Part B

Literary Analysis

Part B contains the second chapter.

Chapter II  Appreciation on the poet

This chapter contains one section

Section one: The Man behind the Mimre
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Chapter II   Section 1

The Man behind the Mimre

Introduction

Every creation of art communicates the thoughts, emotions, aspirations, experiences, observations etc., in total, the life, of the artist, and in this sense the artist’s personality is being transmitted through the artwork and hence the creation of something is an embodiment of the imaginations of the creator. It is in this sense Mar Jacob also writes,

“Glorious (šbih) is this image (šalmo) which proclaims the wonder of its Creator (tehro ‘al boruyo), that is, how wise (ḥakim), capable (meskah) and powerful (salî) He is!” (FMC IV 53-54).

Hence, the creation of God, to a certain extent, is the reflection of what and who God is.

Knickerbocker suggests, “Poems are the products of the poets confronted by their environment, and the poems become the value judgements on that environment. The poems of previous times therefore become documents or depositories where the human values of former ages are found”. When the poet creates his products, if he deals with individuals, human and psychological values emerge; if he deals with the society, social values emerge; and if the topic of the poem is something beyond external nature, metaphysical values emerge, in his poem. A review of all these values will positively help the researcher to draw a good picture of the poet.

Mar Jacob was not replicating in his mimre the Scriptural passages on ‘creation of man’; instead, he contextualised and poeticized them using his own very special poesy. Here, his personal, religious, moral, cultural, social, ideological, theological, psychological and philosophical concepts and influences are possible to affect his works. Hence, through an analysis of the works of the poet we can infer his thoughts and that will help us to know who he was, and what his attitudes, temperaments, responses, observations, valibres etc. were.

478 Knickerbocker, Interpreting Literature, 409.
Hence, I try, in this segment, to experience all those areas of the poet through analysing the whole mimre.

My attempt in this segment is to draw a variant picture of Mar Jacob using the pigments that ooze from his own artwork, the Four Mimre on ‘Creation’. Further, since the unparallel aromatic expressions that are employed in the mimre are best tools to measure the greatness of the poet, here, I try to highlight a few of them. An elucidation on the Dodecca Syllabic Metre that comes at the end of this segment will certainly contribute to the further discussion on the style of Mar Jacob.

II. 1. A. **Various facets of the poet that appear in the mimre**

A strong shake and a thorough coagulation of the Four Mimre of Mar Jacob ‘On Creation’ will certainly bring out the radiant facets of the poet. Not all the radiances of the poet are enlisted here below, but only towards a few of them our attention can be directed to.

II. 1. A. 1. **Pious Poet**

Mar Jacob of Sarug was a pious poet. When we call Mar Jacob a pious poet, it is not intended to label him as a religious poet. The steady mindfulness of the live divine presence with a person, his unwavering trust in God, his lenience on God for everything and at always, his constant invocation for the divine assistance etc. can be considered some of the main characteristics of a pious man. There is no need of evidences to prove that Mar Jacob was a pious and religious poet, because, he was an ardent devotee of God, whatever he had written were purely on divine topics and majority of them were based on Biblical topics.479 He used to invoke the divine blessings for every act in his life. This is more clear from his mimre,

especially from the Four Mimre ‘On Creation’.

II. 1. A. 1. i. **The rationale behind the divine invocation**

The intermittent invocation throughout the poem for divine intervention is one of the key features not only of a religious poem and poet but the same method is found employed also in other categories of poetry like epic, elegy etc.\(^{480}\) Each chapter of Mahabharata, the world famous Indian classical epic, begin with the invocation of the deity\(^ {481}\). A good number of verses at the very onset of Ramayana, another renowned Indian classic, are set apart for praising the divine idol. In ‘Paradise Lost’, an epic of the seventeenth century AD, which treats almost the same theme as in Mar Jacob’s ‘Four Mimre on Creation’, Milton, the poet, invokes several times the heavenly Muse’s blessings. At the very outset of the first book itself, this can be seen; “Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song.....”\(^ {482}\) and as he goes on, he repeats his prayer intermittently in books three, seven, nine etc.\(^ {483}\)

Although almost all Syriac fathers employ this method in their creations, Mar Jacob stands one step ahead of them in this regard. Thomas Kollamparampil attests that almost all prefaces of Jacob’s homilies are supplications for illumination to speak profitably for the hearers.\(^ {484}\) Almost the same kind of invocations can be seen in various mimre of Mar Jacob. Kollamparampil quotes from Bedjan’s Selected Homily of Mar Jacob of Sarug: “I would speak about you, my Lord, not that I will comprehend you, because you are infinite, but let me speak about you, how exalted you are above the preachers”.\(^ {485}\) The same prayer of the poet can be

\(^{480}\) Even according to the modern criteria also this feature is a constituent of an epic – see the segment, “Hellenic Influence in the Formation of the Mimre”, p. 693
\(^{481}\) Cf. Ezhuthachan, *Sri Mahabharatham* (Tr), 140 ff.
\(^{483}\) Cf. Ibid.
\(^{484}\) Cf. Kollamparampil, *Salvation in Christ according to Jacob of Sarug*, 38.
\(^{485}\) Ibid, 395.
seen in the first lines of the first mimro among the Four ‘On Creation’ (FMC I I ff).

The purpose behind this invocation is the assistance of the divinity in order to complete the composition successfully. Moreover, the subject matter of such works is beyond human capacity; hence a divine assistance is inevitable for the poet in order to narrate them through their works: “My Lord I am inadequate because your story is fearful and I am feeble, Your homily is rich and my tongue is poor and by what means shall I comprehend you?" 486

Sebastian Brock explains the rationale behind this attitude of the poets: “Since the human mind is part of creation, it is unable of its own accord to leap across this gap between the created and the Creator and to provide any description at all of the hidden Godhead. No theology, talking about God, would in fact be possible at all but for God’s own initiative and condescension: stirred by love for humanity, the culmination of it is creative activity, He Himself had crossed this gap and allowed Himself to be described in human language and in human terms in the Scriptures as part of the process of His self revelation”. 487

Almost every work of Mar Jacob begins with such invocations; for example, see his homily on Malkizedeq. 488

James Puthuparampil gives a few other examples. 489 Thomas kollamparampil quotes Mar Jacob’s prayer form the Fourth Homily ‘On Sodom’: “Open my lips, my Lord, to proclaim the riches of thy sweetness, and let a glorious homily of Thy Divinity issue out through my tongue. Grant me that I shall be an assiduous labourer of Thy Word and by which I shall complete the course of my life beautifully”. 490

Imagination is the main principle behind an artwork, because, “Poetry, then, is imaginative literature written in verse”. 491
utopian topics. But here Mar Jacob deals with a real stuff and hence he has to be factual and truthful to the events. For this reason he hands the bridle of his flying horses of imagination over to the divine charioteer to control and direct them through the right path and to the real destination. It is in this sense, in the mimre ‘On Creation’ that he requested God to fasten the skilled pen of divine doctrines with his fingers (FMC II 17).

One of the main themes of the mimre is the fall of Adam. Looking at this tragedy the poet fears his probable slips and consequent falls if he is not divinely guarded and guided. The poet is conscious that he also would become a blasphemer (FMC II 119) if he attempts to investigate into the divine issues and thus try to ascend to the mind of God instead of reverently looking at them just for learning only (FMC II 23-24, 115-118). Moreover, the poet aims at describing the heavenly affairs. Thomas Kollamparampil appreciates this attitude of the poet: “As a pastor of souls, Jacob was much preoccupied for the avoidance of heresy and the consequent damage to the faith of the Christian communities” 492

With the same attitude Mar Ephrem also warns against an attempt of investigation on the divine mysteries: “If you investigate the person of God, you will perish, but if you believe in the name, you will live. Let the name of the Father be a boundary to you, do not cross it and investigate His nature; let the name of the Son be a wall to you, do not cross it and investigate His birth from the Father; let the name of the Spirit be a fence for you, do not enter inside for the purpose of prying into it”. 493 Here, the safest means for the steadiness is to grab the divine hands, to go through the types and images and to distinguish their inner meanings. Thomas Kollamparampil underlines this practice of the early Church: “Typological exegesis is a common patrimony of the early Christian catechesis”. 494 James Puthuparampil asserts that this is the reason why the poets, especially eminent Syriac poets like Mar Ephrem, Mar Jacob and

492 Kollamparampil, Salvation in Christ According to Jacob of Serugh, 27.
493 As quoted by Kollamparampil, Ibid, 394.
494 Ibid, 96.
many others adopt typological method in order to narrate the divine mysteries.\textsuperscript{495} Being fully conscious of the limitations of the human intellect Mar Jacob, in one of the homilies, ridicules those who attempt to investigate on divine mysteries: “One glorified himself to investigate your birth, and he became a mockery, because he imagined that he knew, yet he was not aware that he did not know you. There is the ‘wise’ person who become puffed up with (book-) learning so as to speak of you, my Lord, but he was driven off because he assaulted you”\textsuperscript{496}

Any attempt to investigate on the mysteries of God was condemned by the early Syriac Fathers and Mar Ephrem was one of the pioneers in attacking any such insolent attempt. They stood firm on this standpoint in order to refute the Arian and other heresies that extolled man’s ability to look into the affairs of God. P. J Botha mentions this attitude of the early Syriac Fathers, especially of Mar Ephrem: “As a result of his deep-seated aversion to the Arian notion of man being able to ‘investigate’ or ‘comprehend’ God, St. Ephrem is eager to emphasise the fact that not even angels, who are much better informed than man, can penetrate the nature of the relationship between Father and Son. No angel is comparable to Christ or to the Father: ‘There is none who can sit next to him, besides the Offspring which is from him .... If the angels would try to investigate him, they reach silence and are restrained’ (Hymn on Faith 4:1)”.\textsuperscript{497} Mar Jacob of Sarug also considers any attempt of investigating into the mysteries of God as insolence and as part of his refusal against Arian heresy, his thoughts in this regard is also attuned to that of Ephrem. He asks in his homily ‘On Nativity’, “Yet this manifest birth of yours is not at all revealed to the investigators, so how, therefore, is one able to speak about that hidden (birth)?”\textsuperscript{498} And he scoffs at those who make attempts to investigate on God, “There is the ‘wise person, who became puffed up with (book) learning so as to speak of you,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{495} Cf. Puthuparampil, “Mariological thought of Mar Jacob of Serugh”, \textit{Harp}, XVIII, 267.
\item \textsuperscript{496} Kollamparampil, Op. cit. 396.
\item \textsuperscript{497} Botha, “Fire Mingled with Spirit: St. Ephrem’s Views on Angels and the Angelic life of Christians”, \textit{Harp}, VIII, IX, 95.
\item \textsuperscript{498} Kollamparampil, \textit{Jacob of Sarug’s Homilies on the Nativity}, 20.
\end{itemize}
my Lord, but he was driven off because he assaulted you”.\footnote{Ibid, 192.} The poet explains in the same homily the fear of the angels, even though they are very close to God, to ask God about His plans. This we see from the answer of the angel of the Lord to the question of Mary, ‘how it will happen ?’\footnote{Cf. LK. 1/34.} “Your offspring is not investigated by us because He is the Power of the Most High. Searching for Him is hidden, and except without love, it is not to be undertaken. When I was sent to bring His good news I did not investigate Him. I have made you hear what I have heard without arguing. I raised no question regarding it, ‘How it would happen’, because I was not daring to ask a question, I had kept silence”\footnote{Kollamparampil, Jacob of Sarug’s Homilies on the Nativity, 48.}.\footnote{Hansbury, “Love as an exegetical principle in Jacob of Sarug”, Harp. XXVII, 356.} The poet’s fear of a probable slip is more visible from the Four Mimre ‘On Creation’:

“As I meditate, it is not for scrutinizing you that I enter; may I not be perplexed to know who you are in your essence. On this, our image of dust, my word has been shaken; as an insolent, may I not dare to find out your essence. Even the angels can not comprehend your narrations, because, your discourse is hidden from the heavenly as well as the earthly beings” (FMC II 23-28).

Mary Hansbury, based on the thoughts of Bou Mansour, discloses Mar Jacob’s teachings on one’s proper disposition towards the sacred things: “The conditions which Jacob presents for an understanding of God and of the mysteries (raze) of faith: simplicity (hedyututa); discernment (pursanuta or buyana); prayer (slotha); wonder (tehra); faith (haymanuta); love (huba)”\footnote{The concept of the poet on the human physiology is discussed in the segment, “Anthropological Concepts in}.\footnote{Hansbury, “Love as an exegetical principle in Jacob of Sarug”, Harp. XXVII, 356.} In this situation it is noticeable that the early fathers of the church consider the heart, and not brain, of man as the seat of wisdom. While the brain tries to investigate on the issues, the heart passionately receives what is revealed to it. So, learning, for them, is not a process of investigation; but it is a feeling of being with the almighty. Mar Jacob also considers heart as the treasury of all treasures\footnote{FMC IV 127-128.}.
Being fully conscious of the insufficiency of human powers to discern the divine mysteries, the poet says,

“And a debate (bo‘to) is useless, because, I will introduce your genealogy (garbo).
Yes my son, what compelled me is not to investigate, but to learn” (FMC II 114-115).

So, according to the poet, an investigation into the divine affairs will be considered a blasphemy (FMC II 119). The wise and better disposition of the one who attempts to speak on God is that he should accept first that every thing rests in His reason and that greatness can’t be crossed over (FMC II 125-126). All the prayers of the poet are with this disposition: “The search of the scribes to investigate all has failed; and all the wise were agitated as they sought to explain him, but was unexplainable. They assaulted to investigate him, but he was uninvestigable. They dared to trace him out, but he was untraceable. This one said this, and that one said thus. They despised themselves by speaking about the inexpressible Word”504

II. 1. A. 1. ii. Scriptural background

Mar Jacob had strictly followed the rout of the Holy Bible. In the Holy Scripture we see that when Moses disclosed his ineloquence, God said, “I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say”.505 The prophet Isaiah says, “The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens me morning by morning; He awakens my ear to hear as the learned”.506 An angel purifies the lips of Isaiah with a fiery coal from the altar so that he may proclaim the word of God. The hands of God were stretched out to Ezekiel, the prophet, to hand over him a scroll of a book. As he was commanded, the prophet ate the scroll, on both sides of which was written

the Mimre”, p. 355 ff.
504 As quoted by Kollampampil, Salvation in Christ according to Jacob of Serugh, 20.
505 Ex. 4/12.
506 Is. 50/4. 506 - a Is. 6.6
the word of God that is to be spoken, and he tasted it as sweet as honey.\textsuperscript{507} God invites the prophet to receive His words into his hearts (not to his intellect) and to hear them with his ears.\textsuperscript{508} God puts His words into the mouths of the prophets.\textsuperscript{509} Jesus Christ promises the help of the Holy Spirit to His disciples to speak.\textsuperscript{510} St. Paul requests the prayers of the faithful to receive the utterances from above, to open his mouth boldly and to disclose the mysteries.\textsuperscript{511} St. John was asked to write in a book what is shown to him by God.\textsuperscript{512} These are only few examples for the explicit seeking for and extending the divine assistance. Since Mar Jacob was a passionate follower of the word of God, when he ventured to expound a significant Biblical theme, it was only right and natural for him to submit himself totally to the will of the Supreme. It is in this sense the poet writes,

\begin{quote}
\textit{“Double in my lips, the fair rose that is in your treaties”} (FMC II 15)  
\textit{“You speak of yourself, because, there is no means for any man to speak about you”} (FMC I 18) etc.
\end{quote}

II. 1. A. 1. iii. Invocations in the Four Mimre ‘On Creation’

The first twenty verses of the first mimro, thirty six lines at the beginning of the second mimro and the first eighteen verses of the third mimro, besides the intermittent prayers, are the best examples of Mar Jacob’s humbleness before God and for his invocations for the divine assistance. He is always submissive to the supremacy of God and hence he feels himself only a dutiful servant (po’lo) to His ordinances (FMC II 4, 242). He wishes that God be his master (rabo) (FMC II 5), manager (qoyumo) (FMC II 10), director (FMC II 11 ff.), commander (rab haylo) (FMC II 19), teacher (FMC III 4) etc. So, admitting his weakness, he asks the help of the Supreme Being for everything. Since God’s mimre is greater than all the speakers (FMC I

\textsuperscript{507} Cf. Ezek. 2/9 ff.  
\textsuperscript{508} Cf. Ezek 3/10.  
\textsuperscript{509} Cf. Jer. 1/9, Is. 51/16, Deut. 18/18.  
\textsuperscript{510} Cf. Luke.12/12.  
\textsuperscript{511} Cf. Eph. 6/19.  
\textsuperscript{512} Cf. Rev.1/11.
1) he asks the permission of God to speak on Him and thus to reveal His majesty (*FMC I* 2). The poet is conscious of the power of the word of God and the powerlessness of the human word, because, all human words will collapse before the Divine Word (*FMC I* 3). Since God’s Word is exalted above all (I 8, IV 408), no human word is powerful enough to reach it (*FMC I* 4). Hence the poet asks for the divine word to be spoken through him so that he may narrate the discourse (*FMC I* 5, I 8). The poet’s barren words will become fruitful only when God makes it productive (*FMC II* 1).

The poet is sure that only an acquaintance with God is essential for his tongue to bring forth the glorious fruits (*FMC II* 2). Since the topic is incomprehensible he asks permission to speak on it (*FMC II* 21). The expressions of the poet’s willingness to meditate on the scholarship, to be a labourer to the ordinances of the Lord, to become a humble disciple to the great master and a lawful defender to the instructions of the teacher, through out his life, can be seen at the very outset of the second mimro (*FMC II* 3-6). He is ready to give himself totally to the master, hence he asks for taking his whole limbs to be managed and controlled by the master (*FMC II* 9-10). He entrusts God his whole organs to be controlled and used by Him: his vision to be directed to the image of God’s inscriptions (*FMC II* 11-12), his tongue to be dug diligently in the vineyard of God’s mysteries and to reveal the secrets (*FMC II* 13-14), his lips, so that it shall not attend to with weak expressions on the mysteries and also the treatises shall be doubled in the lips (*FMC II* 15-16), his fingers to be fastened with skilled pen of God’s doctrines in order to figure the great image in characters (*FMC II* 17-18), his senses to be commanded by God as a zealous commander in order to make them fight to overcome the detestable silence (*FMC II* 19-20).

He begs pardon in advance for the probable shortcomings (*FMC II* 21-30), because, not even the angels have the power to comprehend the genealogy as it is hidden from heavenly as
well as earthly beings (FMC II 27). If so, how much feeble will be the human being to venture? He wishes that he totally be controlled by God lest his attempt should be an investigation (FMC II 23), thus he should be an insolent (FMC II 26) and it should be an effort to diminish God’s essence (FMC II 24). He trembles to touch the hidden mystery (FMC II 25) and fears to approach the genealogy (FMC II 30). Even while the theme is being discussed seriously in the mimre, his subconscious mind reminds him of the solemnity of the matter, his unworthiness to discuss on it (FMC III 4) and such kind of searching is unsuitable and a woe to him (FMC II 109-120, ). The poet calls himself as a hired labourer (FMC II 242) whose duty is to produce the product not relying on his own knowledge alone (FMC II 243-244) but by partaking in his master’s richness.

The third mimro also starts with the prayer for the permission from above. The poet sees that God gave a garden of blessings to Adam and raised the insolent transgressor from the dust (FMC III 3, 5, 7). This is a credible reason for him also for asking permission and blessings for entering into the riches (FMC III 2), increasing his words (FMC III, 6) giving proper expressions (FMC III 8) for his narration etc. He fears that his narration might become superfluous (FMC III 11) and thus he would violate God’s commandments (FMC III 12), and become a blasphemer (FMC II 119); thus he calls himself a boaster (FMC III 10).

Unusually the fourth mimro starts neither with the invocation nor with the narration of poet’s meekness. He directly enters into the topic of the benevolence of God. The fourth mimre can be considered an addendum as well as a conclusion to the other three. It is also noticeable that the poet never behaves ungrateful to the benevolences he received from above. Each syllable of the mimre is drawn by the poet in full consciousness of the presence of and with the help of the divine power. And since he cannot but be grateful to the almighty, besides the intermittent slogans of praises, when each mimre among the four is completed, we see genuine
expressions of gratitude, especially at the end of each mimre: “Blessed be the maker” (*FMC* II 308), “Blessed be the Messiah” (*FMC* III 1079), “Blessed is the one who renews” (*FMC* IV 468) etc. The Mimre ‘On Creation’ is a best testimonial to label Mar Jacob as a pious poet.

II. 1. A. 2. **Passionate lover of beauty**

The mimre draws the picture of Mar Jacob as an ardent lover of beauty and nature. And his excitement on beauty facilitates him to keep his mind ever pleasant. David Lane gives a narration on the process of appreciating beauty and on the prime objective one should have behind such appreciations. According to him, the concept of beauty must not be constrained in its physical realm alone; it must transcend from there to a sublime realm and then to the realm of God, “This happens because beauty is not only a physical attractiveness, but also a mental or spiritual one. And this leads to the Word of God. Or, in the classical Syriac terms, from *pagaro* (body) to *naphsho* (soul), and on to *ruho* (spirit)”. 513 We see that Mar Jacob had already adopted the same path and his concept on beauty consists not only in the physical realm, but he relates it with the beauty of the image of man and through it ultimately with God.

