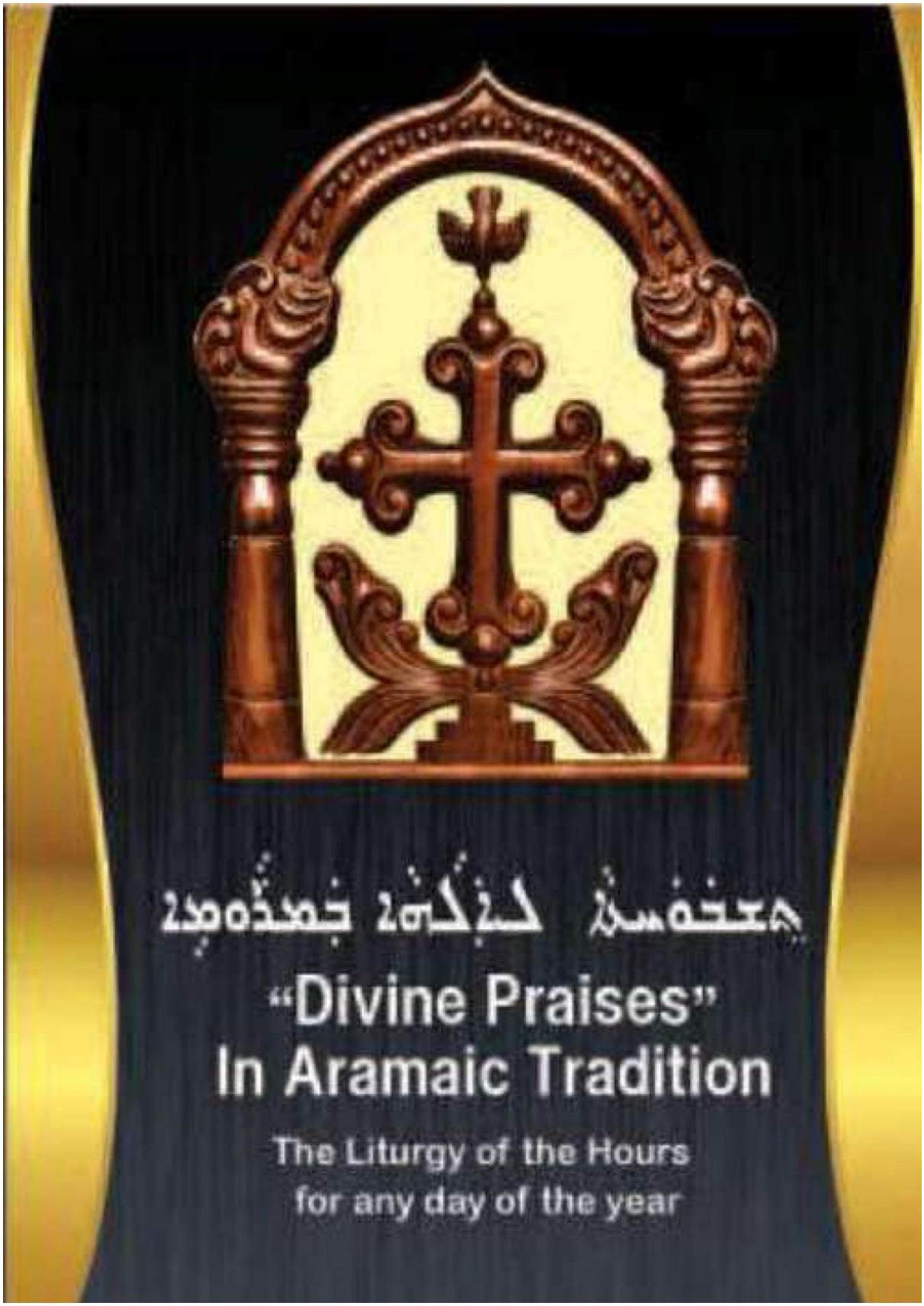

"Divine Praises"
In Aramaic Tradition
The Liturgy of the Hours
for any day of the year

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"DIVINE PRAISES" IN ARAMAIC TRADITION

"Divine Praises" ('Liturgy of the Hours')
for one day in the Aramaic or East Syriac Liturgical
Tradition, as it is in the present
Mar Toma Nasrani (Syro-Malabar) Church

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"Divine Praises" in Aramaic Tradition

