

## **Administrative Approaches in Syriac Culture**

Since Syriac culture, which sees God in man and the universe, is based on realizing the common good through love and knowledge, administrative matters are based on governance, love, and altruism. Love here does not mean how one feels toward those under the administration but how one treats them. It is essential to serve with charitable motives and a spirit of empathy, fulfillment, and development rather than power-hungry and oppressive ambitions. Here, not doing what should not be done is more important than doing what should be done.

For this reason, it regulates the relationship of man with his fellow men and society/the environment, as well as man's relationship with God in the functioning of life, while upholding the social good in the use of material and spiritual resources. **By emphasizing reciprocity, with the vital knowledge it provides to the true self and the perception of life, it also places equal importance on spiritual development and financial security. It associates this with high-frequency constructive ideas and consistent actions.** It values the effort of conveying the inner world through literary and aesthetic expression. It teaches the moral importance of caring for life and the environment, being hardworking and disciplined, acting responsibly, caring and sharing without exploiting labor, not being negligent, and being sensitive to humanitarian issues. The criteria for this approach are sincerity rather than status and how much love and goodwill is invested in what is done (work and relationships).

Social justice is fundamental in the relations between society and social dynamics. Justice consciousness, human rights consciousness, and hard work consciousness are the foundation of moral consistency. And Syriac culture prioritizes them, placing equal importance on material and spiritual growth. Based on the inequality in society, it assigns everyone their rights and obligations as parts and members of the whole. It builds a framework for what needs to be done. It invites people to be good to themselves and good towards everyone and everything. **While making this invitation, it counsels us to approach everything with moderation, maintaining a balance between talent (people) and production talent (labor). But when it comes to love and wisdom, it sets no restrictions.**

Syriac culture counsels us to look into the mirror of the self and, as a principle, to exist for the existence of others and through the existence of others. It accepts people unconditionally and appreciates them for who they are, regardless of their gender, for the sake of their innate value and dignity. **“Humans are human when they act righteously toward God and truth, and morally toward creation.”** With this truth as its main foundation, **it does not see people as the**

**means to an end but as the goal and the agent. It enhances their strong suits while reinforcing their weaknesses.**

In Syriac culture's way of life, the greatest worship is a moral and virtuous life. Authority, knowledge, duty, office, power, talent, ability, skill, money, and all such qualities known as "**kakro**" in Syriac, have been entrusted to us so we may serve. They are a divine contract. We only have the authority to use them.<sup>1</sup> If we misuse them, the contract is forfeited. Anything that is not properly or conscientiously utilized (authority, knowledge, duty, office, power, talent, ability, skill, money, and other such qualities) becomes poisonous. Its antidote, which is pliability, is not a weakness. It is an advantage. Because rigid things break, while pliable things bend freely and carry on. Therefore, in the context of showing appreciation, we are reminded of the need to never forget the truth of the vines on the stick<sup>2</sup>.

Realizing that there is no full ownership in life opens the door to new openings and developments in the inner world of human beings. The moment we say that it's *my vine, my talent, my knowledge, my skill, my power, my duty, my office, or my authority*, the poison seeps in and begins to weaken us. If this problem is not resolved through self-examination, that vine, office, power, skill, talent, etc., takes the offensive against the person. Instead, the negative energy of selfishness can be eliminated, and its positive energy bolstered with a sincere acknowledgment that **"I am not the vine; I'm only a branch. No power, talent, or quality that has been entrusted to me belongs to me. I will use them appropriately for the benefit of everyone."**

Syriac culture does not abandon divine favors to seizure and subjugation by the flesh, nor does it condone arrogance, bragging, dominating humans for wicked purposes, oppressing them, exploiting them, abusing them, or subduing and bullying them. It categorically renounces condescension, pontification, and possessiveness. Instead, Syriac culture nurtures respect, honesty, sincerity, responsibility, loyalty, and consistency. It develops, strengthens, and promotes individuality with a holistic understanding of other fundamental truths<sup>3</sup>. It serves and

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<sup>1</sup> **"For who sees anything different in you? What did you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why did you boast as if you did not receive it?"** (1 Corinthians 4:7)

<sup>2</sup> There are very subtle differences between ownership and appreciativeness. Appreciativeness is the approach of love. It has the energy of the spirit. Therefore, whatever we appreciate flourishes and is blessed. Ownership is the approach of fear. It is the lowest level of the ego. It has a negative energy. Therefore, ownership is more prevalent than appreciativeness.

