

The Meaning of Spiritual Rituals

All rituals performed in the churches of the Lord serve an ultimate purpose. Whether it is a holiday, a fast or some other ritual, they are all designed to improve us by bringing us closer to the virtuous and achieving higher development.

Mar Severus of Antioch (459-533)

The term ܛܘܪܘܫܐ / Turoso / Turasa found in the original Syriac text written by Mor Severius of Antioch (459-533), **conveys meanings such as to heal, enhance, repair, organize, reform, rectify, and arrange.** This concept, which is highly significant, strongly refers to the correction, improvement, and restructuring of a diseased structure or a disrupted state. This undoubtedly points to human weaknesses, shortcomings, disorders, and inner ailments, thereby expressing the healing, correction, and organizing power of spiritual rituals. The remedying of human weaknesses, the removal of defects and the treatment of mental illness is in itself an attempt at order. It is a process of rehabilitation. This correction and reform, which strengthens spirituality, prepares man for a second birth. However, it is essential that the meanings and information necessary for the second birth reach/tauch not only the brain but also the heart and soul. The wisdom of spiritual rituals requires overcoming inner limitations (egoism and other negative attitudes). By overcoming these obstacles, man must break down stereotypes, transform negative prejudices, develop himself and achieve the sublimity of his soul and moral values. The most important thing is to let the energy emanating from the divine truths flow into life as it is, without polluting it. The goal is to meet the true self (soul), which is a more authentic form of existence, by overcoming the illusory/false self and ego that run counter to the flow. It is to continue life with this soul. If this awareness does not develop, the energy of the soul cannot be filtered through the dirty filters of the ego, it becomes cloudy or negative. The negative energy that comes out of the dirty filters of the ego also reveals the false self. If the energy found in the inner being (soul) emerges clean and unpolluted, and flows positively into life, then only then does the naturalness (true self) reveal itself. However, even if the source is clean, sometimes even the clearest water can be affected by

the negative conditions of the path and environment it flows through, according to the *principle of causality*, and become cloudy. When this happens, the naturalness and tranquillity of man may be disturbed. It is not easy to repair and restore the disturbed natural state without using the spiritual power of spiritual rituals to correct and regulate it.

In this context, spiritual rituals, which can be defined as a discipline that provides psychological immunity and healing, make an important contribution to the human capacity to achieve balance. By teaching the need not to replace the temporary with the permanent, they keep him on the right path and within the right limits. For in the flow of life we can fall prey to the ego's illusions and sometimes consciously or unconsciously drive ourselves into a bad cul-de-sac by abusing our free will. Here, spiritual rituals that develop the method to free oneself from these difficult impasses of life mean the discipline that upholds the spirit of compassion. The purpose of existence is to obtain this essence. It is to strive to keep this essence alive and to promote it for virtuous purposes. This endeavour requires a high degree of responsibility, marked by inner discipline. **A person can pose a significant threat to himself and those around him until he acknowledges the darkness within. When one becomes aware of his inner darkness, he can engage in a process of enlightenment. Therefore, the challenging exercises done in education and worship to strengthen the spirit of self-discipline contribute to the development of strong personalities.**

Just as preventive medicine means something in the medical field, spiritual rituals have the same meaning for the spiritual field. These rituals open a path from the mind to the soul and heart and focus on finding the right thing for growth and maturity. They also enhance the ability to experience divine values. The possessed knowledge embraces a divine meaning and humility composition. It adds a permanent and infinite dimension to all that is in exchange. It diffuses the energy of divine essence, makes the soul functional and spiritually empowers the individual. It also equips the individual with social tools to refine his ego through the medium of the body. The essence of this is that the individual cultivates his ego through the use of his body. **Self-discipline means that a person aligns himself with the thoughts and power of the soul and prepares himself to sustain and strengthen life. It means creating a home for well-being and stability in one's inner world.** Therefore, spiritual rituals possess a meaning that establishes a divine connection

through the training of the body. **At the core of all spiritual teachings lies the truth that a person becomes enlightened when he comes to know his inner darkness.** This fundamental understanding relates to the inner state of man and matters of the heart. This approach aims to prevent the things a person possesses (position, authority, power, wealth, knowledge, titles, skills, abilities, etc.) from having dominion over them, while emphasising how to gain control over these possessions.

