



from Necdet Yeşilyurt

to Cemal Yeşilyurt

The philosophy as well as the greatest wealth of my father was being helpful to people.

He was a father generous beyond words when it came to philanthropy, and he was "Uncle Cemal" of Turkey. Some people ascribed him the moniker "Cemal Aga," but he did not fancy it very much, he always said that it was harder and more precious to be "Uncle Cemal."

Our father taught us that real wealth cannot be measured in money but in being able to help people. He was exceptionally altruistic, disciplined, and hard-working. His determination to work and his discipline was extraordinary. He was organized, astonishing, and always aware.

Cemal Yeşilyurt, to put it briefly, was a privilege not every child can have. There are fathers who set an example in business and social life with the things they do, they earn the love of everyone. We learned from him that earning this love is the highest tier a person can achieve, and that it would, however, require great sacrifices in every part of life.

He was two months old when our great leader Atatürk passed away. He used to say that "that day had made him feel more responsible to Turkey." He worked unrelentingly from his early youth, and he spent what he earned on people and new investments, always with a sense of duty deriving from the thought that "he had been born when Atatürk was dying, and he was one of those youths to whom Atatürk entrusted Turkey."

He was a remarkably successful businessman and industrialist. He was open to innovation and technology. He was apprehensive, even when it comes to subjects he did not know. He asked the right questions to right people, and he often asked questions that he knew the answers of to evaluate who he was dealing with, to understand the matter. He was a treasure chest to his very last day, there was always something new that you could learn from him.

We learned a lot from our father

He learned to be just and ethical in trade from my grandfather Ali Yeşilyurt, and he sought such legitimacy in everything he did and every decision he made in his life.



We inherited a grand moral legacy from our father. Boundless generosity is one of his most significant legacies. He was prudent, he was never thrifless, and he did not take kindly to lavishness.

He was very loyal to his religion and his country. He placed them above everything else. He sought religious justification as well as a benefit to the country, to the public in everything he would do.

He touched many lives; he provided jobs, toiled, and gave love. He was, in a way, born into this world to work and to give.

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He was prudent, he was never thrifless, and he did not take kindly to lavishness. He used to say that "How wealthy you are does not determine how you can spend your money, what you earn is not yours."

He was "Uncle Cemal" of Turkey...

My father, "Uncle Cemal" of Turkey, had a beautiful smile. The smile on his face when looking at a successfully completed investment was worth seeing. However, his most admirable smiles appeared on his face the moment he decided to engage in a project for the benefit of the community. What describes him the best is the fact that the elation he felt from giving was more than that he felt when he earned money. That is why, as the poet says: "In this life, it is my father I loved the most."

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My father was not only a figure that his children could look up to but also a person who accomplished many things besides fatherhood. I wish that we could honour his name for many years to come, that we could contribute to the community so that they benefit from his experiences.

Boundless generosity is one of his most significant legacies. He used to say "Always be honest, work, work and work, and share what you earn with people. What you earn is not yours. If Allah bestowed you wealth, you must share it with people". My brothers and I took it as our duty to continue in our father's path of philanthropy. We are determined to follow his footsteps, and shoulder this responsibility as he taught us.

"Since he managed it by himself, good on him, let him continue studying there"

I have many memories with my father, and I would like to share one of them from my childhood. I was at high-school, my parents withdrew me from Mithat Paşa High-School, and enrolled me in Yüzüncü Yıl High-School. My father drove me to my new school in the mornings. I went to my new school for nearly three months, but all my friends were back at my old school, and I did not care for my new school very much. I managed, although not very easily, to enrol myself back in my old high-school, without telling anyone, even though my withdrawal from Mithat Paşa High-School was a problematic process. In the mornings, my father was dropping me off at Yüzüncü Yıl High-School, and then I was running to Mithat Paşa High-School, which was just across the street from our home, to make it on time to class. Of course, one day I could not take it any longer and told my mother. I was very worried about what could happen when my father heard what I did. And what he said was: "Since he managed it by himself, good on him, let him continue studying there."

He used to say: "My philosophy of life is to be helpful to the community and to my country."

We accepted our father's words: "Wealth is to be helpful to people with what you earned, that is my philosophy" as our principle. What wealth means should be defined accurately. Actions must be evaluated based on underlying intentions. Efforts to gain wealth should only count for something if exerted with the intention of being helpful to the community and the country. Otherwise, you may think that you have money, but it is the other way around. You may think that you are wealthy, when in fact you are the most deprived of all. Many who are thus enslaved are not even aware of the situation that they are in. That is why my philosophy is to gain wealth to be helpful to the community and to my country.

My father was not only a figure that his children could look up to but also a person who accomplished many things besides fatherhood. I wish that we could honour his name for many years to come, that we could contribute to the community so that they benefit from his experiences; so that business people, young people starting to work, wealthy philanthropists could follow in his footsteps.