

Bridges instead of Walls

تَعْمَدُ عَلٰی نَفْسِهِ

"مُفْهِمٌ هَذَا نَحْنُ نَعْمُ"

[illegible]

On November 4, 2019, we met together with one of the doyens of Syriac culture, the Metropolitan Bishop of Mount Lebanon Mor Theophylos George Saliba, along with the senior general secretary of the Swedish Evangelical Church Rev. Cajsa Sandgren, and the members of the board of the Södertälje-Mor Ephrem Church, in a dinner party hosted by the patriarchal vicar Metropolitan Bishop Mor Dioskoros Benjamin Atash. We chatted. We spoke together of the importance of dialogue. We experienced happy times of mutual cultural exchange.

I want to express my sincere thanks and respect to H.E Benjamin Atash for his approach -inviting us all together in mutual appreciation. It was very polite.

As we spoke in our dinner gathering, the drive/incentive to build bridges instead of walls -in spite of all else- is nothing less than the effort to protect the purity of the highlands of the heart.

They say, “**A good word is the alpine pasture of the heart.**” The towns of Mesopotamia are bound to the alpine pastures and highlands above them, for the sake of their flocks and herds, and for the refreshment of the people in summer

time. So the heart is to the body as the highland is to the city. The highland means refreshment, purity, and cool air. One does not descend to it, one ascends. It is high. In our highland, every good thing, every behavior, every word, creates a sweet breeze. To protect it, to prevent it from being polluted, requires effort. We have to keep ourselves at a distance from everyone who abuses it, despises it, and throws litter and garbage on it.

In this context, not losing sight of the rationale that constitutes the foundation of merciful awareness and affectionate action due to the walls we build between the self and the other, but rather nurturing that rationale, gives birth to the activation of high energy life.

According to the logic of Shumloyo, no approach that fails to purify thought and intent, or unlock the spirit, can carry one forward. The human being comprehends the depth of life, its aroma, and its visible and invisible realities by the cleansing of intent that unlocks the spirit, and by the spirit of love, sincerity and responsibility. By this spirit the human being tastes. To the extent that he can protect this spirit he adds meaning to life. He finds the meaning of his life. He enlightens his blind spots.

The truly concrete thing is to be able to see the invisible truths of the world. When we can see those invisible -those spiritual- truths, we more easily comprehend how important it is to construct bridges instead of walls in both our social life and our field of service. Because one of those spiritual truths is sincerity. Sincerity is the liberty of the spirit. As it has been said, **“The most difficult direction of thought is LOVE, sincerity, and responsibility.”**

According to a wise saying, **“Not only do the thirsty seek water, water also seeks lips to assuage.”**

Let's not forget, as a human being gives, he, or she, multiplies. The more one shares from the heart, and does things for others, he or she, becomes more human.

So, for our own peace and liveliness (for our field of service and for our social circles), we should look for ways to be useful and to provide useful fruits. Because, **“Trees bear fruit as long as they have life. People however, have real life as long as they bear fruit.”**

Yusuf Beğtaş