



Saint Ephraim the Syrian  
On the Nativity Hymn 1,  
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**T**O EVE OUR MOTHER a man gave birth, who himself had had no birth. How much more should Eve's daughter be believed to have borne a Child without a man! The virgin earth, she bare that Adam that was head over the earth: the Virgin bare today that Adam which is Head over the Heavens. The rod of Aaron, it budded, and the dry wood yielded fruit: its mystery is made clear this day, for the virgin womb a Child hath borne!



**W**HAT MOVES THEE that Thou didst let all that saw Thee have Thee, both rich and poor? Thou helpedst them that called Thee not. Whence came it that Thou hungeredst so for men?

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**T**O WHOM ART THOU LIKE, glad Babe, fair little One, Whose Mother is a Virgin, Whose Father is hidden, Whom even the Seraphim are not able to look upon? Tell us whom Thou art like, O Son of the Gracious!



**T**HOU ART WONDERFUL, in all parts where we see Thee. — Near art Thou — and far — and who may attain unto Thee? No seeking avails, that its stretch should reach unto Thee. Wherever it may stretch to reach Thee, it is checked and stops — it falls short of Thy mountain: Faith reaches thither; and Love with prayer.

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**F**IRE COMMENDED THY BIRTH, which drew away worship from it. The Magi used to worship it: they who have worshipped before Thee. They left it and worshipped its Lord; they exchanged fire for the Fire. *Blessed is He Who hath bathed us in His light!*

**I**N PLACE OF THE SENSELESS FIRE that eats up its own body of itself, the Magi adored the Fire Who gave His Body to be eaten. The Live Coal drew near and sanctified the lips that were unclean. *Blessed is He Who has mixed His Fire in us!*

**D**ELUSION BLINDED MEN, to worship created things: fellow servants were worshipped, and the God of all was wronged. He Who is to be worshipped came down to birth, and gathered to Himself worship. *Blessed is He Who by all is worshipped!*

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