II. 1. A. 2. i. **Passion of the poet**

The passion for beauty of Mar Jacob can be inferred from his Four Mimre ‘On Creation’, where we see him enjoying the wonder and attractiveness of the created things. But he doesn’t allow himself to be entangled by it, instead, this enables him to reach the Creator and to stand before Him with folded hands and to admire His skilfulness. That is why very often the poet exclaims,

“*Behold, the skill of the creator: how glorious (mhiruto) it is!*” (*FMC* II 167)

“Glorious (šbih) is this image (šalmo) which proclaims the wonder of its Creator (tehro ‘al boruyo), that is, how wise (hakim), capable (meskah) and powerful (šalit) He is!” (FMC IV 53-54).


The aesthetic concept of the poet can clearly be seen when he discloses how the mind of Eve had functioned when she was attracted by the beauty of the fruit and tree at the centre of the Garden (FMC III 518 ff.). Actually the poet’s mind on beauty is disclosed there; the obsession of Eve on the fruit was really the poet’s own sentiments on an attractive object, but certainly not in a sinful manner. Another explicit outpouring of the poet’s aesthetic conscience is the description of the beautification of the bride and bridegroom (FMC IV 158 ff.).

For the poet, the beauty of an object is not its outer attractiveness alone but it is its intrinsic worth with its purity, integrity and perfection and it is related to its relevance in the universe as well as before God. So, according to him, the most beautiful thing in the universe is the image of man (FMC IV 111-112), because, it is the image of God, the perfection of all beauties. The poet goes to the extent of declaring the infinity of the comeliness of the image:

“Whole beauties (supren supren) of all generations (dren dren) were embroidered (ptak) in it
and it was made a grand beauty (ṣupro rabo) which was infinite” (FMC IV 103-104).

According to the poet, besides the resemblance of God in man, the inclusion of all material elements in the image (FMC IV 15 ff.), perfect and logical arrangement of each limb on it (FMC IV 101 ff, 113 ff.), the gift of freedom of choice (FMC II 141 ff.) etc. are that make the image most beautiful.

Looking at the beauty and greatness of the image Mar Jacob exclaims, ‘marvellous’ (FMC II 163) and he describes its beauty as,

“The image (ṣalmo) is great, rich in colour (‘atir gayno) and (with) comely embroideries (pe šurto)” (FMC II 274),

“His creation was great, sublime (romo), comely (payo) and full of charms (malyo ṣupro)” (FMC IV 149)

and “Out of them He made a comely image (ṣurto pito) which was full of beauties (malyo ṣupro)” (FMC IV 156).

The poet doesn’t hide his thrill in getting the chance of poeticizing such a marvellous image (FMC II 287 ff). He likes to picturize Adam as the totality of all beauties of the world (FMC IV 21 ff):

“When He created, He created all kinds of beauties (kul ṣupre) according to their natures (kyono)
and He came and comprehended (sayek/suk) all the beauties (kul ṣupre) in the beauty of Adam (ṣupreh dodom)” (FMC IV 19-20, 33 ff.).

The poet extols the exalted beauty of this image which is capable enough to create envy in the mind of Satan514 (FMC IV 64).

II. 1. A. 2. ii. The poet bewails at the loss of beauty

Artists, especially poets, while being devotees of the beauty, cannot tolerate any kind of deformation to any beautiful objects. Many classical poems under the category of threnody are written lamenting over the loss of beauty of objects or people. Since the poet was very much

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514 For the poet’s notions on the comeliness of the image, see the segment, “Image and Likeness of God in Man”, p. 281 ff. and 285 ff.
fascinated in the comeliness of the image, the main reason that made him so worried is the loss of the beauty of the image. He could look at the destruction of the beauty of the image in the grave only with shedding tears (*FMC* I 208-210) and he viewed the dissolution of each and every element and parts that adorned the image with the same sad mood (*FMC* IV 69 ff):

> “But the comely graces (*supro payo*), which were covetable, were dissolved and it was burned fiercely, and all the beautiful forms (*šurto şapirto*) had fallen down (*npal*) into destruction (*ebono*)” (*FMC* IV 95-96),
> “The whole well arranged beauties (*supro sdiro*) were trampled and destroyed” (*FMC* IV 144).

Thus he makes a philosophical statement on the transience of beauty:

> “But when a man is dead, his beautiful forms (*šurto şapirto*) fall off; this shows how the beauties (*supro*) of the whole world disappear” (*FMC* IV 333-334)

and

> “You shall not go astray in this covetous world; for, it corrupts by itself and its beauties (*supro*) decay and the turbulence of its desires ceases” (*FMC* IV 367-368).

Quite often he laments over the destruction of the beauty of the image (*supro dšalmo*) (*FMC* IV 59, 88, 95 ff., 106 ff., 110, 143 ff, 187 ff.). It is not the destruction of the image’s beauty alone that disturbs the poet, but he is also agitated at the sight of the destruction of the beauties of the world (*FMC* IV 336 ff.), the destruction of the beautiful tablets (*FMC* I 113) etc. The grief of the poet at the destruction of the beautiful necklace (*FMC* IV 105-110) is one of the best examples for proving the obsession of the poet in attractive objects.

Even in the prayers of Mar Jacob of Sarug, we see his infatuation in beauty and his bewailing over its destruction; for example, “O Soul, depiction of the Kingdom, who has stripped you of your beauty and mocked you? For look how ugly you are with your many evil deeds”.

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515 Brock, “A Prayer Song by St. Jacob of Serugh recovered”, *Harp*, XVI, 351.
II. 1. A. 2. iii. **The contempt of the poet**

Mar Jacob, the infatuated lover of beauty, scorns those who can’t appreciate and take pleasure from the beauty of the created things. This can be seen from his reproach on Eve for her negligence in realizing the beauty beside her at the Garden while she was hastening in her covetousness for snatching the fruit. Here, the poet scorns at her saying,

“There she did not gush forth (gulh/goh) and look on its surroundings” (FMC III 521),
“No other beauties (supro) attracted her, so that, she may consider them” (FMC III 525),
“She did not incline to see the beauty (supro) that was in Paradise” (FMC III 534) etc.

This was an invitation also of the poet to the followers of the mimre to enjoy the beauty of all things that are skilfully created by God.

Mar Jacob goes even to the extent of saying that God’s main intention of sending His only begotten Son to the world was to safeguard the comeliness of the image of man:

“God descended, so that, the beautiful one (sapiro) (image) may not perish” (FMC I 93)

and “On account of this big shame of the comely image (šalmo payo), the Son of the King (prince) came down to renew His image which was disfigured” (FMC IV 193-194).

Hence, it is affirmed that Mar Jacob, the outstanding poet, was an ardent lover of beauty.

II. 1. A. 3. **Psychologist and Psychiatrist**

At least a basic acquaintance with the principles of psychology will add greatness to poets and their application in the poems will make the poetry more appealing as well as acceptable. A poet, who elaborates the mindset of his characters, even though it is imagination, is actually a good psychologist who analyses the characters’ mind at the given situation, because “Psychology touches almost every facet of our lives”.\(^{516}\) Since a poet has to go into every phases of human life, a background of psychology is essential. Even though Mar Jacob

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\(^{516}\) Hilgard, *Introduction to Psychology*, 4.
was not a trained psychologist or psychiatrist, the Four Mimre of Mar Jacob ‘On Creation’ reveals his proficiency in this field.

The raw material of psychology is the mind of man and the basis of psychiatry is the mind-body relationship. If the ancient definition of Psychology was, “The science of mental life, both its phenomena and their conditions”\(^\text{517}\) the modern definition is, “It is the scientific study of behaviour”\(^\text{518}\) But both the aspects are not contrary but complementary; hence psychology is the science that studies behaviour and mental process\(^\text{519}\). Mar Jacob was not second to any one in the psycho-analysis, in describing the soul-body relationship and in analysing behaviours and mannerisms of his characters. Even though, in the mimre, he did not synonymise mind with soul, his descriptions on the soul of man can be seen as psycho-analysis. The thesis of the poet on the mind (soul) - body relation is,

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{“He did not give the body, a lasting life without the soul nor (did He give) sensibility to the soul without the body.} \\
\text{The life of the soul without the body is without feeling; } \\
\text{in the same manner, the body that is set upon its dust is without life.} \\
\text{All what these mean is that one needs its companion,} \\
\text{because, one neither knows nor exists without the other” (FMC II 189-194).}
\end{array}
\]

Mar Jacob assumes that Satan also has a mind. As a well-versed mind reader, the poet elicits each plan of Satan (FMC III 287 ff.). This logical description on the step by step development of thoughts that progresses in the mind of Satan (FMC III 303-316) is a precise instance of the poet’s psychological approach to his topic. The serpent’s dialogues with Eve in order to seduce her are yet another best example of strong psychological basis of the poet (FMC III 401 ff.). The poet reads the mind of the serpent and tells how many roles he takes to make him acceptable to Eve (FMC III 333 ff.). He describes in detail the tricks the serpent adopts in order to seduce the silly girl, Eve, as if the serpent knows her mind (FMC III 334 ff.):

\(^{517}\) Ibid, 12
\(^{518}\) Ibid.
\(^{519}\) Ibid.
“He seduced her soul as if he does not know how it is: it resembled to hear that, as a wise man, he was giving a counsel” (FMC III 363-364).

The poet analyses the activities of Eve and finds out the basic causes that led her and her spouse’s total destruction; many of which are purely on psychological basis:

“The pride seized her, so that, the supremacy shall be introduced in the history; and behold, in her tumult, she behaved haughtily against Adam also” (FMC III 503-504),

“The sin had struck (mahet) her conscience (re’yono) and it perverted her and she did not set herself to approach towards propriety” (FMC III 543-544) etc.

If she had approached the tree for the want of food alone it might have been forgiven because it is a physical as well as psychological need. But the poet affirms that it was not her hunger that led her towards the tree, but,

“The hateful lust (regto snito) had burst forth from the freedom (hiruto) and it carried her towards the beauty (payuto) of that tree” (FMC III 517-518).

The poet’s portrayal on the emotional flight of Eve’s mind at her sight of the tree and the fruit at the centre of the Garden (FMC III 517 ff.) not only exposes his highly commendable imagination but it is a confirmation also of his sound psychological base.

“In principle, all psychological events are represented in some manner by the activity of the brain and nervous system in conjunction with other body systems”. This basic principle of psychology enables the poet to analyse the Garden events accordingly and to come to the conclusion that it is the mind of man that enjoys the pleasure of sin at its beginning (FMC III 593, 597 etc.) and the unpleasant result of sin at its completion harmfully affects the same mind, soul and thoughts. Hence he writes,

“She coveted iniquity (rgot ‘avlo) (and) this caused the soul to regret” (FMC III 583),

“The reproof (maksonuto) was brought forth from his conscience (regyono)” (FMC III 586) etc.

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520 Hilgard explains that longing for food is human psychological as well as a physical urge. Cf. Ibid, 306.
521 Ibid, 5.
This prick of conscience makes Adam and Eve to blame each other (FMC III 588, 780 etc).

The humanistic approach in psychology holds the view that a man must take up the responsibility of his actions: “An individual is free to choose and to determine his actions. Consequently, each person is responsible for his actions and cannot blame the environment, his parents, or circumstances for what he does”.\textsuperscript{522} Mar Jacob had already found out one of such psychological as well as adverse results of the sin:

“\textit{The confidence (tuklono) which accompanied them in the Garden had fled and fear (qentọ) came and stood before them with terror}” (FMC III 577-578).

Due to this mental struggle, the poet finds,

“\textit{And due to their terror they began to tremble to the extent of falling down}” (FMC III 580).

It is a common understanding in psychology that if a man has prick of conscience upon his own error, it will create in him a feeling that everyone and everything are against him and this, in turn, makes him fearful: “Any situation that threatens the well-being of the organism is assumed to produce a state of anxiety ...... By anxiety we mean the unpleasant emotion characterised by the terms ‘worry’, ‘apprehension’, ‘dread’, and ‘fear’ that we all experience at times in varying degrees”.\textsuperscript{523} Mar Jacob had already applied this psychological principle on Adam and Eve and says,

“\textit{The fear (qentọ) which shot up from all sides had terrified (balhi) them}” (FMC III 604),

“\textit{Due to their trembling (zaveto), what so ever they had seen, had stupefied them}” (FMC III 657)

and

“\textit{When they became fearful (dheḷ), they remained shaken like thieves}” (FMC III 689).

The poet discloses the same feeling of Adam and Eve at their vision of angel who was appointed to watch the tree with the fiery sword at the centre of the Garden of Eden (FMC III

\textsuperscript{522} Ibid, 10.
\textsuperscript{523} Ibid, 440.
1049 ff.). When the poet narrates on the pain of the infliction of thorns when the fugitives were running from the Paradise (FMC III 1073 ff.), he considers it also not as a physical pain but on a psychological base, as a prick of thorn in the heart. This we can infer from his statement,

“Also, it was right that the chief part of the thorns to come up: it should become (painful) for him, because, the seed is also from himself” (FMC III 1077-1078).

Nakedness of Adam and Eve is also conceived by the poet psychologically (FMC III 571 ff.). For him, their nakedness was not the exposure of physical parts, especially genital organs before others; instead, it is the disclosure of their corrupted inner self in public.\(^{524}\) That is why he says,

“The iniquity (‘avlo) drove the innocence (pșituto) away from them and instead of it (innocence), it (iniquity) carried-in the remorse of the soul (tvot napɔ) in order to scourge (nged) them” (FMC III 575-576).

And when the poet speaks of the new tunic made for Adam and Eve by God, there also, he puts it in psychological terms, that is, it was not a cloth made on a beam that covered their nakedness but it was their feeling of being removed from the mental fear and being covered by the grace of God that saved them from their shame of nudity (FMC III 1001-1014).

All the exegeses given in the mimre are Mar Jacob’s psychological attempts to discern the thoughts of God. One, among the many of such explicit examples, where the poet tries to disclose God’s mind, is,

“The Creator wished that Adam should become great like God” (FMC I 203). Even a movement of God was also analysed by the poet on psychological basis. Thus, the rattling of the foot steps of God was for reminding Adam and Eve of the presence of God, of their sin and also of the need for their repentance (FMC III 697 ff.). Mar Jacob tries to discern the mind of God based on God’s question; “where are you Adam” (FMC III 713 ff.). He says,

\(^{524}\) This aspect of sin is discussed in the segment, “Sin as the Soteriological Causality”, p. 557 ff.
“In this ‘where are you’, through this, He indicated to him; ‘seek your soul, make a prayer and approach Me, so that, I may be in agreement with you’” (FMC III 733-734).

And while explaining the meaning of ‘dust’ (FMC III 953 ff.) the poet was actually giving its psychological implications on Adam.

A better psychological know-how of the poet can be seen also at the scenes of verdicts, especially on Eve (FMC III 889 ff., 897 ff., 921 ff.), where we see that he emphasises God’s mercy, consolations and gifts (FMC III 888 ff.) as balancing mechanisms so that the judgments shall not psychologically affect the culprits adversely. Thus he writes,

“He wisely bestowed the pain together with the gift, because, when He smote her, He scourged her (in such a way), so that it should not curtail (kari/kro) her” (FMC III 909-910).

The psychological perception of the poet enables him to consider the psychological as well as physical feebleness of woman. So, the poet takes special attention to depict the trial of God on the crime of Eve in its maximum possible mildest form where the questioning is described almost like whispering (r ’tam) in her ears (FMC III 803 ff.). This becomes clearer from the poet’s description on the verdict against the serpent, where,

“The Judge shouted (z’aq dayono) against the serpent without any question” (FMC III 811).

The narration of the poet on the defence mechanism adopted by Adam and Eve at the time of their inquisition shall also be seen as his psychological expertise. Psychologists say the most primitive defence against external threat is the denial of reality – the individual tries to block out disturbing realities by refusing to acknowledge them. They continue by saying that rationalisation of a folly is one of the often used methods in defence mechanism and as part of rationalising we try to find out so many excuses: “In the search for the ‘good’ reason rather than the ‘true’ reason, a number of excuses can be put forth. These excuses are usually plausible, and the circumstances they justify may be true ones; they simply do not tell the
whole story” 525 It seems that Mar Jacob had already this psychological theory in his mind; the poet draws our attention to the attempt of Adam and Eve to find excuses for their sins:

“He began fabricating excuses to escape from accusation as if he had never approached the crime that happened there” (FMC III 737-738, 801).

Considering the search for excuses for hiding truth a negative attitude, the poet ridicules this disposition of the first parents:

“So then, the thief, to whom you certainly ought to listen: God or Eve, the one who transgressed the law?” (FMC III 781-782).

The main intentions of the poet in describing at a good length the vision of the arrival of messiah (IV 233 ff.), of the brightness of the new world and brilliance of the renewed image (FMC IV 407 ff.) etc. were psychological in order to give hope on the coming world to the faithful who follow the mimre. The new world is pictured in the mimre as the perfect place of bliss in order to generate an eagerness in the mind of people so as to seek that kingdom and to equip themselves to reach this new world.

When he declares,

“Jealousy (ḥ’somo) will come and it will bring forth ulcer (ṣuhno), its pain is severe” (FMC II 260),

it can be considered a natural outcome from the psychiatric information the poet had. With the same mind he states the adverse effects of sin on one’s body (FMC IV 364-380). Thus he was ascertaining the psychosomatic aspect of sin. While narrating this, he might have had in his mind the curing of the paralytic by Jesus Christ who said to the paralyzed, “Your sins are forgiven” 526 and established the relationship between sin and sickness. Mar Jacob discloses also the extremity of jealousy in Satan,

“The deceitful devil was struck(bla’) by jealousy (ḥsomo) on account of his (Adam’s) freedom (ḥiruto)” (FMC III 182).

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526 Mk. 2/5.
The poet describes the disturbances and pains jealousy causes as,

“They all suffered pain and anguish” (FMC III 185).

And he states that due to the sin,

“Jealousy (hsomo) entered among the charming ones and perturbed them” (FMC IV 179).

Hence the poet affirmed that sin is the venom that pollutes the body and soul and generates severe ulcer in man. In his six festal prose homilies also Mar Jacob speaks of ulcer caused by the same reason. As the psychiatrists do Mar Jacob also prescribes medicine for the cure of ulcer, even though it was not scientific but spiritual:

“Heal your ulcers (suho) through gentle drops of tears” (FMC IV 379).

But in his festal homilies the remedy for the disease is fasting which is co-existant along with the repentance.

Not much descriptions are needed from the mimre to expound the psychological knowhow of the poet.

II. 1. A. 4. Moral instructor: Values expressed in the mimre

A poet sometimes becomes a corrective force to the society and to a certain extent, he warns the world of its forthcoming disasters; thus the poet rises to the level of a prophet also. A poet, who is conscious of his greater responsibilities towards the society deals in his poems with the values of the society. Thus analysts opine, “Poems are the products of poets confronted by their environment, and the poems become value judgements on that environment”. They insist on values like psychological, social, metaphysical, moral, religious and many more. Mar Jacob in his mimre deals with such kinds of values and thus he can be considered a moral instructor of the society.

527 Cf. Kollamparampil, Salvation in Christ According to Jacob of Serugh, 161.
528 Cf. Ibid, 161.
529 Knickerbocker, Interpreting Literature, 409.
Mar Jacob was a cleric and later became a Corepiscopa and Bishop. Thomas Kollamparampil gives a detailed narration on the birth, life, ministry and death of Mar Jacob where he speaks of Mar Jacob’s Corspiscopal and Episcopal ministry.\textsuperscript{530} Since his life was dedicated for the service of man as well as of God, his most important activity was leading people in the right way towards eternity. Mar Jacob found poetry as one of the best media for conveying his message to the faithful. Thus all the works of Mar Jacob are exegeses and exhortations, but with all the ingredients of a good poem. The Four Mimre of Mar Jacob ‘On Creation’ is the best example for his ethical exhortations.

Sufficient space is given in the mimre for the narration of the progress of Satan’s (\textit{FMC III} 287 ff.) and of the serpent’s (\textit{FMC III} 333 ff.) cunning plans to deceive Adam and Eve. Long portrayals can be seen on the transgression of Eve (\textit{FMC III} 497-516), on the development of lustful thoughts in her mind (\textit{FMC III} 517 ff.), on impropriety\textsuperscript{531} (\textit{FMC III} 535 ff.) etc. The main purpose of the poet behind all these narrations was to equip people to discern such situations in their real life and to help them to escape from the occasions of committing iniquity.

His illustrations on the spitefulness of sin\textsuperscript{532} are certainly intended to create an aversion against iniquity. By using all possible harsh words against the agents of sin\textsuperscript{533} (\textit{FMC III} 289 ff, 317 ff, \textit{IV} 175 ff.) as well as against the sinners (\textit{FMC III} 387 ff, 735, 741 etc.) and by unveiling the devastative nature of death and Sheol\textsuperscript{534} (\textit{FMC I} 208 ff, \textit{IV} 92 ff, 143 ff, 331 ff.), the poet was trying to generate in the minds of the faithful the fear upon and hatred against iniquity and Satan; thus he helps them to flee from the possibility of being caught under the clutches of sin.

