

Culture

Culture is the beating heart of a civilization. It is a vigilant spirit that gives life and awakens people by bringing them closer to their true self. Language is the foremost element that forms culture. Language and culture are the intergral parts of the same whole. The two of them exist in solid and constant harmony. Likewise, faith also has an important place within the cultural structure. There is a constant connection and interaction between culture and faith. The combination of culture and faith, their synonymy, adds distinctly new meanings to culture. Therefore, sometimes it can be misleading to isolate faith from culture. Because all systems of faith are bound to uphold a certain cultural structure.

The basis of continuity is viewed as the blending and explication of culture, which takes shape throughout the centuries, with the nuances of language in the context of life circumstances. Therefore, culture is shaped by the mold of language and passed on to future generations through language. Without language, cultural progress is impossible and civilization remains stagnant. The semantic existence of every concept that bears cultural significance is proportional to the expressions of the language that nurtures and uses it. **Therefore, cultural weakness is not just one weakness, but a weakness in every respect.** Because there is much interaction between humans and culture. Culture adds to the foundation of life, self-perception, and progress. A person's intellectual success is bound to the development of language and culture, while the success of language and culture is bound to humans and society. These two complete and sustain one another. Humans, who are a product of culture in a sociological sense, are simultaneously its agents, sustainers, and improvers.

When viewed from this aspect, language, which is the fundamental element of culture, is also a system of nominating and defining. The speakers of a language ascribe meaning to concepts according to their language and behave according to these meanings. But the incorrect usage of these definitions impedes healthy communication and understanding. It creates problems in communicating one's desire and intent to the other party. In other words, knowing the correct meaning of

concepts is the only way to communicate accurately both in writing and in speech. Speaking and writing in a language does not equate to knowing that language. The important thing is thinking, producing, and creating an intellectual space in that language. Because language has a similar function to salt in sociocultural life. If salt loses its essence, it goes stale and loses its taste. It loses its preservative qualities and becomes useless. Likewise, if the literary essence of language is not preserved and cultivated in daily life and in various areas of service, that language loses its flavor. Maybe this flavorless language is the main reason for the widespread unrest in the world.

Just as **“no one knows the value of gold better than a goldsmith”**, the value of culture and language is only known to those who strive to preserve it. Without an understanding of cultural depth, there can be no appreciation for the richness of the language that constitutes that depth. Hence, the value of culture is better known to the industrious intellectuals working day and night with the fastidiousness of goldsmiths and a passion for culture. For this reason, intellectuals have a lot on their plate. Just like an oyster, they toil and labor to grow a pearl in their stomachs. They are troubled by the defects of society, culture, people, and life. The security provided by material wealth to the perceptive world is bound to cultural wealth. Without spiritual freedom, there is no worldly freedom. No matter how tall the mountain of material things, carnality, and selfishness stands, the path of culture, discipline, and virtue spans them. **“Those who only look for answers in material things think with their eyes, but to the spiritual, the eyes are blind.”**

On this path, humans must really educate themselves about philosophy for self-knowledge and self-development, and about their own culture (and universal culture) in order to understand basic existential truth and social reality. Without culture, it is difficult to understand the basic concepts and values embraced by existential truth and social reality. Such is the nature of sociological research. Because culture gives meaning to our lives, orientation to our thoughts, and principles and morals to our disciplinary measures. Cultural awareness destroys mental barriers. It builds bridges in place of walls. It does not satiate itself on

narcissism and vanity. It grows with the discipline of humility and simplicity. Therefore, the word **uncultured** means impolite and sometimes even immoral.

According to psychosocial studies, the way to become more humane is revealed through understanding oneself and others. It develops when the world of meaning we thought is shown respect. Without the central pillar of civilization, which is culture, this respect cannot exist or flourish. Here, **culture / Mardutho¹ ܡܪܕܘܬܐ** and **character development / tulmodo d-yasro / ܬܠܡܕܐ ܕܝܫܪܐ** forms the fundamental power of spiritual life, which enables humanism. The thematic depth of these two concepts has crucial functions in people's moral and intellectual lives. Thereby, the erosion in these concepts' plane of meaning leads to weakness and a form of erosion both in culture and in humanism. This is not just one weakness, but a weakness in every respect. **If we do not care about culture, character development, and character transformation, we neglect not only our spirit, but our bodies and the meaning of our life as well.** Ignorance of this crucial fact of life and worldview makes moral humanization more difficult.

