

Culture and Genuine Awareness

On the path of learning, culture is the meaning of the journey, the light of both reason and heart.

However, cultural weakness does not merely signify a deficiency in one area; it implies fragility in all aspects of life. This leads to stagnation in a person's intellectual and emotional world, fostering an ego-centric attitude and mental blindness.

The ability of material wealth to bring peace to the mind and spirit is only possible through cultural richness. No matter how high the mountain of materialism, egotism, and selfishness may rise, the road of culture transcends these obstacles.

The fundamental goal of a healthy life is to transform existence into a space for learning. This learning should not be for ourselves alone but should aim to create value for others -for everyone.

Opening our wings to love and embracing this approach is of great significance for social development. For the light kindled on the path of learning illuminates not only today but also the future.

When we contribute to life, life does not abandon us; it always gives us what we deserve in return. However, when learning, which nurtures cultural awareness, is neglected, the heart darkens and hardens. Trying to build growth upon a hardened heart is like sowing seeds on a rock.

Just as a seed needs fertile soil to flourish, cultural development requires open hearts and cultural interactions.

Cultural conversations conducted in this spirit are events that nourish one's humanity and strengthen the soul. They are also of great importance for both individual and societal growth.

For as long as I can remember, I have valued spending time with culturally aware individuals who possess sincere awareness. On Tuesday, 24 December 2024, I had the pleasure of meeting in Istanbul with my dear brother Zeki Yoldaş, who carries within his heart the eternal flame of Syriac culture and whose surname, fittingly, means "companion." Together, we embarked on a meaningful journey through the historical corridors of Syriac heritage, discussing the future of our culture with a spirit of genuine awareness.

On this occasion, we visited the printing house to see firsthand the publication of his book *Syriac Stories*, prepared and printed for children in both Western and Eastern dialects. With gratitude for his contributions to the Syriac language, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to him. **Tawdi saggi, Zakay!**

Once again, through the intellectual exchange of this meeting, I understood that amidst the hardships of life, it is crucial to preserve the spirit of kindness and to amplify compassion.

The most vital element that connects the secondary roads of our inner world to the main path of truth is this genuine awareness.

A person walking this path elevates and sanctifies human dignity. On this journey, respect means listening to understand; learning exists to enable sharing; being open to criticism is a prerequisite for growth. Accepting differences is the key to avoiding othering.

This path is a road filled with responsibility.

This path is the road of decency, morality, and inner enlightenment.

This path is the road not of "being like everyone else" but of "being oneself," of authenticity.

The greatest success of a person walking this path is self-awareness -being at peace with oneself and fulfilling one's responsibilities.

This is both duty and joy.

Yusuf Beğtaş