\textsuperscript{531} See the impropriety of the actions of Eve in the segment, “Anthropological Concepts in the Mimre”, p. 393 ff.
\textsuperscript{532} The poet’s notions on this aspect is discussed in the section, “Sin as the Soteriological Causality”, p.539 ff.
\textsuperscript{533} These agents are Satan and the serpent; see the section, “Narrations of the Non-corporal Beings”, p. 486 ff.
\textsuperscript{534} See ‘Eschatological Destinations’ in the segment, “Eschatological Perceptions of the Poet”, p. 588 ff.
He teaches elsewhere in the mimre about the transitory characteristic of the pleasures of sin (E.g. FMC 589, 591-593, 597, IV 367 ff.). Admonishing those who run after worldly pleasures, he states,

“Evil is immeasurably beloved for its makers
and iniquity is more beloved (for them) than a multitude of righteousness” (FMC III 531-532).

Lengthy narration on the nakedness as the result of sin (FMC III 571 ff.), event by event illustration on the trial and punishments on the sinners (FMC III 793 ff.), on the expulsion from the Paradise (FMC III 1041 ff.) etc. are deliberately included in the mimre as part of his responsibility in his capacity of a moral and religious teacher to make the people conscious of the dreadfulness of sin.

Mar Jacob always tries to demonstrate the close association between sin and death. As a moral teacher he explicitly warns people showing them the real nature of sin:

“Woe to you, oh, soul, while you have inclined towards the love of the world; pull back the hand from its affairs, for, they are not lasting. Shackles are its love, cut it off and escape with legs; take care of you, before it makes you fall: you are also in calamity” (FMC IV 369-372)

and he exhorts them to be mindful of the fire of hell (FMC IV 375 ff.). Pointing out the atrociousness of sin, the poet warns,

“You shall not go astray in this covetous world; for, it corrupts by itself and its beauties decay and the turbulence of its desires ceases” (FMC IV 367-368).

Within the Four Mimre ‘On Creation’, we find the poet’s philosophical statements which are part of his moral exhortations and which are universally applicable for ever:

“Some times silence causes damage to those who keep it and some times question will eject death” (FMC III 495-496), “The hateful lust had burst forth from the freedom” (FMC III 517), “Evil is immeasurably beloved for its makers and iniquity is more beloved (for them) than a multitude of righteousness”

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535 *The poet’s concept of nakedness as the result of sin is narrated in the section, “Sin as the Soteriological Causality”, p. 555 ff.
536 See the section, “Sin as the Soteriological Causality”, p. 547 ff.
“Suffering exists with the crime as a watcher, so, when man commits sin, suffering seizes him bitterly. The charm of the lust is like a flower as long as it has been committed but when it has grown up its fairness withers due to the midday distress. At the beginning, sin is immeasurably beloved; but at the end, lamentation possesses the one who crosses over it” (FMC III 589-594).

“The abominable sin is much pleasing at the beginning and at the end, its taste brings forth severe bitterness” (FMC III 597-598) etc.

On the whole we see that, as a dutiful servant of God, one of the prime motives of the poet behind the creation of the mimre was to exhort the faithful.

II. 1. A. 5. Ordinary man

The attribution ‘a common or ordinary man’ on Mar Jacob never aims at belittling the transcendence of the poet in the spiritual, intellectual, literary, cultural, social, religious, learning realms, but it only aims at understanding him as the one who is familiar with every aspect of an ordinary life of man. His religious and literary sophistications and responsibilities did not keep him aloof from the common life of the ordinary man. Thomas Kollamparampil mentions his monastic life: “There are several references to the monastic life of Mar Jacob. But the exact nature of it is not clear. In the school of Edessa every student had to follow a mode of life similar to that of monastic prescriptions in the tenor of its pedagogy. Moreover, Jacob was a personality who was much in contact with various monastic groups and could extend spiritual and ascetical help to them as well”.\(^{537}\) Monks use to keep themselves away from the ordinary life of the common man and they live almost in a spiritual realm and pay more attention to the spiritual affairs. Contrary to this common factor of the monasticism Mar Jacob had a very close contact with the daily life of the public. He had Mar Ephrem before him as a model, about whom it is said: “Though a hermit, remarkable for his severe asceticism, he interested himself

\(^{537}\) Kollamparampil, *Salvation in Christ according to Jacob of Sarug*, 32.
in all matters which closely concerned the people of Edessa”.\footnote{538} In the same way, the Four Mimre ‘On Creation’ reveals that Mar Jacob was a very common man who is familiar with the day-to-day life of the common people, because, in the mimre, there are many allusions to the daily life and activities of the ordinary man as we see below.

II. 1. A. 5. i. **Painting**

The Four Mimre ‘On Creation’ reveals that Mar Jacob had proficiency in painting. His artistic mind enables him to illustrate the creation of man in a more colourful manner than what we see in the scripture. He presents the creation of man in terms of painting. And the skill of the poet in the colour combinations and the ratio of mixing the colours are also visible in the mimre:

\begin{quote}
“He mixed (ḥlat) the elements like colours (gavno) and mingled (mzag) them, and out of them He made a comely image (zurto pito) which was full of beauties (malyo supro). He painted (šor) the image with choicest and suitable pigments (sammono gbayo)” (FMC IV 155-157).
\end{quote}

II. 1. A. 5. ii. **Sculpting**

It is sure from the mimre that Mar Jacob possessed sufficient knowledge in sculpture. Now and then, while describing the creation, he employs the pattern of sculpting:

\begin{quote}
“He collected the dust, moulded it, rent it, bound together and plucked it (FMC II 175),
“in his skilfulness He mixed the nature here and there, He marked and lifted up the image which (is capable) to turn towards both the sides” (FMC II 177-178),
“He poured water, formed the clay and imparted air. And He burnt it in fire and gave it the life giving spirit, and it became an image which is burnt up, cool, moist and warm”\footnote{539} (FMC IV 152-154) etc.
\end{quote}

The sculptural mind of the poet incites him to call God an artificer and a skilful craftsman

\footnote{538}{Gabriel, *Syro Chaldaic Grammar*, xix.}
\footnote{539}{Details on the creation of man can be seen in the section, “Anthropological Concepts in the Mimre”, p. 345 ff.}
‘Mould’, ‘carving’, ‘marking’, ‘engraving’, ‘die’ ‘imprint’ ‘furnace’ etc., \( (FMC \, II \, 275,167 \, etc.) \) which we find in the mimre, are technical terms related to sculpture. We do not feel that these terms are intentionally appended in the mimre but are quite natural outcome of the sculptural mind of the poet. Because, he uses such terminology even while describing the punishments of God on the serpent also:

\[
\text{“He cursed the furnace (kuro), for, the word of treachery was moulded in it: (and) He had blown (into it) in order to increase suffering upon the Craftsman (umono)”} \, (FMC \, III \, 867-868). \]

II. 1. A. 5. iii. **Ornamentation**

The acquaintance of the poet with ornaments and their manufacture is visible from the mimre when he describes the magnanimity of man \( (FMC \, IV \, 57) \) as well as the relation between body and soul:

\[
\text{“On the thread of the soul (bhu \, \text{dnaps\,o}), in the form of a necklace of pearls (’eqo \, \text{dmar\,gony\,o\,to}), it (image) was stringed with the limbs and set in order; wholly covetable”} \, (FMC \, IV \, 101-102). \]

And the poet laments over the destruction of this lovely necklace \( (FMC \, IV \, 105-109) \). Mar Jacob describes God as a goldsmith \( (\text{hasolo}) \, (FMC \, III \, 64) \); as a goldsmith \( (\text{hasolo}) \) makes ornaments with all decorations God created the image with all its pomp. It is in this context the poet uses the symbol of crown \( (\text{kli\,lo}) \) to portray the image \( (FMC \, IV \, 111, \, 113 \, etc) \) and he compares his mimre also with a crown \( (\text{kli\,lo}) \, (FMC \, II \, 241) \). All these reveal the ordinary man in Mar Jacob.

II. 1. A. 5. iv. **Masonry**

Disclosing good architectural calibre the poet describes the creation of man in terms of
architecture. Mar Jacob explains soul as the central pillar (‘amudo) of the whole body\textsuperscript{540} (FMC II 171). Every element and each activity of the body are centred on the soul as a column (‘amudo) that bears the centrality of a building. The poet compares the willpower of man with the Will of a mason who either constructs or destroys (FMC II 169-172). Similar terms are also visible while describing the formation of man out of dust (FMC II 175 ff, IV 152 ff.).

II. 1. A. 5. v. Farming

Mar Jacob compares himself with a farmer who sows his homily in the field of the hearers\textsuperscript{541} and at times a farmer’s mind of the poet becomes visible in the Four Mimre ‘On Creation’ also. The meditative search and the proclamation on divine mysteries are compared with diligent digging of a farmer in the vineyard for cultivating fruits (FMC II 13). The creation of the mimre through the members of the poet’s body is compared with a group of labourers’ work in the vineyard under a manager (FMC II 9-10). The familiarity of the poet with farming emerges also when he employs the method of a farmer who tests the quality as well as the ripening of the crops:

\begin{quote}
"When a man plucks a fruit from the tree, from it, he learns about its sweetness and bitterness. If a man gathers the first fruit from the branches, there is in it the taste of all the fruits of that tree " (FMC II 203-206).
\end{quote}

The same method is used also to tell about the nature of sin (FMC III 595 ff.). Mar Jacob distinguishes between the good and wicked apostles and angels in the manner of a farmer who separates the good plants from the wild:

\begin{quote}
"From the granary of discipleship, a tare had proceeded forth and from that blessed field of watchers a thorn had sprung up “ (FMC III 73-74).
\end{quote}

A farmer’s mindset of the poet is also visible when he describes of the tree at the centre (FMC

\footnote{Soul as the pillar of the human physique – see the section, “Anthropological concepts in the Mimre”, p. 357 ff.}

\footnote{Kollampampil, Op. cit. 39.}
The relationship of Mar Jacob with faming makes him a very common man.

II. 1. A. 5. vi. **Weaving**

The Four Mimre ‘On Creation’ reveal that Mar Jacob was familiar with cloth manufacturing, sewing etc. While he was explaining the statement; ‘He made the garments of skin’ (*FMC* III 999 ff.), there, he mentions the techniques and mechanism of weaving on a beam (*FMC* III 997 ff.). And while illustrating the tunic of leaves of the fig tree, we see the familiarity of poet with ordinary household activities, where, women use to stitch cloths for the members of the family and repair the shabby garments:

“My brothers, perhaps, Eve might have done this first: she might have woven a garment of leaves for Adam, in order to clothe him”  

*FMC III 637-638, 639 ff).*

II. 1. A. 5. vii. **Music**

Sebastian Brock underlines the peculiar characteristic of Syriac literature and the contribution of Mar Jacob in it: “The chief glory of Syriac literature lies in its religious poetry. While St. Ephrem from the fourth century always stands out as the towering genius, many other poets from subsequent centuries have also been acclaimed in Syriac tradition as masters in this art, ...... Perhaps ranking next to Ephrem ...... is the Syrian Orthodox poet Jacob of Sarug...”. As a religious teacher, all poems of Mar Jacob are part of his didactic commitment and responsibility. James Puthuparampil, referring to S. Jammo, informs us that the metrical works of Mar Jacob were used in the ‘Theological schools’, that is, in the monasteries and such compositions have been helpful for the purpose of teaching, because, it is

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542 More discussion on the ‘Cyclic History of the Garment’ can be seen in the section, “Eschatological Perceptions of the Poet”, p. 615 ff.
543 Brock, “Jacob of Serugh on the Veil of Moses”, *Sobernost* 3:1, 70.
544 See above – ‘Moral Instructor’.
easier to memorise poetry than prose. Considering various homilies of Mar Jacob, Thomas kollampampil extols the musician in Mar Jacob, “As a composer of mimre Mar Jacob calls himself a ‘harp’ on which the fingers of the Spirit play on. Mimre are usually chanted in the church”. Hence there arises no question of musical mind of Mar Jacob.

Mar Jacob’s acquaintance with the musical instruments also is evident from the Four Mimre ‘On Creation’. The imparting of information from Satan to the serpent is described in instrumental musical terms;

“The accursed root had blown the wind of lie (ruho dsuqro) through the flute (abubo) in order to play there the melody of death to those who hear him” (FMC III 321-322)

and “The singer rose up to sing perverse” (FMC III 330).

Similar metaphors such as flute (abubo) and flute player can be seen in other places of the mimre also (E.g. FMC III 835-836, 863). Another musical instrument mentioned in the mimre is ‘harp’ (qitoro) as a metaphor for the serpent (FMC III 864) and metaphorically the poet calls Satan, ‘the tiara’ (hudo). No more evidence is needed to show the poet’s musical touch.

II. 1. A. 5. viii. Science

It is true that Mar Jacob was not a scientist in its strict sense, but he was not alien to the then scientific milieu. When he narrates, in the mimre, the creation of man, he speaks of elements out of which man was created (FMC II 269, IV 39, 69, 73, 89, 93, 155, 271, 355 ff, 362) which he certainly explained from his scientific background. It seems that he applies his information on the principles of vibrations and resonances from Physics in his mimre; God was not actually walking in the Garden on corporal feet, but He was only making the voice of His foot steps (FMC III 692 ff):

545 Cf. Puthupampil, Mariological thought of Mar Jacob of Serugh, 29.
547 This topic is discussed in detail in the section, “Anthropological Concepts in the Mimre”, p. 349 ff.
“The voice rattled towards their ears as if one goes on foot” (FMC III 699, 705).

Since he knew well how an explosion and fire takes place according to scientific principles, he confirms that God has placed the bile and heat in man for such an explosion against sin (FMC IV 131-132). And the statement that a separation of heat and cold from man will collapse his whole course of life (FMC IV 321-324) is yet another indication of poet’s scientific information. Detailed narrations on physical as well as biological characteristics of various wild animals and birds are used in order to explain the cruel nature of the serpent and Satan\(^{548}\) (FMC III 289 ff, IV 177), which shows what an expert was the poet in zoology. His anatomical narrations on human body\(^{549}\) (FMC IV 113 ff.) reveal his biological expertise. The cosmological and astronomical narrations in the mimre (FMC IV 271 ff.) are sufficient enough to expound the poet’s proficiency in the related scientific areas. Indirectly he speaks of a solar system in which the planets revolve (FMC IV 303-304). But he directly mentions of an axle on which this revolution takes place and also of a bridge through which the light of the luminaries passes to the earth (FMC IV 303-304).

II. 1. A. 5. ix. **Law and Legal procedures**

The Four Mimre ‘On Creation’ reveal his acquaintance with juridical practices. He underlines the importance and inevitability of the law (FMC III 188 ff.):

\[
\text{“That was why the Lord had constituted the law for Adam, so that, the observance of the law should become something which makes him grow” (FMC III 197-198) and “In order that they should understand who the Lord is, who raised them to honour, He constituted the law that they should not eat from the tree ” (FMC IV 171-172).}
\]

It is found in the mimre that one of the main attributes the poet gives to God is that He is Just

\(^{548}\) The cruel nature of Satan is discussed in the section, “Narrations on the Non-corporal Beings”, p. 489 ff.

\(^{549}\) See the section, “Anthropological Concepts in the Mimre”, p. 355 ff.
(kino) and the juridical mind of the poet incites him to call God, ‘the Just one’\textsuperscript{550} (kino) (FMC II 85, III 1):

\begin{quote}
\textit{He (God) was establishing there the throne of judgment (kursi dino) out of justice (kinuto)}” (FMC III 793).
\end{quote}

The realisation of the crime of the first parents is described as the appearance of justice in their conscience in the form of sun (FMC III 629). Since Adam and Eve roused their lust and raised themselves above their creator, the poet justifies the poverty and the suffering which fell upon them on the basis of the natural law (FMC III 675-678). Mar Jacob’s proficiency in the legal-procedures is very well seen at his descriptions of the trial and the verdict on Adam, Eve and the serpent, where we see that the poet makes use of the practices of a law-court\textsuperscript{551} (FMC III 793 ff, 811 ff.). All these point to the better know-how of the poet in law and legal practices.

II. 1. A. 5. x. \textbf{Athletics, Sports, Games and warfare}

The information of Mar Jacob on sporty events is highly commendable.\textsuperscript{552} Observance of the commandments and its reward is described in the mimre in terms of victory or defeat in athletics (FMC III 193-194, 560, 563-564, 569). The attempt of Adam and Eve to become divine at the provocation of the serpent is compared in the mimre with sporty events such as weight lifting (FMC III 123) long jump (FMC III 125), high jump (FMC III 127) etc. The acquaintance between Satan and Adam (FMC III 143-147) as well as the attempts of Adam and Eve for committing sin are pictured in the mimre as wrestling contest among them (FMC III 135 ff, III 549, 551, 559 ff, 563). God is pictured in the mimre as a spectator and a referee who observes the contest and proclaims the result (FMC III 553-554). Mar Jacob’s acquaintance

\textsuperscript{550} But the entire mimre give us the impression that Mar Jacob prefers the merciful God to the just God – see the section, “God’s Mercy as the Catalytic Code”, p. 477 ff.

\textsuperscript{551} The poet’s notions on the legal procedures are described under the heading, ‘Verdict on the sin’ in the section, “Sin as the Soteriological Causality”, p. 576 ff.

\textsuperscript{552} See the section, “Hellenic Influence in the Formation of the Mimre”, p. 672 ff.
with warfare also is visible in the mimre; many such words are employed there and many events are explained in combat terms.\(^{553}\)

II. 1. A. 6. **Feministic approach of Mar Jacob**

The Four Mimre ‘on Creation’ disclose Mar Jacob’s attitudes towards woman.\(^{554}\) Here, he can’t be categorised either a feminist or an anti-feminist. His open-mindedness towards both the sides shall be appreciated, because he extols women for their merits and at times he condemns them for their follies. A close look at the whole catalogue of the poet’s main literary works\(^{555}\) will certainly give us the information that he had written many mimre on many good women of the Holy Scripture. On one occasion in the mimre, while extolling the greatness and discernment of St. Mary (\textit{FMC} III 437 ff), he retorts to an existing false impression that woman is lesser than man in many respects, and says,

> “Behold, from this lovable girl, every one should learn that the nature of woman is not in want of knowledge” (\textit{FMC} III 455-456).

Mar Jacob portrays Mary, the mother of Christ, the best example of woman. How much he is thrilled to speak about Mary can be seen in his verse;

> “The (life) history of Mary had stimulated me to speak here and it doesn’t allow me to pass plainly over it” (\textit{FMC} III 439-440).

Thus he proved that he was not a misogynist.

Mar Jacob talks about woman standing on a male dominated cultural ground where women were under-privileged of their status. The Pauline concept on woman had still strong influence on his society who said; “Let your woman keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to

\(^{553}\) See this under the heading, ‘Warfare and the Poet’ in the section, “Hellenic Influence in the Formation of the Mimre”, p. 674.


\(^{555}\) Cf. P. Bedjan, \textit{Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug}. Vol. VI.
learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church”.

Mar Jacob was not completely free from the clutches of this social stigma of discriminating woman.

But Mar Jacob gives due prominence to woman in the mimre through Eve. In modern languages, with a feminist perspective, female characters are to be mentioned first when both the sexes are to be mentioned alike. We see that Mar Jacob employs this pattern even at his own times, when women were considered less than man, and in several places he mentions Eve first and then only he mentions Adam (FMC I 123, 129, 132, III 603 etc.).

While discussing in the mimre the status of Eve in the Garden of Eden what really came out were Mar Jacob’s notions on the rank of women. The poet attributes sovereignty over the Garden to Eve also along with Adam, her husband. This can be inferred from the conversation between Eve and the serpent where the poet intentionally insists on ‘WE’ many times (FMC III 371, 375, 377, 380 etc.) in order to acknowledge the common responsibility of Adam and Eve. Impartiality of the poet between men and women can also be seen from his comparison of Adam and Eve with the two tablets of commandments made by God’s own hands, of which one is not more valuable than the other:

“The two tablets; so as to say, are Eve and Adam: beloved nature, innocent couple, who are from God” (FMC I 123-124).

Mar Jacob is not hesitant to declare the high position of femininity through the life of Eve. He considers her status in the Garden as its resident and possessor (FMC IV 158, 164 ff., 173, III 292), one who is specially cared by God (FMC IV 159 ff.), sumptuous and hence never in want of something (FMC III 890) etc. She was the queen in the Garden who was gloriously dressed (FMC IV 163). She, along with her husband, was the proposed inheritor of the tree of life (FMC III 1049-1050). In many other places Mar Jacob replicate the common notion on

556 1 Cor. 14/34-35.
Eve as the bride and wife of Adam (FMC IV 159, 176, III 506, 639, 780, 796, 802, 893, 895, IV 162, 166, 168). She was created as the partner (FMC III 552) and helper to Adam (FMC III 783-784). She is the mother to the whole children to be born through out the ages (FMC III 891 ff., 906, 912, 917 etc.).

Mar Jacob is amazed at the brilliance of Eve in her pre-sin state. In this context, in agreement with St. Paul, Mar Jacob also asserts that the beauty of a woman is her inner sanctity. Eve was that much dazzling in the garden for many reasons; in addition to her status as a child of God (FMC IV 173, I 124), her nature was so beloved (FMC I 123-124). She was clothed by God with magnificent light and dazzling brightness (FMC IV 163) in order to make her the bride of Adam and the queen of Eden (FMC IV 159 ff.).

