

## Springtime in Kardu

In Spring, the skirts of Mount Kardu (Judi), wrap the village of Hassana (Kösreli) in a distinctive natural beauty.

The sounds of the wind blowing in the grass and trees -rattle rattle and whoosh- are like first aid for tottering thoughts and wrinkled feelings joy and sorrow.

Because in the natural flow, there is no arrogance or humiliation. There is an approach of mutual completion. There is unpretentiousness. There is inhaling and exhaling. And is not the essential aim of life, **“to be able to take a breath, and to be able to be a breath”**?

That is why being distant from nature is another name for being a stranger to self.

When I openly sense the difficulties of taking ownership of a ruined village and bringing it back to life, I stagger. My deceased father, Fr. Tuma Beğtaş, who for 40 years provided pastoral care for this village, said something however that fastens me with nails me to the natural beauty of that environment: **“The paths we walk on will always have thorns. If the walker does not have thorns in his spirit and thoughts, the thorny paths will be easier.”**

The springtime of the great rocks standing like castles and greeting those who come, stirs up an indescribable pleasure within. The landscape blends the ruined homes and abandonment with the wonder of nature. And so, even

if the chains of painful memories be lost in the brilliance of the green that covers Hassana, it is impossible not to experience the rising and falling tides of the mind.

Truly, nature awakening rocks the inner world. It imposes a spiritual shake-up.

After a severe rain nature has opened her heart, and she sways in the sweet breezes like a bride. Spring has warmed up the soil and brought the vegetation to life. Nature, as it comes to life, not only sprinkles little flowers everywhere, she also mixes in the sounds of singing birds and splashing streams, lending musical accompaniment to the cycle of life. As if she were restoring to us humankind our good cheer and the joy of living... On the skirts of this ancient Mount Kardu (Judi) of the House of Two Rivers (Mesopotamia or Beth Nahrin), as we watch the journey of nature's flow, it is impossible not to feel the past -the bitter- sweet experiences our people had here.

**A cheerfulness has filled the mountains, the plains, and the high pastures. The most beautiful scent spreads into the world of pleasure and taste. Even so, the messages which the Creator has given with care, have spread into the world of hope and meaning.**

The sweet zephyrs of Hassana village scatter all of their smells, sounds, and pollens, to the right and to the left, as if to say, **“Everybody wake up!”**

The natural flow of life continues in harmony, as it has done for thousands of years in these mountains... And yet it reminds us of their lost productivity and lived experiences.

I believe that life will be far better when we human beings protect this renewal and harmony of being in nature. It will be blessed.

For this reason we need to be earnest about not falling foul of the natural flow of life. Just as she constructs her balance, we need to keep our life in balance. We need to develop a balance of body and spirit... By drawing power from the love and kindness within us... By despising hatred... Even by excluding hatred...

When we are unable to strike this balance and we behave contrary to the natural flow, we experience a break in the divine flow, our life ceases to be normal... and we begin to flounder. The effects of mental infections and spiritual malfunctions increase.

Just as scientific studies affirm, the trigger or principal source for all spiritual, mental, and physical diseases, is this floundering!

No matter what, we need to pay attention to our natural flow. To avoid crash ups, we need to keep from swerving and losing control. That is, even if occasionally we are grieved, or if sometimes angry, or from time to time in tears, we need to keep HOPE alive!

When we remain in the natural flow, we will not only learn the ways of keeping this hope alive, we will also feel and see that there are other lives

we must protect. We will have a much better grasp of the importance of constructing balance.

To quiet down, to slow down, and to attain rest, we need to feel the FLOW that is in nature and the breezes of spring.

Can the old memories, the past remembrances... and all of the experiences which surround Hassana become a bridge to new hopes? Can they be transformed into new developments? My wish is that it be so.

I offer my feelings of thanks and gratitude to the Silopi district-governor, the elected village representative, and to everyone who has been a means for, and has contributed to, the budding anew of the hope found here.

Yusuf Beğtaş

**Note:** Hassana village is situated in the district of Silopi, in the province of Şırnak, in southeastern Turkey. It was evacuated in 1993 and faced the powerlessness of abandonment. With the return of some families from Europe in 2014, it opened up to a new life. The village began to experience belonging. This essay expresses my impressions from my visit intended to provide encouragement to the community there, on May 6-7, 2019.