dawned."
8. The princes of Persia, exulting, carried gifts from their region; and they brought to the Son of the Virgin gold and myrrh and frankincense.
9. They entered and found Him as a child as He dwelt in the house of the lowly woman; and they drew near and worshipped with gladness, and brought near before Him their treasures.
10. Mary said, "For whom are these? and for what purpose? and what is the cause that has called you to come from your country to the Child with your treasures?"
11. They said, "Thy Son is a King, and He binds crowns and is King of all; and great is His power over the world, and to His Kingdom shall all be obedient."
12. "At what time did this come to pass, that a lowly woman should bring forth a King? I who am in need and in want, how then could a king come forth from me?"

13. "In thee alone has this come to pass that a mighty King from thee should appear; thee in whom poverty shall be magnified, and to thy Son shall crowns be made subject."
14. "Treasures of Kings I have not; riches have never fallen to my lot. My house is lowly and my dwelling needy; why then proclaim ye that my Son is King?"
15. "Great treasure is in thy Son, and wealth that suffices to make all rich; for the treasures of kings are impoverished, but He fails not nor can be measured."
16. "Whether haply some other be for you the King that is born, enquire ye concerning Him. This is the son of a lowly woman, of one who is not meet to look on a King."
17. "Can it be that light should ever miss the way whereon it has been sent? It was not darkness that summoned and led us; in light we walked, and thy Son is King."
18. "Lo! ye see a babe without speech, and the house of His mother empty and needy, and of that which pertains to a king nought is in it: how then in it is a king to be seen?"
19. "Lo! we see that without speech and at rest is the King, and lowly as thou hast said: but again we see that the stars in the highest He bids haste to proclaim Him."
20. "It were meet, O men, that ye should enquire who is the King, and then adore him; lest haply your way has been mistaken, and another is the King that is born."
21. "It were meet, O maiden, that thou shouldst receive it, that we have learned that thy Son is King, from the star of light that errs not, and plain is the way, and he has led us."
22. "The Child is a little one, and lo! he has not the diadem of a king and of a throne; and what have ye seen that ye should pay honour to Him, as to a king, with your treasures?"
23. "A little one, because He willed it for quietness' sake, and meek now until He be revealed. A time shall be for Him when all diadems shall bow down and worship Him."
24. "Armies he has none; nor has my Son legions and troops: in the poverty of His mother He dwells; why then King is He called by you?"
25. "The armies of thy Son are above; they ride on high, and they flame, and one of them it was that came and summoned us, and all our country was dismayed."
26. "The Child is a babe, and how is it possible He should be King, unknown to the world? And they that are mighty and of renown, how can a babe be their ruler?"
27. "Thy babe is aged, O Virgin, and Ancient of Days and exalted above all and Adam beside Him is very babe, and in Him all created things are made new."
28. "It is very seemly that ye should expound all the mystery and explain who it is that reveals to you the mystery of my Son, that He is a King in your region."

29. "It is likewise seemly for thee to accept this, that unless the truth had led us we had not wandered hither from the ends of the earth, nor come for the sake of thy Son."
30. "All the mystery as it was wrought among you there in your country, reveal ye to me now as friends. Who was He that called you to come to me?"
31. "A mighty Star appeared to us that was glorious exceedingly above the stars, and our land by its fire was kindled; that this King had appeared it bore tidings to us."
32. "Do not, I beseech you, speak of these things in our land lest they rage, and the kings of the earth join together against the Child in their envy."
33. "Be not thou dismayed, O Virgin! Thy Son shall bring to nought all diadems, and set them underneath his heel; and they shall not subdue Him Whom they envy."
34. "Because of Herod I am afraid, that unclean wolf, lest he assail me, and draw his sword and with it cut off the sweet cluster before it be ripe."
35. "Because of Herod fear thou not; for in the hands of thy Son is his throne placed: and as soon as He shall reign it shall be laid low, and his diadem shall fall on the earth beneath."
36. "A torrent of blood is Jerusalem, wherein the excellent ones are slain; and if she perceives Him she will assail Him. In mystery speak ye, and noise it not abroad."
37. "All torrents, and likewise swords, by the hands of thy Son shall be appeased; and the sword of Jerusalem shall be blunted, and shall not desire at all to kill."
38. "The scribes of the priests of Jerusalem pour forth blood and heed not. They will arouse murderous strife against me and against the Child; O Magi, be silent!"
39. "The scribes and the priests will be unable to hurt thy son in their envy; for by Him their priesthood shall be dissolved, and their festivals brought to nought."
40. "A Watcher revealed to me, when I received conception of the Babe, that my Son is a King; that His diadem is from on high and is not dissolved, he declared to me even as ye do."
41. "The Watcher, therefore, of whom thou hast spoken is he who came as a star, and was shown to us and brought us good tidings that He is great and glorious above the stars."
42. "That Angel declared to me in his good tidings, when he appeared to me, that to His Kingdom no end shall be and the mystery is kept and shall not be revealed."
43. "The Star also declared again to us that thy Son is He that shall keep the diadem. His aspect was something changed, and he was the Angel and made it not known to us."

44. "Before me when the Watcher showed himself, he called Him his Lord before He was conceived; and as the Son of the Highest announced Him to me: but where His Father is he made not known to me."
45. "Before us he proclaimed in the form of a star that the Lord of the Highest is He Who is born; and over the stars of light thy Son is ruler, and unless He commands they rise not."
46. "In your presence, lo! there are revealed other mysteries, that ye may learn the truth; how in virginity I bare my Son, and He is Son of God; go ye, proclaim Him!"
47. "In our presence the Star taught us that His Birth is exalted above the world and above all beings is thy Son, and is Son of God according to thy saying."
48. "The world on high and the world below bear witness to Him, all the Watchers and the stars, that He is Son of God and Lord. Bear ye His fame to your lands!"
49. "All the world on high, in one star, has stirred up Persia and she has learnt the truth, that thy Son is Son of God, and to Him shall all peoples be subject."
50. "Peace bear ye to your lands: peace be multiplied in your borders apostles of truth may ye be believed in all the way that ye shall pass through."
51. "The peace of thy Son, it shall bear us in tranquility to our land, as it has led us hither; and when His power shall have grasped the worlds, may He visit our land and bless it!
52. "May Persia rejoice in your glad tidings! may Assyria exult in your coming, And when my Son's Kingdom shall arise, may He plant His standard in your country!"
53. Let the Church sing with rejoicing," Glory in the Birth of the Highest, by Whom the world above and the world below are illumined!" Blessed be He in Whose Birth all are made glad!