Mar Jacob narrates the feministic features, calling her ‘the Soft One’ (rpiyo) (FMC III 367, 391, 425, 429, 564, 756) ‘an infant’ (gabro) (FMC III 334, 462), a virgin (btulto) (FMC IV 159) etc. But none of these descriptions were for narrating the weakness of woman but they were only to portray her innocence and comeliness. In this sense he says that Eve was an innocent pair and a lovely companion to Adam (FMC I 124, III 296, 298). In order that the reader may feel her gentleness, the poet takes the symbols of mild creatures of the universe to portray her, such as chick (parugo) (FMC III 292), dove (yavno) (FMC III 296, 388, 363, 171), partridge (haglo) (FMC III 397), sparrow (šepro) (FMC III 298) etc. Mar Jacob finds out and appreciates the intrinsic traits peculiar to woman; whenever the poet describes soothe, care, compassion etc., he takes the symbols of a ‘nurse’ (maynaqto) (FMC III 725, 926), mother (emo) (II 255) etc.

557 Cf. 1 Tim. 2/10.
558 More descriptions on these are given under the heading ‘Radiances of Eve’ in the section, “Anthropological Concepts in the Mimre”, p. 385 ff.
559 This concept of the poet is developed in the segment, “God’s Mercy as the Catalytic Code”, p. 447 ff.
The poet’s reverence towards women can very well be seen from his description on the pronouncement of the verdict on Eve at the Garden of Eden:

“*The Judge whispered (rta*m) towards Eve interrogatively*” (*FMC III* 803). By using the word ‘whispering’ the poet was trying to safeguard the dignity of woman and hence he was narrating that the questioning on Eve was mild. Even in modern times, the norms for upholding the dignity of woman at the time of trial etc. are not yet fully emerged. In such a male dominated society where women were considered menially, Mar Jacob’s attempt to safeguard women’s rights was revolutionary as well as highly commendable. And when the poet reports on the punishments on Eve, realizing her fragility, he seems to be very cautious to describe them in their mildest form and along with consolations and gifts (*FMC III* 897-920), so that the woman shall not be fainted due to the harshness and heaviness of the punishments\(^\text{560}\) (*FMC III* 909-910).

But Mar Jacob is not reluctant to point out the faults of woman based on the life of Eve. But none of these accounts of the poet on the stained phase of Eve were for belittling her anyway but were only for narrating the entrance of sin into the world, her role in it as well as God’s merciful involvement in eradicating it.

The poet considers impulsiveness a character of an immature woman. Eve was a woman of troubled wisdom (*FMC III* 444) and in her tumult and without any investigation she accepted the enticing words of Satan (*FMC III* 433-436, 457 ff.). Mar Jacob refers this impetuous nature of Eve and its worse after-effects in other homilies also like “On forty days’ fasting”, where he contrasts the catastrophic impulsive desire of Eve with Jesus’ victory over the impulses for food when Jesus was tempted by Satan.\(^\text{561}\) The impulsiveness of Eve made her so zealous to cross the limits of commandments before any one else do it (*FMC III* 505, 442,

\(^{560}\) More details on this are given in the section, “God’s Mercy as the Catalytic Code”, p. 466 ff.

494, 507, 511 ff, 570, 579, IV 181) and the same temperament carried her away through her hallucinations (FMC III 518 ff., 600) and consequently her reasoning power was enslaved by the lustful desire (FMC III 519, 543-544).

The passion for something which she likes to possess is said to be a common character of women. The poet evaluates that Eve had this kind of passion in its topper degree:

“All the trees that were in Paradise were worthless for her and towards one alone she looked fiercely” (FMC III 527-528).

The amount of pressure of lust in Eve can be counted from the poet’s statement,

“The hateful lust had burst forth from the freedom and it carried her towards the beauty of that tree” (FMC III 517-518).

Mar Jacob expresses in the mimre the so called talkative nature of women and their alleged inability in keeping secrecy. The poet scolds Eve’s imprudence:

“Oh, the perturbed mind, the discourse regarding you should have been with prudence” (FMC III 390).

Hence she became eligible to be called ‘Heartless’ by the poet (FMC III 389). On the contrary, Mar Jacob finds the abominable silence of Eve before the serpent a major reason for her death and makes a thoughtful statement;

“Some times silence causes damage to those who keep it” (FMC III 495).

Even though the poet accepts the position and status of women, he ridicules Eve’s improper attempts to overcome Adam. But this shall not be considered a favouritism of the poet towards male domination; in its place, it shall be treated as an explosion of the poet at the sight of the destruction of an order set by God for ever. According to the poet, Eve elevated herself unnaturally:

“The pride seized her, so that, the supremacy shall be introduced in the history; and behold, in her tumult, she behaved haughtily against Adam also” (FMC III 503-504).

562 This impropriety of Eve is discussed in the segment, “Anthropological Concepts in the Mimre”, p. 393 f.
She wanted to become chief to Adam in divinity (FMC III 506) and in her attempt she was vulgarly successful in defeating her husband (FMC III 514). Keeping in mind the faithlessness Eve had shown towards God, her husband, towards the commandments, towards her own responsibilities etc, the poet goes to the extreme of calling her ‘a harlot’ (zanoyto) (FMC III 17). He describes in detail the faithlessness of Eve (FMC III 395-396, 425 ff, 446 ff, 458, 459 ff, 499, 501-502, 512 etc.). Mar Jacob compares the cheating of Delilah of the Old Testament with that of Eve and calls Delilah “the second Eve”.

It is noticeable that Mar Jacob doesn’t favour priesthood for women because, he condemns another attitude of Eve. The priest extends the sacrificial meal that gives eternal life to the people in order to make them pure, eternal and divine. The poet compares the performances of Eve with the rubrics of a priest: she plucked the fruit from the tree that contains life and extended the meal to her husband so that they may become equal to the eternal God (FMC III 535-536). She not only wanted to overcome her husband (FMC III 503-514) and cross the limits of the divine law (FMC III 547) but also tried even to go beyond the almighty, her Creator (FMC III 678, 891).

The concept of Mar Jacob regarding the place of woman in the family can also be traced from his mimre where one will easily find the male dominated concept of the poet on family. It is in this sense that the poet makes statements such as,

“She was given to you by the Maker as a help giving one: she is not a counsellor and so as to instruct the perverse way” (FMC III 783-784).

Since Adam refused God’s ordinances and followed Eve’s counsel, the poet harshly calls him “thief” (FMC III 781). He warns Eve saying,

“You will never be the mistress to your husband according to your

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These concepts also of the poet on women may be understood in the context of his outburst emotions against the destruction of a divinely set order. Here also, more than the insistence on the male domination, the poet’s stress is more on the disobedience of Adam on the commandment of God than on his consultation with woman; Adam should have given utmost care not to deviate from the Word of God. Hence these statements of the poet do not go against the divine concept of equality and complementary nature between man and woman.

Taken all these views of Mar Jacob together, even though he doesn’t seem to define in an exclusive statement the status of woman, it is clear that he is not a misogynist as the rabbinic literature do,\textsuperscript{564} so as to deny any of the ranks and merits to women. He admires all the brightness of women at the same time he is not hesitant to point out their faults. He appears in the mimre as the one who stands with folded hands before all women who are beloved to God.

II. 1. A. 7. An Optimist

One of the best features of the mimre as well as of Mar Jacob is the optimistic outlook. Mar Jacob’s infatuation in ‘beauty’ and its descriptions\textsuperscript{565} are clear signs of his optimistic outlook; only one who keeps cheerfulness in his mind can appreciate the beauty outside of him. Moreover, behind and within every event, even if it is fatally catastrophic, the poet finds in it a positive factor. The reason behind this positive outlook of the poet behind every act, even if it appears painful and catastrophic at the moment when it happens, is that it is God who allows the thing to be happened as such. God cannot but act only positively, because a negation would be contradiction to the very truthfulness, credibility and perfection of God. Mar Jacob was

\textsuperscript{564} Rabbinic literature considers woman only as a creature for the use of man and hence women were allowed only the lowest status.

\textsuperscript{565} See above – ‘Infatuated Lover of Beauty’ in the section, “Man behind the Mimre”, p. 160 ff.
fully conscious of this fact and this helps him to see every event positively. This idea of the poet can be seen from the narration of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Paradise. The poet opines,

“Through the garments which He clothed them when they were expelled, through these, He was teaching about the restitution which He prepared for them. Through this apparel which was stretched out on their fleshes, through it, He was showing that He did not cut off His love from them” (FMC III 1033-1036).

The following are some of the occasions that we see from the mimre that explain the poet’s positive outlook.

II. 1. A. 7. i. Eve’s Attitude

Even though Mar Jacob uses very harsh words against Eve for her role in the commission of sin, the positive outlook of the poet enables him to accept positively the frankness of Eve in revealing her activities. Thus he says,

“Eve also, at the first question itself, that was towards her, had revealed the mystery: “The serpent betrayed me and seduced me”. When it was asked, she did not conceal about her counsellor and without any persuasion she revealed her affair as it was performed” (FMC III 805-808).

II. 1. A. 7. ii. Sin, fall and death

For the poet, even the sin of Adam and Eve were occasions of God’s blessing; it was the sin of Adam that brought Christ down (FMC I 285-286). His positive attitude enables the poet to view the fall and death of Adam optimistically:

“If it (image) had not fallen down, the resurrection also would not have been required. Since it had fallen down, it rises up: to that which did not fall, it is deprived of rising up; the dead lives and he who is not dead is not revived” (FMC IV 458-460).

The poet might have been influenced by St. Paul who said that sin of the Jews had credited to the salvation of the gentiles.567

II. 1. A. 7. iii. Retention of the central tree and the expulsion from Paradise

Usually the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Paradise is considered an outburst of God’s wrath. But for the poet, there are also the optimistic elements. That is why the poet says,

“When He cast him out He did not cast out an enemy; but He raised up a friend a little near to His beloved one” (FMC I 229-230).

Another positive element behind this expulsion is, in order that they should not eat from the tree at the centre of the Garden presumptuously (FMC III 1042 ff.),

“He preserved there the tree of life in watchful care, so that, its fruit will be theirs long after” (FMC III 1049-1050).

So the expulsion was for the majestic return (FMC III 1080) for receiving the reward as an athlete receives his prize at his victory.

II. 1. A. 7. iv. Establishment of the Law

A common understanding is that laws and regulations are restrictions on the freedom of man. But the poet confronts it with an opposite at the same time an optimistic view that the laws are for the growth of man, including his freedom. The calibre and bravery of a man will be ascertained only when it is tested in a combat; if there is no battle, there is no victory (FMC III 190 ff). In the same way, the dignity of man will be revealed only at the accomplishment of the precepts of law (FMC III 195 ff.). Hence the poet cheerfully finds the advantages of the law:

“That was why the Lord had constituted the law for Adam, so that, the observance of the law should become something which

567 Rom. 11/11-12.
makes him grow” (FMC III 197-198).

II. 1. A. 7. v. Creation from the dust

Comparing to other created things, dust seems to be insignificant in size, value and usefulness. But Mar Jacob elucidates the positive aspects in the selection of dust by God for the creation of man (FMC II 173 ff.); it points to the worthiness of all created things (FMC II 183), it speaks of the greatness of God who can make wonders from menial things (FMC II 177), it tells us about the weakness of man (FMC III 957 ff.), it enabled man to possess all earthly elements in him so that, he can be one with the soil and be its master (FMC IV 15 ff.) etc.

Finally the dust becomes the soft bed for man for the long rest before his resuscitation at the end of the times.\textsuperscript{568}

II. 1. A. 7. vi. Walking of God in the Garden and the interrogations

It is written that God walked in the garden towards Adam and Eve in the cool of the day.\textsuperscript{569} Mar Jacob finds a lot of optimistic implications in God’s walk;\textsuperscript{570} it was for making them ready for doing penitence:

\textit{“The voice rattled towards their ears as if one goes on foot, so that, they should be prepared with the prayer upon the transgression. He arranged the foot steps in the garden and made them hear, so that, when He approaches them He should have been received with supplication”} (FMC III 699-702).

Mar Jacob had been attuned to the views of many early fathers of the church who explained almost unanimously the meaning of God’s walk in the garden. Mar Ephrem says: “He also wished to benefit them by the sound of His feet. God endowed His silent foot steps with sound so that Adam and Eve might be prepared, at the sound, to make supplication before

\textsuperscript{568} See the section, “Eschatological Perceptions of the Poet”, p. 603 ff.

\textsuperscript{569} Cf. Gen. 3/8.

\textsuperscript{570} In the section, “God’s Mercy as the Catalytic Code” this aspect of God’s action is discussed in detail, p. 463.
Him who made the sound”.\footnote{McVey, \textit{The Fathers of the Church}, 115.} And Mar Ephrem opines that since the voice of God’s foot steps could not be recognised by Adam, God raised the voice of His lips and asked questions like, ‘where are you Adam?’\footnote{Cf. Gen. 3/9.} for the benefit of Adam.\footnote{Cf. Op.cit.} Mar Jacob views God’s interrogations at the garden very optimistically and explains its purpose as a chance for Adam for repentance. (\textit{FMC} III 707 ff.). It is to be noticed that Mar Jacob also gives almost same connotations to the question of God ‘where are you Adam?’ as other fathers of the Church did.\footnote{Cf. Ibid, 116.}

\section*{II. 1. A. 7. vii. \textbf{Hope of things to come}}

Only an optimist will have hope on the things to come. Everywhere we see the poet as one who gives hope to the grieved ones. For him, even punishments are neither an end in itself nor a means for destroying the culprit, in its place he views them as platforms where buds of hope sprout up. Mar Jacob considers God’s promise of a child as a gift to Eve which gives her hope in the midst of her heart-breaking pain of punishment (\textit{FMC} III 915 ff.). This optimism can be seen also in the descriptions of the functioning of God’s mercy at the time of punishments.\footnote{See poet’s notion of punishments as part of God’s mercy in the section, “God’s Mercy as the Catalytic Code”, p. 466.} Even at the dissolution of the well settled flesh into dust, the poet keeps the hope of its return:

\begin{quote}
\textit{You will return towards your earth (and) you will become dust, as it was in the beginning, but in resurrection you will give praise to the mercy, (because) how much it pitied on you”} (\textit{FMC} III 979-980).
\end{quote}

The hopefulness of the poet is very well seen at his description on the arrival of Messiah, resurrection of the flesh and at the establishment of the new kingdom (\textit{FMC} IV 233 ff).
II. 1. B. **Mar Jacob – a pioneer in the aromatic expressions**

As a pioneer in the field of poetry Mar Jacob excels many others in the field in the use of language of his poetry. To discern the distinction of his poetry we need to understand what is the language of poetry and what is figurative language.

II. 1. B. 1. **Language of poetry**

The expressions or language of poetry is different from the language of prose. Hence, the use of words and phrases in a poem may not convey the ordinary meaning, but very often, it gives figurative meaning and therefore the delight of enjoying the poem rests on the imaginative mind of the reader also. Thus scholars opine, “The meaning of a word or phrase includes the things it suggests as well as it states, its connotations as well as its denotations”,\(^576\) “Moreover, the meanings in a poem can be rich and complex”\(^577\) and so, “Poetry, then, is imaginative literature written in verse”.\(^578\) Here, the language of a poem means the figurative ornaments well employed by the poet in his poem in an appealing and proper way, in order to decorate it and to generate various kinds of sentiments in the minds of the readers and listeners, especially the pleasure of enjoying the poem through exploring the content in its deepest meanings and thoughts.

Scholars suggest different levels of meaning for a poem: “A poem has at least two levels of meaning: the literal level and the figurative-symbolic level”.\(^579\) The first and superfluous reading of a poem gives us its plain or literal meaning, and from there we have to search for a different meaning that includes the figurative, symbolic meanings, a kind of paraphrasing that reaches to the mind of the poet, sometimes even beyond that. In a poem, “....

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576 Barber, *Poetry in English*, 60.
577 Ibid, 61.
578 Ibid, 5.
more is involved than the vivid tabulation of events. To grasp the full significance of what is being said, one must probe for another level of meaning”.  

James Reeves distinguishes between the ordinary meaning and the inner meaning of a phrase or usage in a poem and he calls the hidden meaning ‘the form’ of poetry: “The (ordinary) meaning is of no importance; form is all important”. Hence, he continues, “… you must look not only what he says, but first of all at the way in which he says it”.

Words in a poem may contain, sometimes, more than these levels of meanings. For example, if a religious poet employs the concept of ‘City of Jerusalem’, it may mean i) literally, a temporal place, ii) religiously, the Holy city, iii) allegorically, the church militant, iv) morally, the just soul, v) analogically, the triumphant church, perhaps, even more can be added. According to David Daiches, “Thus a poem differs from a work of scientific prose in having as its immediate object, pleasure and not truth”. And he continues, stating that, the plain meaning of a sentence is enough to disclose the scientific truth, but for giving pleasure while reading a poem, a ‘poetical form’ is essential and this ‘form’, which he suggests, is the language of the poem and this ‘form’ includes many things. Aristotle expresses his views on the topic ‘Language of poetry’ by using the terms ‘Poetic Diction and Style’. I. A Richards speaks of two usages of language in poetry; scientific and emotive. The scientific meaning is the matter of fact of a given sentence or a line, but the second usage of language is for raising our emotional attitudes. A fiction doesn’t give us the matter of fact meaning, but it raises our emotions.

Besides these, when we say ‘the language of a poem’ in the Four Mimre of Mar Jacob

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580 Hawkins, Preface to Poetry, 34.  
581 Reeves, Understanding Poetry, 38.  
582 Ibid, 192.  
583 Daiches, Critical Approaches to Literature, 102.  
584 Cf. Dorsch, Classical Literary Criticism, 60 ff.  
‘On Creation’, it has two more connotations than the ordinary meaning: the figurative language employed in the poem by the poet and the linguistic mind of the reader to the extent of taking advantage of the pleasure of following the poem. Thus academicians say, “The figure of speech not only says exactly what the poet means, it also invites the reader to help to say it”. Hence we do not just understand poetry, but we are enjoying its pleasure. It is true that there are more things needed for attaining this pleasure such as sound, rhythm etc. than recognising the figures of speech.

II. 1. B. 2. **Figurative Language**

Poets utilize various kinds of techniques to make their poem figurative. The technique is also used for exploring the less known through the known. Being fully conscious of the effectiveness of the use of such figures of speech in the mimre, Mar Jacob of Sarug also, as a great poet, uses them successfully to enhance the beauty of his mimre and the real scent of the mimre is those such expressions in them. Some poets take conscious efforts to decorate their work by the use of these techniques, but that may not give natural flavour to the poem and hence those products may not be impressive enough to take in. What makes a poem worthy to be accepted is not its artificial elements but it is its natural upcoming. And so, what differentiates Mar Jacob from those artificial poets is his potentiality to generate these figures of speech instinctively and instantaneously during the natural course of creating his artworks and this makes his works fragrant, rich, tasty, striking, inspiring, memorable and perpetual.

Imagery is the heart and core of the poetic language, in a way, it adorns the poem. It is the life of a poem, because, “With imagery, the poet allows the life to present itself, and we can

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587 Ibid, 366.
hear, see, smell, feel, and touch experience”. Imagery is formed through a typical process. Normally we experience the outside things through our senses. Through a proper mental processing, these perceptions are made into thoughts and ideas. And these ideas are attributed to another object or thought. In order to disclose our original idea, we depend upon these objects or thoughts, and some times these images give us more meaning than the original.

Thus, “The poetic image is not quite so obvious, but it works the same way. Besides its appeal to the senses, the image is frequently symbolic – that is, it stands for something different from itself. Usually it is presented through figurative language”.

Day Lewis, an eminent literary man, explains the imagery as “It is a picture made out of words. An epithet, a metaphor, a simile may create an image; or an image may be presented to us in a phrase or passage on the face of it purely descriptive, but conveying to our imagination something more than the accurate reflection of an external reality”. And the main purpose of the imagery, according to K. L. Knickerbocker, is to communicate meaning, not merely to serve as a graceful embellishment.

But it is, at the same time, not simply imparting information, on the other hand, it is handing over of one’s ideas to the other, beautifully packed with his emotions and thoughts, through the perfect blending of choicest words and phrases. And some of the commonly used such figures are metaphor, simile, allegory, symbols, irony etc.

II. 1. B. 2. a. Figures of Speech in the Mimre of Mar Jacob

Mar Jacob employs the commonly used figures such as metaphor, simile, allegory, symbols, irony etc. in their maximum and quite appealingly in his mimre in order to convey his idea in a perfect way. Since the similes employed in the mimre are many in number and in

588 Ibid, 358.
590 Lewis, The poetic image, 18.
view of the fact that they are explicit by the use of the words ‘like’, ‘as’ etc. not much
examples for them are given below. The term ‘image’ is used equivocally in the following
analysis. When it is used to tell about Adam, it denotes the image of God imparted into him by
the grace of God and in other places ‘image’ is used to signify the figure of speech that the poet
employs to decorate his mimre. Each word and each verse in the mimre are packed with a lot
of figurative expressions. Since an analysis in detail of all of them would create volumes, only
a few of the for example’s sake are taken for the analysis.