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With the Blessings of:

✠ His Beatitude
Mar George Alencherry
Major Archbishop
of the Syro-Malabar Church

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ܪܡܫܐ : *Ramsha* : Evening Time

In the Old Testament the paschal lambs were killed in the evening (Ex 12:6). Jesus died on the Cross exactly at that time. Over and above such facts of history, the evening is highly symbolic to the Fathers of the Church. It symbolises the end of an era and the beginning of a new one. Jesus' death was the victory over the powers of darkness and the inauguration of a new era of light. Moreover, Saint John joins together Jesus' death and resurrection. Through the death and resurrection of our Lord we have entered a new era, the era of eschatological life. It is the era of salvation and thus it is beyond the ordinary era of space and time. It is an era sealed with the self sacrifice of the heavenly Lamb and one to be fulfilled at the end of time. Thus, it is also the end of the era of darkness and slavery and the beginning of the era of salvation. It is in this context that the East Syriac Tradition and, thus, also the *Mar Toma Nasrani* Church of India, begins her "Liturgical Day" with the *Ramsha*, the Evening Liturgy at 6:00 pm. The celebration of the "Liturgical Day" is brought to perfection with the singing of the "Divine Praises" during the following hours of *Lelya, Qala d-Shahra, Sapra, Quta`a, 'Endana and D-Bathsha` Sha`in.*

PREFACE

"DIVINE PRAISES" or 'LITURGY OF THE HOURS'

"Divine Praises"

The "Divine Praises," with its long history, was known by several names such as the 'Divine Office,' 'Canonical Hours,' 'Liturgy of the Hours,' and so on. It is a celebration of our day-to-day Christian life. It is an extensive celebration of the history of salvation centred on Jesus Christ. In fact, it is the celebration of the Eucharist spread throughout the whole of the liturgical year.

Beginnings

Acts 2:42 gives us the basic life-style of the first Christian community. The emphasis on *tais proseukais*, "the prayers," namely, the plural noun with a definite article in Greek, points to a set of determined prayers at specific times. From other instances we understand that those prayer times were mostly of the Jewish tradition. We have evidence for prayer at the third hour (*Acts* 2:1-15), sixth hour (*Acts* 10:9f.), ninth hour (*Acts* 3:1f.) and at mid-night (*Acts* 16:25f.). Psalm 118:164 speaks about the seven times of prayer during the time of ancient Israel.

Example of Our Lord

Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the distinguished model, constantly inducing every Christian to pray without ceasing (*Mt* 14: 23; 26:36-44; *Lk* 5:16; 6:12; 9:18; 11:1; *Jn* 17:9-12; etc.)

ܪܡܫܐ : *RAMSHA* : EVENING LITURGY

(6.00 PM)

[The sanctuary remains veiled; the candles on either side of the Mar Toma Sliba on the Bema are lit; on solemn occasions the celebrant priest and assistants vest in their own liturgical vestments as for Holy Qurbana, enter the Bema and show proper respect to the Holy Sliba. They begin the Liturgy with exchanging peace to each other in the community, beginning from the leader or celebrant, when he is a priest or bishop]

Cel: Glory to God in the highest (3)
Res: Amen (3)
Cel: And on earth, peace and hope to people at all times forever.
Res: Amen.
Cel: Our Father in heaven *(congregation joins)* hallowed be Your Name/Your kingdom come/ holy, holy, holy, are You./ Our Father in heaven/ heaven and earth are full of the grandeur of Your glory./ Angels and men cry out,/ holy, holy, holy, are You./ Our Father in heaven/ hallowed be Your Name/ Your kingdom come/ Your Will be done on earth/ as it is in heaven./ Give us this day the bread we need/ and forgive us our debts and sins/ as we have forgiven those who offended us./ Do not let us fall into temptation/but deliver us from the evil one/For Yours is the kingdom/ the power and the glory, forever. Amen.
Cel. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

ܠܝܐ : *LELYA* : NIGHT LITURGY

(9.00 PM)

[The sanctuary remains veiled; the candles on either side of the Mar Toma Sliba on the Bema are lit; on solemn occasions the celebrant priest and assistants vest in their own liturgical vestments as for Holy Qurbana, enter the Bema and show proper respect to the Holy Sliba. They begin the Liturgy with exchanging peace to each other in the community, beginning from the leader or celebrant, when he is a priest or bishop]

Glory to God..., Our Father..., *(as at the beginning of Ramsha)*

Dcn: Let us pray; peace be with us.

