

Wise Proverbs

Language shining with literature is like a luminous star.

Literature is a stairway descending into the depths of the human soul; it unearths the hidden secrets of the soul and assumes an active role in the service of these secrets. It resembles electricity: it is unseen but illuminates. It directs the mind of the person of discernment; thus, deep and rich meaning begins to filter and flow within the world of the mind. It is precisely because of this that the world changes. For literature is like a marketplace without doors, walls, or boundaries.

Wise proverbs are a genre of literature, and they hold a distinguished, lofty position among these genres. Even in this era, presumed to be enlightened, literature devoid of wise proverbs is considered incomplete. An era that does not shine with wise words means it has lost the essence that filtered through the soul and mind of the wise philosophers of past times. Their wisdom, which remained scattered, is transmitted from generation to generation, from mouth to mouth; ultimately, one day, it is gathered in a book, read, examined, and understood.

Wise proverbs contain deep and symbolic mental thoughts that come filtering down from the summits of the ages. These meanings, purified by passing through the sieve of different generations and times, are shaped by the words with which we speak, hear, think, love, hate, approach, arrive, and comprehend the complex aspects of life.

Literature is exalted through its various fruits. As is known, there is no satiety in literature; yet the enlightened person nourishes it through exquisite ways. These fruits are a path, a means, and a delicious taste. It delivers the human being from unhappy loneliness, from the collapse of a sick and frail reality, from the weight that is a burden to life, and from inner constriction. This is also accompanied by intellectual pleasures and inner states.

The human being is in need of understanding in order to discover their great purpose and goal. Here, literature is one of these paths; it places the key into the hand of the human being. It sets the human being in motion with the burning and shaking power of its meanings.

Franz Kafka (1883–1924), as one of the pioneering figures of Western thought, says in his life story: ***"Thanks to literature, I escaped from hell. We ought to read the kind of books that wound and stab us. The person who keeps the capacity to see beauty alive never grows old."***

When joy fades on the journey of life and a deep torpor creates restlessness through the turbulence washing upon the shores of memory, the human being becomes in need of help. It is at this moment that the proverbs of the ancestors mean strength and abundance at this point. They are like a smile for sleeping consciousnesses; they open new doors of meaning in moments of rupture and regression, and sow fertile seeds into the arid soil. They grant courage in anxiety and despair; sometimes they become a warning and a shaking, sometimes a consolation, sometimes counsel, sometimes compassion and encouragement, and sometimes mercy and humility. As a Syriac thinker says: ***"To read books without reading carefully is a vain deed. This is akin to the one who sows the wind reaping the whirlwind. Reading with a loose foundation is like an ear of corn without grain. The one who reads without understanding gathers the grass of the rooftops; their labour is empty, it is useless."***

In this era, literature is a stance and a style of struggle against threats that suppress linguistic and cultural values. For this reason, reading the wise words gathered in the book entitled "The Wisdom of Time – Syriac Folk Proverbs" and learning their hidden meanings is like ploughing the soil of thought and weeding out the wild grass. These words cleanse the sediments that wound the heart, strengthen the soul, and direct feelings. They render the human being not a

judge, but one who understands. When used continuously, they not only nourish the memory but also renew the discipline of human understanding.

Out of these needs, folk proverbs are forgotten, remembered, gathered, and redistributed to be understood and used in daily life. Just as a camel's hump is a source of strength and safety in an arid desert, these words are precisely so for the human being.

As I have said before: Awareness is the mother of orphaned knowledge. Were it not for compassionate awareness, the human being would not know what they ought to care for; nor would the power of literature in this difficult and dark era be set in motion.

Therefore, we must raise anew the spirit of wisdom and compassion; as clergy, intellectuals, men of letters, and community leaders, we must not content ourselves with moulds, but must be pioneers. Thus, we gain the courage and strength to serve ourselves and our literature.

I have penned this introductory text upon the kind request of the author of the book; the venerable Malfono Joseph Asmar Melki, who is one of the pillars of the Syriac language and a industrious labourer in the field of literature. He is a devotee enamoured with the literary heritage, a veteran who breathes life into the soul of our language night and day.

The story of every human being is different; this difference is observed in the fruits of their service, their labour, their humility, and their sincerity. I must sincerely confess that we owe a great deal to the intelligence and productivity carried by his pen. Those who wish to see the richness of his works should look to his prose and poetry books.

Words of wisdom are a domain separate from ordinary literature and social knowledge. In an era where moral decay encompasses everywhere, there is a

need, more than ever, for their clear judgment and victory. Otherwise, the human being is gradually drifted into the abyss of spiritual deprivation and anxiety; wise meanings become lost within the locked doors of memory.

Let it not be forgotten that reading these wise words continuously and using them in every corner of the world lights the lamp of knowledge and consciousness. It renders the human being a warm home and a secure refuge for themselves and others; it banishes selfishness.

Finally, I give thanks to the Lord, who breathes power into the weak. I wish for this book to be a guide to the right path and a strengthener of the soul. My hope is the resurrection anew of thought, education, the word, and the writing.

The hopes of our Syriac language are knocking on the door of hearts today. May the melody of our beautiful language, the voice of our pure heritage, and the robust power of our literature never be silenced.

Note: I penned this text in Syriac upon the request of the esteemed Malfono Joseph Asmar Melki, who resides in Sweden. It took place as an introductory text in Arabic and Syriac in the work entitled "The Wisdom of Time – Syriac Folk Proverbs," published in 2021. When the book reached my hands two days ago, I translated this text into Turkish for the precious reader for the purpose of introduction.

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