‘Mouth of flame’ (pumo dsalahebito) (FMC I 7) - is used in the mimre metaphorically.
Here, Mar Jacob conceives flames as powerful and effective; destructive as well as creative.
And, naturally, words are being pronounced from the mouth. Hence ‘mouth of flame’ (pumo
dsalahebito) can be understood as the total effort of man with all his capacity to describe God
in human terms. The poet, elsewhere in the mimre, uses the term ‘furnace’ (kuro) (FMC II 179,
III 63 etc.) in which the things are being moulded by the heat of fire. So, the ‘mouth of flame’
(pumo dsalahebito) connotes to the words and expressions that are being moulded in the
mouth. This also connotes to the recitation of the mimre.

‘Mouth of sun’ (pumo Igemso) (FMC I 9) - is seemingly paradoxical, because the sun
does not possess a mouth. But it is also a poetical and metaphorical usage. Here mouth is the
total energetic light and heat of the sun. It points to the vainness of an attempt of a powerful
creature like sun. Even though its light covers and enlightens the whole world and thus
becomes the source of energy for its inhabitants, its vastness and powerfulness cannot
comprehend and reproduce the powerful Word of God. Its hotness will be cool at the heat, the
creative power, of the Word of God.

‘Voice of the sun’ (qolo dgemso) (FMC I 10) – even though it is an improbability, it is
another metaphor that comes from the imagination of the poet. This ‘voice of the sun’ (qolo
*dsemso* is the heavy light and energy that emanates from it. Often the poet discloses the power of the voice.

‘The word of the sea’ (*melto dyamo*) (*FMC* I 14) - is yet another figurative usage. Here, the immensity and intensity of the sea, diversity of living beings in it, costliness of its corals, valiance of its waves, the powerfulness of the wind produced from it, the magnificence of the ships that move on it etc. are considered as the word of the sea. The poet brings up the ineffectiveness of an attempt using all these powers to describe God in His integrity. The roaring sound of the waves is envisaged here as the word of the sea.

‘Language of the firmament’ (*lesono darqi ’o*) (*FMC* I 15) - is used here metaphorically to denote the thunder and lightning that appears and resounds on the firmament besides the innumerable luminaries on it. The poet imagines a bridge (*gaṣro*) (*FMC* IV 304) through which the powers of the luminaries pass through and reach the earth. These powerful forces also can’t comprehend the Word of God, because it is beyond all powers.

‘Height is depth’ (*ravmo ’umqo*) (*FMC* I 16) – is a paradox, because, usually, a height cannot be a depth. The poet employs this paradox in order to point out incomprehensibility of the Word of God. In comparison with the Word of God any height of the world is equal to depth and any huge light is equal to dullness.

‘Restraining of the mystery of the Son’ (*mpaged  lrozo dbro daloho*) (*FMC* I 26) – It gives us an image of the one who is wonderstruck at an amazing sight. It also shows one’s delight at the finding of an enormous collection of precious pearls and gems in a cave at the end of his long search. This restraining at the sight of the image of the Son of God had controlled and helped the poet to keep it as the pulse that vibes through out the whole mimre.

‘Begetting (*p-ro*) of the reading and writings’ (*qeryono u ktibto*) (*FMC* I 28) - is used here figuratively. When the poet asks,
“Is there a place in the Book where He is not, or, a reading in the scripture that doesn’t contain His name?” (FMC I 27-28)

he visualizes the whole Old Testament of the Holy Bible as the womb where the mystery of the Son, the Word of God, was carried in (FMC I 27-30).

‘Engraving the house of Adam’ (rgomo dbeyt odom) (FMC I 58) - is an allegory that denotes the predetermination of God’s plans. Engraving on something is for a permanent and inerasable marking. Here, an inference can also be made from the mindset of the poet on how man’s sin affects God’s eternal plans. Sin doesn’t remove these engraved marks completely, but only covers them. That is why there are possibilities of renovation of these marks and reinstallation of God’s designs. If sin can entirely remove the marks, Satan could be considered powerful, equal to or more than God so as to destroy God’s plans. Satan can only spoil and distort these marks; but he can never remove it.

Since the poet speaks many times of the moulding of the image of man, this engraving can also be understood as the marking of the image of man (FMC II 178-179). This marking on the image has an allusion to the marking of the faithful described in the Book of Revelation.592

‘The two beautiful tablets (luhe tarten) of Mount Sinai’ (FMC I 113, 119 ff.) - is a symbol of the divine commandments of God given to the people through Moses. As a metaphor it suggests certain things. The beauty of the tablets means the divinity the tablets contained, the importance of the matter engraved on it and the utmost holiness of the one who has written on it (FMC I 133). Because, for the poet beauty is not outer appearance alone.593

God gave the commandments purposefully in two tablets because, one compliments the other; one is the pair of the other and they shall be used together for achieving the target. The poet takes these tablets and tells the audience that man and woman are complementary in married

592 Cf. Rev. 9/4.
593 The poet’s beauty consciousness is described under the heading ‘Infatuated lover of beauty’ p. 160 ff. and also under the heading, ‘Comeliness … of the Image’ in the section, “Image and Likeness of God in Man”, p.281.
life in order to achieve its goal. Mar Jacob’s primary intention of using the images of the
tables was also to show God’s willingness to repeat His merciful action (FMC I 127-162).

‘The earthen vessel’ (ḥešpo) or vessel of clay’ (mono dtino) (FMC I 152, 163, 166, 169,
172, II 137) ‘rational vessel’ (mono milio) (FMC II 141) and beloved vessel (mono rhimo)
(FMC I 172) – are allegories that denote man. He becomes a rational vessel (mono milio),
because, the gift of reason is granted to man alone and it separates and elevates him from other
creatures of the world. Rationality is for choosing the right thing from the many and also for
giving conscious adoration to God (FMC II 141 ff.). A vessel is a symbol of vacuum which is
always in want of something to be filled in. When the poet calls man ‘a vessel’ it also denotes
his need for God’s mercy to be filled in. ‘Vessel’ is a favourite symbol of the poet. Adam
becomes an earthen vessel (ḥešpo) or a vessel of clay (mono dtino) because of his making
from the dust of the earth.

This has a reference to the ‘pot of Jeremiah’. In relation to the potter, pot, the clay
which is used to make the poet etc., some of the implications of ‘earthen vessel or vessel of
clay’ are: the stuff out of which Adam was created, the chance of breaking-up at its
mishandling, the possibility as well as the necessity of its reconstruction, the necessity of a
process of return towards the maker with the prayer of restoration, the willingness of the maker
for its renewal, the possibility of shaping a new vessel from the same clay and many more. The
vessel becomes ‘beloved’ (rhimo) (FMC I 173), because of the artistic calibre of the maker in
shaping the vessel as well as of the intrinsic splendour of the image of God in man.

‘Concealing the tax from the creatures’ (kesyo dmako men beryoto) (FMC I 243) - is a
very good poetic expression of the poet to signify the love of the heavenly Father who
relinquishes the loss caused by the sin of Adam, which was ought to be repaired by Adam and

594 Cf. Jer. 18/1 ff.
Eve, through His willingness to send His only begotten Son to give ransom and thus to redeem the sinner. This also points to the contagiousness of the sin.\textsuperscript{595} Mar Jacob of Sarug was sure that Adam and Eve alone had committed sin. But when he mentions the ‘concealing of the tax from the creatures’ (\textit{kesyo dmakso men beryoto}), he speaks of the tax to be paid by the ‘whole creatures’ for the sin. Hence this expression speaks also of the spread of one man’s sin over other creatures and their responsibility to shoulder the effects of the sin. Yet another implication of ‘concealing the tax’ (\textit{kesyo dmakso}) is that it denotes to the nature of the remission of sin also. This act of ‘concealing’ (\textit{kesyo}) through the blood of Christ is not for opening it later, but it is an act of burying the sin for ever.

\textit{‘Light is a shadow’ (nuhro hv telolo)} (\textit{FMC I 263}) is a paradoxical as well as a very good poetic expression that gives us the impression of the nature of God’s existence as the perfect brightness. The whole brightness of the entire universe is only a shadow in its comparison with the splendour of God’s magnificence. It also connotes to the immeasurable brightness of the image of God in man and this brightness was shaded by the darkness of sin.

\textit{‘My tongue will bring forth fruits of praises’ (\textit{pire ds\textsuperscript{\text{\textsubscript{\textipa{b}}}ub\textsuperscript{\text{\textsubscript{\textipa{b}}}ho navled les\textsuperscript{\text{\textsubscript{\textipa{b}}}on}}}) (\textit{FMC II 2}) and ‘Diligent digging of tongue in the vineyard’ (\textit{hpuryo ka\textsuperscript{\text{\textipa{b}}}asiro dles\textsuperscript{\text{\textsubscript{\textipa{b}}}on bkarmo}) (\textit{FMC II 13}) etc. are allegorical phrases as well as a beautiful images of a poet and of a singer. The attempt of the poet in making the mimre is compared with a farmer’s cultivation. Here, the vineyard (\textit{karmo}) is a common metaphor used in the prayers of the church as well as in the Holy Scripture for the vast field of the Word of God, where one’s contemplative cultivation will produce fresh fruits. The vineyard also represents the Holy Church. This has an allusion to the labourers of the vineyard in St. Mathew 20/1 ff.}

\textsuperscript{595} Contagious nature of sin is discussed in the section, “Sin as the Soteriological Causality”, p. 521.
A farmer shall dig with his instruments in the vineyard to cultivate vine and produce grapes. The instrument of a singer is his tongue and singing melodious song is the cultivation and the enjoyment that the hearer feels out of the melodious recitation of the poem is the fruit. Metaphorically the expression, ‘diligent digging’ (*hpuryo kasiro*), of the poet aims at the zealous, studious, vigilant, obedient, untiring and meditative approach towards the Word of God and a prayerful and exegetical attempt to delve into the divine mysteries in order to form of a mimre. And ‘Glorious fruits’ (*pire dsgubho*) also indicates the inestimable value of what the poet is going to say. The poet metaphorically considers his tongue an instrument that digs deep and finds out the gems in the divine mysteries (*rozo alohoyo*) (*FMC II* 13-14).

‘Meditation on God’s teachings’ (*hergo ‘al yulpono daloho*) (*FMC II* 3) – is an expression that alludes to the poet. Certainly the poet might have been influenced by the psalmist who describes the meditation on the Word of God.\(^{596}\) Here, it is not mere contemplation on any topic; instead it is the integral merging between the one who meditates and the one on whom the meditation is done. Mar Jacob declares his constant and habitual practice of meditating the Word of God as well as the divine secrets in it (*FMC II* 3-4). A poem being imaginative in its basic character, the first and foremost quality of the poet must be his willingness to meditate, up to the level of a hermit, on the theme of the poem (*FMC II* 3). A genuine poet shall begin his work only after a long period of meditation as if he is in the process of hatching. The mimre of Mar Jacob shows that all his works are the products of such meditations. Hence the poet shares his feeling of internal urge that he acquired from the meditation and that compels him to compose the mimre:

“*Wake up O, mind to speak with discernment*” (*FMC II* 31)

Any poem that is fabricated without this kind of meditation, pain and stirring-up feeling, will

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\(^{596}\) Ps.1/2, 119/97.
be without life and hence distasteful.

‘Distributing the toil to the limbs’ (pulogo ‘amlo lhadome) (FMC II 7) - here also, Mar Jacob narrates the birth pang of a poet – the essential characteristic of a poet, for generating his best product. And he shares with the audience the full amount of his own birth-pang in the making of the mimre (FMC II 7). A good poet begets the idea in his mind. He goes through a period of contemplation which, in the poet’s own terminology, is a stage of ‘meditation on God’s teachings’ (hergo ‘al yulpono daloho) (FMC II 3), in which the idea grows in the womb, the mind, of the poet for a period of time. At the maturity of its growth, the poet feels the push from within to deliver the idea. As if a woman is in travail, the poet feels the birth-pang of delivering the child into words; there a better poem is born. Other requirements to satisfy the idea of a good poet are his readiness to imbibe honey vibes tipped by God and to reproduce it without any stain of insolence (FMC II 15-16), to be an instrument in the hands of God (FMC II 4-6, 8-10), his humility to be directed by God as if a child who is been practiced walking by his parents, (FMC II 11-14, 17-18), his obedience to comply with the orders of the Lord (FMC II 19-20) as if a ‘labourer’ who works only according to the ordinances of the master (FMC II 4-5, 9), his enthusiasm for untiring efforts until the goal is reached (FMC II 23 ff) and to defend the truth (FMC II 6) etc. The poet is sure that this flow of divine words will enrich his relation with God as that of a master-disciple relationship (FMC II 5-6)

‘Fair rose’ (vardo rgigo) (FMC II 15) - is an image used in the mimre to share the poet’s sweet experiences in his association with the treatises of God. For him the Word of God tasted as the sweetness of a rose.\footnote{This has a reference to Ps. 19/10, where the psalmist narrates the taste of the Word of God.} This expression has another connotation also, that is, the poet had been sucking the honey from the rose, the Word of God, in the form of divine inspirations and revelations. The poet always used to imbibe the sweetness in his relation with
the Lord as well as in the reception and the distribution of the word of God. Rose (vardo) is a common symbol of beauty. This expression is self explanatory of how he was in a pleasant mood at the making of the mimre. The rose (vardo) being the symbol of fairness, softness, sweetness, attraction, perfection etc., the poet attributes all these qualities to the divine word.

‘Skilled pen of doctrines’ (qanyo mhiro malponuto) (FMC II 17) - is a metaphorical expression of the poet. Pen (qanyo) is the symbol of an instrument that transmits one’s thoughts into written form on a surface. Then, ‘skilled pen’ (qanyo mhiro) refers to the perfection of the instrument in the act of transmitting the thoughts into words. ‘Skilled pen’ also stands for the excellence and authenticity of the poet, the one who fastens the pen. This also denotes the poet’s willingness to be obedient to the directions of the divine power. When the poet asks,

“Fasten the skilled pen of your doctrines (qanyo mhiro malponutok) with my fingers” (FMC II 17),

he requests the Almighty’s benevolence to convey the divine mysteries in its utmost perfection through a faultless exegesis.

‘Commander’ (rab haylo) (FMC II 19) - is an image of authority, leadership and power. Soldiers are under the control of the officer and thus they have to obey him without any question. When the poet prays for the Divine Commander’s (rab haylo alohoyo) control over his whole senses, his objectives are to march only in the right path towards the battlefield, to fight for discovering the truth according to the commands of the chief (FMC II 20) and thus to avoid any human influence on the exegesis of the divine mysteries in his mimre. At the march of the soldiers for the battle, the commander’s voice stirs the soldiers’ vigour up so as to fight valiantly for victory. Here, in the mimre, the sole exciting factor is the power of the divine inspirations. Through the image of a commander, the poet was also affirming the supervision
of God over his whole works. He also envisages the senses as soldiers who fight at the
directive of their master.

‘Detestable silence’ (*setqa sanyo*) (*FMC* II 20) - is a metaphorical expression that tells
about the barrenness of the womb of the poet, the mind, brain, mouth etc. It also represents the
cloudiness over one’s imagination. Here, the poet alludes to the dormancy of his physical
powers in his attempt to disclose the divine mysteries. But the poet’s fear of being silent and
refraining from proclaiming the Word of God is expressed in another mimre also: “Shall I
choose silence? But it breeds harm, seeing that it belongs to inertia”\(^{598}\) When the poet scorns in
the mimre the silence of Eve in front of the serpent (*FMC* III 495), how can he be silent?

‘Son of the dust’ (*bār dahlīḥo*) (*FMC* II 79, 176, III 186 etc.) has an allusion to the
making of man from the dust\(^{599}\) when he was created by God\(^{600}\) (*FMC* II 175 ff.) In this
context, the poet calls the earth, a mother or a foster mother (*FMC* I 56, III 939-940, 948).

‘Let us strike the mimro on (its) sack as on juniper’ (*‘aṛqo*) (*FMC* II 81) - It is an
excellent poetical expression which shows that the poet is at the verge of generating his
thoughts into words. This shows how much the poet is ecstatic to accomplish the formation of
the mimre. A strike on a juniper causes to drip the sap. A simple strike – a simple stimulation -
is enough to pour forth a deluge of thoughts, expressions and melodies from the profound mind
of the poet. And the mimre is the result of such a gushing forth. For the poet the tongue is the
stick that strikes the dam of the mind and makes the flow of thoughts (*FMC* II 83-84).

‘Yoke of death’ (*nīro dmvto*) (*FMC* II 92) is a symbol of burden and slavery and
hence it implies the trouble one has to bear as a result of his action.\(^{601}\) ‘Yoke of death’ (*nīro d-

\(^{598}\) Kollamparampil, *Jacob of Sarug’s Homilies on the Nativity*, 16.
\(^{599}\) Cf. Gen. 2/7 ff.
\(^{600}\) The poet’s notions on the creation of man is discussed in detail in the segment, “Anthropological Concepts in
the Mimre”, p. 345 ff.
his yielding to sin.  

But ‘Yoke’ (niro) in IV 46 is employed contrarily. There, the poet considers it as a balancing device that controls and regulates various differing elements as one unit. With a similar connotation, the poet speaks of man’s Will as a balancing devise between the two inclinations (II 153-154).

‘Incline the ears’ (šlav maṣma’to) (FMC II 105) - is another metaphor in the mimre that denotes the demand for attentiveness. This tells us of the importance and worthiness of the truth that is going to be said. This expression also points to the manner in which the truth is going to be conveyed and the closeness between the speaker and listener. The poet demands for the turning of the ears of the audience towards him, because he had to convey a mystery through whispering (FMC II 104).

‘The gold of my words’ (dahbo dmelat) (FMC II 105) - is a metaphorical expression which signifies the refined and purified thoughts and ideas after a series of meditations, coagulations as well as debates. It also stands for the thoughts of the poet strengthened by the divine power in addition to its connotation for the veracity of what is being told. The poet’s attempt to combine gold (dahbo) and his words (melto) is intentional in order to show the worthiness of his words. With this confidence, he invites the audience,

“Join with me and hear the truth that is evident from my words” (FMC II 110).

‘Gem in the crown’ (tab’o ıkilo) (FMC II 108) - is an image of the preciousness, comeliness, greatness, majesty and praiseworthiness of something. A gem becomes shining and costly only after a series of purifying processes and when it is on a crown it adds elegance to the crown. The truths on Adam’s nature that are attained and proclaimed in the mimre are pure and precious like gems and they add nobility to the whole generations of mankind.

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601 Cf. Lam. 1/14.
602 Cf. I Tim. 6/1.
‘Charioteer and bridle (henyuko u pgudo) (FMC II 145-146, 147 ff.) - are symbols of guiding and controlling. Mar Jacob employs them in the mimre in order to show the necessity of controlling oneself. A charioteer (henyuko) uses the bridle (pgudo) to control the horses and direct the chariot. Here, these are independent objects and work together as a single unit. But with regard to man, his body, mind, soul, life, senses, reason, thoughts, decisions, words, activities etc. are the chariot and horse, his Will is the charioteer and the commandments of God are the bridles. Hence the poet points out the necessity of controlling man by himself on the basis of the commandments.

The image of ‘architect’ (ardiklo) (II 169) - used in the mimre represents God; as a mason builds the beautiful and well-built house on strong pillars, God built the ‘house of Adam’ on the pillar of soul.

‘Opening the door of death’ (petho dtar’o lmavto) (FMC II 295) - is a figurative statement that denotes the entrance of sin in man which causes death. A conscious effort is needed for opening the doors. Thus the poet hints to the difference between the mortal and menial sins. A sin becomes mortal when there is a conscious attempt from the part of the sinner. In this way he opens the door for the entrance of sin that leads to his death. When the poet uses, ‘Opening the door of death’ (petho dtar’o lmavto) (FMC II 295), he means that the key, the insolence of man, of the door of death is in one’s own hands. Unless one does not open the door voluntarily, and otherwise one enters through the door of death consciously, it will never be opened before him. Hence, a conscious effort is needed to open the door of death.

‘Goldsmith’ (hasolo) (FMC III 64) - is a metaphor of God. As a goldsmith (hasolo) artistically makes magnificent ornaments, God created the world most beautifully and with all complexity. Man is the masterpiece among His creations. In this context of gold-artwork and
considering God a goldsmith, the poet often compares the image of man with a necklace (FMC IV 101-106).

‘A thorn’ (kubo) (FMC III 74) - is a suitable symbol of itch-feeling. The poet uses it to characterize Satan, whose all activities are inflicting in nature. The vulnerability of this thorn is that it was brought up in the blessed field, and thus this ‘thorn’ also stands for the undeserved emergence and presence of some evil thing in a holy place. In another place of the mimre, the ‘thorn’ (kubo) stands for the prick of conscience of man after his sin (FMC III 1073-1076). In the homily ‘on the Nativity’ Mar Jacob views the thorny crown on the forehead of Jesus Christ at His crucifixion as a crown made of thorns of sin603.

‘Granary of discipleship’ (beyt hetto dtalmiduto) (FMC III 73) - is a beautiful metaphor that refers to farmers’ collection of ripened grains of the same kind within a closed room for their own use as well as for the future cultivation. This has an allusion to the parable of the weeds said by Jesus.604 In our context this ‘granary’ (beyt hetto) is the congregation of the twelve apostles selected and appointed by Jesus Christ.605 This implies also of the protection that the grains which are the disciples who enjoy with in the granary, the necessity of harmony and oneness among the disciples in the proclamation of the gospel etc. This is also an image of the gathering of God’s people in heaven at the end of the times.

