

Lesson 62

Translation 9

This is a Nativity story from Mary's perspective, and is the first story ever written in Láadan. It was written, of course, by Suzette Haden Elgin. Reportedly, it was published in the Fall of 1982 in the journal *Women and Language News*; Suzette Haden Elgin states:

The story may well have been published in other places without my having been notified. It would be safe to use the Fall 1982 citation and to add the customary "Suzette has no information in her records on the publication history of this story."

A few small grammatical errors have been corrected, so have fun sleuthing for them if you find this story elsewhere.

On the other hand, several archaic case endings and other forms remain un-updated; this is one of the older texts in respect of which the archaic forms have been presented throughout these lessons.

Láadan Text

Wóoban Méri Batha

Bíide eríli wóoban with wemaneya wáa. Wóoban bi áwithid i ban bi zhath "Zheshu" áwithidedi wáa. Shi áwithid bith, i di bi eba bithodi, "Bíili, bre aril tháa ra áwithéhóo, ébre aril míi le!"

Id—bishibenal—menosháad womilá menedebe i noline menedebe i wothidá nedebe wáa. Medi, "Bóo aril meláad len áwithideth oyinan lu."

Bíide di with biyóodi, "Wulh hath áwitheláadewan! Methi ra bash i methi ra shal!"—i loláad bi ílhith. Izh di bi "Wil sha" zhonal: "Bóo mesháad nen i meláad."

Yide áwithid Zheshu i lili be wi. Nawée be i nánwée be. Éde benem mélhewith. Lith with "Raláadá menedebe!"

I lámála with áwithideth i náluth beth. Bíid mesháad hath i mesháad hath. Doól di with biyóodi, "Bóo melith nen woho! Bí ril nen rathóo wi! Báa melothel nen radalesh? Bí rilrili meloláad thul nenetha lhohoth." I thib with i bel bi áwitheth i naya bi beth.

Bíide thi with zhath Méri wáa.

Your English Translation

Wóoban Méri Batha

E:

Bíide eríli wóoban with wemaneya wáa. Wóoban bi áwithid i ban bi zhath “Zheshu” áwithidedi wáa. Shi áwithid bith, i di bi eba bithodi, “Bíili, bre aril tháa ra áwithehóo, ébre aril míi le!”

E:

Id—bishibenal—menosháad womilá menedebe i noline menedebe i wothidá nedebe wáa. Medi, “Bóo aril meláad len áwithideth oyinan lu.”

E:

Bíide di with biyóodi, “Wulh hath áwitheláadewan! Methi ra bash i methi ra shal!”—i loláad bi ílhith. Izh di bi “Wil sha” zhonal: “Bóo mesháad nen i meláad.”

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Yide áwithid Zheshu i lili be wi. Nawée be i nówée be. Éde benem mélhewith. Lith with “Raláadá menedebe!”

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I lámála with áwithideth i náluth beth. Bíid mesháad hath i mesháad hath. Doól di with biyóodi, “Bóo melith nen woho! Bíi ril nen rathóo wi! Báa melothel nen radalet? Bíi rilili meloláad thul nenetha lhohoth.” I thib with i bel bi áwitheth i naya bi beth.

E:

Bíide thi with zhath Méri wáa.

E:

Suzette's English Translation with Morpheme-by-Morpheme Analysis

Wóoban Méri Batha

Wóoban
GIVEBIRTH

Méri
MARY

Batha
XLOVE1 +
POSSBIRTH

The Birth-Giving of Mary the Beloved

Bíide eríli wóoban with wemaneya wáa. Wóoban bi áwithid i ban bi zhath "Zhesu" áwithidedi wáa. Shi áwithid bith, i di bi eba bithodi, "Bíili, bre aril tháa ra áwithehóo, ébre aril míi le!"

