

Nikos Kazantzakis's Philosophy of Life

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ABSTRACT

Humanity has a commitment to move in the direction of the acknowledgment of God. To accomplish it one need to labor hard abandoning all excitements of getting a charge out of the world hating fun, satisfaction, giggle and not stop till one accomplishes one's goal throughout everyday life. He firmly accepts that it isn't the accomplishment of the objective however the battle which nobles the human life. Maybe it is the best respectability of all, the acknowledgment, the accomplishment of the objective, the association with the Lord. The essence of god is only to discover opportunity, salvation, to spare ourselves from every indecency. The best righteousness isn't to be free, however to battle interminably for opportunity. Humankind has a responsibility to progress in the direction of the acknowledgment of God. To accomplish to it one must laborer troublesome getting out behind all allurements of getting a charge out of the world severely disliking fun, charm, laughing and not end till one achieves one's target throughout everyday life. He emphatically acknowledges that it isn't the achievement of the objective yet the fight which nobles the human life. Possibly it is the most critical decency of all, the acknowledgment, the satisfaction of the target, the association with the Ruler. The pith of god is only to find opportunity, salvation, to spare ourselves from every obscenity. The most noticeable morals isn't to be free, however to fight perpetually for adaptability.

1. Introduction

In a world of increasing globalization and multiculturalism, an understanding that all human beings share a common spiritual heritage would seem to be an answer to so many problems. It is a realization that transcends religions and belief systems, and all human divisions of wealth, social status, education, intelligence, and the like. At the same time, it honours and respects the colourful and variegated sight of the global human society. Wherever and whoever a person may be, they are all a part of the One Spirit, the One Being. No one is excluded. Indeed, all posses the potential to realize their inner identity with this One Being. As human beings, if we can understand something of this universal Spirit of which we are all a part, it will change our lives and the way we interact with each other.

In the beginning ,the Spirit of God- hovers like a mother bird over the lifeless chaos, brooding and bringing froth life in all its form and degrees. "For the Spirit of the Lord fills the whole universe and holds all things together..." (Wisdom 1:7). At the end of this creation myth, we see God, in a touching image; breathe life into the nostrils of the still- lifeless human figure formed out on earth in God's own image. And so we humans come alive. From the biblical perspective, there has never been a human being who is not alive with God's own life breath.

"It is safer to approach God through the Holy Spirit than through theology," Thay writes. And yet he is a theologian in the deepest sense: He speaks of God out of his own living experience. And he speaks with enthusiasm-with the voice of the divine Spirit in his own heart. If we listen attentively, we will hear traditional truths expressed in startling new ways. And we might be surprised by Thay's sure sense for essentials. Thich

Nhat Hanh writes "Discussing God is not the best use of our energy." If we touch the Holy Spirit, we touch God not as a concept but as a living reality."With a gentle but firm hand, this monk leads us again and again from theory to practice. He has deep respect for concepts, but as a means not an end. The Zen tradition has developed a rich and nuanced terminology, but its emphasis on practice makes it less likely that one will get stuck in notions. Thai insists: "Reality is free from all notions.... It is our duty to transcend words and concepts to be able to encounter reality." There is no other way of witnessing to God but by aliveness. With a fine instinct, Thich Nhat Hanh recognizes that this is what the biblical tradition calls the Holy Spirit. After all, the very word "spirit" means "breath," and to breathe means to live. The Holy Spirit is the breath of divine life. St. Francis is calling out to an almond tree break, "Speak to me of God!" and the almond tree breaks into bloom. It comes alive.

Nikos Kazantzakis born in 1883 on 18th February with the thought process that is still engraved on his tombstone "I hope nothing, I fear nothing, I am free". He believed in these words throughout his life, one can say he lived them. He went to university of both Athens and Paris to study philosophy. He was a successful playwright and novelist and he worked for the Greek government as Minister of Social Relief for refugees during the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Among the laurels, he was selected for the Nobel Prize in Literature on numerous occasions, losing by one vote to Albert Camus.