‘Tare’ (zizono) (FMC III 73) - can be understood as a metaphor for malicious growth that not only failed to attain its original target, tarnished the will of the owner and thus became useless and despised by the owner but it became so malicious so as to defile other plants and grains also in the field. And this ‘tare’ (zizono) is an allusion to Judas Iscariot.

‘Wrestling’ (daro) (III 135), ‘overthrow’ (sohupto) (FMC III 137, 145), ‘fighting’ (takatuso) (FMC III 144), ‘victory and defeat’ (zokuto u hayobuto) (FMC III 146, 148),

603 Kollampampil, Jacob of Sarug’s Homilies on the Nativity,
605 Cf. Mk. 3/13 ff.
'crown' (klilo) (FMC III 190-194) – all these allude to athletic competitions used to held in great sporty events like Olympics. These are metaphors used by the poet to demonstrate the nature of sin. In many other places of the mimre, Mar Jacob employs the same notions (FMC III 191-194, 551-552, 563-564). Here, the poet not only narrates the competition between the sinner and Satan, but the conflict between good and evil within a man at the moment of the commission of sin.

‘Cup of death’ (koso dmvto) (FMC III 209) - is a striking allegory the poet uses to tell about the nature of death. This death is not a physical death but it connotes the eternal death of man. When Mar Jacob employs the imagery of a cup (koso), he tells us about the existence of death in the world as if a cup is prepared with full of deadly poison. But it is left to man’s Will to choose either to drink and die or to keep himself away from it and live eternally (FMC III 210). The cup of death (koso dmvto) does not take initiative to attack any one, but it devours people disastrously only when man goes after it and drinks from it voluntarily and greedily.

The expression, ‘cup of death’ (koso dmvto) goes in line with the poet’s concept of sin (III 583ff). The cup is eye-catching as sin is attractive in its outward appearance and the drink in the cup is tasty at the beginning as the sin is immeasurably beloved at the beginning (FMC III 593). But both are filled with deadly drops which may not be seen on the surface (FMC III 230).

‘Drinking the suffering bitterly’ (haso mariroit) (FMC III 211) - is a suitable metaphor the poet uses here to describe the nature of the fruit at the centre of the Garden. Those who drink its juice are drinking the sufferings of death. And ‘bitterness’ (mariruto) signifies the taste of death which a sinner can’t but avoid. Elsewhere in the mimre Mar Jacob speaks of the coexistence of sin and suffering.
‘Sharpened swords in the branches’ (FMC III 213) – is a best allegory. The poetic calibre of Mar Jacob conceives the branches of the tree as sharpened swords in order to protect the precious fruit as well as to attack and kill those who approach to pluck the fruit. He also imagines the branches as soldiers holding swords as if in a battlefield and the movements of the branches at the pressure of the wind as fighting of the warriors with weapons, in order to keep the intruders away from it.

‘Hanging up of fruits of death in the branches of mountain’ (FMC III 269) is an ironic statement. ‘Branches of mountain’ is a figurative expression which doesn’t mean different parts of the mountain, instead, the poet was using this phrase, combining the images of tree at the centre of the Garden and mount Horeb, that brought death to those who touched it. This is an excellent poetic expression.

‘Blessed nest of Eden’ (geno briko de’den) (FMC III 292, 294, 296, 302, IV 178) - this brilliant figurative expression creates coolest symbols of family, serenity, peace of mind, love, innocence (FMC III 296, 298), loveliness (FMC III 298), harmony, cohabitation etc. of the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve, the lovely sparrows (šepro) (FMC III 298) or the innocent partridges (haglo) (FMC III 302) lived cheerfully as if in a lovely nest (geno rhimo).

‘Merchants’ (tagoro) (FMC III 300) - is a symbol employed here for Adam and Eve as the possessors of the priceless image of God. Since they are clothed with this precious image (FMC I 272), Satan tries to strip them off (FMC III 300) and capture the wealth. The use of ‘merchants’ (tagoro) is also because of their ownership of the whole wealth of the universe and their lordship over it.

‘Breastplate, (seryono) spearhead (lulito) and weapon (zayno)’ (FMC III 312-313) - are symbols of a soldier who fights in the battlefield obeying the orders of the commander. The strength, suitability and deployment of these instruments as well as the orders of the officer
save the soldier and they lead the battle towards victory. Here, the commanding officer is God and the orders, armour and the weapons are the commandments and the word of God. They are given with the intention of protecting the image from the enemies and to win the war. The strength as well as the weakness of the breastplate is based on man’s obedience to and the observance of the commandments. Man must make use of the two edged sword, Word of God to protect himself from and at the same time to attack Satan. These descriptions are allusive to the war-knowledge of the poet as well as his acquaintance with the exhortation of St. Paul.606

‘Stretching out of bow’ (qesto) (III 314) - is the metaphorical expression of the devises and schemes as well as the zealous attempts of Satan to attack man. The swiftness and the precision of the arrow depend on the stretching out of the bow. Satan is a cunning and sharp shooter of the lethal arrow of sin. The poet shows how terrible, strong, accurate, deceptive, fast, hurtful and deadly is the arrow that is cast from the bow of Satan who always seeks stratagem to attack man. But in another place of the mimre (FMC III 873, 876, 879, 881), the poet employs the metaphor of bow and arrow contrarily, there, even though bow and arrow are usually symbols of fight and attack, here, it is used to represent the punishments and curses shed upon the serpent by God. The arrows of God’s curses that cast upon him contentiously (FMC III 879) hurt him and disfigured him, thus he started moving on his belly.607

‘Tidings, full of death’ (sbarto dmavto malyo) (FMC III 318) - Since Satan is the embodiment of destruction, whatever comes out of him will certainly be nothing but harmful. Hence the poet employs similar destructive images, allegories and metaphors while speaking about the Satan’s words. ‘Tidings, full of death’ (sbarto dmavto malyo) tell us of the unending repetitions of the provocations of Satan, like the waves of the sea. All tides of sin aim at

606 In Eph. 6/10 ff. St. Paul exhorts the faithful to wear the armour of God in order to fight against the evils of the world.
devouring the one who stands ashore. When some one is trapped inescapably by the waves of sin, they carry him with uproar towards death.

‘Stoning (rgomo) the house of Adam (beyt odom) with ruining voice’ (qolo r’iego) (FMC III 320) - represents the continuity as well as the weightiness of the attack of Satan. Here, the destructive words of Satan are compared with stones that hurt and kill man.

‘Wind of lie (ruho dsuqro) blown through the flute’ (abubo), ‘playing the melody of death’ (qolo dmvto) and ‘singer’ (mzamrono) (FMC III 321-322, 330) - are metaphors used by the poet to narrate the imparting of vices form Satan to the serpent. Here, it is noticeable that the poet uses musical metaphors. ‘The melody of death’ (qolo dmvto) (FMC III 322) describe the outward pleasurable nature of sin as if melodious that leads the sinner towards death.

Here, one more thing is to be noticed; the insistence of the poet on the ‘blow of air’ (ruho) that arises from the singer passes through the flute and creates melody of death. This usage is intentional because he uses it in contrast with the breathing of ‘ruho’ by God the Father through the nostrils of Adam in order to give him life (FMC II 176). This expression is common among the Church Fathers; especially we see it in the ‘Hymns on Paradise’ of Mar Ephrem, where he depicts it as the serpent breaths on Adam.608

‘Letter’ (egarto) (FMC III 323, 325, 327) – is a metaphor the poet employs skilfully in his mimre. This letter (egarto) is not of words written in parchment, but it is a letter (egarto) of appointing the serpent with a mission and imparting into him the wily personality of Satan; hence writing is imprinting Satan’s own nature on to the serpent. The craftiness written on the letter caused the death of the first parents.

Mar Jacob significantly brings in the metaphor of a letter (egarto) here. While the poet was extolling the Virginity and Immaculate Conception of Mary, he speaks of writing the

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608 Cf. Brock, Hymns on Paradise, 98.
Word of God on Mary, the pure and clean paper. James Puthuparampil quotes from the mimre ‘On the Virgin’ of Mar Jacob of Sarug, “She (Mary) gave her body as a clean sheet; the Word wrote his essence on it, corporally”.609 This letter written on Mary is that which gives life to the world. Thus certainly, the letter written by the crafty scribe is brought here by the poet as a contradiction against the letter written with the Word of God.

‘Crafty Child’ (talyo šni’o) (FMC III 326) is the image for the letter given to the serpent by Satan. Here, the idea of the poet in using this word is that a child (talyo) is the miniature totality of the parents. Whatever Satan had handed over to the serpent is his own personality; the serpent is the embodiment of Satan. The poet calls the serpent also, in addition to Satan, ‘a deceitful scribe’ (FMC III 359) because, whatever comes from him are also ‘words of treachery’ (FMC III 499). The image of ‘child’ (talyo) is used elsewhere in the mimre to denote innocence also.610

‘Whispering’ (retmo) (FMC III 331, IV 176) - is an allegory. First of all, it denotes the intimacy of the persons between whom the message is conveyed (FMC III 389) and then it signifies the secrecy of the message (FMC III 394). The message conveyed between Satan and the serpent was deceptive and destructive, but the message conveyed to the Blessed Virgin Mary through the whispering of the angel was creative and redemptive.611 The poet uses this concept of whispering also for denoting God’s respect towards women as well as the fragility of their characteristic: thus the poet describes the questioning of God against Eve, after her sin in Eden, only in terms ‘whispering’ so that Eve shall not be fainted at the questioning612 (FMC III 803).

609 Puthuparampil, Mariological Thought of Mar Jacob of Serugh, 198.
610 This notion of the poet is narrated in the section “Anthropological Concepts in the Mimre”, p. 370.
611 Cf. Lk. 1/26 ff.
612 See above in this section, ‘Feministic Approach of the Poet’.
‘Breaking open of the fortification’ (FMC III 505, 511), ‘crossing the limit’ (FMC III 507), ‘fence’ (FMC III 513), ‘transgression’ (FMC III 515) etc. give us the image of Eve as well as of the nature and purpose of the commandments. God has given the commandments not as a burden on men but as a protection. As a fortress protects the city, the commandments of God protect the precious image and the life of man from the enemy’s attack. As immediately as one starts demolishing the fortress by disobeying the commandments (FMC III 513), then Satan, the enemy begins to attack and kill him. Here the poet draws the valiance of Eve who was strong enough to break up the fortification set up by God.

‘Nakedness’ (pursiyo) (FMC III 555, 572 etc.) - is a figurative expression which is used frequently in the mimre to denote the after effects of sin.\textsuperscript{613} The poet synonymises shame and nakedness (FMC III 571, 574 etc). Human beings feel humiliated at its maximum when their nakedness is exposed in public. When Mar Jacob repeats the Biblical notion of nakedness as an effect of sin, it reflects the utter humiliation which Adam and Eve experienced in the Garden. In this sense the poet often describes it as a stripping off process (FMC III 581). In order to emphasise the intensity of the humiliation, the poet uses another image of ‘defeat’ (FMC III 560, 569). The emotions and feelings that emerge out of this utter humiliation are ‘remorse of the soul’ (FMC III 576), ‘regret of the soul’ (FMC III 582-583), ‘lamentation’ (FMC III 584-585), and ‘suffering’ (FMC III 589).

‘Decoration of poverty’ (ta’dudo dsniquuto) (FMC III 641, 648, 652) - is another ironical statement of the poet to ridicule Eve who was enthusiastic to cover herself with the power of divinity, but she gained the shame of nakedness and poverty. The irony consists in the association of the terms, decoration and poverty. The irony in the statement becomes more enjoyable when the poet describes the characteristics of the tunic of leaves (FMC III 651 ff.); it

\textsuperscript{613} See the detailed discussion on ‘nakedness’ in the section, Sin as the Soteriological Causality”, p. 555 ff.
was insufficient, its fabrication was unskilled, it was too thin, it was transparent even to exhibit their nakedness, it was garment of grief, it was weak, it was a rag tunic etc. Despite all these deficiencies the poet ridiculously considers the tunic, a decoration. This expression is used here metaphorically also to present Eve’s pathetic condition. Eve was adorned by God with all possible ornaments and colours (FMC IV 159 ff.), but her sin damaged all her beauties and possessions and thus she became a beggar (FMC III 649).

‘Throne of Judgement’ (kursi dino) (FMC III 793) – gives us the image of God as the supreme Judge. It is also a metaphorical expression of the final judgement in which God will appear as the supreme Judge and each one will be judged on the basis of eternal justice and according to one’s own deeds.614

Mar Jacob considers this throne and judgement (kursi dino) not as a chair made of mater but as a state of affair and state of being of God, because, the poet speaks of God’s immaterial and immutable nature (FMC III 696) and hence He doesn’t need a throne to be seated and since God is omnipresent, furniture can’t contain Him (FMC III 769). Even though this is the throne of judgement, Mar Jacob likes to conceive it as the throne of mercy (kursi rahme) from where words of consolations are being pronounced in order to soothe the afflicted (FMC III 897 ff.). He speaks of God’s magnificent throne,615 in order to belittle the throne of Satan.616

‘Overshadowing of the serpent’ (aṭel ḥevyo) (FMC III 819, 821) - is an allegory the poet uses here ironically. The overshadowing of the Holy Spirit through the words of the angel617 had produced Jesus Christ in the womb of Virgin Mary. But overshadowing of the serpent through his wicked words helped Eve to conceive iniquity and to give birth to deceit

614 This expression of the poet has allusions to the scriptural passages like Prov. 16/12, Ps. 9/4-8, Matt. 5/34, Rev. 21/11 ff. etc.
615 Cf. Rev. 4/2 ff.
617 Cf. Lk. 1/35.
(FMC III 546). ‘Overshadowing’ refers to the total possession and inculcation of the powerful one over the other. But overshadowing of the serpent over Eve was for seducing her and leading her to commit adultery (FMC III 510 ff.). The poet uses another phrase ‘making friendship’ (FMC III 821) in the same sense. And ‘love’ (FMC III 407, 823, 828) is considered here as a part and means of this overshadowing that leads to the overshadowing and begetting.

‘Flute – flute player’ (FMC III 835-836, 863), ‘harp – tiara (FMC III 864), ‘horse-horseman’, ‘ship - sailor’, (FMC III 865 ff, 883), ‘furnace – craftsman’ (FMC III 867-868), ‘stubble – keeper’ (FMC III 869-870) – all these represent the slavish adherence of the disciple, follower or the servant before his master. Here, the flute-player, the tiara, horseman, sailor, craftsman and the keeper are the images of Satan. The flute, the harp, the horse, the ship, the furnace and the stubble are the images of the serpent. The flute and harp produce melodies only according to the pressure of the wind of the player blown through it, the horse and ship move according to the direction of the master and the furnace moulds images in line with the mind of the craftsman. All these are only submissive agents to accomplish the will of the master. According to the poet this is also a model of the relation between Satan and a sinner, where sinner becomes a slave to Satan and he acts only according to the direction of the wicked master.

‘Sowing deception’ (zra‘ to’yuto) (FMC III 850) - is a metaphor which tells us about the nature of sin and its agent. The seed that is being sown (FMC III 822) is too small, but it is the core of the tree. The inception of sin in man is like sowing seeds in a farm by the farmer. At the beginning the seed is dormant. This inactiveness of the seed helps the sower, the agent of sin, to escape unobstructed. There is a process of growth from seed to the tree. A matured tree again produces fruits and seeds for further sprout-ups. Nature of sin is similar. It may be undistinguishable at the beginning. But at a convenient atmosphere it grows up and produces
the fruits of death and again and again the grown tree sows seeds of calamity. If there is no intentional attempt to uproot the tree of sin, it spreads and causes production of unending calamities.

‘Breathing of the craftsman’ (*npoho dumono*) (*FMC* III 868) - is used here by the poet in order to give us an image of an artificer and to narrate a contrast of breathing between the two kinds of craftsmen. A potter, goldsmith or blacksmith blows into his furnace so as to enhance the fire and thus to bake, burn and mould his product. Among the two craftsmen, according to the poet, one is God, the real and skilful craftsman (*FMC* II 133 ff, 167, 177, IV 7 ff, 111 ff, 149 ff, etc) whose breathing gave the breath life to Adam (*FMC* III 173). When Satan, the wicked craftsman, breathed into the furnace, the outcome was words of treachery that multiplied Adam’s sufferings (*FMC* III 868) and the breath of the serpent caused his death. The poet explains it in another place as the venomous blow of the viper that makes the image fall (*FMC* IV 109).

‘Strap of mercy’ (*'argo drahme*) (*FMC* III 899, 907 ff) - is a metaphor that denotes the gentleness of the punishment of God. Here again, the poet discloses the characteristics of God, who doesn’t avoid punishments on the culprits, because His justice has to be justified. At the same time He will not punish them brutally, because, His mercy hinders it (*FMC* III 899 ff.). So, for the poet, God’s instrument for punishment is a ‘feeble staff’ that was borne from the love of God (*FMC* III 900).

‘Spreading out wings’ (*kenpo*) (*FMC* III 924) and ‘mediator’ (*meš’oyuto*) (*FMC* III 923 ff) - create the beautiful image of a mother-bird. These usages are with the intention of describing the motherly characteristics of God’s mercy as well as of God Himself. The mother-bird spreads its wings over the chicks and keeps them under her safe custody in order

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618 This face of God’s mercy and justice is described in detail in the segment, “God’s Mercy as the Catalytic Code”, p. 477 ff.
to protect them from all kinds of dangers and hurts. And, when the father of a house beats the
children, the mother mediates for the child and covers him on her breast from being beaten,
even if the child is liable for the punishment. The poet beautifully puts the same notion: phase

“*But when the staff of wrath was raised by the Judge,
he (Adam) was received in the arms of mercy lest it should touch him*” (*FMC III* 929-930).

A benevolent mediator risks his life and takes all efforts to intercedee for the afflicted
and thus tries to save him from the torture. Jesus Christ as the mediator between man and
God\(^{620}\) takes up all kinds of suffering to save man. God’s mercy intercedes before the justice of
God for the sinner and it spreads its wings to cover the culprit from being scourged (*III* 923
ff.).\(^{621}\)

‘*The quiver of wrath*’ (*qtírqo drugzo*) (*FMC III* 931) - is a beautiful metaphor that
signifies the storehouse of justice where retribution equal to the gravity of sin are stored and
from where the punishments are cast in the form of hurting arrows. ‘*Wrath*’ (*rugzo*) denotes the
severity of the judgement. But the poet insists that the ‘*the quiver of wrath*’ (*qtírqo drugzo*) of
God is to be understood only in connection with the mercy of God.\(^{622}\)

‘*Brick of clay*’ (*lbeto dtíno*) (*FMC III* 971) - is used here scornfully and hence it can be
considered an irony. It denotes Adam in the sense that he was made of clay of the earth by God
as a brick is formed from the mud by the mason. The poet uses this expression in order to
explain the connotations of God’s words ‘You are dust’, to emphasise God’s grace in giving
His image to the dust and to remind the insolence of Adam. Mar Jacob uses this opportunity to
ridicule Adam on the powerlessness of the core material out of which he was created.

‘*God of clay*’ (*aloho dmedro*) (*FMC III* 973) - is a strong irony the poet employs in his
mimre to mock at the stupid attempts of Adam and Eve to reach up to the divinity. Adam was

\(^{620}\) Cf. Heb. 12/24.


\(^{622}\) Ibid, p. 510 ff.
the best creature that is formed out of dust; but, according to the poet, he misunderstood himself as the one who is capable enough to snatch the divinity by force. Thus, disregarding the limitations of his original capacity as a product of the earth, he tried to snatch divinity by physical force and thus he became a great fool. The entire fury of the poet at the foolish and insolent attempt of Adam and Eve had been expressed here through ridiculously calling them ‘god of clay’.

‘Fugitives’ (‘oruqo) (FMC III 1062, 1071) – is another metaphorical as well as ironical expression the poet uses in his mimre to tell us about the pathetic condition of Adam and Eve after their transgression. It is certain that he used it not sympathetically but it came out of a mind full of scorn and contempt against them, because they were lords over the creatures (FMC I 60, 203, IV 3, 62 etc.) and the whole wealth was handed over to them (FMC IV 165 ff, I 267 ff.). Their own insolence caused them to become pathetic and hence the poet doesn’t sympathise with them.

Comparison between Lot⁶²³ and Adam (FMC III 1063) is significant. The poet conceives the positive aspect of the expulsion of Adam from the Paradise. Lot was compelled to go away from Sodom, but that expulsion saved him and his family from the fire of death. Mar Jacob relates this event with that of Adam and says his expulsion from the Garden of Eden was also for saving him and his race from the eternal death.

