

Historical Importance of Syriac Culture and Its Contributions to Our Region

Syriac culture, shaped by the parameters of the ancient culture of Mesopotamia, has been uniquely changed in terms of style and content by passing through a new understanding as a result of the leaven of factors developed along with the birth of Christianity.

Syriac culture has a unique past in the history of civilization and humanity. It has a remarkable effect in the progression the civilization. All ancient Greek philosophy and literature have been translated into Syriac language. Syriac clergymen and scientists brought it to Islamic civilization by translating it into Arabic language. Later they have been passed to the West and have been translated into Latin. Therefore, Christianity, Islam and civilization, they all owe a lot to Syriac culture.

Syriac culture has been known in the history of the region with its initiative characteristic. In its active periods in history, it had an important role of bridge in intercultural interaction. It has contributed to the East-West conception, to the development of civilization, philosophy and rationalism. The breakthrough it had made in the world of thought had reached the Arab world and Europe. It has a great role and impact in the carrying of the antiquity to the Islamic world. It has been coming to the fore with its contributions, primarily to the Arabic and Islamic philosophy. Masters of pen and word of this culture has left a rich literature and limitless legacy to us and has served the development of the social concept with spiritual awareness.

As an autochthonous culture of our geography, it has spent an effort to the continuous contribution to the common life with a concept that acknowledges as a virtue the responsibility and being in harmony with reality. By making the living and keeping alive as goal, it has always prioritized the effective altruism, social peace and solidarity. It has exhorted the culture of living together, cooperation, peace, prosperity and stability. It is not a remnant of the past, but also the inheritor of values that give different meanings to the pluralistic identity of the region.

The exhilarant and determining role of Syriac culture in the rise of the East and the West and the meeting of Islam with philosophy cannot be denied. In virtue of it, both the East and the West were able to reach their own philosophic roots and sources, in other words, the Greek

philosophy. As the enlightenment has been experienced, the Renaissance was triggered, and new progress was made. In its golden era (4th-10th centuries, A.D.) it was at the peak that it should have reached. From this aspect, it was a waterfall of humanity with dialogical relations, not with monological. Therefore, it is a humanistic and conscientious responsibility to express the contribution of this culture to the civilized world.

However, although this is the situation in regards to this rich culture, on the other hand it has been dragged into a subalternity that bears carelessness. Despite all the positive role it had in history and even though it was one of the productive veins that fed the Eastern culture, due to historical events and socio-political conflicts it has turned into a fountain that needs to be cared of and paid attention for not being crushed and wrinkled, while it has been flowing as a big river. In fact, this passive situation is a continuation of old times, political turmoil and historical events in different tones. It is a result of the negative impacts and wounds caused by migrations and painful events that have occurred in the past.

Although the preservation of this culture, which is a part of Turkey's and the global universal heritage, depends on many components, it also depends on being more understood in its homeland. And this is possible only by creating new awareness in social perception. Because we can't stake out a claim to anything that we are not aware of. In order to be aware of something, we have to get to know it closer. The awareness that gets beyond the ordinariness develops according to the maturity level of human and turns into wisdom through action. As it is said in one maxim, **"Awareness is the mother of an orphan knowledge."**

Unfortunately, these characteristics of Syriac culture, which is the autochthonous dynamic of the East, are mostly either ignored or barely spoken about. Its historical philosophical and intellectual contributions both to the East and the West are either unknown or waiting to be discovered on dusty shelves. The transformation of this stagnation to a movement, which is conspicuous in terms of the philosophy and the operational logic of history, depends on scientific research and objective studies by conscientious social scientists. Only then will the value of this culture, which breathes the exhilarant spirit of the truth and civilization to humanity, come to light. And its importance will be more understood.

It must be known that within the historical sequence of wisdom, the Syriac culture still makes an effort to maintain its existence with gritted teeth and despite the fractions, like a lost link of

the East. Although it experiences drifts and indifferences because of the oscillation it has between victimization and subalternity, it is obvious that is not just a touristic past. As a living culture, it still makes directly/indirectly significant contributions to the socio-economical development of the region and to the recognition of the region nationally and globally with its historical churches, monasteries and centers of knowledge and education.

Since the way of achieving a strong position in global operation under today's circumstances begins from the local region and differences, it is not even necessary to explain how significant are these contributions for the region and country. It is obvious that if this value, which draws attention globally, is supported with tangible efforts, it will make a different contribution to the socio-economical, socio-political and socio-cultural movement of the region.

Yusuf Beğtaş

Syriac Language-Culture and Literary Association / Mardin