



**CATHOLIC
SYRO-MALABAR
EPARCHY OF
GREAT BRITAIN**

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Eparchial Family Quiz on Spirituality

100 Questions for Unit Level Competition

1. Q: Where did the Syriac language originate as a local Aramaic dialect?
A: Edessa
6. Q: What are the three main dialectal branches of Eastern Aramaic?
A: Syriac; the language of the Babylonian Talmud; and Mandaic.
7. Q: In which year was the Council of Ephesus, the third ecumenical council, held?
A: AD 431
12. Q: As a result of the Christological controversies of the 5th century, into how many ecclesiastical bodies was Syriac-speaking Christianity divided?
A: Three
13. Q: What are the three ecclesiastical bodies into which Syriac-speaking Christianity was divided as a result of the Christological controversies of the 5th century?
A: 1) The Church of the East; 2) those who accepted the Christological formula of the Council of Chalcedon (451); and 3) the Syrian Orthodox.
14. Q: Where did the Church of the East predominantly exist in the fifth century?
A: In the Persian Empire
20. Q: Which were the five most important centres for Syriac literature in the Roman Empire in the early centuries?
A: Edessa; Nisibis (until AD 363); Serugh; Amid; Mabbug
22. Q: From which language was the Peshitta Old Testament translated into Syriac?
A: Hebrew

24. Q: Who is considered the author of the Diatessaron?
A: Tatian
30. Q: What are the two most important ancient works of apocryphal literature associated with the name of Thomas the Apostle?
A: The Gospel of Thomas and the Acts of Judas Thomas
31. Q: When and where was the Gospel of Thomas probably written?
A: In the second century in Syria.
34. Q: What themes are covered in sections I-VI of the Acts of Judas Thomas?
A: Mar Thoma's time in North India and the conversion of King Gudnaphar.
35. Q: What is the focus of sections VII-XIII and the Martyrdom (section XIV) in the Acts of Judas Thomas?
A: Mar Thoma's experience at the court of king Mazdai.
39. Q: Who is known as 'the Persian Sage' among the Syriac Churches?
A: Aphrahat
41. Q: What represents the first extensive piece of Syriac literature to survive?
A: Aphrahat's Demonstrations.
45. Q: Which of Aphrahat's Demonstrations is one of the most important sources for knowledge of the early Syriac ascetic tradition?
A: Demonstration VI.
46. Q: By what terms were the men and women referred to who had made some sort of ascetic commitment, as addressed in Aphrahat's Demonstration VI?
A: Ihidaye, bnay qyama, bthule, and qaddishe.
50. Q: What does bnay qyama literally mean?
A: 'Children of covenant'.
56. Q: What does the Syriac term qaddishe literally mean?
A: Holy ones.
60. Q: What is the title of Aphrahat's first Demonstration?
A: On Faith.
61. Q: Where was Mar Aprem the Syrian born?
A: Nisibis.
62. Q: In which century was Mar Aprem the Syrian born?
A: 4th.
65. Q: To which school of theology did Mar Aprem the Syrian belong?
A: Antiochene.
71. Q: What was Mar Aprem the Syrian's primary role in the Church?
A: Deacon.

74. Q: What heretical movement did Mar Aprem the Syrian write extensively against?
A: Arianism.
79. Q: Which Pope declared Mar Aprem the Syrian a Doctor of the Church?
A: Benedict XV.
80. Q: What is the feast day of Mar Aprem the Syrian in the Catholic Church?
A: June 9.
82. Q: During which century was Mar Aprem the Syrian's Commentary on Genesis written?
A: It was written in the 4th century.
86. Q: How does Mar Aprem the Syrian's work reflect the Syriac Christian tradition?
A: His work emphasises poetic exegesis, a focus on the mystery of God, and the harmony between the natural world and divine revelation.
89. Q: Why is Mar Aprem the Syrian referred to as the "Harp of the Holy Spirit"?
A: This title reflects his mastery of theological poetry and his use of hymns to convey profound spiritual truths.
91. Q: How does Mar Aprem the Syrian interpret the phrase "In the beginning" in Genesis 1:1?
A: Mar Aprem the Syrian views it as pointing to Christ, the eternal Word, who is the beginning of all creation.
95. Q: How does Mar Aprem the Syrian explain the creation of the sun and moon on the fourth day in his Commentary on Genesis?
A: He views them as symbols of Christ (the Sun of Righteousness) and the Church (reflecting Christ's light).
96. Q: What is the significance of humanity being created in God's image according to Mar Aprem the Syrian's Commentary on Genesis?
A: Mar Aprem the Syrian emphasises that this reflects humanity's capacity for free will, moral responsibility, and communion with God.
99. Q: How does Mar Aprem the Syrian interpret Adam's naming of the animals in his Commentary on Genesis?
A: He sees it as an act of stewardship and a sign of humanity's intellectual and spiritual authority over creation.
102. Q: What does Mar Aprem the Syrian say about the consequences of the Fall in his Commentary on Genesis?
A: He emphasises the disruption of harmony between humanity and God, as well as the introduction of suffering and mortality.
104. Q: What is the significance of the garments of skins given to Adam and Eve, according to Mar Aprem the Syrian's Commentary on Genesis?
A: They symbolise God's compassion and protection despite human sinfulness.
108. Q: What is the spiritual significance of the seventh day of rest, according to Mar Aprem the Syrian's Commentary on Genesis?
A: Ephrem sees it as a foreshadowing of eternal rest and communion with God.