With this comparison the poet also tries to communicate the association between Eve and the wife of Lot, because, both of them became vessels of God’s displeasure. Both of them were very much fond of worldly pleasures. The opinion of the poet on Eve is,

“She wantonly desired on the tree” (FMC III 526)

and the wife of Lot looked back behind lustfully and sadly saw the pleasures she was forced to

⁶²³ Cf. Gen. 19/1ff.
leave and thus she became a pillar of salt.624

‘Smallness of the entire earth’ (z ‘uruto dkul ar’o) (FMC III 1069) - is an exaggeration that denotes the swiftness of their running, because the point of the fiery sword was pointed towards them. As a metaphor it signifies many things. First of all, it represents the whole universe. This metaphor doesn’t mean the contraction of the earth, because, the earth and the universe remains the same. But it denotes the short-sight of one’s own perception as well as the narrowness of his mind as an effect of his sin. In the original status Adam was placed at the top of all creatures and thus he could see everything at a glance (FMC IV 113-114). But when he fell down from the top due to his sin (FMC IV 189 ff.), he lost his broad sight and he became poor-sighted. His sin made him blind (FMC III 571-572). This caused him to run within a very limited area. Another connotation of the metaphor is his impossibility of hiding himself from the presence of God. Wherever he went, he felt the presence of God and thus he went on running for the escape. The poet wants to insist that a sinner will find relief nowhere on earth other than from God. Yet another implication of the expression is his narrow-mindedness. His whole attitude towards God and towards others was changed due to his sin.

That is why the poet states,

“For, before his transgression, it (earth) was considered too big” (FMC III 1070).

One more implication that can be deduced from the ‘smallness of the earth’ is the insufficiency Adam felt in the world after the sin and in this sense the poet calls him ‘fugitive’ (FMC III 1071).

The expression of the poet gives us the idea that Adam and Eve were running fast up to the frontiers of the earth. But Mar Ephrem, in his ‘Hymns on Paradise’ tries to explain the expulsion of Adam from the Paradise little bit contrarily; his step by step descend to the lower

levels of the mountain as: “When Adam sinned God cast him forth from Paradise, but in His grace He granted him the low ground beyond it, settling him in the valley below the foothills of Paradise; but when mankind even there continued to sin they were blotted out and because they were unworthy to be neighbours of Paradise, God commanded the Ark to cast them out on Mount Quardu”.625 Mar Ephrem mentions various levels also in Paradise: “Each is stopped at the level whereof he is worthy, there being sufficient levels in Paradise for every one: the lowest parts for the repentant, the middle for the righteous, the heights for those victorious, while the summit is reserved for God’s Presence”.626

‘God of flesh’ (aloh besro) (FMC IV 3) – gives us the image of Adam. It is an allusion also to the special creation of man among other creatures, including the angels. The poet employs this to denote several things. This implies the innate divinity in man by the reason of the similarity of the image between God and him and which is covered with flesh (FMC I 219-220, 269 ff.). Another suggestion is Adam’s lordship over the creatures (FMC I 60, IV 62). Yet another implication is God’s appearance in fleshy form in Adam before the creatures. Thus he becomes the type of Christ who was born in fleshy form (FMC I 183-186). The poet respects the divinity in Adam in his original status. But he contemptuously calls Adam, ‘god of clay’ (FMC III 973) after his sin.

‘Chamber of light’ (gnuno dnuhro) (FMC IV 13) – light always symbolises the pleasantness, sumptuousness, clarity, openness, transparency, truthfulness, life, etc. A chamber represents the inclusiveness as well as the perfection. Along with these, the Garden of Eden was the seat of the comeliness and perfection of the creatures, fullness of virtues, holiness of Adam and Eve and moreover, the place of the presence of God as the sun of the Garden (FMC IV 305 ff.). The purpose of the poet behind this usage is to distinguish between the greatness of

625 Brock, Hymns on Paradise, 81.
626 Ibid.
the Garden and the sufferings of Sheol, which is identified as the ‘house of darkness’ (beyt hesko) (FMC IV 14) where Satan, the embodiment of all kinds of evils, is the head and its inhabitants are his wicked followers. While describing this, Mar Jacob might have had in his mind the division of St. Paul between the sons of light and the sons of the darkness.627

‘Ornaments’ (šebto) (FMC IV 57) - are always symbols of elegance, skilfulness, beautification and preciousness. The precious ornaments in man which make him more beautiful than any other creatures of the world are the image of God in him and his power of choice (FMC I 199-200, II 141-142 etc.). In this context he compares the composition of man with the making of a necklace by an artisan (FMC IV 101 ff.). Mar Jacob elaborates in detail about each limb by which man is decorated (FMC IV 113 ff, 137 ff.) and so, for the poet, the limbs are all ornaments that decorate the image.628 And what makes the poet more concerned is the loss of this comeliness of the image; thus he laments,

“And this elegance fell down into the pit in order to be corrupted in it: the whole well arranged beauties were trampled and destroyed” (FMC IV 143-144).

Only a poetic mind will shed tears at the loss of beauties, because poets are infatuated at the beauty of the nature; Mar Jacob excels in this regard above many among the flock of the same feather.

‘Whole creation as a great city’ (mdito rabto) (FMC IV 61) - is a metaphor that signifies many things. City is an image of magnificence, affluence, complexity and pomp and thus great city is a place of wonders for a common man. Very often the poet infers the majesty of the Creator from the diversity and grandeur of the creatures and thus he establishes the greatness of the creation also. A city stands for its well-planning, well-settlement and perfection. God has created nothing more and nothing less than what is needed for perfection.

627 Cf. Eph. 5/8 ff.
628 See this concept of the poet under the heading, ‘Comeliness ... of the image’ in the section, “The Image and Likeness of God in Man”, p. 281 ff.
God’s creation is eternally planned and the creation of man is the best example for God’s systematic setting up (FMC IV 93-94, 113 ff). That is why the poet often says that there is no new idea in God (FMC I 227) so as to change his plans often. A city is significant for its density and vastness also. Mar Jacob awfully repeats the endless limits of the world and the variety of creatures in it; all of them were created by God. He mentions the vastness of the bride-chamber in which the first parents were placed (FMC IV 158). A city is governed by the highest authorities and the law and order are supposed to be well maintained in cities comparing to the villages. Mar Jacob deliberately calls the Creator, ‘righteous one’ (kino) (FMC IV 61), because every creature is well established justly according to its nature and each creature is assigned with a particular task. Hence by all these means the whole creation can rightly be compared with a great city.

Most modern sociological atmosphere is of a global village. By the expression, ‘The whole creation is a great city’ (FMC IV 61), Mar Jacob might have been visualising in much advance, the possibility of this ‘global village’ concept.

‘Biting on the image’ (nukto dhevyo) (FMC IV 65) – creates an image of the brutal nature of Satan and the serpent. We never see in the Scripture that the serpent bites Eve or Adam at the Garden. But the poet highlights the snaky characteristics of the serpent and conceives his deception metaphorically as a venomous bite on the image of man and his treacherous words as the sharp injection of poison into the image (FMC IV 66, 141-142). The bite (nukto) of the dragon cuts the central string of the necklace, the image of man (FMC IV 105). Through the narrations of the horrifying characteristics of a dragon or python or similar big snakes,629 Mar Jacob draws the exact picture of how Adam and Eve were killed by the devil. Squeezing, paralysing, hurling, trampling etc. (FMC IV 67-68) are parts of python’s

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629 The poet’s descriptions on the Serpent can be seen in the section, “Narrations on the Non-corporeal Beings”, p. 500 ff.
process of devouring the prey. Through this imagery Mar Jacob tries to picturize the process of a sinner becoming dust (FMC IV 68).

‘Chariot’ (markabto) (FMC IV 73) - is a symbol of royal magnificence. Adam, being the bearer of the image of the Lord and thus he being the lord of the creatures (FMC IV 62), Adam has a royal lineage and this majesty is symbolised in ‘Chariot’. It also denotes coherence in an establishment, smooth functioning of its each part and the objective it has to be achieved. A chariot presupposes a charioteer who controls and horses denote that which pull the chariot. Through the image of a chariot (markabto), the poet was underlining the perfect integration of complex constituents in human body as well as the wisdom of the maker who made it in such a way. Mar Jacob was explaining the smooth performance, despite their basic differences, of the four elements in man like the unidirectional rotation of the wheels of a chariot in its course. The charioteer of the human body is the five senses (FMC IV 74). But in another place of the mimre, the willpower of man which is directed by divine wisdom is considered as the charioteer (FMC II 145-146). But these two notions are not contradictory for the reason that the senses are directed by the will (FMC II 145-146). Mar Jacob has long elaborations on ‘Celestial Chariot that contains God’ as a symbol of St. Mary’s virginity. James Puthuparampil had analysed those elaborations of Mar Jacob. The poet uses ‘chariot’ (markabto) also as a simile to tell about the feet of Adam in his course of running (FMC IV 115-116).

‘The Pillar’ (omudo) (FMC IV 89, II 171) – is a symbol of strength and centrality of a construction. This symbolism clarifies the construction of man. A pillar is made strong by using the mixture of various elements. A central pillar holds the whole weight of the edifice and each part of the building is adjoined to the pillar. Like that, man is a mixture of various

630 E.g. Ezek.1/4.
631 Cf. Puthuparampil, Mariological Thoughts of Mar Jacob of Serugh”, 128.
elements and thus he is built strong. As he is the centre of the universe (*FMC* IV 56), each and every part of the universe is centred on him and thus he has the responsibility to look-after them. The strength of the pillar is mostly depended on the mason who builds it (*FMC* IV 90). The poet employs the same image of a column in order to speak about the centrality of soul in a body (*FMC* II 171) and there God is pictured as the skilful mason (*FMC* II 169).

‘Necklace of pearls’ (*eqo dmargonyoto*) (*FMC* IV 101) - is a symbol of magnanimity, proud, integrity, preciousness, beautification, craftsmanship etc. This beautiful symbol is employed in the mimre in order to explain the excellence of man’s creation. The necklace (*eqo*) stands for the totality of the creation. Necklace (*eqo*) is important for its costliness, comeliness, coherence, decoration and the workmanship of the artisan. Every limb of man is the precious pearls of the necklace (*FMC* IV 101-102). The costliness and magnetism of the necklace (*eqo*) depend on the preciousness of the pearls and their artistic arrangements on it. The artistically fixed gems and pearls (*margonyoto*) on the necklace (*eqo*) stand for the logical and intentional arrangements of the valuable limbs of man (*FMC* IV 107-108, 110) as well as of its preciousness. The poet’s statement,

> “*He put together the organ by organ and set in order very distinctively in the image while the Wise one of the worlds was fashioning him in beauties*”

(*FMC* IV 137-138),

plants in our minds the patient care God, as a goldsmith (*hasolo – FMC* III 64), has taken to make man artistically. Since man is the most beautiful creature and the fullness of all the elements of the world (*FMC* IV 19-24, 29 ff. 103-104, 111-112, 149 ff.) and due to his unmatched possession of the image of God, he is the most precious creature in the world. In order to show the centrality of the soul in man, the soul of man is compared in the mimre with a string on which the necklace of human body is crafted (*FMC* IV 101-102). As immediately as the thread is broken, the whole necklace falls down. Similarly, at the bite of the serpent on the
soul, the whole limbs of man loose their bond and thus they fall down (FMC IV 105 ff). And also, at the increment of the gorgeousness and worthiness of the ornament, the craftsmanship of its maker is appreciated more. Whenever the poet exalts the magnificence of the image of man, there he certainly praises the skilfulness of God who created it (FMC IV 53-54). In a prayer of Mar Jacob, he considers the necklace as a seal on the image: “You were sealed with the King’s own necklace”.632 This necklace is certainly the image of the King in man.

‘Fortification in the manner of shellfish (halizuno) (FMC IV 125) – Here, the poet compares the fortification around the hole of the sense of hearing with the shape of a shell fish. This is an occasion also to evaluate the poetic calibre of Mar Jacob; how he keenly observes, evaluates and appreciates each and every minute piece of the universe.

‘Heart’ (lebo) (FMC IV 127) - is usually a symbol of love, compassion etc. But here, Mar Jacob considers it as the seat of wisdom (kursi dhekmto) (FMC IV 127-128). When Mar Jacob correlates treasury (gazo) and the heart of man (lebo) (FMC IV 127-128), he clearly indicates the importance of heart (lebo) as the storehouse of all treasures (simto). The poet considers wisdom (hekmtso) as the most valuable wealth in man. That is why he sees the heart (lebo) as the stockroom (gazo) of all thoughts of man and from where all treasures (simto) are being poured out. Poet’s concept of treasury (gazo) certainly involves a treasurer also who receives and disperses the treasures properly; the willpower of man stands as the treasurer.

‘Bile and heat’ (merto u hemto) (FMC IV 131) - represents explosion. Mar Jacob confirms the innate potency in man to react against sin and its circumstances. This is an invitation as well as an encouragement from the part of the poet so that the followers of the mimre shall burst out against evils and sins. The bile and heat (merto u hemto) are considered in the mimre as the instruments of the willpower; the Will of man decides to react against sin

632 Brock, “A Prayer Song by St. Jacob of Serugh recovered”, Harp, XVI, 352.
and this decision leads to the explosion and that explosion leads to the destruction of sin, its impulses and its agent.

‘Ill-smelling mud’ (syono saryo) (FMC IV 142) - is a metaphor that denotes the dirtiness and nastiness of sin. This expression of the poet aims at making a contrast between the sweet-smelling as well as virtuous mud (FMC IV 141) formed directly by God out the pure dust to make man (FMC IV 152 ff) and the dirty, impure and deceptive mud of the Satan that was shed upon Adam.

‘Embracing the clay’ (‘upoqo medro) (FMC IV 146) - is a poetical expression that alludes to the last point where one’s ultimate fall can happen. It gives us the picture of one’s prostrate fall on the ground as if he embraces the ground. When the sin of Adam caused him to fall down, the poet views it as a facedown fall. The intention behind the poet’s various attempts to show the unfathomable depth of the pit into which Adam fell down (FMC IV 143-148) was to show the severity of the fall and also to confirm the immeasurably exalted position where Adam existed before the fall. This feeling of the poet can be seen in his verse,

“..... deep and terrible was his chasm” (FMC IV 148).

This also points to Mar Jacob’s information on various layers of the earth.

‘Bridegroom and bride’ (hatno u kalto) (FMC IV 158-159, 166, 176) - are symbols of purity, freshness, unity, ornamentation, festivity, love, enthusiasm, fascination, shining etc. This also connotes to the settlement of a family. Here, the poet relates God with the fatherhood of a bride and bridegroom; Eve and Adam. They were faultless, gorgeous, shining (FMC IV 162) and fresh in the garden. They were decorated with the priciest pigments, chiefly with the pricey image of God. Mar Jacob explains in the following lines (FMC IV 161 ff.) the festivity of the marriage. Mar Jacob used to portray Adam as the type of Christ (FMC I 183-186).

Keeping in mind the comparison of St. Paul between Christ and the Church as the bridegroom
and bride respectively, the poet was confirming that Adam as bridegroom is the type of Christ, who is the Bridegroom of the Church (FMC IV 259) and Eve as the bride is the type of the Church, the bride of Christ.

‘Painting the image (FMC IV 157) - is used here metaphorically. Painting an object aims at beautifying it and at inviting others’ attraction. This expression represents the special creation of man in his most attractive manner so as to attract all other living and non-living beings in the universe. The priciest and choicest pigment (sammono gbayo) that attracts others is the image of God in man. This also presents God as the skilful artist.

‘Adorning Eve’ (FMC IV 159) - is a metaphor that tells us of the extraordinary creation of the bride on the bone from the side of Adam and thus the sharing of Adam’s image with Eve. The poet’s descriptions on adorning the bride have reference to the descriptions of the decoration of bride in Ps. 45/13 ff.

‘Bride chamber’ (gnuno) (FMC IV 158) and ‘Bedchamber’ (qaytuno) (FMC IV 167) - are symbols that signify the intimacy between the spouse, romance, sharing, serenity, splendour, pleasure etc. Here, the bed or bride chamber is the Garden of Eden where the couples were enjoying very much (FMC IV 162) between themselves, in the presence of God and along with all other creatures.

‘Clearing the face from the dust’ (FMC IV 209) - gives us an image of the motherliness of God, whose compassion is seen here at the renovation of the damaged image of Adam. It denotes many other things also. This clearing is the removal of the dust which was stuck on his face at his deep prostrate fall embracing the clay (FMC IV 146). Taking the humiliation and shame away from the face of image that it obtained due to the sin is it’s

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635 Mar Jacob’s descriptions on the motherliness of God is explained in the section, “God’s Mercy as the Catalytic Code”, p. 451 ff.
another significance, because the poet uses the phrase, ‘Shame of the face’ in FMC IV 182, a result of sin. The poet presents God as a loving mother who picks the fallen infant up immediately after the fall and carries him in her bosom and removes the dust from his face patiently and tenderly with words, actions, lullabies and signs of consolation. ‘Face’, here, is a synecdoche, because it doesn’t mean the countenance, the upper front part of man, but it stands for the whole image, because, the fall is the fall of the whole image. Face as the chief part of the body gives identity to the person; hence clearing the face is regaining the real identity of man.

‘Sea of fire’ *(yamo dnuro)* (FMC IV 247, 382) – is a contradiction in terms. Sea contains water that extinguishes fire and so sea and fire do not go hand in hand. It alludes to the narrations on the lake of fire in the book of revelation chapters 19-21, in order to remind the readers about the severity of punishment on the culprits. ‘Roaring sea of fire’ (FMC IV 382) signifies the extreme severity of pain and grief a sinner suffers in Sheol, destructive nature of sin and the total consummation of the image in the fire of Sheol. And here, Mar Jacob considers ‘fire’ as a symbol of destruction as the enormous amount of fire that burns the entire world at world’s consummation. Hence the contradictory terms are combined here in order to illustrate in a superlative manner the catastrophic dissolution of the universe at its end. In order to illustrate the enormity and intensity of the fire in Sheol, to warn people to be always mindful of it, and to invite them to make atonement (FMC IV 385), the poet uses terms like ‘terrifying flames of fire in Sheol’ (FMC IV 375-376), ‘putting of burning coals’ (FMC IV 378), ‘fear the fire’, ‘roaring sea of fire’ (FMC IV 382) etc.

But in another place the poet employs fire as a symbol of purification (FMC IV 425), but both these are not contradictory but complimentary, because, both the destruction and renewal take place together at the end of the times.
‘Sleep in Sheol’ (*demko dšiul*) (*FMC* IV 252) - is a metaphor that signifies the dormant state of man due to his death. Elsewhere in the mimre the poet uses the image of Sheol to demonstrate the sinner’s pathetic plight after his death and to denote the severe torture and destruction he has to undergo there. But when he speaks of sleep in Sheol it implies the possibility of awakening of the image after the sleep (*FMC* IV 252). Through this the poet is pointing out the image’s revival from the destruction as if a rising from sleep. The poet imagines that the sleeping ones wakeup startlingly at the shouts of the trumpet that accompany the Messiah at His arrival (*FMC* IV 251-252).

‘Band of Simon’ (*gudo dšem’un*) (*FMC* IV 261) - is a metaphor that corresponds to the followers of Christ who acknowledges St. Peter as the head of the Church.

‘Mansions of Gabriel and Michael’ (*beyt gabriyel u beyt mikoyel*) (*FMC* IV 261, 263) - is another metaphor that represents the innumerable number of angels in various groups. Since individuals represent the whole group of angels, literally it can also be considered a synecdoche. The meeting and the merging of the resurrected ones with the angels signify the implementation of the teaching of Jesus on the nature of the risen ones that they will be like angels in heaven (Matt. 22/30).

‘Thousands of Paul (*alpe dpavlus*) (*FMC* IV 263) - is another metaphor that stands for the gentiles who received the word of God from St. Paul and who accepted him as their apostle. The metaphor, ‘thousands’ (*alpe*) does not correspond to a particular digit but it stands for the innumerability of the crowd as we see in Rev. 7/9 ff.

‘Solemn procession’ (*zavho rabo*) (*FMC* IV 266) - is a symbol that denotes the victory over the enemy. The poet always considers man’s contact with Satan in terms of a contest

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636 These concepts of the poet are discussed in the segment, “Eschatological Perceptions of the Poet”, p. 589 ff.
637 See the section “Eschatological Perceptions of the Poet”, p. 548 ff.
638 Cf. Matt. 16/18.
639 On Angels, see the section, “Narrations on the Non-corporal Beings”, p. 483 ff.
640 Cf. 2Cor. 1/1, Col. 1/1.
Satan and sin are the causes of death (FMC IV 91 ff.). Hence, resurrection from the death is the victory over Satan and sin. The angels, the saints, the resurrected men and the whole creatures are the partakers of this victorious procession (FMC IV 259 ff.). They all have the right to scream on the triumph over Satan and praise God in loud voice. Because, Satan became an enemy to the angels for the reason that it is from their company Satan had quit (FMC III 59-66), people will rejoice because, it is Satan who seduced them to commit sin that led them to death (FMC III 333 ff.). The whole creatures will celebrate the victory, because, due to the wickedness of Satan, the earth was cursed through Adam (FMC III 853 ff.). Thus this solemn procession is the clamorous and elated march of the champions along with their King over the total defeat of their common enemy, Satan.

‘Axle and bridge’ (sarno ugasro) (FMC IV 303-304) - are two beautiful symbols. Axle (sarno) represents rotation and bridge (gasro) represents passage. The poet employs them here metaphorically to demonstrate the solar system, the revolution of times based on the sun, the passage of one spell of the time to the other etc. and geographically to mention the revolution of the earth on its axis. Also, by using the term ‘bridge’ (gasro), the poet employs his scientific information on the elements in the air poetically as a bridge through which the brightness of the luminaries pass towards the earth.