A highly elevated soul, his parents had distinct personalities, his father instilled in Ohim sense of human dignity and courage as well as pride. His mother was full of patience, peace and harmony like the mother earth. As a young child he

was passionate about getting freedom for his country due to which he learnt to revolt periodically. He was from Crete, in Greece where he attended to a French school headed by French Monks, he developed familiarity with French and Italian and also with the culture of three worlds. During his childhood days he had tragic experiences of violence, savagery and revolution as the Turks had sabotaged the entire land. But the struggle ended in 1899 when the family rejoiced and young Kazantzakis became the witness to the joy of liberation of his land. The freedom naturally had a deep influence on the young mind of Kazantzakis. He was atheist, since his childhood days and believed "God surely has a different plan for me. He has sown a seed which took an entirely different course, that seed went on to become an entire tree where my life was germinated, flowered and bore fruit". For Kazantzakis the sacrifices made by the young men for the sake of their country had left deep impressions on his mind. He never saw his father laughing or clean off his beard to show the grief for his country and lived up these principles. He strictly made his dear son experience fear by locking him outside his house in darkness, and asked him to kiss the feet of the dead freedom fighters that was hanged by the Turks on the trees.

Another influence on his mind was of Struggle & Freedom. When he was studying in school he saw in his surrounding both the struggle and freedom of his land Crete. He believed a person has to win the fight from outside and inside, there were Turks making them slaves, but after getting freedom from them he feels the new struggle begins- to achieve liberty from the inner Turks – from ignorance, malice, envy, fear, laziness, dazzling false ideas; finally, from idols all of them.

According to Kazantzakis, God is not a being, but all knowing, all holy, almighty, nor is God a predetermined goal toward which history proceeds, but he is the true spirit, an energy which is at the heart of the Universe, within the soul of each being. The love of the Lord is beyond race, faith, social order but way beyond the minute being of any human. He says to achieve that love one should go to the pilgrimage of the truly spiritual struggle which leads us beyond the ego of the self, into the natural world of our core being where the Invisible Energy permeates all things. God – an energy who is the creator of this universe is beyond the physical self.

Kazantzakis wrote in *Odysseus*, where he mentioned about the revolutionary Eros that runs through the heart of the world and he called his heart - God, he mentioned that the individual heart is a restless heart. Anything or anyone any philosophy or art, any religion or god that resolves that restlessness, no matter how beautiful or seductive it is only an illusion, for the human spirit. That's why he calls himself Nikos – in search of God. His restlessness tells us that he could satisfy his hunger of the soul. The quest remained in his heart and ended with him only. That is actually looking for the light, for direction, for a way out of all the problems of his inner self. While he was in the political reign where he could not get any results to his fight against the world, he returned to literary activity, which he felt that suited his nature. As he increased his responsibility for being a good writer, all his problems overshadow the political and social questions.

"All the technical progress cannot have any regenerating significance, so long as our inner life remains as it is at present. The more the intelligence unveils and violates the secrets of Nature, the more the danger increases and the heart shrinks" (Kazantzakis, 1968, 507) with these words, Helen explains the technical development cannot have any significance where inner center of the human heart is concerned. Intellect will always hinder the spiritual path for the souls that want to tread the path for God realization.

Kazantzakis's ideology had a goal that he would give appropriate poetic expression to the ideas which were clarified in his own mind. These ideas were to set him apart from all the religious dogmas and all political ideologies. Lastly, he concluded that the face of God was unchanging and infinite behind all religious masks. For him, God was not a predestined goal which men try to achieve but a nonstop and progressive evolution toward higher refinement of spirituality. He felt a great accountability to put in his part to God's salvation, to struggle industriously and turn to the spirit within. He believed that man, composed of both flesh and spirit is half God. He adds by saying "My sole duty, is to reconcile and transform the energy within the soul, to directly connect it to the Lord. One needs to put all this efforts and abilities to turn towards the radiance of the Lord.

This is the utmost duty of every human in this world. Man has been enabled to enter God's Workshop and labor in his love.

