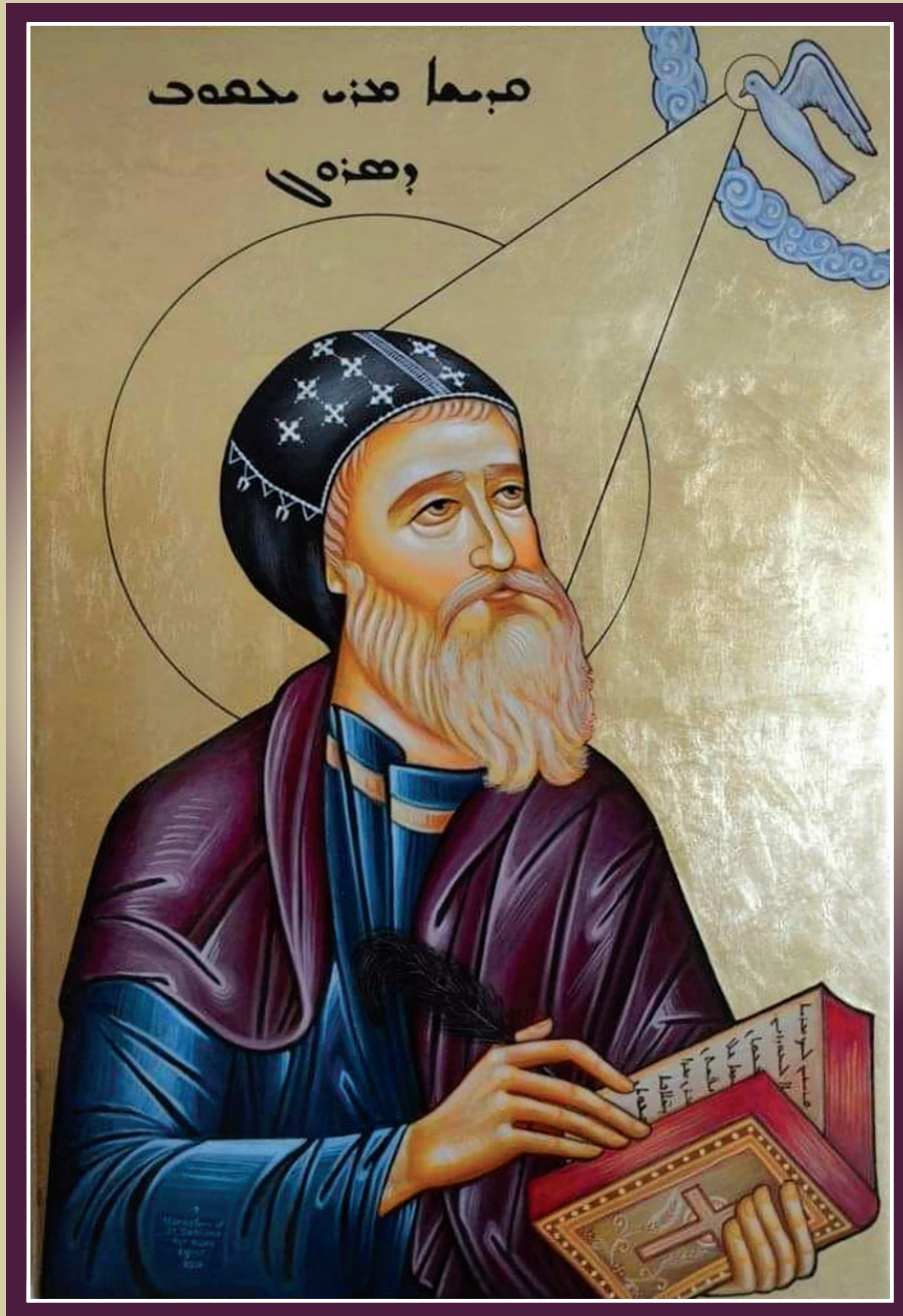



Golden Words

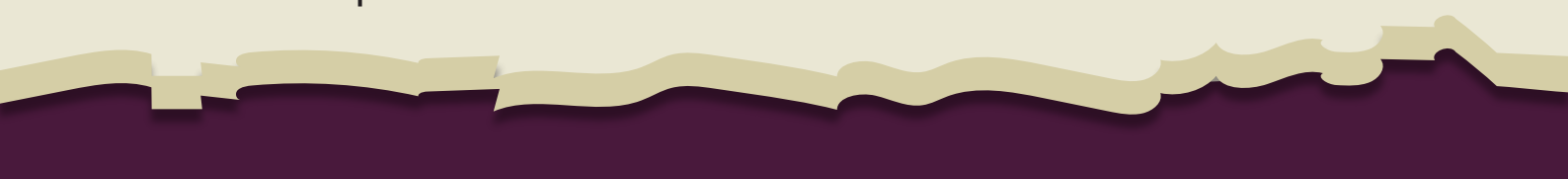
From the Homilies of Saint Jacob of Serugh




Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty



Fasting from the World's Possessions and Constantly Striving

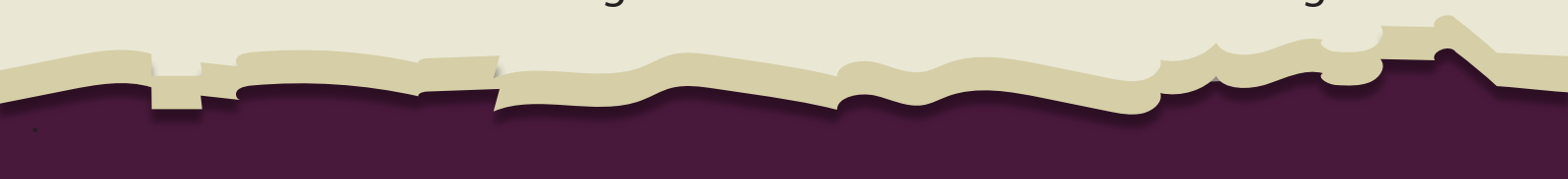
- ❖ “O lover of God, it is good for you to pursue the works of righteousness. It is appropriate for your wise God-loving soul to plant goodness every day because the time will come to reap and rejoice. Do not tire of sowing good deeds. If the farmer sows, his conscience rejoices, not with the sowing but with the farms that are full of yields.
 - ❖ Likewise, if the soul sees the new world (eternal life), it despises the possessions of this vain world and it joyfully hastes in distributing all things, giving the needy in order for her to lay a treasure in the place that is full of light where the righteous will be rewarded.
 - ❖ This troubled world is like herb, lawn, or a flower, like a fleeting shadow. It is like a beautiful flower that falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. Its riches are like a dream and its possessions are a false mirage. It is like a dream that pleases the person asleep, but when he wakes up, he wonders because he was fooled by unreal possessions.
