



Getting Old in Georgia

In a beautiful, natural landscape, surrounded by massive, green mountains, and sparkling with transparent eyes, there is a very old country - my Georgia.

Its wild nature, swirling rivers, tiny old villages set on slopes, ancient villages and cities. Here purity, splendour, and the magnificence of nature and people have been retained for centuries in their original beauty. I love very much and worship my beautiful country, my Georgia.

You would be a very cold-blooded person not to have emotions when looking at buildings and monuments built by our ancestors. You ask what is to get old in Georgia - I can't imagine anybody not being proud of being born in this beautiful country with such a long history.

God has given Georgia its blessed land and asked us to look after it. God gave us a beautiful country and taught us to love people and God. These are not different things - on the contrary, they complement each other which means that it is impossible to live without love. A sensible person always thinks of immortality and that's why they are happy. And we are obliged to look after, protect and love what we have been given. This is how it has been for centuries. I am happy to have been born in Georgia despite the difficulties I have faced during my life.

We should do everything we can to be happy. We build our lives ourselves. We should not complain; if something goes wrong, it is our fault. Maybe we did not follow our ancestors' traditions and wisdom.

We have managed to retain a once large but now a small Georgia.

I would like to ask all mothers to teach their children to love their motherland and God, and to believe in God if you like what He has given to you. The younger generation should know the history of their country well and understand how and why their ancestors sacrificed their youth for their motherland, love and God.

Please understand that education is a blessed and true treasure trove and only when you have studied can you tell what is good and bad, the difference between a truth and a lie.

We, Georgians, always want to be first. We should understand that this is not good and may create a lot of problems in our lives.

Saint Father Amba Arseni said: "A monk saw a church and two riders who had a big log in their hands. It was so big that they were not able to get into the church but they still didn't want to give way to each other, both of them wanted to be the first and that's why the two of them were outside the church."

We are like these riders. We try to do the right things but we do them with arrogance. Nobody wants to bow his head and that's why we are not in God's kingdom yet.

It is a great happiness to get old in Georgia but ageing can be very different; when I look at my country and see all the hardships, I would prefer to be dead and not to have seen the problems.

Georgia has always had a lot of enemies, willing to destroy the country, but what is happening now goes beyond any logic. That's why, my dears, the younger generation, I beg you not to live with the terrible motto 'Georgia without Georgians'.

Georgians, you should use your brains and not force, otherwise nobody will be able to help us. Sleeping Georgians, do you think somebody will come to do your job? God save you, sleeping Georgians, when you wake up, you won't see a good picture. Our land, filled with the blood of our ancestors, will already be sold.

My children, sleeping Georgians, please wake up and see what a foreign seed and people are doing in your beautiful country, with turquoise skies and emerald lands. Wake up, Georgians, as they say that the Georgian nation has become old and is one step from its death. There is a danger that our nation won't survive.

Talent that is not used for the benefit of a country is useless even if it sometimes surprises the whole country. Life is like a fable that is measured by its content and not its length.

Luck is a satirical answer to my hopes, plans and wishes. If you analyze people's lives, you will understand that nobody is completely happy. A person is happy if all those who are dear to him are alive. We should try to sow good seeds, to love and be loved. Life doesn't always bring happiness, but kindness is a must in life. It would have been good if I had thought about this earlier but then I thought only about the present and didn't think about the future, though it was very necessary. If only I had known ...

People should live so that others like to see and meet them. And the advice we give to you, the younger generation, will hopefully make you remember us. It is necessary to ensure that nobody ever says bad things about you.

We should not judge a person's dignity by his noble features but by how he uses them. We should think about our way of living, not be hot-tempered or arbitrary; we should trust people and think logically. Idleness destroys and damages a man.

We, older people, should hurry to do and finish everything we need to do as nobody knows when God will take us. Nothing can be changed; as people say, 'Earth is a waiting room to immortality'.

As I have aged, I am very critical of my former life and think that I spent a part of my life without any sense, just daydreaming. I remember my younger days when I was just enjoying life and lived in a dreamland. Once an old lady told me: "Nino, my child, let God make all your dreams come true but it is better to spend your life near birds than dreaming about wings". I did not pay any attention to her words at that time but I remembered them when my wings were cut.

I don't know why but indifference has become one of our biggest sins. We care only for things that directly affect us. Why have we become like that and why have our minds changed? Have our lives made us change? I remember Ilia Chavchavadze's words (a famous Georgian poet and writer): "Our life consists of only 'my' and not 'ours'. People lie in the name of truth and nobody asks where a lie starts and finishes."