‘Enormous sea of backslides’ (yamo gayo datyobuto) (FMC IV 377) - is a very beautiful poetic expression the poet employs to emphasise the necessity of repentance. This image has many connotations. At the outset, it tells about the need of shedding of tears in huge measure as part of the repentance for the remission of one’s own sins. And the poet compares the amount of the tears with the immeasurable quantity of water in the sea. And thus he

642 Cosmological concepts of the poet are discussed in the section, “Eschatological Perceptions of the Poet”, p. 629 ff.
emphasises that, simply a feeling of sorry is not sufficient for the remission of sins but such a measure of tears is required to extinguish the enormity of fire, which a sinner may face in Sheol (FMC IV 382).

‘Gentle drops of tears (tavpe adem’o rakikto) for healing the ulcer’ (suḥno) (FMC IV 379) - is a metaphor that stands for the contrition of one’s heart on the sins and for the remedial measures to be taken for the remission of sins. Here, Mar Jacob envisages sin as painful and irritating ulcers (suḥno) on man and tears of repentance (dem’o datyobuto) as the gentle drops of medicine (tavpe rakikto dsamo) that cures the ulcer (suḥno) (FMC IV 381). This expression of the poet is not a contradiction to his suggestion for the enormous sea of backslides (yamo gayo datyobuto) (FMC IV 377) for the forgiveness of sins. These are two sides of the same process. Enormous sea of backslides (yamo gayo datyobuto) is required for washing the dirtiness of sins as well as to extinguish the sea of fire in hell. The gentle drops (tavpe rakikto) are required for dripping it for cure on the wounds caused by the sin. This statement of the poet creates an image of the poet as a well-versed physician.⁶⁴³

For examples’ sake, only a few of the expressions of the poet are taken for the analysis and in the performed analysis all the pearls from the sea of each word could not be fully picked up. Because, each word of the mimre contains rich connotations and no word in the mimre can be isolated as inappropriate and irrelevant.

II. 1. C. The Dodecasyllabic Metre and Mar Jacob of Sarug

Many authors opine that most of the works of Mar Jacob are in dodecasyllabic or twelve syllable metre (Hexameter)⁶⁴⁴ and they attribute the fatherhood of it to Mar Jacob of

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⁶⁴⁴ Brock, Brief outline of Syriac Literature, 30.
In this segment of the thesis, I try to establish that Mar Jacob was following Aristotle in this regard and he had followed in his Four Mimre ‘On Creation’ the hexameter pattern or twelve syllabic or Dodecasyllabic metre, in order to execute Aristotelian prerequisites of an epic poetry.

II. 1. C. 1. Application of Metre in poetry

Even though some modern liberal poets deny the necessity of metre in poetry, majority of the poets make their pieces of work using a variety of meters, seeing that metre as one of the basic principles of poetry: “In metrical reading expectancy is definite and precise. Metre gives uniformity in variety, and mental drill in words. Metre is effective, not in stimulation but in response. Metre adds to expected expectancies which make up rhythm into a definite pattern. With every beat of metre the tide of expectancy turns and swings and causes sympathetic reverberations”. Thus, in a way, we can call metre the grammar of poetry. The main characteristic of poetry is, “Unlike prose, it is divided into lines of predetermined length and these divisions are independent of those demanded by grammar or meaning”. Poems shall be created with in a framework outlined by precise dimensions. Metre is the measuring rod of the tempo of poetry and hence it “is the name given to the formal rhythmical patterns in which poetry is written”. And “The unit of measurement in verse is ‘foot’ which is a group of either two or three syllables”.

Syriac poets had composed their poems in various meters; thus their compositions are often known as metrical verses. Thomas Kollamparampil elucidates their characteristics and

645 See below in this segment, ‘Mar Jacob .... inventor ..... metre’.
646 Hellenic influence on Mar Jacob as well as Aristotelian concepts on poetry are discussed in detail in the segment “Hellenic influence in the formation of the Mimre”, p. 651 ff.
649 Reeves, *Understanding poetry*, 140.
purposes: “Often these involve repetitions and prolixity which may be an unwelcome factor to
some modern readers especially in the context of rationalistic theology. But it should be borne
in mind that most of the Syriac poetic forms are meant to be sung antiphonically, especially in
liturgical assemblies. Added to this, the verse compositions had the function of catechetical
teaching and homiletical persuasion. Such were the purpose of several poems that served
Christian life in liturgical and sacramental contexts as well as the life of piety in general”.651
Erudite men point out the characteristic of Syriac poetry and its metre: “In Syriac poetry there
are two kinds of strophes, simple and mixed or hypermetric. Simple strophes consist of two or
four regular metrical verses of equal length. In hypermetric strophes, the number of verses may
vary and there may be verses of different metres in the same strophe”.652 Mar Jacob of Sarug in
his Four Mimre ‘On Creation’ follows the simple strophe consists of two metrical verses of
equal length. Regarding metre, “In Syriac poetry, metre is based not on quantity as in the
ancient classical languages, Greek Latin etc., nor on the accent of syllables as in most modern
European languages, but on the number of syllables of the verses without distinction of long
and short syllables. Rhyme, as such, was unknown to the Syriac poets of the golden age, as
well as to the ancient Hebrew, Greek and Latin poets. It was only after the eighth century AD
that rhyme began to be generally used in Syriac versification”.653

Syriac literary men mostly dealt with religious topics in their works and hence we do
not have much works on grammar or on literary criticism. We see that it was only in the eighth
century AD, that there was very systematic grammar for the Syrians, especially for the Western
Syrians: “Jacob of Edessa was the first systematic Syrian grammarian from among the West
Syrians”.654 However, it is also said, “According to the fifth century church historian Sozomen,

651 Kollamparampil, Salvation in Christ According to Jacob of Serugh, 35.
652 Gabriel, Syro-Chaldaic Grammar, xxii.
653 Ibid., xxi.
654 Ibid., xxxvii.
it was Harmonius, son of Bardaisan ‘the philosopher of the Aramaens’, who, being deeply versed in Greek learning, was the first to subdue Syriac, his native tongue, to meters and laws”.\textsuperscript{655} Even though there are no clear cut evidences for the use of Harmonius’ work in the making of Mar Jacob’s poems, the possibility that Mar Jacob might have employed these guidelines in his works, can’t be left aside.

II. 1. C. 2. **Mar Jacob of Sarug as the inventor of the Dodecasyllabic metre**

The prosodists ascribe certain metres to some great luminaries in the field of Syriac poetry. This is based on the introduction and meticulous use of such metres by these poets in their creations. Thus they call the Heptasyllabic, ‘the Ephremian metre’\textsuperscript{656} the Pentasyllabic, ‘the Balaian metre’\textsuperscript{657} etc. In this line, the Dodecasyllabic metre usually is ascribed to Mar Jacob of Sarug; hence it can be called ‘the Sarugian metre’.\textsuperscript{658}

In many occasions it is said and believed that Mar Jacob is the inventor of Dodecasyllabic metre. Referring Khouri Sarkis, Thomas Kollamparampil says, “Mar Jacob is considered to be the inventor of Dodecasyllabic metrical hymnody. This particular metre is formed by verses of twelve syllables (three feet of four syllables) mainly used by Mar Jacob. Hence West Syrians call this particular metre Nisa dMar Ya’qob”.\textsuperscript{659} But contrary to this opinion, some others say Mar Ephrem is the first one who used this metre in Syriac: “...... And dodecasyllabic (twelve syllable), is introduced, it seems, by Ephrem. The most favourite metre of Ephrem is heptasyllabic which is consequently called after him. The tetrasyllabic and pentasyllabic meters also were widely used by him. The dodecasyllabic and other meters also

\textsuperscript{655} From a leaflet, “What is Poetry?”, 6.  
\textsuperscript{656} = Metre of Mar Ephrem.  
\textsuperscript{657} = Metre of Mar Balai.  
\textsuperscript{659} = Metre of Mar Jacob of Sarug, Kollamparampil, *Salvation in Christ According to Jacob of Serugh*, 36.
are found in his poetry”. ⁶⁶⁰ Sebastian P Brock affirms the credit of the Dodecasyllabic metre to Mar Jacob of Sarug. ⁶⁶¹ James Puthuparampil also quotes G. K. Sarkis and affirms that Mar Jacob is the inventor of ‘Dodecasyllabic metre’. ⁶⁶²

But here, I defend that Mar Jacob employed this metre, very particularly in the Four Mimre ‘On Creation’, by the reason of the influence of Aristotelian ‘Poetics’ ⁶⁶³ on him. So, the so called Sarugian Metre ⁶⁶⁴ is an adoption from Aristotle.

II. 1. C. 3. Aristotelian Heroic Hexameter

Hexameter is a metrical line of six feet ⁶⁶⁵ with two syllables each in a foot and thus having a total number of twelve syllables. Aristotle considers letter as the basic unit of language and syllable comes next. ⁶⁶⁶ According to him, “A syllable is a sound-unit without meaning, made up of a mute and a sounded letter” ⁶⁶⁷

Aristotelian hexameter has twelve syllables grouped as six feet in a line. On the basis of metre of a poem, Aristotle makes a distinction between epic and tragedy; epic keeps to a single metre while it is not necessary in tragedy. ⁶⁶⁸ He insists, “Experience has shown that the heroic hexameter is the right metre for epic”, because “the heroic hexameter has the greatest weight and stability”. ⁶⁶⁹ The stanzas of an epic should be in couplets. And in the same place he opines also that an epic in any other metre would be incongruous. While describing the usages of many other metres, like, tetrameter for the expression of movements etc, he affirms that this

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⁶⁶² Puthuparampil, Mariological Thought of Mar Jacob of Serugh, 29.
⁶⁶³ Details on ‘Poetics’ are given in the section, “Hellenic ...... mimre”, p. 679 ff.
⁶⁶⁴ = Metre of Mar Jacob of Sarug.
⁶⁶⁵ Cf. Cuddon, Dictionary of Literary terms and Literary theory, 381.
⁶⁶⁷ Ibid. 59.
⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., 67.
hexameter is the selection of the nature for an epic poetry.670

II. 1. C. 4. **Metrical systems employed by Mar Jacob**

Prosodists classify the metrical system mainly into two: ‘the stress-feet system’ and ‘the syllable-counting system’.671 Both the systems are classified while counting the basic unit of measurement, the ‘foot’. A line in a poem is a group of such feet and literary critics define line and stanza in a poem as, “The line, called also a ‘verse’, determines the basic rhythmical pattern of the poem and provides a principle of order for the sense. Lines are named according to the number of feet they possess”.672 And “A stanza is a pattern of lines which usually presents a unit of poetic experience”.673 Also, “A stanza is a group of lines with a predetermined metre and sequence of rhymes, the same for each stanza of the poem”.674

The meaning of ‘foot’ in the dictionary is ‘a group of syllables forming a metrical unit, a unit of ‘rhythm’ and the foot is measured in terms of syllable variation: long and short syllables, stressed and unstressed. And prosodists enlist nearly twenty seven possible kinds of feet.675 Among them, an ‘iamb’ is a foot consisting of a short syllable followed by a long, a ‘trochee’ containing a long syllable followed by a short, an ‘anapaest’ having two short syllables followed by a long, a ‘spondee’ possessing two long syllables, a ‘pyrrhic’ having two short syllables, and a ‘dactyl’ consisting of a long followed by two short syllables.676

By means of both the systems, stress-feet and syllable-counting, the mimre of Mar Jacob ‘On Creation’ can be analysed counted. The stress-feet system can be applied more effectively in English or in Latin poems because of their emphasis on the accent and stress in

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670 Cf. Ibid.
673 Ibid., 353.
pronunciation. But this system can be taken as a measure in Syriac poems only on the basis of
the effectiveness in the application of Rukoko and khushoyo rule\(^{677}\) as well as according to the
derivations of the root. Hence, the more comfortable system for analysing the mimre of Mar
Jacob is the syllable counting system. There are twelve syllables in each line in the mimre of
Mar Jacob ‘On Creation’.

All the lines of the whole mimre ‘on creation’ were not taken for thorough verification
either for counting the syllables or for analysing the kind of foot in them, but a random
examination only was held. For the assessment let us take, the first two lines each of every
mimre as model.

First Mimro

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccccccc}
12 & 11 & 10 & 9 & 8 & 7 & 6 & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccccccc}
12 & 11 & 10 & 9 & 8 & 7 & 6 & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 \\
\end{array}
\]

\(^{677}\) This rule is applicable for six letters in Syriac, \(ܒ ܓ ܕ ܟ ܦ ܬ\), which have both soft and hard sounds in
pronunciation.
Second Mimro

中部 مصدحة ماهنا مخلذاً وبسم الله

12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

中部 مصدحة ماهنا مخلذاً وبسم الله

12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Third Mimro

dانباً واهد كحبنا أبوم مع فننسا

12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
dانباً واهد كحبنا أبوم مع فننسا

12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
dانباً واهد كحبنا أبوم مع فننسا
Fourth Mimro

šenâ šeheb, nha ġnâbâ, tâbôm
12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

II. 1. C. 5. Heroic Iambic Hexameter

Besides the syllable counting system, Mar Jacob’s mimre ‘on creation’ can easily be analysed on the criteria of Aristotelian heroic hexameter of an epic poem also. Each line of the mimre is divided into six feet of two syllables each. This counting pattern may seem contrary to the traditional counting of the Dodecasyllabic metre as said by Thomas kollampampil, “This particular metre is formed by the verses of twelve syllables (three feet of four syllables) mainly used by Mar Jacob”. The most probable type of foot that is applied in the mimre is an ‘iambus’ which contains a short syllable followed by a long. But I do not deny the probability of variation in the counting of syllables and feet on the basis of various derivatives from the roots, the long and short sounds of vowels as well as on the rule of ‘Rukoko’ and ‘khushoyo’.

Let us take the first two lines each of every mimre as model, as above, in order to analyse its number of feet, category of syllables and feet. A vertical line separates each foot

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678 Kollampampil, Salvation in Christ According to Mar Jacob of Serugh, 36.
679 See above, foot note no. 673.
and the feet are numbered using Roman numbers and above each syllable, this ‘–’ sign denotes a long or stressed syllable and this ‘v’ signifies a short or unstressed syllable.

**First Mimro**

\[
\text{いただく すみません くつ は え か} \\
\text{す – す – す – す – す – す} \\
\text{す – す – す – す – す – す} \\
\text{す – す – す – す – す – す} \\
\text{す – す – す – す – す – す} \\
\text{す – す – す – す – す – す} \\
\text{す – す – す – す – す – す}
\]

vi  v  iv  iii  ii  i

**Second Mimro**

\[
\text{おめでた すみません すみません すみません} \\
\text{す – す – す – す – す – す} \\
\text{す – す – す – す – す – す} \\
\text{す – す – す – す – す – す} \\
\text{す – す – す – す – す – す} \\
\text{す – す – す – す – す – す} \\
\text{す – す – す – す – す – す}
\]

vi  v  iv  iii  ii  i
Third Mimro

مثالاء أصحاح حجمين أبوم مع هندسة

Fourth Mimro

 حيث هندسة نمط يدو حنكة وأبوم
Conclusion

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiworks”. 680

Every creation declares the expertise of its creator. So far, I have been trying to caricaturize Mar Jacob of Sarug with the available materials. But certainly it is not a complete picture of Mar Jacob of Sarug owing to the reason that I could go through only a few phases of his life that appeared in his Four Mimre ‘On Creation’.

The invocation for the divine assistance, in turn, is a validation for the seriousness as well as worthiness of the themes which are dealt within the poem. Those invocations help the readers or the audience also to approach the product with utmost seriousness and to follow them with the same mind of the poet. Since this attitude of the poet is one of the essential requirements of an epic poet, the affluent employment of such a method in the Four Mimre of Mar Jacob ‘On Creation’ points to the eligibility of the poet to be called an epic poet.

The fact that the quiver of language of Mar Jacob had always been affluent and full and hence he could discharge the flowery expressions lavishly, is beyond the need of any investigation or clarification. His calibre to explain an event in a pretty lengthy manner itself is an evidence of his rich vocabulary. This makes the works of the poet more attractive from a literary viewpoint besides their theological or liturgical worth. The Four Mimre ‘On Creation’

680 Ps. 19/1.
approve that Mar Jacob was a lover of beauty. But he considered spiteful even the most beautiful things of the world if they are against God, especially if they are contaminated by sin. That is why with the same lips which praised the magnificence of the image of Adam, the poet scolds the same image with all possible harsh words when it was stained by sin.

The skilfulness of a better poet in comprehending the emotions of his characters and presenting them in his works is very well seen in the works of Mar Jacob, especially in his Four Mimre ‘On Creation’; thus he raised himself to the status of a better poet. The elaborations in the mimre on the outlooks of Satan, Eve etc. and the narration of the nervousness, insecurity and fear of the first parents are best examples of his psychological awareness. An exegete is also a psychologist in the sense that he can read the mind of the author. On this basis also Mar Jacob is a better psychologist because he could explain in the mimre the Scriptural passages attuned to the thoughts of God. The description of the verdict of God on Eve at the Garden is one of the best examples of the poet’s expertise in Theopsychoology and in women psychology. When he explains the cause-effect relationship between jealousy and ulcer what really manifested was his psychiatric proficiency. And he prescribes tears of repentance, the spiritual medicine, for the ulcer caused by jealousy as well as by sin.

It is unambiguous that Mar Jacob took all efforts, employed all his calibres and exploited all literary possibilities to create best literary works. But the primary intention of Mar Jacob in creating such kinds of works was not a production of classical literary pieces. But all of them were for the purpose of teaching the faithful through explaining the Word of God. Even the philosophical statements made by the poets, although they are universally applicable, are primarily intended for teaching the faithful the moral, religious and eternal truths.

One of the greatness of Mar Jacob rests on his ground level experience with the common life of man. He sowed the seeds of his poetical imaginations and thoughts in the field
of the life of the common man, he absorbed manure from there, produced and harvested best fruits from there. The Four Mimre of Mar Jacob ‘On Creation’ reveals Mar Jacob’s touch with various phases of an ordinary man such as painting, sculpting, ornamentation, masonry, farming, weaving, music, family, science, law, athletics, warfare etc. Along with the literary superiority and the content-wise richness, this ground level footing of the works of Mar Jacob, especially of the Four Mimre ‘On Creation’ makes him a popular poet also.

The feministic approach of Mar Jacob is more or less balanced as much as it can be deduced from the Four Mimre ‘On Creation’. He doesn’t seem to be lenient to either extremes; a radical feminist or a zealous antifeminist as these terms on feminism are understood now. The criteria that the poet employed in evaluating human beings was not their gender difference but it was their life; whether it is according to the Word of God or against it. On this basis he considers them good or bad. Whoever obeys the commandment of God, whether it is man or woman, will be justified before God. Establishing his feet firm on this stand Mar Jacob reacts to certain traditional misconceptions like woman is inferior to man. But at the same time he does not close his eyes on the improprieties of Eve; her loyalty to the serpent, her over enthusiasm to cross the fortification by the commandment, her attempt to overcome Adam, her husband, her attempt to become chief in divinity and her insolence to become a priest. On the whole, the feministic attitude of Mar Jacob is highly commendable, because it is straightforward, balanced and impartial.

The aromatic expressions that we see in the mimre not only give us the feel of perpetual fragrance but they urge us to embrace the poet with boundless excitement. Certainly the finest literary and poetical expressions in the mimre of Mar Jacob, through their recitation and reading, not only satisfy the senses of sight and hearing, but they also give fullest satisfaction to the senses of taste and smell and to a certain extent to the sense of touch also. As the poet
himself says that his mimre is the outcome of his personal experience of the divine treatises as if he smells from a rose (FMC II 15), naturally the mimre produces a kind of sweet fragrance as if from a garden of roses. In order not to lose the least of its taste and smell in the mimre, the poet keeps himself away from attending to include weak expressions in it:

“Double in my lips, the fair rose that is in your treatises
and may no empty hymn be served through the words of my tongue” (FMC II 15-16).

Referring to Mar Jacob’s various homilies, Thomas Kollamparampil enumerates some of such functions of Mar Jacob’s mimre: “Firstly, the hearing of homily is a ‘fattening from the Scriptures’. From the reading the soul is illuminated and instructed. The homily is a ‘table’ set for nourishment. The mouth breeds the words and ears become educated and trained as nourishment that nurtures little children. The homily is a ‘censer’ in which the incense is the fire of love. The poet is a farmer who sows his homily in the field of hearers”681

I took sufficient space in this section to elucidate the accuracy of calling the twelvesyllabic metre the ‘Sarugean metre’. And when I speak of Mar Jacob’s adoption of the dodecaisyllabic metre from the hexameter pattern in the Aristotelian poetics, it doesn’t deny the fact that Mar Jacob had extensively used this metre in his mimre than any other poet of the same genre and hence the metre can rightly be called ‘Sarugian metre’.

If a man had chance, at least once in his life, to get in touch with Mar Jacob of Sarug through his mimre, he would definitely be astounded at his magnificence and would fervently embrace the poet with greater wonder and affection and would definitely admire him with all choicest praises, because, Mar Jacob of Sarug is such a wonderful, pious, passionate, erudite, graceful, edifying, optimistic and lyrical poet and there are only a very few who can be matched with him.

681 Kollamparampil, Salvation in Christ according to Jacob of Sarug, 38.