Cel: *(on Sundays and Feast days)* (ܢܩܘܡ ܡܪ *Nqum Mar)* O my Lord, may the hidden power of Your Divinity, the wondrous help of Your Lordship and the great power of Your hands strengthen us, and in Your loving-kindness make us worthy to lift up praise and honour, worship and thanksgiving to You at all times, Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, forever.

(on ferial days) (ܡܪܢ ܘܠܗܢ *Maran Walahan)* Our Lord and our God, You are the refuge of sinners and the comfort of the afflicted. Awaken us from idleness and teach us to serve You with diligence, Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, forever.

Res: Amen.

ܣܦܪܐ : *SAPRA* : MORNING LITURGY

(6.00 AM)
(Sundays and Feast days)

[The sanctuary remains veiled; the candles on either side of the Mar Toma Sliba on the Bema are lit; on solemn occasions the celebrant priest and assistants vest in their own liturgical vestments as for Holy Qurbana, enter the Bema, show proper respect to the Holy Sliba and begin the Liturgy]

Dcn: Let us pray; peace be with us.

Cel: (ܡܪܢ ܡܢܟܗܢ *Maran Walahan)* Our Lord and our God, shed Your light on us and make us happy by Your coming; make us partakers of Your holy Mysteries; make us worthy to join the choirs of angels and sing and extol Your adorable Trinity with gratitude. You are the Creator and You have authority over all; You do not need the services of Your creatures; those on earth and heaven cannot ever fully comprehend Your wisdom, Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, forever.

Res: Amen.

Dcn: *(Ps.100)* Make a joyful sound to the Lord, all you lands/ *(Qanona)* Lord, the Giver of light, we praise You!

(Community in alternating choirs) Make a joyful sound to the Lord, all you lands./ Serve the Lord with gladness;/ come before Him with singing.

Know that He is the Lord our God;/ it is He who has made us,/ and not we ourselves;/ we are His people,/ and the sheep of His pasture.

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,/ and into His courts with praise./ Give thanks to Him and bless His Name!

ܣܦܪܐ : *SAPRA* : MORNING LITURGY

(6.00 AM)
(Ferial Days)

[The sanctuary remains veiled; the candles on either side of the Mar Toma Sliba on the Bema are lit; on solemn occasions the celebrant priest and assistants vest in their own liturgical vestments as for Holy Qurbana, enter the Bema, show proper respect to the Holy Sliba and begin the Liturgy]

Dcn: Let us pray; peace be with us.

Cel: (ܡܪܢ ܗܠܗܢ *Maran Walahan)* Our Lord and our God, all creatures praise and worship You with rejoicing, for You have created them by Your infinite and incomprehensible mercy and You provide for them in miraculous ways, Source of all creation and Protector of our souls, Lord and God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, forever.

Res: Amen.

Dcn: *(Ps.100)* Make a joyful sound to the Lord, all you lands/ *(Qanona)* Lord, the Giver of light, we praise You!

(Community in alternating choirs) Make a joyful sound to the Lord, all you lands./ Serve the Lord with gladness;/ come before Him with singing.

Know that He is the Lord our God;/ it is He who has made us,/ and not we ourselves;/ we are His people,/ and the sheep of His pasture.

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,/ and into His courts with praise./ Give thanks to Him and bless His Name!

For the Lord is good;/ His mercy is everlasting;/ and His truth endures to all generations.

ܩܘܛܥ : *QUTA'A* : THIRD HOUR LITURGY

(9.00 AM)

[The sanctuary remains veiled; the candles on either side of the Mar Toma Sliba on the Bema are lit; on solemn occasions the celebrant priest and assistants vest in their own liturgical vestments as for Holy Qurbana, enter the Bema and show proper respect to the Holy Sliba. They begin the Liturgy with exchanging peace to each other in the community, beginning from the leader or celebrant, when he is a priest or bishop]

Glory to God..., Our Father..., *(as at the beginning of Ramsha)*

Dcn: Let us pray, peace be with us.

Cel: (ܡܪܢ ܡܠܟܢ *Maran Walahan)* Our Lord and our God, sprinkle on us the consoling dew of Your sweet charity, and wash us clean by it from the stain of sins; O the good Shepherd, who went out in search of us and found us, who are lost, and who wills our return in Your grace and mercy, Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, forever.