Kazantzakis believed himself to be the child of God where he feels imbibed with all the creation whether it is plants, animals, birds all living creatures. Each of his creation is possessed of a more refined spirit than the last, and God mercilessly uses his creations and discards them as he progresses upward toward total spirituality. Since man is the uppermost creation so far, God must depend on him for his salvation. Man needs to dedicatedly surrender himself to the creative power. According to him, "Mankind faces an obligation to work towards the realization of God, it is the prime responsibility and duty for every human being to give ourselves to the supreme power and it has to go ahead of our individual concerns and selfish motives."

Mankind has an obligation to work towards the realization of God. To attain to it one has to toil hard leaving behind all temptations of enjoying the worldly fun, enjoyment, laughter and not stop till one achieves one's objective in life. He firmly believes that it is not the achievement of the goal but the struggle which nobles the human life. Perhaps it is the greatest nobility of all, the realization, the attainment of the goal, the union with the Lord. The core of God is nothing but to find freedom, salvation, to save ourselves from all the vices. The greatest virtue is not to be free, but to struggle ceaselessly for freedom. Kazantzakis says when a soul feels the power of the Lord within oneself, and then he looks upon fear with intrepidity.

The Philosophy of Kazantzakis has been explained by him in three steps which man should go through to find his real self and then his Journey of the soul transcends in four steps.

He composes and writes that a man has and performs three obligations in his life.

His first duty is to the mind that is intellect which forces, organizes and defines laws, builds bridges over the impossible abyss and sets up rational boundaries, beyond which man does not challenge to go.

His second duty is to the heart, which acknowledges of no boundaries, which longs to penetrate beyond phenomena and to merge with somewhat beyond intellect and matter.

Further he says the third duty is to free him from both intellect and heart, from the startling temptation of the hope which both offer to subduing phenomena or of finding the heart of things. A man must at this point embrace the annihilate abyss without any hope, he must say that nothing exists, neither life nor death, and must accept this need bravely, with festivity and song. He may at this point construct the affirmative structure of his life over this abyss in ecstasy of tragic joy.

A man gets now ready to endeavor a journey of four stages. In the start of his journey he hears an agonized cry inside him shouting for help. Man begins his first step where he tries to plunge into his own ego until he finds that it is the endanger spirit lock up inside each man that's crying out for freedom. In order to free it, each man should think about himself entirely accountable for the salvation of the world, as a man dies that phase of the world which is his specific vision and the interesting play of his intellect also collide in wreck forever. In the second step, a man must dive beyond his ego and into his racial beginnings; however, among his ancestors there may be those who can help him towards greater enhancement of the spirit, that he may in turn pass the mission to his son who may surpass him. The third step for a man is to plunge beyond his specific race into the races of all mankind and to endure their composite agony in the effort to free God within them. The fourth step is to dive beyond mankind and to become known with the entire universe, with animate and inanimate, with earth, stones, ocean, plants, creatures, insects, and birds, with the vital impulse of creation in all phenomena. Each man may be an immeasurable combination of atavistic roots diving down to the primeval beginning of things. A man is now ready to go beyond the mind, the heart, and expectation beyond his self his race and mankind indeed, beyond all wonders and dive encourage into a vision of the invisible permeating all things and forever ascending.

The essence of the Invisible is an agonized ascent toward more and more purity of soul, toward light. The objective is the struggle itself, since the ascent is endless. He is not Almighty, for he is in constant danger, filled with wounds, struggling to survive; he is not All holy, for he is pitiless in the cruel choice he makes to survive, caring neither for men nor animals, neither for virtues nor ideas, but making use of them all in an attempt to pass through them and shake himself free; he isn't All-knowing, for his head may be a perplexed between dark and light. He cries out to man for offer assistance since man is his highest spiritual reach in the present stage of his evolution. He cannot be saved unless man tries to save him by struggle with him, nor can man be saved unless God is saved. On the

whole, it is rather man who must save God.

