



## To be an Intellectual of the Brain

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**T**he year is 2025... after June 10th...

On a sunny day in Stäfa, Zurich—amid the joyful shouts of children playing by the lake, surrounded by sunflowers—we are speaking about you. We are remembering your life, your plans, your contributions—your “magnificent century,” shaped by your labor, your sweat, and your intellect.

“Children grow up the day their fathers leave”...

June 10, 2025...

It feels as though that day is also the beginning of my own journey in this vast world.

This story, in truth, begins with a disappointment in 1990...

At that time, I was a young resident in my twenties. I did not yet fully understand what lay ahead, but sensed that the road to understanding would be long and difficult. In my hand was a simple two-line address in Zurich—Prof. Dr. M. Gazi Yaşargil, a name spoken everywhere with reverence.

On one side stood the fear of the unknown—the obstacles, the sacrifices, what would have to be left behind. On the other, I placed my hopes into a short letter and sent it to you, uncertain whether I would ever be accepted. Years later, when I told you how devastated I had been to receive your reply—“Unfortunately, the period you wish to come is not suitable...” — When I later told you about it, it made you smile slightly. I remember it as if it were yesterday.

If being an intellectual of the brain means making the problems of humanity your own, then you embodied that ideal. You dedicated a century to this cause. In striving to help every patient, you sacrificed your personal life for the advancement of neurosurgery—and never once complained. We are all witnesses to this.

Sometimes I wonder: what did a young resident in their twenties mean to you in those years? There were dozens, hundreds of students in your school, and yet you devoted yourself to each one—tirelessly, relentlessly—for decades.

From now on, every sentence you spoke will need to be reconsidered, every word revisited. We will continue to work to carry your teachings forward. Because you achieved not only the difficult, but the seemingly impossible, I will always strive to honor the promise I made—to do my part.

You once said: “Everyone has a story, and each is difficult in its own way... but not impossible.” Perhaps that is why you never had time to feel the weariness of years. You were right: “Our work is an endless preoccupation—we do not even fully know what we are fighting against. It is a war with no final victory. We are not commanders, but soldiers, fighting with infinite patience.” And also: “The neurosurgeon’s brain is the product of millions of years of evolution, and that collective intellectual power is focused on saving one patient’s brain at a time.”



From you, I learned that even in failure, there are lessons—and that those lessons belong to future patients. I understood that to know, one must strive; to strive, one must question; and that our work must be done with integrity in the present—not postponed “for the sake of those who come after us.”

You illuminated future centuries within your own.

In my journey—one that began by observing your surgeries—your presence beside me in every operation for twenty years after 2005 was a gift beyond measure. I often feared betraying your trust, yet I never allowed myself to step back.

This may seem like your story, but it is also the shared destiny of those who shape human history. It is the story of individuals who carry light within them, who work for humanity, who transform the impossible into reality, and who strive to spread that light.

Through your life, you showed us that doubt is only the beginning; that what is visible is the easiest part to grasp; and that true understanding lies in perceiving—and feeling—what is unseen, without ever departing from the scientific, ethical, and moral path.

I am grateful to have shared an eternal time with you, the last “soldier” of an unending struggle, armored by time itself, prepared for every battle with what felt like a blessing from another era.

For the words I never spoke, and for the letters I never wrote, I want to confess this: by allowing me to walk beside you, you did more than guide my path—you saved my life.

I am grateful for the courage you gave me to seek answers, to test my limits, and to discover the purpose I will carry forward.

It has been an honor beyond measure.

And for that, I am grateful to life itself.

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