<sup>3</sup> The other fundamental truths are as follows: Truth, justice, fairness, conscience, reason, moral norms, moderation, righteousness, discipline, humility, responsibility, altruism, self-control, transparency, solidarity, helping one

contributes to these truths. Espousing the principle of "**individual differences**," it counsels against the blunder of comparing vital human qualities like intelligence, talent, skill, etc. Like the "**principle of individual differentiation**" in developmental psychology, it emphasizes people's individuality and uniqueness, drawing attention to the downsides of comparison and rivalry.

In Syriac culture, which grounds itself on sustaining life, there is no place for high-handedness, ill will, disparagement, or wrongdoing, leading to grievances and discord between people. In fact, if someone is not living up to the post they occupy, like the good shepherd, that means they have surrendered to their ego and ambitions. In other words, a person needs positive development, freeing himself from selfishness, arrogance, pride, contrarianism, and opposition; he needs to have a big heart with no inner contradictions. He must ascend to the realm of true love—the creative productivity of truth and wisdom<sup>4</sup>.

Syriac culture teaches valid and legitimate methods for getting rid of the weeds and couch grass in our mental soil. It makes it imperative that we remain in a state of spiritual peace and individuality to not deviate from the legitimate ways. Because valid and legitimate methods have positive energy, whereas illicit and illegitimate methods have negative energy, and they bring evil.

Exploitative and oppressive motives are the yeast of evil. Acting on these motives erases individuality and freedom. This is contrary to the essence of life and human dignity. It enslaves people to themselves and others. Syriac culture draws attention to this grave contradiction and replaces the mental residue of oppression with shumloyo reasoning and loving servitude. It prizes altruism over self-interest. It strives to transform negative energy (evil) into positive energy (good) and creates a balance between giving and receiving based on mutual needs<sup>5</sup>. It prioritizes facilitation. It associates a fulfilling life of development with being born again. **Even**

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another, loyalty, compassion, sincerity, faithfulness, balance, harmony, decency, etiquette, politeness, courtesy, artlessness, legitimacy, generosity, forgiveness, tolerance, trust, maturity, individuality, freedom, serenity, equality, hard work, and prudence.

<sup>4</sup> Saint Mor Aphrem (303-373) says, "**Be genial towards everyone. Try to make people happy as best as you can.**" This literary approach is the main moral discipline of a healthy and fulfilling life.

<sup>5</sup> On this subject, Saint Mor Baselius (+ 378 a.d.) is of the opinion that, "**None of us can fulfill their bodily needs by themselves. Far from it, each of us is in need of another in order to fulfill said needs, and therefore, we must be mindful of one another's concerns/benefits, which is impossible to do by isolating oneself and living alone.**"

**though being born again is a tiring and occasionally painful, arduous process that begins with breaking the mold, getting rid of inner veils and masks, full of internal and external conflicts, it sees this as a fundamental obligation.**

It waters the tree of life (individuality) in our inner world with the insights of this second birth, granting us spiritual stability. Thus, it exerts positive control over the ego system while carrying the spiritual world to a metaphysical dimension. It invites us to the development of thought, strengthening of actions, and to help and solidarity.

This invitation whispers the secrets of righteousness, goodness, and beauty into our ears as we travel through life. **"A human is defined not by his appearance but by his heart. His worth is measured by what he gives rather than receives."** With this approach, it draws attention to the cultural toxins that pollute life.

In the journey of discovering our inner greatness, it is vital that we look inward, checking and illuminating our blind spots, moving from knowing to doing and from doing to being. Though its source might be pure, even the clearest water can be affected by the unfavorable conditions of the canal or riverbed it flows through, by the relation of causality.

**Let's not forget that no matter how strong we may be, none of us can bear the weight of a life in which breathing and being a breath of fresh air have lost their meaning.**

Yusuf Beğtaş