

LEADING A FULFILLING LIFE

BY DELIA STEINBERG GUZMAN



We sometimes ask ourselves: what is life? What does it mean, for a philosopher, to live?

The special mode of existence that has been afflicting the human being over the last few centuries has made us forget certain simple but important values, while their place has been taken by meaningless elements. This is why it is so difficult to define what life is.

It goes without saying that life is much more than having a body and trying to satisfy all its fleeting desires, controlling it very little and ineffectively, and most of the time ending up as its slave.

Nor is it about just attaining a prominent position in society, because prestige and praise are illusory shadows handed out like prizes by people who are themselves immersed in the illusion; what exists today will disappear tomorrow for no apparent reason; those who today sing the praises of certain types of behavior will deplore it tomorrow with the same passion...

Life cannot be just about power and wealth, because these suffer the same fate as praise and condemnation: they alternate like a light show, in which it is almost impossible to recognize anything valid and stable.

The same can be said of the person who pins his hopes on human affections, especially if he or she doesn't know how to maintain and develop them with time. To raise a family, to perpetuate a name or a tradition, all this is valuable, but...does it fulfill one's life completely? Do we not sometimes feel a deep and hidden longing that asks for "something more", so that all those other things can take on a new, more valid and justified meaning?

To live is an act of responsibility, to oneself and to others.

To live is an act of generosity towards oneself and towards others.

There are some who shut themselves away in their studies, searching there for the meaning of existence; to know is a way of standing out like any other. Then there are others who find it difficult to fill the long hours of boredom and look for distractions that are forms of escape; anything goes, as long as it helps us escape from the emptiness of the inner self, which stands silent before us.

For a philosopher, to live must be much more than any of the above. To live is a school, the most complete and difficult of all schools. Body, feelings and thoughts are the tools that help us overcome the tests of this special and critical stage of learning. Time is the great teacher and the inner self is the pupil who gathers experiences throughout his or her existence.

From this point of view, external circumstances have only a relative value, the value needed to provide us with situations appropriate to our development, but circumstances are not essential or definitive, and it is not they that make us what we are. When we start seeing circumstances in this way, they cease to become obsessions and can be managed and changed with much more skill. Only then does the human being begin to become the master of his own destiny.

To live is an act of responsibility, to oneself and to others. A philosopher cannot live in an unthinking way;

his or her actions must have a purpose and a logic that can transcend the simple survival of the body. In the school of life everything has a reason why and therefore a how and a "wherefore".

To live is an act of generosity towards oneself and towards others. It is about helping ourselves by learning; it is about sharing every achievement, everything we learn, giving value to existence as a constant gift to the world in which we find ourselves and above all towards the humanity of which we form part.

To live is...to be alive. This is not a secret, it is not a play on words. To be alive is to feel oneself a part of the living universe, of its energies, to use them and to resonate with them. In this way, the philosopher can make life an eternal act, towards a goal of perfection, which is also eternity. ★★★

Delia Steinberg Guzman is the International President of International Organization New Acropolis.