 - ❖ Wake up, O wise soul, wake up! Put on the infallibility of the Lord's arm. Escape these shadowy night dreams and come enjoy the fine daylight. The night passes and its dreams unfold and the world fades and all its possessions will be despised because the deception introduced by the serpent was revealed by the light of the cross. The desire for riches and power that possessed humankind since the tree of knowledge was diminished by the fruit of life that has shone from Mary. The guardianship of paradise was taken away and the key was given to the right-hand thief. The cherubim's spear dismissed and the path to paradise was opened.
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You were called to heaven so do not concern yourself with worldly matters!

- ❖ A great Teacher came down from heaven, to teach the world, and all creation was enlightened by His teachings. Do not desire vain possessions. Possess neither gold, silver nor copper in your money belts, not even a bag for your journey, two tunics, sandals, nor staffs. The way is terrifying, and its path full of wickedness.
- ❖ Move, move, and get out of the world! Do not concern yourselves with its affairs. Do not worry about tomorrow, sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Cast possessions behind you and do not desire to be rich. Be a stranger to your country, your dwelling, and even your race.
- ❖ Heaven is open and waiting for you to enter the wedding with the righteous, and do not lay up for yourself treasures on earth. You are called to heaven so do not gaze at the worldly. God gave birth to you from water and Spirit, and He brought you up by the blood of His Son, and called you to be His heir.

