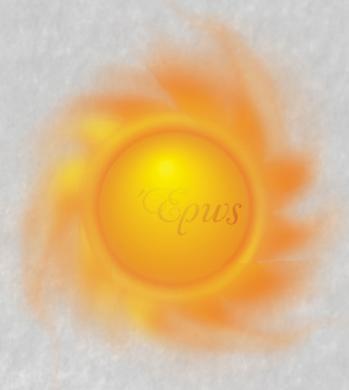


ANTONIS ANASTASIADIS



55 YEARS OF THOUGHTS & MEDITATIONS

Practical Experiential Philosophy



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**55 Years of Thoughts
& Meditations**
Practical Experiential Philosophy



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Introduction

The fifty-five years of thought and meditation that fills my life started as my only distraction from the exhausting work of ploughing and planting the fields. Rain or shine, I worked from sunrise to sunset with only my deep thoughts and magical dreams to keep me company. Utopian visions of a world worth fighting for helped distance me from the reality of my life, but that world never materialized; I only saw it deteriorate.

As I grew, my knowledge increased rapidly, and that predictably stimulated my mind. My thoughts encompassed: a better life for mankind; freedom; humanity; peace; justice and beauty. The questions poured forth: why does man fight and kill; what defines art and beauty; what creates wisdom; what is knowledge and is it always experiential—and, what is the one and only truth when we all perceive the truth of any given idea or situation differently. Can any truth be absolute?

You, my honoured friend, but also you my young reader with the clarity of soul¹ that you possess, please hear my heartfelt plea. Please read this book carefully, with a clear mind, pure feelings, heart and serenity of the soul. If you find a syntactical or grammatical error here, or a wrong expression or anything in any event that you may not agree with, I will consider you a true friend if you share your doubts with me. I will be ever so grateful if you point these out to me as such feedback is essential.

All those scattered thoughts, questions and emotions that I have noted down during my life, I have collated and now pres-

ent to you. I beg you, read it not only with an open mind and heart but also with objectivity. Treat me as you would a friend who values your criticism, for communication is necessary to advance our philosophical world view. We cannot learn what that view lacks or where it wrongly opposes the beliefs of another unless we discuss it freely. I do not ask for validation of my thoughts, but if you find a deficiency, I want to know. I will gladly contemplate your opinion, and change mine where necessary.

I look forward to your comments and thank you in advance,

Antonis Anastasiadis
anastasiadisan@yahoo.gr

Dedications

- *To my loving mother, the embodiment of a true heroine, who has made many sacrifices for all of us.*
- *To the memory of my sweet tempered, smiling father.*
- *To George Boulouchos and Homer Sofianos, my teachers and mentors.*
- *To all my colleagues Drama's (my hometown in Northern Greece) educational department.*
- *To Panagiotos Anthitsos and Andreas Kapodistrias who aided my adult development.*
- *To my many students who have inspired me in many ways.*
- *And finally, to my beloved children Dionysis and Eleftheria, who bring me the greatest joy in my life.*

Antonis Anastasiadis

Acknowledgments

I owe thanks to all my friends—from those with wisdom or specialized knowledge, to those who confronted me with their strongly held views, some of them extreme—who compelled me to think about and confront that which had escaped me.

But my unrestrained gratitude must go to my friend and colleague, a teacher of Greek, Vasilis Messis, for his observations and corrections; to my friend, Dimitris Boukonis for his contributions and his assistance in publishing this book; and finally, to Dimos Christos and his print office associates who tolerated me.

With my heartfelt thanks to all who have supported me.

Antonis Anastasiadis

The Seeker

I am a human being, a seeker of love, knowledge and truth who must follow the path of enquiry.

-And what of freedom?

The elements which I seek demarcate my freedom.

-But your lifespan will limit your seeking.

How long I live is of no concern. The quality of this life, how long I will seek fulfilment, is my only concern. The quest for beauty, justice and truth is an eternal search that everyone should follow. Yet only the Gods and those who achieve great wisdom understand that they persist through time; this continuity can eventually be understood by creative thinkers, philosophers and artists who spend their lives striving to understand the momentary existence. Lesser mortals often settle for a superficial understanding of time and existence.

Seeking is, therefore, a necessity for mankind.

The result of seeking enlightens mankind, makes him aware of all life in its glory.

For me those moments occur when I find love, when my struggle to comprehend succeeds, when I understand a truth. Only when my quest bears fruit, do I truly live. Then I feel my infinite soul contract until I understand it, yet simultaneously it expands until I understand the essence of man, and life.

So who am I?

I am a seeker.