Res: Amen.

Psalm of the Day

[Any Psalm may also be selected]

Dcn: (Ps 47) O clap your hands, all people!/ Shout to God with the sound of triumph!/ *Halleluia, Halleluia, Halleluia.*

(Community in alternating choirs) O clap your hands, all people!/ Shout to God with the sound of triumph!

For the Lord is Most High and to be feared;/ He is a great King over all the earth.

For He has subdued the nations under us,/ and the peoples under our feet.

ܥܕܢܐ : *'ENDANA* : THE NOON LITURGY

(12.00 Noon)

[The sanctuary remains veiled; the candles on either side of the Mar Toma Sliba on the Bema are lit; on solemn occasions the celebrant priest and assistants vest in their own liturgical vestments as for Holy Qurbana, enter the Bema and show proper respect to the Holy Sliba. They begin the Liturgy with exchanging peace to each other in the community, beginning from the leader or celebrant, when he is a priest or bishop]

Glory to God..., Our Father..., *(as at the beginning of Ramsha)*
Dcn: Let us pray, peace be with us.
Cel: (ܡܪܢ ܡܠܗܢ *Maran Walahan)* Our Lord and our God, make us worthy to praise and thank Your most glorious Trinity, night and day, together with the heavenly ones, Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit forever.
Res: Amen.

ܡܕܡܪܝܬܐ : *Marmitha* : Psalmody

[Any group of Psalms may also be selected]

Dcn: *(Ps 22)* My God, my God, why have You let me live?/ And yet You have delayed my salvation from me,/ because of the words of my folly./ *Halleluiya, Halleluiya, Halleluiya.*

(Community in alternate choirs) My God, my God, why have You let me live?/ And yet You have delayed my salvation from me,/ because of the words of my folly.

O my God, I call to You in daytime/ but You do not answer me;/ and at night, You do not abide with me.

For You are the Holy One,/ and Israel dwells under Your glory.

Our fathers trusted in You;/ they trusted, and You delivered them.

ܕ̈ܒ̈ܨ̈ܥ̈ ̈ܫ̈ܥ̈ : d-*BATSHA' SHA'IN*

NINTH HOUR LITURGY

(3.00 pm)

[The sanctuary remains veiled; the candles on either side of the Mar Toma Sliba on the Bema are lit; on solemn occasions the celebrant priest and assistants vest in their own liturgical vestments as for Holy Qurbana, enter the Bema and show proper respect to the Holy Sliba. They begin the Liturgy with exchanging peace to each other in the community, beginning from the leader or celebrant, when he is a priest or bishop]

Glory to God..., Our Father..., *(as at the beginning of Ramsha)*

Dcn: Let us pray, peace be with us.

Cel: (ܡ̈ܪ̈ܢ̈ ̈ܥ̈ܠ̈ܗ̈ *Maran Walahan)* Our Lord and our God, make us worthy to join with the watchful ones and the companies of angels in voices full of confession to sing praise to Your glorious Trinity night and day, Lord of all forever.

Res: Amen.

Psalm of the day

[Any Psalm may also be selected]

Dcn: *(Ps 67)* May God be merciful and bless us;/ and may He cause His face to shine upon us./ *Halleluia, Halleluia, Halleluia.*

(Community in alternate choirs) So may Your ways be known upon earth,/ Your healing salvation among all nations.

Let the people praise You, O God./ Let all the people praise You.

O, let the nations be glad and sing for joy!/ For You shall judge the people justly,/ and govern the nations upon earth.

Appendix

IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE DEPARTED
(Short Service for the Departed Faithful)

[The priest turns to the Mar Toma Sliba, the symbol of Jesus' Resurrection, which is set at the head of the tomb in the cemetery or when in the church, at the head of the Shoshepa (chalice veil - the symbol of Jesus' tomb cover), spread in the nave, to begin the service.]

Dcn: You who raise the dead to life, we revere Your holy Name.
Let us pray. Peace be with us.

Cel: O Lord of mercy, those who lament their beloved dead cry to You, and those who mourn place their trust in You. According to Your promises, come to the comfort of Your servant(s). For You are the Lord of life and death, O Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, forever.

Res: Amen.