This is Eternal Life

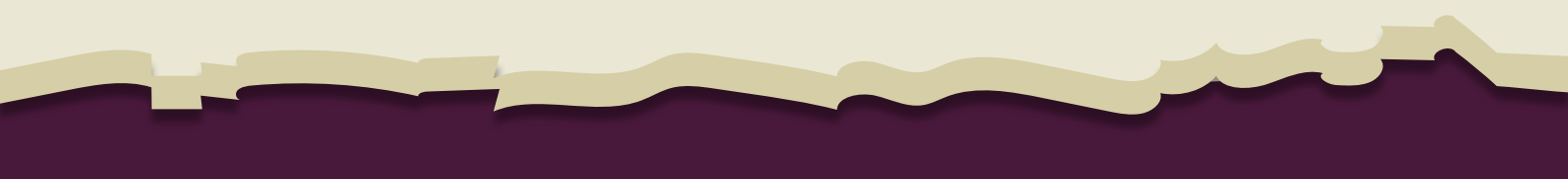
- ❖ For now, labor as a hireling and attain for yourself the kingdom of heaven. Or fear like a servant and flee from the fire that threatens sinners or serve the Father by loving His children and this is perfection.
 - ❖ “For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink” and for the sake of these and their like, “come and inherit the kingdom of heaven.” Who is he who yearns for such a holy voice and distributes all his possessions on the needy?
 - ❖ This is eternal life! The groom enters and shuts the wedding’s door
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and no longer opens to those who knock, lest the wedding be offended. They say: Lord, Lord, open up to us! But He answers them: I do not know you. To his guests, He says: "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" You gave alms, sowed good deeds, and carried out my will. He is just and His judgment is right.

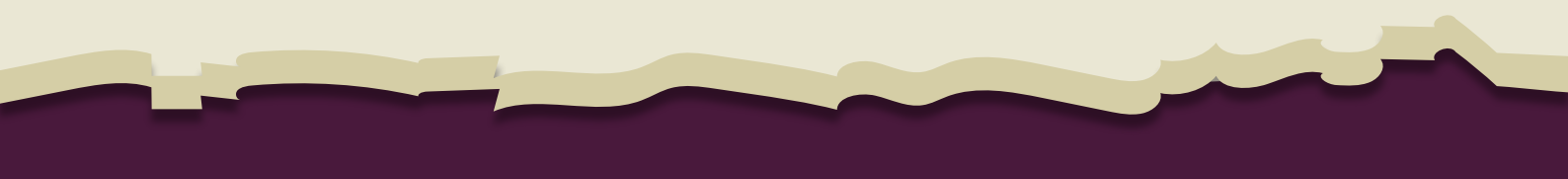
- ❖ It is good for us to say, "Lord, You are righteous and just and Your judgments are very good. Your righteousness is above all reproach. It is just for the sinner to fall into the eternal fire because he set his mind on sinning forever. The righteous deserve eternal life because they gave themselves, their bodies, their possessions, and all their lives in order to strive on the path of righteousness forever.


But as for you, O man of God...

- ❖ But as for you, O man of God, forget those things which are behind and reach forward to those things which are ahead. Every day, when the sun shines, do good deeds. Start with good deeds and do not tire, for you are yearning for the kingdom of heaven.
 - ❖ For this purpose, if the name of Christ is called upon you, let your action be in agreement with Christianity, and labor as befitting of your name lest Christianity be offended by your deeds. And if the name of virginity is called upon you, do works consistent with virginity. If you are married, keep your marriage. If you live in holiness, wear the armor of righteousness, fasting, prayer, austerity, and asceticism. Toil yourself with hunger, tire your body with stiffened thirst, sleep ascetically that you may be illuminated by holiness and that you may enjoy purity.
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- ❖ Strive for this, for the crown of holiness calls you to struggle. Come down and struggle with the lust of your body, with your body's rest, with your soul's stillness, with your eyes' sight, with the thoughts of your heart, and with the hearing of your ears. Overcome by striving from within and by fighting from outside. As long as it is daytime, fight! And as long as the waves of evil thoughts attack you by night, fight! **Because there is no crown without struggle! There is neither victory without fighting nor wages without work, neither rest without fatigue nor expansion without hardships.**