In Syriac culture, especially in churches, there is a multifaceted and profound philosophy behind the spiritual rituals. These rituals aim to elevate the individual, along with their subconscious and conscious mind, their thoughts, senses, and understanding, to the maturity of divine truth and the productivity of wisdom, which is the realm of true love. In this way, people are invited to a comprehensive unity of humanity in which egoism, arrogance, discrimination, abnormal behaviour, opposition and fundamental contradictions do not exist. For the most important task of a human being is to discover his permanent essence and to reach his true self. This means freeing oneself from all limiting and harmful intentions and behaviours driven by the ego and the ego. This understanding requires accepting life holistically and living it with good moral values. **The sole purpose of spiritual rituals is to discard our old creation, to clothe ourselves with Christ, to become like Him and to achieve an inner transformation through His Spirit. It is to experience our second birth.** In pursuit of this goal, spiritual rituals, didactic repetitions and educational meanings direct complex spiritual themes to thoughts that promote mental stability and healing. At the same time, they direct thoughts and intentions towards a second birth, freeing them from artificial patterns. The goal is to contribute to the emergence of authenticity (the light of life) and to enable people to stay connected to their essence in their journey of **knowing, doing and being**. The primary goal is to connect the secondary paths within the inner world to the ultimate truth and lead to individual enlightenment. Because what locks or unlocks a person's world is the presence of strong negative or positive beliefs. The emotions and situations reflected by these thoughts are what manifest in one's life.

Antiochian Mor Severius (459-533) explains the ultimate purpose of spiritual rituals as follows: **All rituals performed in the churches of the Lord serve an ultimate purpose. Whether it is a holiday, a fast or some other ritual, they are all designed to improve**

us by bringing us closer to the virtuous and achieving higher development. However, if the use of rituals cannot achieve the desired effect and the expected transformation, the problem is not limited to unknown meanings. The main problem is the insufficient understanding of the known meanings and the preference for temporary things over permanent ones. In addition, the lack of effort on the part of individuals to learn and understand cultural and spiritual knowledge, and the way this knowledge is presented, also play a negative role here. Unfortunately, if the inner knowledge is not properly imparted, the meaning of the spiritual rituals cannot be adequately learnt. The perception of these rituals as mere theatre can have a negative effect on the soul and lead a person into inner emptiness. When this emptiness is filled with the demands of the ego, the needs of the soul begin to be suppressed under the dominance of the ego. **Therefore, in the context of understanding and interpretation, it is of vital importance to thoroughly research this subject. While various factors may be at play in the background the methods for comprehending Christian teachings should be sought first and foremost. With these methods, faith and the spiritual world can be further strengthened.**

When the world of meaning is illuminated by the light of Messianic teaching, it will be better understood that the purpose of spiritual rituals is to dispel the inner darkness and fill the inner emptiness. For true divine love can only be attained through the discovery of the true self. Without discovering one's true essence, without illuminating it with the light of love and without fulfilling its responsibilities in the outer world, the voids within us unfortunately remain unfilled. Therefore, the performance and results of spiritual rituals, which are not only based on memorisation but also understood through the ancient and positively charged concepts of Syriac, bring us into another dimension. The key is not the language itself, but the feeling for the inner depth of these concepts that motivate and inspire a person. To be physically present in churches, one should not expect a ritual performed for visual purposes only to bring the desired pleasure and effect. For rituals performed without internalisation are nothing more than a physical movement. Even if one knows what it means to give a greeting, if it adds another layer of meaning and pleasure to the act of greeting, then consciously understanding the connotations of spiritual rituals, performing them with heart and soul, the indescribable pleasure of doing so, and the extent of the effect it has on a person is impossible to define. Therefore, in these moments a deep