When a person has had this visualization of the incessantly unstated and struggling spirit, he should then endeavor to give his thoughts and action in activities in political action, in works of every nature, comprehending, that any personification must of necessity pollute the visualization thus accepting and make use of such imperfect means in the never-ending struggle.

The essence of God is to find liberation. Our obligation is to assist him in this way up and to save ourselves at last from our final hope of liberation to say to ourselves that not even liberation exists, and to believe this with tragic joy. Love is the strength which supports us on and which goes down on us as a dance, a rhythm. Injustice, cruelty, longing, hunger and war are leaders that push us on. God is never cheated out of happiness and comfort, but out of tragedy and strife. The greatest virtue is not to be free, but to struggle ceaselessly for freedom. The universe is a foundation in the meeting of two opposite streams, one female and the other male, one going uphill toward integration, toward life, toward immortality, the other going downhill toward disintegration, near to matter and death. It becomes a budding Tree of Fire whose peak bears the final fruit of light. Fire is the first and final disguise of God. One day it will disappear into the deepest and most distilled essence of the spirit, that of silence, where all contraries at last will be resolved.

While reading the poem *Odyssey* together with Chile Antofagasta in the summer of 1954 in Antibes, he was suppose to write a "Credo" for a planned third volume of *This I Believe*. It encloses the last summary of Kazantzakis's life. From his early youth his principal struggle and the basis of all his delights and distresses had been the constant and pitiless fight within him between the flesh and the soul. Within him were the most ancient, pre human dark and lustrous powers, and his soul was the field where these two armies had met and fought. He felt that if only one of these two conquered and annihilated the other, he would be lost, since He cherished his body and did not wish it to vanish however he adored his soul and never wanted it to decrease. He struggled to connect these two antithetical and universal powers in companionship until they realized that they were not enemies but co-workers, until they rejoiced so that he also might celebrate with them in their harmony.

This struggle lasted for many years. He tried many different ways so that he can reach his salvation: the road of love, of scientific curiosity, of philosophical inquiry, of social rebirth, and finally the difficult and solitary path of poetry. But when he saw that all these show the way to the Abyss, fear would seize him, and he would turn back and take another path. This traveling and this martyrdom lasted for many years. At last, in desolation, he sought shelter on Athos, the holy mountain of Greece where no woman had ever set foot, and where for a thousand years many monks had devoted their lives to prayer and chastity. There, in the solitude of the Holy Mountain, in an old hermit's retreat above the sea, he began a new struggle. First of all, he implemented his body in acquiescence to the spirit. For many months he had taught it to

endure cold, hunger, thirst, sleeplessness, and every privation. Then he turned to the spirit; sunk in painful concentration, he had sought to conquer within him the minor passions, the easy virtues, the cheap spiritual joys, the convenient hopes. Lastly, one night he started up in great joy, for he had felt the red ribbon left behind him in his ascent within us and in all the universe by a certain Combatant; He clearly saw the bloody footprints ascending from inorganic matter into life and from life into spirit.

Kazantzakis saw that life was consisting of and supports the very truth of logical inconsistencies and the resulting battles. His socio-political, social and family qualities impacted and formed the fundamentals of his way of thinking of life. As Kazantzakis developed as an author, Christ, Nietzsche, Buddha, Bergson, Lenin, and Odysseus started to give the magical and scholarly establishment for his political thoughts. Kazantzakis's Cretan look, his definitive philosophical viewpoint, is a combination of the impacts of his local island, family, his youth encounters and recollections of which his character is really formed. It is this special aesthetic scene of his mind that delivered the rich, complex, and amicable choice of his scholarly output. Like his impossible to miss approach it tends to be seen that different areas in Greece are additionally double in nature, and the feelings which spring from them are likewise double in nature. Harshness and gentleness stand next to each other, complement one another and pairing like a man with a lady. Kazantzakis contends that this fundamental duality stretches out from people to the geological areas in Greece.