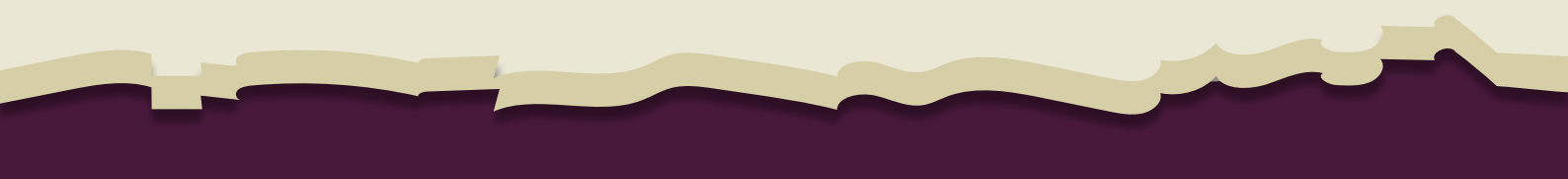
Understand these Commandments


- ❖ Whoever leaves the world for the sake of Christ goes on to inherit the prepared world that was promised to the saints. Whoever leaves the earthly kingdom will inherit the kingdom of heaven. Whoever leaves a father, mother, or brothers **becomes a child of the Holy Spirit, a brother for Christ, a beloved friend for the Heavenly Father.** Whoever leaves earthly riches, inherits the heavenly riches. Whoever leaves possessions, buildings, clothing, the adornments and glory of youth, and the worldly pleasures, accepts in exchange for them a world that is not fleeting, incorruptible rest and beauty, a garment of glory, a crown of light, a suit of honor and the kingdom's crown. If you have the spirit of heavenly knowledge, understand these commandments that I have written for you.
 - ❖ Do not despise any of these little ones, because they see the face of God at all times because of that angel who takes care of each of them. When you do an act of mercy towards any of them, that angel who is guarding him ascends to God and says before him: "My lord, that poor, sick, needy and distressed person who is going through many hardships, this man came and comforted him,
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encouraged him, fed him, gave him a drink, clothed him, and comforted him in all his troubles. Reward him according to Your promise, in this world with thirty sixty and one hundred and in the coming age, with eternal life.

Act as though you were dust in humility

- ❖ It is for this reason that I advise you if you chose from your youth to carry the yoke of monasticism, it is appropriate for you to sit alone in calmness and refrain from conversing with people and from hindering interests. Make yourself dust in humility for everyone. Weeping should not stop from your eyes. Picture the kingdom and hell before your eyes. Death and life; And the fire that does not get extinguished, the outer darkness, the gnashing of teeth, light and life, the glory of the just and the joy of the Holy Spirit. To Whom (Christ) they offered themselves, their bodies, and their souls as an acceptable sacrifice, an aroma of incense through their fasting, their prayers and the sweat of their prostrations which was more precious than all spices before God who chose them. Let your dwelling be abstained from luxury. Place in your cell what pleases God who knows your sitting and standing, your coming in and your going out.
 - ❖ Be persistent in prayer, especially at night. Be like your Master, who used to bow down in prayer that the glory of God may shine upon you. Steal the kingdom of heaven for yourself at all times. Take heed to do all good deeds. Then the Merciful One, the granter of gifts, will come to you quickly, help you and slap the wicked one, nullifying his works. He will prepare your conscience and places good thoughts in you, will strengthen you and help you to do His will.
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❖ Woe to us because we did not know to where we were called. Woe to us because we are negligent in our lives. Woe to us because the world overwhelms and keeps us away from the works of God. Woe to us because we have replaced life with God and mingling with the angels with this fleeting vain world full of sorrows.

Behold, I wrote everything to you. Behold, I have taught you the way of God. Behold, I have guarded you from the evil world and from the devil's battles.

Now, you choose what you want! May our Lord grant you to choose what will edify you and what is profitable for you forever and ever, Amen.

In Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be the glory forever. Amen

St. Jacob of Serugh

Translation:
Mary F.A. &
Michael Stefanos

