

The Measure of Life is the Human Being

In Syriac culture, a human being is not an entity completed in isolation. A human being matures through relationship. Every positive touch extended to another is the visible manifestation of the divine image carried within their heart. For this reason, every good action directed towards another gives strength not only to the recipient, but to the person's own soul as well.

Christ establishes morality not through lengthy laws, but with a single sentence entrusted to the conscience of the human being: ***"And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them."*** (Luke 6:31; Matthew 7:12)

This word calls upon the human being not to correct others, but to weigh themselves first. For every behavior directed towards another actually reveals who we are. Refraining from wishing for another what we do not wish for ourselves is the simplest, yet at the same time the heaviest responsibility of being human.

This call of Christ directs the human being not to be cautious against another, but to take responsibility for another. Morality, thus, ceases to be a reflex of protection; it transforms into a lived state of consciousness. By how they treat another, a human being also discloses what kind of world they desire for themselves.

This principle does not merely summon the human being to guard against evil; it directs them towards conscious goodness. "Doing no harm" is the lower threshold of morality; however, in Syriac culture, morality begins far beyond this threshold. What is expected of the human being is not a passive innocence, but an active responsibility. Goodness ceases to be a preference; it becomes a fundamental state that determines the direction of the human being.

In the language of Syriac culture, love is like a divine movement that opens the human being's existence outwards. Love is not reduced to an emotion experienced within; it remains incomplete when it does not transform into action. Therefore, by how they treat another, a human being discloses not only their morality, but also how vibrant the divine image they carry within is. Hence, morality becomes not merely a

law that draws boundaries, but a path that invites the human being to transcend themselves. Wishing for another what one wishes for oneself is the responsibility of keeping the divine spark within the human being alive. And this responsibility is the quietest yet heaviest call of being human.

This call does not keep the human being on the defensive; it invites them to walk. It is not enough to say, "I have done no evil." The real question is this: What have you done for goodness? For Syriac culture sees the human being's resemblance to God not in a passive innocence, but in the incarnation of mercy and justice. The divine image remains alive not by being guarded, but by being shared. In this context, the word of Christ does not build grand ideals; it leaves a small but heavy burden: the responsibility to construct for another the world we desire for ourselves. Morality begins precisely here.

Consequently, this word is read as a discipline of the soul rather than a rule. Morality is not an order imposed from the outside; it is a balance established in the heart. A human being is not merely an individual, but a relational being. For this reason, Christ's call is directed not towards fixing the world, but towards establishing the inner order of the human being first. The scales are not in another, but in the human being's own heart.

A human being is often sensitive towards themselves and callous towards others. When they are hurt, they demand justice; when another is hurt, they choose to remain silent. They consider their own expectation a right, and view another's as a burden. Yet, Syriac wisdom conceives of the human heart as a balance. When this equilibrium is disrupted, not only are relationships damaged, but the bond the human being establishes with God is also harmed.

For this reason, Syriac culture does not deem merely avoiding evil sufficient; it renders conscious goodness mandatory. Because in this culture, love is not a passive emotion; it is a state that transforms into action. By how they treat another, a human being demonstrates how alive the divine image they carry in their heart is.

The same principle echoes in a simpler expression: We must not wish for another what we do not wish for ourselves.

This word sets the simplest yet heaviest measure of morality. If a human being deems a behaviour proper for another which they cannot accept for themselves, it means they are weighing justice according to the situation rather than the principle. Virtue, however, is the courage to maintain an inner balance that does not change according to circumstances; it is being able to keep the scales at the exact same point for everyone, regardless of who they are.

An inconsistent double standard first fatigues relationships, and subsequently erodes the conscience. Conscience is the silent witness within the human being; it cannot endure inconsistency for long. This crack starting within damages the bond the human being establishes with themselves and with God over time. To repair the meaninglessness deepened by this damage, the word calls the human being to empathy; yet not to a superficial exchange of places. It teaches one to look into the heart of the person before them with the fragility of their own heart. A word that wounds us wounds another too. An injustice that disturbs us is heavy for another as well. Being human is attaining a maturity capable of noticing this shared fragility.

Social peace is preserved, more often than not, not by grand and complex rules, but by this small yet profound principle. When people approach one another with this measure, tyranny does not spread easily, and injustice does not become ordinary. When everyone refrains from inflicting upon another what they do not wish for themselves, peace and trust flourish on their own.

Yusuf Beğtaş