

On The Meaning of Civilization

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On The Meaning of Civilization

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In the Name of God,

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My brother, exalted in essence:

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I read the letter bearing your seal. The beauty of its hand and grace of its language gave me hope that, by God's pure will, you will not only perfect your style and become a peerless correspondent, but that you will also pay attention to the substance of what is written. Do not pass beyond a certain limit, for eloquence is a highly subtle branch of knowledge to the brilliance of which most writers' eyes remain blind. Today the sun of eloquence has risen from the West, and the thunderbolt of knowledge and arts has flashed from the West. Turn your face toward it, and give your heart to that holy one. Perhaps the splendor of that radiant star will illuminate your pure heart, and unite the stream of your consciousness to the ocean of the Source of awareness.

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My dearest friend: the good qualities in figures of speech are like lovers' adornments: "God-given beauty has no need of cosmetics." Metaphor, rhyming prose, simile, and alliteration are like salt in food: too much destroys it, diminishing the original charm of the words. In this regard, do not transgress the bounds of moderation or borrow overmuch from the speech of others. For in your borrowed cloak, the adornment appears shameful. Render your words concise and harddriven, making use of their basic eloquence, that your letters may gain fame throughout the world and your name be linked with stylistic and rhetorical excellence.