Those who do not undergo an inner revolution and develop their cultural identity struggle in making sense of and overcoming this difficult process. They are unable to lay the groundwork for the cultural and philosophical outlook necessary to understand the existential, intrinsic truth of life. This makes the exit route more difficult. **Therefore, societies that do not safeguard their language and culture are doomed to be uprooted by the wind, just like trees with dry roots.**

It is challenging to appreciate the value of a vital concept like culture, which is so significant in a social sense, without a holistic approach and outlook. For culture is like a tree whose branches stretch to the sky, staying green and bearing fruit all year

The concept of "**culture/mardutho ܡܪܕܘܬܐ**" has been derived from the verb "**rdo ܪܕܐ**," which has connotations in Syriac such as "**to walk, go, travel, flow, discipline, educate, teach manners, give guidance, learn.**" This shows that culture plays a critical role in our walks, progress, and growth on the path of life while staying true to our moral norms.

round. The shade of a deep-rooted, healthy culture is both soothing and comforting. Nevertheless, its branches must be regularly pruned, lest they block the light, thus receiving more sunlight, its branches strengthening and its fruits ripening with flavor. It is known that forests which are thinned receive plenty of sunlight and their trunks and branches grow stronger. This has been proven by experience.

To benefit from the tree of culture, we must prune old habits and rote thinking; we must transform our prejudices and fixed opinions. Humans and societies cannot benefit from the tree of culture by remaining fixed in place. Impatience, excessive anger, blinding passion, power seeking, lust for power, selfishness, jealousy, ostracism, spite, conceit, pride, slander, exploitation, abuse, overconfidence, vanity, greed, rebelliousness, fraud, defamation, rivalry, vengefulness, intolerance, hate, etc. are branches blocking the sunlight for humans (and society). It is vital that they be pruned. The meaning of light or its obstacles might change from person to person, but it is mandatory to understand this for a life in which the person shows positive growth. We must be highly aware of the sources of light in our lives. We must carefully prune anything that prevents that light from reaching our spirit and increasing in brightness. We must prune for a better life. First we must notice, slow down, stop, relax, face up, and partly do the opposite of the things we've done up to this point. However, we must strive to do this with the spirit and love of culture. Because culture is the element most capable of enriching both of our worlds. But realizing this and acting with the awareness of realization are two different things. Awareness of realization requires that we do not get held up on persisting negative thoughts and emotions. For this reason, the spirit of those who act responsibly and faithfully on the path of culture remains tranquil. Their intelligence, happiness, and voice is welcome.

Culture is not an inanimate object. It is a living phenomenon. It comes to life in people with merciful awareness and responsibility. In other words, the vitality and inclusivity of culture is proportional to cultural awareness. **Culture does not come to life thanks to culture-makers, but through the will, decisiveness, personality, capacity, worldview, inner world, sense of responsibility, dreams, and intentions of the segments of society that embrace it.** Sometimes, culture is

perceived according to one's sociopolitical awareness and capacity to understand; at other times, it is interpreted and evaluated "**willfully**". Such a willfull understanding is related more so to one's approach to things and their general perception, rather than the purpose of values expounded in culture. However, it should be known that sincere people (or groups) with high cultural awareness avoid the pitfall of willfully understanding and interpreting culture. They do not even attempt this. On the contrary, they try to grasp the fundamental and ultimate purpose of culture. They make sure to take nourishment from the formative mental vitamins that constitute the background of culture. Since time immemorial, culture has functioned as an effective force in the transformation of people and societies. For this reason, literary works of cultural significance possess attributes that do not lose relevancy.

Individual and societal approaches may be important for cultural vitality, but culture **is not as passive as might seem** in this dynamic. Culture is also a strong and capable agent. It makes an impact through didactic approaches and methods. And it never refrains from conveying its essential meaning, desires, concerns, and love. This state of affairs continues until it becomes a strong interaction in the light of knowledge and love, which is the meaning of life. **Thus, the path of the individual is illuminated by culture; his spirit is filled with warmth, his homeland glows. A cultured person glows with inner richness and meaningful living.**

The glow of culture comes with a very good grasp of the sociological justification and necessity of culture. This calls for expertise in the field of sociology. Though there are other factors in this regard, education and reading are indispensable.

Yusuf Beğtaş