

## Fear Not. Nothing Happens Without God's Willing It: St. Isaac the Syrian



*St. Isaac the Syrian, (c. AD 613- c.A.D. 700). Ordained Bishop of Nineveh. Great ascetic and teacher. illuminated monastic writer.*

### **St. Isaac the Syrian, (c. AD 613 - AD 700), written c. AD 688**

If at any time you are found worthy of the solitary life (whose burdens are easily borne in the dominion of its liberty), do not let the thought of fear oppress you, as it commonly does, through diverse manners of shifting arguments and refutations. But, on the contrary, be like a man who believes that there is a guardian with him and who is perfectly assured through his wisdom that he, together with all creation, is under a single Master Who with a single nod moves, and shakes, and stills, and orders all. There is not one slave who can harm any other of his fellow slaves without a warrant from Him Who provides for them all, and controls all; and all things are under His providence. Rise up straightway and take courage! For although liberty is granted to some, it is not granted for every act. For

neither demons, nor ravaging beasts, nor men bent on evil can carry out their will to ruin and destroy their fellows unless the bidding of Him Who governs permits it and assigns it a definite compass. For that Divine nod from on high does not command or permit liberty to come into full sway; if it did, no flesh would survive. The Lord does not suffer the power of demons and men to encroach upon His creation and do with it as they please. For this reason, always say to your soul, “I have a Guardian watching over me, and there is not a creature that can even appear in my presence, unless a command should come from on High.” And although you should see with your eyes and hear with your ears their threatenings, do not believe that they will venture to act. For if they had a warrant from the bidding of Heaven, there would be no need of speech and words, but upon their willing it, the act itself would immediately ensue.

But again, say to yourself, “if it is the will of my Master that evil beings should hold dominion over what He has fashioned, I am not vexed at this, as one who would wish to hinder the will of his Lord.” And thus even in temptations you will be filled with joy, as one who knows and is fully aware that his Master’s signal steers him through all. Stablish your heart, therefore, by the confidence [[of faith]] in the Lord, and be not afraid *for the terror by hight, nor for the arrow that flieth by day* (Psalm 90:5), for the righteous man’s faith in God, they say, tames wild beasts as though they were sheep.

[Homily 54: “On the Solitary Life, and That We Must Not Be Timorous and Afraid, but Make Our Heart Steadfast Through Trust in God, and Have Courage with Unhesitating Faith, Since We Possess God as Our Guardian and Protector,” in **The Ascetical Homilies of Saint Isaac the Syrian**, translated by Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, MA 1984, p. 270-271.]