Bien has set out, through cautious and patient investigation, to demonstrate how the different components communicate, or—to switch representations—how the different ethereal and scholarly strands are intertwined in Kazantzakis' own idea. Kazantzakis considered life to be a battle in which the imaginative power in man (fundamentally, the *elan essential* of Bergson) looks for continually to conquer its restrictions until it ends up celestial. He more than once talked about a procedure (taken to a great extent from Bergson's thought of "innovative development") by which "matter is transubstantiated into soul." This battle includes a progression of vicious difference between restricting powers in the spirit: psyche and matter, soul and flesh, impulse and reason, essentialness and structure, activity and consideration. On the social and authentic level, Kazantzakis considered this to be process as requiring awful, bleeding, and calamitous changes.

As pointed out by Bien, Kazantzakis comprehended the advanced period as a "transitional age" in which mankind was balanced between the debauchery of the old human progress and the satisfaction of another essential, and freeing request. Like Nietzsche, he completely scorned liberal, middle class human progress, which he saw as being overwhelmed by innovation, realism, and a stifling solace that adored security to the exclusion of everything else. Likewise like Nietzsche, Kazantzakis was a learned, intelligent individual who respected men of vitality and action. He proposed reclamation of agnostic imperativeness and opportunity over middle class idleness and patience. He was keen to see middle class society cleared away in an extraordinary purging tsunami of brutality and

devastation. He upheld whatever political development appeared right now to show the enthusiasm and incensed vitality important to impact the change. As an outcome, Kazantzakis was at different occasions a patriot, an extremist (or if nothing else proto-fundamentalist), a socialist, and a communist. He was every one of them but then none of them since every was, to his brain, simply a vehicle for propelling a progressively essential otherworldly and social plan. He gave them a shot, discovered them needing, and lost them as heedlessly as he had initially grasped them.

So, Bien sums up; Kazantzakis was not a genuinely political scholar by any stretch of the imagination, in that he didn't include himself in the reasonable parts of governmental issues, e.g., gauging and adjusting different cases and rights, thinking about the prerequisites and constraints of equity in explicit and firm circumstances. Or maybe, Kazantzakis was essentially a religious and otherworldly figure with an "eschatological attitude" that couldn't rest content with anything short of a "meta political" venture. Obviously, eschatological attitudes do attempt to manifest their desires in legislative issues" a lot to the despondency of the world. What recognizes Kazantzakis from different craftsmen and rationalists is that he fell into such a significant number of various eschatological imprudence.

2. Conclusion

Kazantzakis intellectualized his own personal baggage from birth to death as far as considerations concerning human freedom. His whole life is a depiction of the way to opportunity, to a higher human presence past expectation and level headedness, depression and skepticism, conquering the numerous obstructions throughout our life. His life was a persistent fight with the void, a constant journey for immortality during a time when man has capitulated to the materialistic interests of the advanced age.

It tends to be genuinely seen that Kazantzakis's life and workmanship are intertwined with the complexities of otherworldly, political and mystical issues concerning human life and God. His works mirror the battle to determine the dangerous. This is clarified in Kazantzakis's claim words as remembered by his better half Helen:

I have struggled, that's true, throughout my life. And I'm still struggling to keep my soul from dying. I know how the mortal becomes immortal. And this is precisely the great torment of my life . . . The major and almost the only theme of my work is the struggle of man with God, the unyielding inextinguishable struggle of the naked worm called man against the terrifying power and darkness of the forces within him and around him. The stubbornness, the tenacity of the little spark in its fight to penetrate the age old boundless night, the anguished battle to transmute darkness to light, slavery to freedom, have been my prime motifs. (Helen, Nikos 471,507)

This untiring battle is the artistic statement of Kazantzakis. Any individual who overviews his works would find that he stays consistent with this position. Kazantzakis went through

his entire life on earth trying to ace darkness and to declare human importance even on the consecrated. Darkness stays an intensely checked still, predominant nearness in Kazantzakis; however he never enabled it to rule his mind.

Amidst this obscurity, there are radiant flash of mystery and understanding. Such minutes ascend over the quiet and dimness and burst into unadulterated tune.

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