

## NATIVITY PRAYER OF ST EPHREM THE SYRIAN

Child of Bethlehem, what contrasts Your embrace!  
No one has ever been so humble;  
no one has ever wielded such power.  
We stand in awe of Your holiness,  
and yet we are bathed in Your love.

And where shall we look for You?  
You are in high heaven, in the glory of the Godhead.  
Yet those who searched for You on earth  
found You in a tiny baby at Mary's breast.  
We come in hushed reverence to find You as God,  
and You welcome us as man.  
We come unthinkingly to find You as man,  
and are blinded by the light of Your Godhead.

You are the heir to King David's throne,  
but You renounced all of his royal splendor.  
Of all his luxurious bedrooms, You chose a stable.  
Of all his magnificent beds, You chose a feeding trough.  
Of all his golden chariots, You chose a donkey.

Never was there a King like You!  
Instead of royal isolation, You made Yourself available  
to everyone who needed You.  
Instead of high security, You made Yourself vulnerable  
to those who hated You.

It is we who need You, above anything in the world.  
You give Yourself to us with such total generosity,  
that it might almost seem that You need us.  
There never was a king like this before!



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