ܥܘܢܝܬܐ : *'Onitha* : Hymn

(*Malka Mshiha...Mahimayodanthima...*)

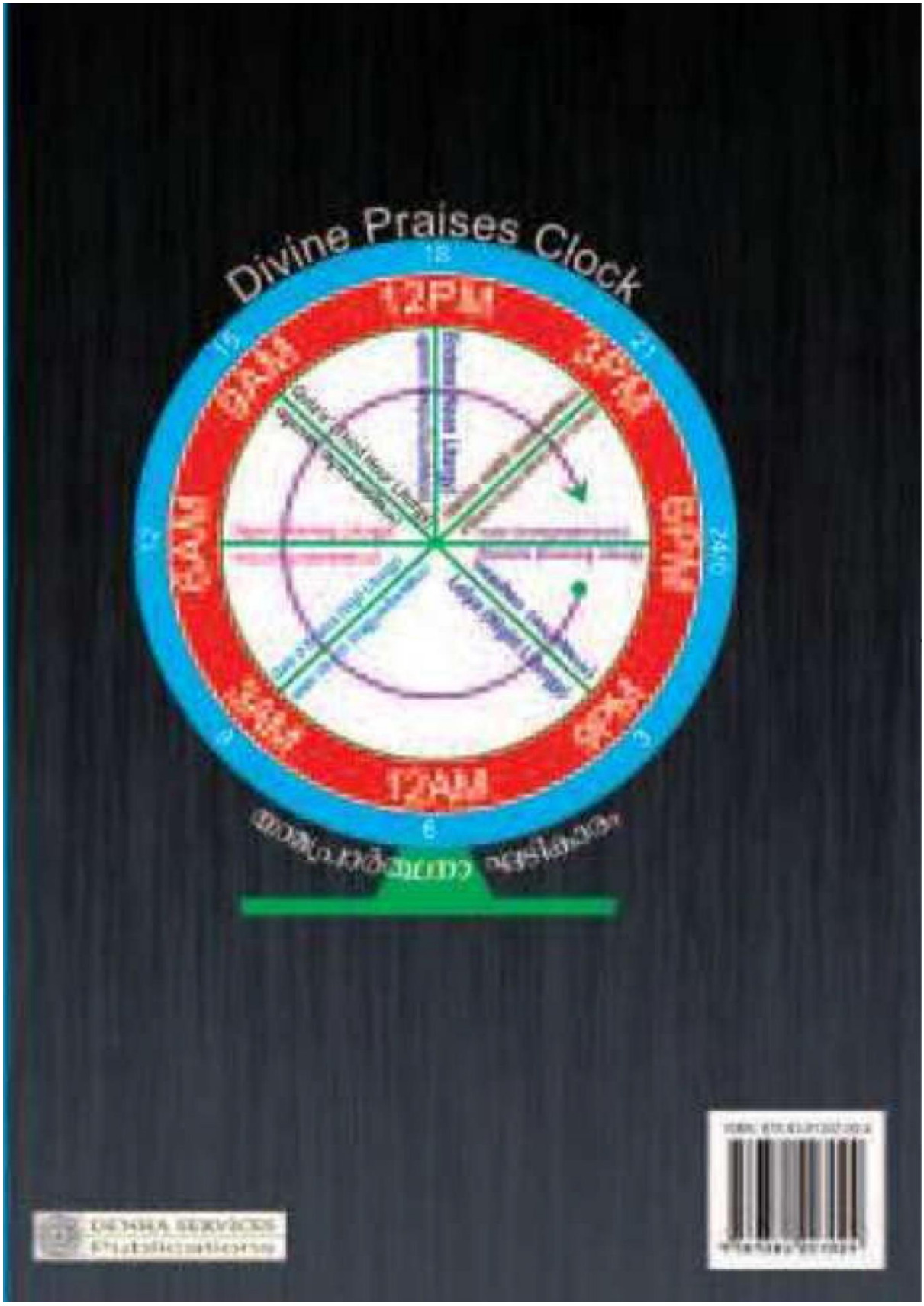
My Lord, I will praise You!

When You come in glory, Lord,
at the end of time to judge,
with love place me at Your right
with Your chosen holy ones.

My Lord, I have trusted You!

Lord, I worship and bow down
as I look upon Your Cross,
which gives hope for redemption
and our own resurrection.

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