The Fates

When I was born, the Fates, angered that man had banished them to a distant, inhospitable land, wrote of my wretched destiny on the cracked windowpane of a lonely derelict hut, which was situated on a leafy cliff that looked down on a valley near the ends of the earth where land and sky coalesce.

A nearby brook was gently singing of the miracle of life when a soft summer breeze that arose to cool the sun-kissed land shattered the fragile glass of the window, and thereby was the prophecy of my destiny transformed. Only a fragment of glass remained on which were the words:

You will love; you will be hated; you will believe in mankind; you will be betrayed.

One day I found the shard. I took it in my hand with reverence, for I knew it directed my beliefs and my path through life. And so, I went in search of another hut where the prophecy might be fulfilled. It was in a distant and lonely land that I found ruins beside a dried up brook where only a few shallow puddles quenched the thirst of those whose yearning brought them to this place. There, guided by the Principle of Causality and the Principle of Serendipity, not only my thoughts but also my life choices developed.

Now, from the ruins of that desolate hut where another shard of glass threw back my transformed image, I am building anew. There I will seek further truths and beauty. My heart may be drenched with many tears of sadness, yet those of joy give me the courage to write an epigram:

I will love even if I am hated; I will believe in man even if I am betrayed.

Snow

You came one night to speak to me of her, and freezing fog
rolled across my heart,
But beneath it, my heart was enclosed in a warm yet strange
and familiar grip.
It spread beneath that icy fog your words invoked.
It could not be halted.
Were you not aware of the thickening fog?
It dulled my eyes; to me it was palpable.
My hands trembled at its caress.
I know why you spoke, but it brought the chilling fog.
Such warmth from a momentary joy, such life-long misery to
follow.

Soil of Leukogia

(a village in the County of Drama, North Greece)

I held a handful of Drama's soil, and a little from Leukogeia: that soil which gave me life.

On Leukogeia's soil, I walked; I ran; I fell and felt pain; and I daydreamed. On Leukogeia's soil, I first loved. From Leukogeia's soil, I once drew strength. Of a summer evening, I would rest on it after my daily toil to ponder my labour. I loved the texture of the soil and the smell as I raked it; during a summer rainstorm, the fresh, heady scents filled me with sensuality and the joy of life.

I want to return to Leukogeia's soil. Then I will unite with the departed, but the living and those to come, who will take form from her soil, will also unite with me.

If after all of that...

One morning, I am awoken by devastating lightning strikes, and I am compelled to consider the pain, troubles and sadness of life.

I think of humanity that includes all types, from the evil and dangerous to those who are merely devious, indifferent, incompetent, or even quiet and decent.

I think of those who selflessly sacrifice themselves, and those incarcerated for righteously defending freedom. I contemplate Bruno, Christ and Socrates, and I feel pain.

I think of Hypatia and others who were unjustly killed, and it angers me.

I think of the departed, the living and those who will lead us into the future.

And then, to the universe, with all my might and breath, I deliver it my demands of mankind.

Should one day my friend, my son and my fellow man be harmed,

Should they deny you of your laughter and should they hurt you,

Should they hurt you without cause

Should they poison you with hemlock and crucify you,

Should they fight you without cause

Should they chase you and wound you and should all of them not understand you

Should they lead you to the Inquisition, then please do not look

back with anger, just talk to the wind and cast away all evil.

Should your soul remain virtuous after everything that you may suffer,

Then fear not for all the gods are with you.

Should they ignore the entire truth, the one I am telling you about and you fought for.

Should they follow a mistake, the very mistake that with courage you fought against,

Should they have fabricated lies and forced you to stand in front with thought with consideration and bravery

Should (what is) wrong, a lie and unjust/in their minds is a constant imbecility,

But to them all reason has evaporated

And they all look at you as if you are insane,

And despite all that you remain reasonable

Stand tall and see the chaos in front of you.

Should your soul remain virtuous after everything that you may suffer,

Then fear not for all the gods are with you.

Should you not be afraid to dream and killing your dream does not scare you

Should you not hesitate to imagine/to propagate this fantasy

Should the fantasy and dream combined lead you-but don't abandon you-in Utopia.

And you quickly recover from that, you will then seek another dream, another fantasy.

Until you find the true dream you will continuously seek it in your mind,

And in in the beginning, again and then again from the start

You will continuously dream and seek.

Should your soul remain virtuous after everything that you may suffer,

Then fear not for all the gods are with you.

Should you find yourself in times of joy or when you find yourself in times of sadness

Whether evil or good appears in front of you

Should you be covered in thorns by both and whatever ends up before you

And for one moment you end up on your knees

You will alas walk upright again in your life, and after when you contemplate

Without your thinking becoming your sole objective, the teaching of many wise men

They will always lead your soul, and after you are hated for all of the above

You will always honour what is just in your life.

