

## Formation of discipleship in the Syrian Orthodox breviary Šḥimō: some thoughts and reflections

This paper investigates the formation of discipleship as it is expressed in the liturgical life of the Syrian Orthodox Church and especially formulated in the breviary used for ordinary weekdays, called the Šḥimō.

The west-Syrian liturgical tradition in general is characterized by a great usage of poems and hymns stretching back to the works of Ephrem the Syrian (+373) and Jacob of Sarugh (+ 521) and the Šḥimō is still using this form of Christian poetry to articulate and express central beliefs of the Syrian Orthodox Church. As we delve into samples of the Šḥimō we will also reflect upon its formation of discipleship for the community and individual(s) who prays with it.

According to the testimony of Bar-Salibi (+1171) the impetus of creating a simple office [tešmešto Šḥimtō] - that later developed into the book that we today call the Šḥimō - was that it was created for “the weak and the nuns” (A Treatise of Barsalibi against the Melchites).

Perhaps only a few of us can call ourselves nuns, but hopefully the more so as weak. The term of weak in Syriac [mḥilē] may even include an inclusive ecclesiology dating back from Jacob of Sarugh that makes it possible for simple disciples as you and me to hope for salvation in a difficult time and a difficult world.