

TEACHING A HOLY WEEK HYMN

Sharagan for TURUNPATZEK Mode III

(The Opening of the Doors Service)

Materials to be used:

1. Holy Bible
2. *Hymns of Holy Week* by Vatche Vartabed Hovsepian, C 1966. (Most church choirs should have a copy you can borrow.)
3. Copies of translation and transliteration of hymn along with key words.

During Lent we, Christians, have been preparing ourselves spiritually to celebrate the glorious resurrection of our Lord, Who trampled upon death with His death and resurrection.

Palm Sunday is the remembrance of our Lord's triumphant entry to the eternal city, Jerusalem, which was to begin the events of His betrayal, torture and crucifixion. The Armenian Church remembers the events, which culminated in Christ's resurrection, during Holy Week

Since it is through the mystery of the resurrection that we were saved and given new hope to enter the Kingdom of God, the prayers and sharagans that are part of the services of Holy Week emphasize a great concern and desire on the part of the faithful to be able to attain that; thus supplication for the grace of our Lord becomes the main theme.

A beautiful sharagan that is sung during the Opening of the Doors Service, in the afternoon of Palm Sunday, is based on the biblical story that Christ told about the wisdom of the ten virgins, in Matthew 25:1-13.

O Lord, grant us, that we may be awake as the wise virgins; brighten our spiritual lanterns.

We are in awe O Lord, fearing your answer, lest you say "Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

When you come again in the Glory of the Father, to judge the whole universe, grant us, O Lord, that we may stand on your right hand side.

Let the doors of mercy of the heavenly bridegroom open to us, and let us enter the marriage feast along with the wise virgins.

Let us meet the bridegroom and enter with him to the marriage feast so that we will not be shut out like the foolish virgins.

May our spiritual lanterns brighten, and may we sit with those who are invited to the feast of the heavenly kingdom.

This sharagan, which is in narrative form, has besides its biblical reference, an element of the creed of the Church. In verse 3 we actually are singing the part of our creed which says:

"He is to come with the same body and with the glory of the Father to judge the quick and the dead; of whose kingdom there is no end."

The symbolism of this service is very apparent. The faithful of the Church plead to God through prayers and sharagans to re-open the doors of His heavenly kingdom which were closed to man through his fall and expulsion from paradise (symbolized by the drawn curtain in church during Lent). The Lenten period afforded time for meditation and repentance for our sins. With this ser-

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