Bíide DECL + NARR	bi XHON1	áwithidedi BABY + MASC + GOAL	bi XHON1	ra NEG
eríli FARPAST	áwithid (INFANT + PERSON = BABY) + MASC	wáa. TRUSTED	eba SPOUSE	áwithehóo, BABY + FOCUS
wóoban GIVEBIRTH	i AND	Shi TOPLEASE	bithodi, XHON1 + POSS + GOAL	ébre ...THEN
with PERSON	ban GIVE	áwithid BABY + MASC	"Bíili, DECL + LOVE	aril FUT
wemaneya WINTER + TIME	bi XHON1	bith, XHON1 + OBJ	bre IF...	míi BEAMAZED
wáa. TRUSTED	zhath NAME + OBJ	i AND	aril FUT	le!" I
Wóoban GIVEBIRTH	"Zhesu" JESUS	di SPEAK	tháa THRIVE	

Long ago, a woman gave birth in the wintertime. She had a baby boy, and she named him "Jesus." The baby pleased her, and she said to her spouse, "If this baby doesn't do well, I'll be very surprised!"

Id—bishibenal—menosháad womilá menedebe i noline menedebe i wothidá nedebe wáa. Medi, "Bóo aril meláad len áwithideth oyinan lu."

Id ANDTHEN	womilá LIVESTOCK + DOER = SHEPHERD	menedebe #>5	wáa. TRUSTED	len WE>5
—bishibenal— BESUDDEN + MANN	menedebe #>5	i AND	Medi, PL + SPEAK	áwithideth BABY + MASC + OBJ
menosháad PL + (FINISH + COMEGO = ARRIVE)	i AND	wothidá WISDOM + MASC + DOER	"Bóo REQ	oyinan EYE + INSTR
	noline ANGEL	nedebe #2-5	aril FUT	lu." PLEASE
			meláad PL + PERCEIVE	

And then—suddenly—there arrived many shepherds, many angels, and several wise men. They said, "May we please see the baby?"

Bíide di with biyóodi, "Wulh hath áwitheláadewan! Methi ra bash i methi ra sha!"—i loláad bi ílhith. Izh di bi "Wil sha" zhonal: "Bóo mesháad nen i meláad."

Bíide DECL + NARR	hath TIME	i AND	loláad PERCEIVEINT	bi XHON1
di SPEAK	áwitheláadewan! BABY + PERCEIVE + PURP	methi PL + HAVE	bi XHON1	"Wil OPTV
with PERSON	Methi PL + HAVE	ra NEG	ílhith. DISGUST + OBJ	sha" HARMONY
biyóodi, XHON1 + REFLX + GOAL	ra NEG	shal!" MANNERS	Izh BUT	zhonal: SOUND + MANN = ALoud
"Wulh SUCHA... + PEJ	bash COMMONSENSE	—i AND	di SPEAK	"Bóo REQ

mesháad nen i meláad.”
 PL + COMEGO YOU>5 AND PL + PERCEIVE

“What a horrible time for a baby-viewing!” the woman said to herself. “They have no common sense and no manners!”—and she was disgusted. But aloud she said, “Please, come and see.”

Yide áwithid Zhesu i lili be wi. Nawée be i náuée be. Éde benem mélhewith. Lith with “Raláadá menedebe!”

Yide	lili	be	Éde	with
BEHUNGRY	BEWET	X1	NEVERTHELESS	PERSON
áwithid	be	i	benem	“Raláadá
BABY + MASC	X1	AND	STAY	NON + PERCEIVE +
Zhesu	wi.	náuée	mélhewith.	DOER
JESUS	SELFEVID	CONT + CRY	CROWD + PEJ	menedebe!”
i	Nawée	be.	Lith	#>5
AND	BEGIN + CRY	X1	THINK	

As would be obvious to any thinking person, the Baby Jesus was hungry and wet. He started crying, and he kept on crying. Nevertheless, the crowd stayed on. “What a lot of blind, deaf, dumb, thick-headed creatures!” the woman thought.

I lámála with áwithideth i náluth beth. Bíid mesháad hath i mesháad hath. Doól di with biyóodi, “Bóo melith nen woho! Bíi ril nen rathóo wi! Báa melothel nen radaeth? Bíi rilrili meloláad thul nenetha lhohoth.” I thib with i bel bi áwitheth i naya bi beth.