divine connection is established. An immediate access to the divine centre is created. The power of this connection increases when it is imbued with love and sincerity. As spiritual gains accumulate and inner upliftment takes place, the meaning and fulfilment of life grows in parallel. This leads to a person reaching a positive state of mind in which they perceive everything from a different perspective and act accordingly. This paves the way for the opening of the spiritual or heart eye. As a result, the contributions of spiritual rituals to inner enlightenment offer significant benefits. Spiritual rituals are designed to guide us on the path to becoming virtuous individuals and to facilitate profound development.

Expressing enlightenment in another way, the opening of the eye of the heart or soul means the bestowal of an internal key that allows one to see the world with a non-judgmental and pure perspective, transcending all fragility and sensitivity. This key is used to attain a state of awareness and consciousness filled with purity, humility, love, compassion, and mercy.

Therefore, the collective or individual worship, rituals and ceremonies practised in the church, as well as other disciplines, are practises that remind us not to move away from our self or our spirit. This recurring cycle nourishes our soul while not driving away the inner darkness, not enduring the difficulties, but rather teaching us to overcome them and even free ourselves from them. The rituals and disciplines of the Church aim to keep life in a positive cycle. These practises help individuals to come closer to their essence and contribute to their spiritual development, while helping them to master themselves. Understanding this unique spiritual software and programme requires a high level of awareness and responsibility, for man is constantly striving to lift the veils of mystery and reach the secret of the unknown in this world full of the unknown. Indeed, it is the search for meaning that prevents people from separating themselves from the divine light and truth.

Human beings, on the day they are born, depart from the warmth of the womb and the nourishing tenderness of their essence. This departure marks the beginning of adversity for humans. Similarly, when a person separates from the divine source, they lose the nourishing meaning and tranquility of life. Love and the spirit of home come from the Creator, so to love is to unite with Him. This also means returning to one's inner home (essence). Selfishness, exclusion, discrimination, envy, jealousy, hatred, pride, and other negative attitudes that poison life signify distancing oneself from the core and home. Very

few people can return to that home before they die, while they are still alive. Different spiritual disciplines and rituals provide the formulas for this return to the core. These formulas are bestowed upon humans. With these formulas of returning to the core, the desired maturity is achieved. It serves as an inspiration on the path leading to this goal. Because within a person, there are sometimes blind and dark areas that deceive themselves, incline towards egoism, deceit, and cunning, and elevate their own egos. Spiritual rituals awaken associations that remind us of what is ideal or enlightened in this context. They help to illuminate blind and dark areas with new lights and representations. They break the influence of attitudes that deceive and mislead people. This transforms into a high moral responsibility that strengthens social compassion

For these reasons, Syriac culture places great emphasis on sincere worship and rituals performed with heart and soul. It is believed that harmony between mind, body and heart is crucial because it maximises the effect of worship. When a person dedicates himself wholeheartedly to worship, with heart, soul and mind, it is already a form of divine connection. In Syriac culture, worship is therefore not only a physical act, but is also considered a deep spiritual experience and a spiritual connection. But if the right state of mind is not attained, the goal cannot be reached, and the right application and stage cannot be grasped. For it is crucial to be mentally present in the moment, to remain in the moment (i.e. not to be distracted or distracted), so that the meaning of existence can arise. Therefore, in all tasks, mental preparation and staying in the moment are necessary and paramount. The enthusiasm of existence that is hidden in the moment cannot be captured in any other way. It does not provide the soul with the necessary healing. The concept of meditation, which has had significant influences on the West and originates from Far Eastern cultures, is essentially nothing more than teaching humans to live in the present moment.

A person who wants to break free from self-imposed limitations or overcome their shortcomings must definitely understand the meaning and impact of spiritual rituals. This is expressed through a sincere belief, love, compassion, effort, and discipline that take control of the soul.

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