

Notes from the author

Following a long search in the philosophical bazaar I found a handful of precious papyrus. With them I retired inside a cave, deep into a philosophical desert called Venezuela.

After long years of struggle in almost total isolation with them I came up with this book.

The suspicion of madness is always present around people who spend long years of isolation inside a cave, and besides, as the Spanish saying goes: “de poeta y de loco todos tenemos un poco” (Of poet and madman we all have a little). However, suspicions notwithstanding, I may not be crazy at all.

I want to acknowledge the following persons who enlightened my way to attaining philosophical and spiritual peace of mind and heart:

Epicurus of Samos, teacher and philosopher

Ayn Rand of Russia, novelist and philosopher

Chou Chong of China, once president of the Chinese Supreme Court.

What you just read was the back cover of a book I self-published in Venezuela some 12 years ago, of which I made a few copies, to give to selected people I knew.

The description is, of course, metaphorical, but it captures the essence of the long process and eventual joyful climax of attaining philosophical peace of mind. This peace of mind only comes after having dissected and digested a sufficiently large number of philosophical proposals so that at some point your intellect and your heart are satisfied by conclusions derived from all those proposals. Make no mistake: in my case, no single set of proposals coming from the same source could satisfy me. My peace of mind and heart came from several different sources, although all belonged to the same family of thoughts.

The search for philosophical solidity can be exhausting, even painful. There are so many ideas and points of view, most of them so difficult to ‘purchase’. That is why I described a long search in the bazaar of ideas, inspecting with suspicion, comparing, rejecting, embracing, haggling.

Writing about the isolation inside a cave in a desert hints at the fact that one must ponder those ideas and points of view in isolation, in a slow manner, comparing, putting them into practice in one’s mind, until one can finally accept or reject them. The desert is a metaphor for a place where most ideas are rejected as dangerous and only those of an anointed leader are considered acceptable, safe and sound. It also hints at the possible rejection of others, especially when the ideas one embraces have political consequences.

It finally talks about coming out of the cave, convinced that the ideas embraced, and others independently produced, are sensible and intrinsically solid.

I recently decided to publish this book in the United States, adding a second part (To Destroy The Nation) analyzing some social and political aspects of this country.

In the pages that follow I will try to impart the same sense of discovery I felt during those lonely years with my papyrus. You will find that I borrowed ideas from many scholars, philosophers and writers of all ages. As you can deduce from the opening passage, I especially admire the three persons I acknowledge as the most influential to me, but that doesn't mean that others are to be disregarded.

The first part of this book, 'To Save (The Nation)' is more an outlook of life than a book on specific subjects. I have tried to put many different subjects together in as coherent a format as possible. I hope I have succeeded; you will be my judge.

Although the book is full of the ideas and thoughts of others, I did contribute a couple of things I believe are original; first, the structure of the book is original, and second, I have attempted to reconcile Spirituality with the philosophy of Egoism.

I have left the bulk of the original text mostly untouched and the changes I have made are more of form than content, which means that I am still happy with my ideas of 12 years ago. I called this first part "To Save (the Nation)" because it contains all the elements to do so, according to my philosophical views.

At the end of the book you will find what I called "To Destroy the Nation", which is a social and political criticism of democracy, written in a style totally different from the one I used on the first part.

It is a warning about how Democracy can be used to destroy the values and soul of a Nation.