"You should not covet somebody else's things, yours should be enough. This should be a cornerstone of relations between people," said Ilia Chavchavadze.

It is very disappointing when people who have not lived properly try to knock you down. We should never forget that we represent a country with a very old history but at the same time we should not stay in the past. We have one anchor and it is impossible to break away from it – we have responsibilities. It is true that sometimes it is very difficult to fulfil responsibilities but remember that it is even more painful not to fulfil them and those who pay their debts in this life will always be alive in other people's memories.

I didn't think about my daily life before I became old. How happy I was when I was young! I didn't understand then that those who don't appreciate happiness when they have it should not complain when it's gone. The problem is that I didn't understand or analyze this in my younger days.

A man's character is not born with him; it develops as he grows up and is finally defined by the turbulences of life. Lessons learned in life are very important. A person should be clever enough, should learn how to ask reasonable questions, should listen attentively, answer quietly and not talk when there is nothing to say. That's why reasonableness, reasonableness and, once again, reasonableness is important. You should carefully analyze people's wisdom. Saint Luka was asked who taught him wisdom and he answered that he learned his wisdom from blind people as they never took a step before they examined where they should take a step.

We need to fight a lot to achieve success and only by doing this can we achieve it. I don't mean a physical fight but a battle of brains and intelligence. There are no situations in history when success was achieved without a struggle. I never thought that it would be necessary for me to fight and that's why I never tried and, as a result, I lost and stayed alone. Many people are like me and they think only about the present, the rest are stuck in the past or dream about the future.

That's why I think that my life was full of mistakes, but can I correct them? No, it is too late.

You ask what would I change in terms of ageing? My dear friends, all Georgians are dreamers. Georgia is the only country where people's dreams come true only to the government (of course, this is a joke).

I can say only one thing. Please change the amount of a pension, as you well know that we aren't even able to buy necessary medicines. How can a single person like me live on such a small pension? It is impossible to make both ends meet with this pension in the summer, to say nothing about the winter. I won't list all the things that a person needs in daily life...

It is understandable that Georgia is facing a very difficult period and this is not only due to financial problems. But we, older people, are like children and a bit of attention will make us happy. It would be good if some kind of incentive is given to us. You may do it by caring about our health or social life as, in many cases, we feel needless to society. Sometimes, close relatives and even children forget what we have had to endure to bring them up. Though there are cases when children start their relationships with their parents with love and finish by blaming them. Single people like me are left without any funds and need to seek the help of strangers. I, for example, feel that I am like a small child in a big forest who doesn't know what to do or where to go and that's why I am very scared and frustrated.

That's why we need social and cultural environments so that we can interact. In Georgia, the fate of old people is terrible. In my opinion, when an older person is engaged in something, he has some incentive and thinks less or, to put it more correctly, does not have time to think that he is not socially safe or has financial problems, or that nobody needs him. We just don't think about helplessness.

There are a lot of old people who have very useful professions that can't be used easily. For example, older people living in our old people's home are willing to work. Such an occupation brings happiness and a new life to us as we get closer to eternity. Old people very often become distressed when they remember their past. While you are young, you work for your family, think about its well-being, which is great, but people in our situation are happy when we make the lives of others easier, or just encourage them; we find justification for our existence in this.

Younger generation, it is already the 21st century. It is a very difficult epoch. I shouldn't moralize but why not? You may know that it is said that a man's brain has more than 20 million nerve cells and can remember 96 million bytes of information every day. Thus, an older person should have acquired 150 trillion bytes of information. That's why they are considered to be a source of wisdom.

Man's state of mind is very interesting as it does not matter how old he may be, he still has a lot of hope for the years that remain. No doctor can prescribe any better medicine for a tortured soul than hope.

And in the end, I would like to tell you a story: A monk asked one God-fearing person to say something that would be good for his soul. The man told him a fable in which one man wanted to see a king and asked his friend to take him to the king. One friend took him half way, the second friend took him to the palace and the third took him to the king. The monk asked what he meant by this fable and the man explained: the first friend is an ascetic existence that takes you to the truth, the second is holiness that takes you to heaven, whilst the third leads you straight to God through tolerance.

My dear people, whether you are politicians or ordinary people, let God show us a way to the truth and if you want something with all your heart, you will achieve it. God bless you!

We, old people, should not think about ageing and death, it will come without any thought.

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