Should your soul remain virtuous after everything that you may suffer,

Then fear not for all the gods are with you.

Should they corrupt proper speech

Should they allow words as they should be used, to slide a slippery slope and with snide thoughts, drag people into darkness

If around you madness prevails,

As do lies all around and a hollow delusion

Should you harmonise harmonious Language and Thought and Word with Action

Even if you find doctrines all around you, ones that enslave people

A terrified human herd.

Darkness, lies and dirt all around
And you stand up against a society that has sold out.

***Should your soul remain virtuous after everything that you
may suffer,
Then fear not for all the gods are with you.***

Should you suddenly rise up in the middle of a crowd
And show the light, the sun and all horizons
Should you stand up straight in front of the wave/and should
you stretch your hand toward the dawn.
Should waves, words, arrows hurt you/ and you charge ahead
with what makes you wonderful with virtue and integrity
Should you stand in front of the arrows/ahead of the vultures
that hurt you with their hypocrisy
And you with courage remain virtuous/you think with bravery,
knowledge and wisdom

***Should your soul remain virtuous after everything that you
may suffer,
Then fear not for all the gods are with you.***

Should you see that they belittle your dream
And your body, soul, and mind are hemorrhaging

If they stab you, make you bleed, with many wounds on your
naked body,
If full of blood, mud and sweat
Should they draw shapes on your body and while defeat is
standing in front you
You stay there. You know. You will fight.
You feel that you don't belong there
The outcome of the battle does not scare you, you stay there

standing and you don't quiver. You only will choose your quietus.

***Should your soul remain virtuous after everything that you may suffer,
Then fear not for all the gods are with you.***

If in the end, a mighty pain and destructive weather elements lead you to the entrance of the abyss.

And you end up lying there alone, with many wounds on your body

Should you again there stand tall, as tall as you can in front of the door of your loss

In the midst of the chaos you stay there with fury, intensity to fight

Without too much fuss or too many tears or words

Should you then shout loud and clear:

"I am here death and pain! Come! Hit me!"

Should you declare: *"I am no longer afraid of you, life now I will come to fight you!"*

Death-pain I am talking to you, unfairness, lies, /darkness and malice

I am made of strong and sturdy material, my soul is made of pure steel

See the look in my eyes, my strength is the truth and the light,

My only weapons are Love, Knowledge and the Truth".

***If with all that you stand tall and strong,
In love, enamoured in the holy moment and alone
And defend Knowledge and the Truth
Support Love and Justice
Then loudly proclaim:
My friend, my son, my brother and fellow man:***

***Listen! Don't be afraid or ashamed, but just say it,
"Yes I am a proper human being! I hereby declare it! I
shout it out!"***

The piece of fake gold

You were born with your soul trapped in fake gold, and when you were shown the avenue of fake silver, you followed it without protest. There were many paths from that avenue, some through thorns and some near precipices. All led to a place where you might have quenched your thirst, satisfied your hunger, exercised your mind and learned to throw off your shackles, but you lacked the courage to step from the known. *You will, therefore, remain ignorant.*

And remaining ignorant, you will be indistinguishable for the masses; a fact of which you are aware. You were born with abilities but you rejected them. Your senses remain dormant, dis-tained by you. You deny your inherent freedom in favour of slavery. You follow directions and conform. You have no thoughts of rebellion. You will live with the sheep in your lonely world. *And you will remain ignorant.*

Your soul, like a beautiful piece of genuine gold, perhaps encasing a diamond, buried for too long under the fake, needs to be freed. I try to uncover it, but you look at me in fear. And the sadness behind the fear shows through as you stretch out your hand to protect yourself; from what, from me, from thought?

So much fake gold. How can you tolerate it? Can't you fight it?
Will you remain ignorant?

When I look at you carefully, I wonder how fake gold can conceal real gold. It must be because they are constantly throwing fake gold on your soul to keep you imprisoned. Defend your-

self; cast off the fake gold. And beware the fake silver avenue they lead you along, for it is mesmeric. Take a remote path, even through rocks and nettles. Only there can your thirst be quenched. Only then can you seek, comprehend this world, cultivate your soul and find your path in the universe.

Do not remain ignorant.

You have the potential to transcend this mundane plane. Do not remain lost, walking the paths carved for you by others, passing through this life, a nonentity and indistinguishable from the herd. Do not allow fake words to blanket your mind, fake gold to quash your soul, fake silver to blind your eyes, for if you do, you will be subjugated. *And you will remain ignorant.*

Cast aside these chains: all that glisters is not gold.