

The School of Meltho in Ankawa, Erbil

The Syriac Orthodox Church, under the leadership of Metropolitan Mor Nicodemos Daoud Matti Sharaf, has accomplished a very important deed in Ankawa, Erbil, by establishing "**Meltho International School,**" which has universal standards and benefits from the opportunities and technological boons of the digital world.

The language of instruction at the multilingual school is English. However, students of different faiths and ethnicities learn in their mother tongues of Syriac, Kurdish, and Arabic. Christian students are taught Christianity and ethics as religious education, while Muslim students are taught Islam and ethics.

Built with great thought, courage, and spiritual breakthrough, *Meltho International School* was conceived as a consolation of life beyond local standards. We had the opportunity to visit this school in Erbil and observed firsthand that it has a promising future. With its well-equipped administration, it is taking steps toward overcoming the challenges of starting education.

As I toured this educational institution under the guidance of our esteemed Metropolitan Mor Nicodemos Daoud Matti Sharaf, I felt very happy about the future. I felt proud. My chest puffed up. In a word, I applaud everyone who contributed and their managers. My only desire is that it will introduce a way of life in which human beings are renewed in each other.

I wish the *Meltho International School* and its administrators great success in their future endeavors. May God help them.

In Syriac, the name "**Meltho** ܡܠܬܘ" is rather meaningful. The concept of **Meltho** ܡܠܬܘ is one of those rare concepts with all the ingredients to warm the heart. Depending on where it is used, it can mean "**word, concept, speech, the word, perception, understanding, issue, subject, law, praise, or reason.**"

In Syriac theology, **Meltho** ܡܠܬܘ refers to the Divine Word, the Messiah. As it is written, "**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it**" (John 1: 1-5).

Famous writer Don Miguel Ruiz (1952) on the importance of the Word: "**Your word is the power that you have to create. Your word is the gift that comes directly from God. The Gospel of John in the Bible, speaking of the creation of the universe, says, "In the**

beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word is God.” Through the word you express your creative power. It is through the world that you manifest everything. The world is a force... Your word is pure magic, and misuse of your word is black magic."

Therefore, every new concept we learn in any language we know that is not in our vocabulary contains a new meaning.

Every meaning is a new horizon. It has the effect of guiding the spirit and disciplining the ego. The discipline of the heart and spirit does not happen at the same rate everywhere. Therefore, each person must make their inward journey into the world of words in which they live. Through the meanings and composition of words...

Each new concept, each new meaning that enters our world of thought and meaning, reinforces our individuality over time as it is understood, assimilated, and given a permanent place in our intellectual world. Like a shining light, it makes us aware of new things. It enriches our thinking. Because people live under the influence of the words and meanings they know and continually engage with. They live out their lives with whichever words and meanings they know best. Their speech and thoughts (and actions, too) are shaped by the meanings they live with. Their world is made up of these.

To the human mind, words and concepts with new meanings are like a seed cast into the soil. One can never give up hope on a seed that has been cast into the soil. However, seeds without roots and action cannot germinate and yield produce in the field of life.

Thus, a person's intellectual and spiritual development is commensurate with the number of words and meanings they know. As a person matures in self-discipline, morality, love, responsibility, awareness, and life experience, his understanding of his position in life naturally evolves.

Here, love and knowledge means discipline. The more love and knowledge a person has, the more humble he is. The more humble a person is, the farther he is from feelings of superiority. He accepts others for who they are.

In this temporal world of limitations, the sole aim of limitless knowledge and love is spiritual development. It is the maturation of man. One must continually learn new words and concepts in order to speed up this process. Just as in school education, this is possible through constant reading. This is an endless process. The primary goal of education is lifelong learning. To develop a lifelong spirit of discipline and self-control.

The light of this intellectual enrichment and awareness functions as a bulwark against deceptions and difficulties; it serves as an antibody against life-poisoning, growth-impeding mental antigens (virus, microbe, bacterium...). Because our sole purpose in life is to discover the TRUTH with our most valuable possession-our minds. The closest thought to the truth is moral thought. Moral thinking (or being moral) is a way of thinking that seeks not to harm anyone in intention, word, or deed.

Contrary to popular belief, morality is based on having a healthy relationship with oneself, not with others. Without the light of meaning, this relationship will stay impaired forever.

On the other hand, an educated person is like cultivated soil. Education expands the power of the mind and the abilities of the person. Enlightening education teaches us to avoid bad habits and harmful behavior. For this reason, many thinkers and writers have expressed the importance of education in different ways. Saint Aphrem (303-373), one of the most prominent figures of Syriac literature with universal renown, put forward the idea that "**Education is the second light.**"

Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) said, "**Everyone is a teacher, and everyone is constantly a student,**" and "**One of the goals of education should be to teach the preciousness of life.**"

The famous scientist Albert Einstein (1879-1955) says, "**The future of a country depends on the education its people will receive.**"

... And he continues: "**If you must fight, fight your own ignorance.**"

Yusuf Beğtaş