I	i	woho!	Bíi	bel
AND	AND	#ALL	DECL	BRINGTAKE
lámála	mesháad	Bíi	rilrili	bi
CARESS	hath.	DECL	HYPOTH	XHON1
with	PL + COMEGO	ril	meloláad	áwitheth
PERSON	TIME	PRES	PL + PERCEIVEINT	BABY + OBJ
áwithideth	TIME PASSES	nen	thul	i
BABY + MASC +	Doól	YOU>5	PARENT	AND
OBJ	ATLAST	rathóo	nenetha	naya
i	di	NON + GUEST +	YOU>5 +	CAREFOR
AND	SPEAK	IDENT	POSSBIRTH	bi
náluth	with	wi!	lhohoth.”	XHON1
CONT + ROCK	PERSON	SELFEVID	SHAME + OBJ	beth.
beth.	biyóodi,	Báa	I	X1 + OBJ
X1 + OBJ	XHON1 + REFLX +	Q	AND	
Bíid	GOAL	melothel	thib	
DECL + ANGER	“Bóo	PL + KNOW	STAND	
mesháad	REQ	nen	with	
hath	melith	YOU>5	PERSON	
PL + COMEGO	PL + THINK	radaeth?	i	
TIME	nen	(NON + THING =	AND	
TIME PASSES	YOU>5	NOTHING) + OBJ		

And she held the baby close and rocked him. Time went by.... and more time went by. At last the woman said to herself, “All of you, please think! You’re not guests any longer, you’re nothing but trouble! Don’t you know anything? Your parents would be ashamed.” And she stood up and took the baby and took care of him.

Bíide eril thi with zhath Méri wáa.

Bíide	thi	zhath	Méri	wáa.
DECL + NARR	HAVE	NAME + OBJ	MARY	TRUSTED
eril	with			
PAST	PERSON			

That woman’s name was Mary.

Suzette's Free Translation

The Birth-Giving of Mary the Beloved

Long ago, a woman gave birth in the wintertime. She had a baby boy, and she named him "Jesus." The baby pleased her, and she said to her spouse, "If this baby doesn't do well, I'll be very surprised!"

And then—suddenly—there arrived many shepherds, many angels, and several wise men. They said, "May we please see the baby?"

"What a horrible time for a baby-viewing!" the woman said to herself. "They have no common sense and no manners!"—and she was disgusted. But aloud she said, "Please, come and see."

As would be obvious to any thinking person, the Baby Jesus was hungry and wet. He started crying, and he kept on crying. Nevertheless, the crowd stayed on. "What a lot of blind, deaf, dumb, thick-headed creatures!" the woman thought.

And she held the baby close and rocked him. Time went by.... and more time went by. At last the woman said to herself, "All of you, please think! You're not guests any longer, you're nothing but trouble! Don't you know anything? Your parents would be ashamed." And she stood up and took the baby and took care of him.

That woman's name was Mary.

Comments

There are several words Suzette Haden Elgin created for this story that demonstrate the flexible nature of Láadan word-building. These are all on-the-fly formations that would probably not be included in a dictionary.

First, "wothidá" (wise man) [woth (wisdom) + -id (MASC) + -á (DOER)]. There's an interesting commentary going on within the formation of this word. We've seen "wothá" (wise person; sage), and the step to "wotháhid" (male sage; wise man) is a natural one. However, in this word, Dr. Elgin has gone a different direction: she starts with "woth" (wisdom), then adds the masculine ending "-id" to give "wothid" (male wisdom; wisdom as perceived by men) and only then does she add the agentive suffix "-á" to give "wothidá" (doer of male wisdom)—a very different slant from the common English notion of "wise man."

Next, "wulh" (what a horrible...) [wu (what a; such a) + -lh (PEJ)]. Usually, we've seen the pejorative affixes used directly on the thing that is being reviled; in this case, however, it's attached to "wu" (such a...; what a...) to bring the pejorative to the situation rather than the noun that is being discussed.

Next, "áwitheláad" (baby-viewing) [áwith (infant) + láad (perceive)].

Finally, mélhewith (crowd, pejorative) [méwith (crowd) + -lh- (PEJ)]. Do you remember, from when we were studying the pejorative, that the usual use for the pejorative infix is in creating new words? Well, this word makes use of the fact that "méwith" (crowd) is formed from "with" (person) with a variant of "me-" (plural in verbs; also used in forming nouns meaning "larger/more important"); Dr. Elgin simply inserted the pejorative infix between these two word-parts.

Regarding the word-part "mé-": it has recently been defined as a collective-noun prefix. In words like "mébabí" (flock of birds) it stands for "flock;" in "méthili" (school of fish) it stands for "school;" and so on. This has the added benefit of regularizing "méwith" (crowd) as a collective form for people.