113. Q: How does Mar Aprem the Syrian connect the creation narrative to baptism in his Commentary on Genesis?
- A: He views the separation of waters as a prefiguration of baptism, symbolising purification and new life.
115. Q: How does Mar Aprem the Syrian interpret the promise of a redeemer in Genesis 3:15 in his Commentary on Genesis?
- A: He views it as the first prophecy of Christ's victory over sin and death.
117. Q: How does Mar Aprem the Syrian interpret work and toil after the Fall in his Commentary on Genesis?
- A: He sees work as a means of discipline and participation in God's redemptive plan.
120. Q: What is the ultimate spiritual goal of humanity according to Mar Aprem the Syrian's Commentary on Genesis?
- A: To restore communion with God through humility, obedience, and participation in divine life.
121. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Faith," what is the foundation of faith, and how does it relate to the building metaphor?
- A: The foundation of faith is our Lord Jesus Christ, described as the "true stone." Faith is likened to a building constructed on this foundation, rising until it is perfected.
122. Q: In Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Faith," what qualities and actions are required to make one's house a dwelling place for Christ?
- A: Qualities and actions such as pure fasting, prayer, love, alms, humility, virginity, holiness, wisdom, hospitality, simplicity, perseverance, moderation, mourning, and purity are required.
130. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Charity," how does Jesus demonstrate his love for humanity through his actions?
- A: Jesus demonstrates his love by healing the sick, forgiving sins, feeding the hungry, offering salvation, and reconciling humanity with God through his sacrifice.
131. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Fasting," what is the significance of pure fasting beyond abstaining from food and drink?
- A: Pure fasting involves abstaining from evil actions, controlling anger, avoiding hateful speech, and maintaining purity of heart, which are more excellent and pleasing to God than fasting from bread and water.
137. Q: In Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Prayer," how does he interpret the saying, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20)?
- A: Aphrahat explains that when a person cleanses their soul, Christ dwells in them, and God dwells in Christ, making that person one of the three. This demonstrates that Christ can be with a single individual who prays with a pure heart.
139. Q: What does Aphrahat suggest is more important than verbal prayer in "The Demonstration on Prayer"?
- A: Aphrahat emphasises that doing the will of God, such as acts of mercy and giving rest to others, is a form of prayer that takes precedence over verbal prayer.

146. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on the Sons of Covenant," why should the covenanters remain vigilant and prepared?
- A: They should remain vigilant because the Bridegroom (Christ) may come suddenly, and they must be ready to enter the bridal chamber with him.
153. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Penitents," why should a wounded person confess their sins instead of hiding them?
- A: If a person hides their wounds (sins), they become worse, like an untreated abscess, leading to spiritual death.
154. Q: In "The Demonstration on Penitents," which Old Testament figure does Aphrahat mention as an example of someone who confessed his sins and was forgiven?
- A: David, who confessed his sin to Nathan the prophet and was forgiven by God.
155. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Penitents," when will repentance no longer be possible?
- A: Repentance is only possible in this world; when grace disappears and justice rules at the end of time, repentance will no longer be accepted.
156. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on the Resurrection of the Dead," what happens to the body of the righteous on the day of resurrection?
- A: The body of the righteous will be changed, and the earthly form will be swallowed up in the heavenly, becoming a heavenly body.
159. Q: According to "The Demonstration on the Resurrection of the Dead," how does Aphrahat interpret Christ's resurrection in relation to the Christian faith? A: Aphrahat states that if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ did not rise, and if Christ did not rise, then Christian faith and preaching are in vain.
164. Q: In "The Demonstration on Humility," what contrast does Aphrahat make between Adam and Christ regarding humility and exaltation?
- A: Adam exalted himself and was humbled, returning to dust with a curse, while Christ humbled himself and was exalted with additional glory.
166. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Pastors," what example should pastors follow in caring for their flock?
- A: Pastors should follow the example of the Good Shepherd, who gave himself for his sheep and diligently cared for them.
167. Q: In "The Demonstration on Pastors," why does Aphrahat say that many leaders in the Bible, such as Moses and David, were first shepherds of sheep?
- A: They first shepherded sheep so they could learn diligence, care, and leadership before being chosen to lead people.
169. Q: In "The Demonstration on Pastors," what does Aphrahat say about Simon Kepa (Peter) and his role as a pastor?
- A: Christ entrusted Peter with feeding his sheep, and after Peter's time, the responsibility was passed on to other pastors.
170. Q: According to "The Demonstration on Pastors," what warning does Aphrahat give to pastors regarding worldly distractions?
- A: Aphrahat warns that a true pastor should not abandon his flock for business, farming, or worldly pursuits, as this would leave the sheep vulnerable to wolves.

176. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Passover," what does he say is the true Passover for Christians?
- A: Aphrahat states that the true Passover for Christians is the sacrifice of Christ, which replaced the Jewish celebration.
179. Q: In Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Passover," how does he compare Moses and Jesus in relation to Passover?
- A: He contrasts Moses, who led Israel out of Egypt and parted the sea, with Jesus, who led believers out of sin and broke the gates of Sheol.
181. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Sabbath," what was the primary purpose of the Sabbath?
- A: The Sabbath was given for rest from labour, not as a means of righteousness or salvation.
185. Q: In "The Demonstration on Sabbath," how does Aphrahat explain God's rest on the seventh day?
- A: He clarifies that God did not rest due to weariness but because He had completed His work of creation.
189. Q: How does Aphrahat contrast the physical Sabbath with the true Sabbath in "The Demonstration on Sabbath"?
- A: He teaches that true Sabbath rest is found in doing God's will and entering into God's ultimate rest.
194. Q: In Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Exhortation," what does he say about pride and its consequences?
- A: He provides biblical examples of how pride led to the downfall of many, including Adam, Cain, Pharaoh, and Saul.
195. Q: What Old Testament example does Aphrahat use in "The Demonstration on Exhortation" to show that God judges both justly and mercifully?
- A: He cites the story of Noah, where God destroyed the wicked but preserved Noah and his family.
196. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Exhortation," how does love contrast with strife?
- A: Love brings peace, conceals faults, and unites people, whereas strife leads to destruction, division, and suffering.
200. Q: How does Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Exhortation" describe Jesus as a model for Church leaders?
- A: He presents Jesus as the ultimate peacemaker who reconciled humanity with God and calls leaders to follow His example.
203. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on the Distinction Between Foods," why were the Jews commanded to eat animals they once worshiped in Egypt?
- A: To turn them away from idolatry and prevent them from worshipping the gods of Egypt.
206. Q: In Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on the Distinction Between Foods," what reason does he give for the distinction between foods in the Mosaic Law?
- A: The distinction was not for righteousness but to restrain Israel from idolatry.
207. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on the Distinction Between Foods," what did the Prophet Samuel say was better than sacrifices?
- A: "Behold, obeying is better than sacrifices, and to hearken, than the fat of the failings" (1 Sam. 15:22).

209. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on the Distinction Between Foods," how did God describe the commandments given to Israel after the golden calf incident?
- A: God said He gave them "commandments which are not good and judgments through which they will not live" (Ezek. 20:25).
210. Q: In Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on the Distinction Between Foods," what did Jesus offer in contrast to the burdens of the Law?
- A: Jesus said, "Come to me all who are weary and carry burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is light and pleasant" (Mt. 11:28-30).
211. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on the Peoples Which Have Taken the Place of the People," who has inherited the blessings given to Abraham?
- A: The Church has inherited the blessings given to Abraham.
224. Q: In Aphrahat's The Demonstration on the Messiah who is the Son of God, how does he defend the worship of Jesus?
- A: He argues that if people honour and do obeisance to earthly rulers, even wicked ones, it is even more appropriate to worship Jesus, through whom people know God.
225. Q: How does Aphrahat in The Demonstration on the Messiah who is the Son of God use Daniel's prophecy to support his argument?
- A: He refers to Daniel 9:26-27, which states that the Messiah will come, be killed, and that Jerusalem will be destroyed, proving that the Messiah has already come.
226. Q: What Old Testament prophecy does Aphrahat cite in The Demonstration on the Messiah who is the Son of God to show that the Messiah would suffer?
- A: He quotes Isaiah 53:5, which says, "He shall be slain on account of our sins; he shall be humbled for our iniquity."
227. Q: According to Aphrahat's The Demonstration on the Messiah who is the Son of God, how does Psalm 22:16-19 relate to Jesus?
- A: He interprets the passage, "They pierced my hands and my feet," as a prophecy of Jesus' crucifixion, which was fulfilled in his suffering.
234. Q: In Aphrahat's The Demonstration against the Jews on Virginitv and Continence, how does he argue that virginitv is superior to marriage?
- A: He compares it to creation, stating that while both are good, some things are better than others—just as heaven is better than earth and light is better than darkness, virginitv is better than marriage.
235. Q: What Old Testament figures does Aphrahat cite in The Demonstration against the Jews on Virginitv and Continence as examples of celibacy?
- A: He cites Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, and Jeremiah as men who remained celibate and were greatly honoured by God.
240. Q: How does Aphrahat conclude The Demonstration against the Jews on Virginitv and Continence?
- A: He urges Christians to defend virginitv against Jewish criticisms, emphasizing its spiritual power and the great reward it brings in heaven.
242. Q: In Aphrahat's "The Demonstration Against the Jews on Account of Their Saying that It is Certain for Them to Be Gathered Together," how many times does Aphrahat say God saved Israel?
- A: Twice — once from Egypt and once from Babylon.

254. Q: In Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on the Support of the Poor," what does Jesus call those who provided for the poor at the Last Judgment?
- A: Blessed ones of his Father.
255. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on the Support of the Poor," who is represented by the rich man in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus?
- A: The people of Israel.
256. Q: In Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on the Support of the Poor," who are the "dogs" that lick the sores of the poor man (Lazarus)?
- A: The Gentiles.
257. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on the Support of the Poor," what is the "great chasm" between Abraham and the rich man meant to show?
- A: After death and resurrection, there is no repentance.
258. Q: In Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on the Support of the Poor," which Old Testament figure does Aphrahat present as a model for hospitality and care for strangers?
- A: Abraham.
259. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on the Support of the Poor," what does Jesus advise the rich man to do if he wants to inherit eternal life?
- A: Sell all he has and give to the poor.
264. Q: In Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Persecution," how does Aphrahat compare Joseph's persecution to Jesus?
- A: Joseph was persecuted by his brothers and later exalted, just as Jesus was persecuted and later glorified.
267. Q: In Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Persecution," what does Jesus provide to all nations, just as Joseph provided for Egypt?
- A: The bread of life.
270. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Persecution," which New Testament martyr does Aphrahat describe as the "faithful witness"?
- A: Stephen
272. Q: In Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Death and the Latter Times," what does Aphrahat say happens to a person's riches and possessions at death?
- A: They are left behind and cannot accompany the person.
273. Q: According to Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Death and the Latter Times," what example does Aphrahat use to illustrate the certainty of death?
- A: The example of Adam, who returned to the dust from which he was taken.
274. Q: In Aphrahat's "The Demonstration on Death and the Latter Times," what does Aphrahat say the wise person does in preparation for death?
- A: The wise person prepares good deeds to accompany them after death.
283. Q: In "The Demonstration on the Cluster of Grapes," what biblical example does Aphrahat give to show that even Jesus' prayers were not always answered?
- A: Aphrahat mentions that Jesus' prayer during his suffering was not heard, illustrating that even the righteous sometimes face unanswered prayers.

289. Q: According to “The Demonstration on the Cluster of Grapes,” why were the prayers of great prophets like Moses and Samuel sometimes not heard?
- A: Their unanswered prayers served as a lesson that even the righteous are sometimes denied in order to correct and refine them.
291. Q: According to Mar Aprem’s Commentary on Genesis, how does he describe the creation of light on the first day?
- A: Mar Aprem explains that God created light before the sun, moon, and stars to demonstrate that light is not dependent on these celestial bodies but rather on God’s command.
293. Q: How does Mar Aprem interpret the “deep sleep” that fell upon Adam in Commentary on Genesis?
- A: He interprets it as a divine mystery, symbolizing that the creation of Eve was entirely God’s work and prefiguring Christ’s side being pierced to give life to the Church.
296. Q: In Mar Aprem’s Commentary on Genesis, how is Noah’s righteousness described?
- A: Mar Aprem highlights Noah’s obedience and faith, stating that he stood apart from the corruption of his generation and followed God’s commands fully.
299. Q: In Mar Aprem’s Commentary on Genesis, how does he interpret the sacrifice of Isaac?
- A: He views it as a test of Abraham’s faith and a foreshadowing of Christ’s sacrifice, where God provides a substitute
300. Q: According to Mar Aprem’s Commentary on Genesis, why did Joseph’s brothers fail to recognize him in Egypt?
- A: He explains that divine providence played a role, and their perception was clouded by guilt and the unexpected transformation of Joseph’s status.
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