



Your Thoughts And Mine, by Gibran

Your thought is a tree rooted deep in the soil of tradition and whose branches grow in the power of continuity. My thought is a cloud moving in the space. It turns into drops which, as they fall, form a brook that sings its way into the sea. Then it rises as vapour into the sky. Your thought is a fortress that neither gale nor the lightning can shake. My thought is a tender leaf that sways in every direction and finds pleasure in its swaying. Your thought is an ancient dogma that cannot change you nor can you change it. My thought is new, and it tests me and I test it morn and eve. You have your thought and I have mine. Your thought is social science, a religious and political dictionary. Mine is simple axiom. Your thought speaks of the beautiful woman, the ugly, the virtuous, the prostitute, the intelligent, and the stupid. Mine sees in every woman a mother, a sister, or a daughter of every man. Your thought concerns the skilled, the artist, the intellectual, the philosopher, the priest. Mine speaks of the loving and the affectionate, the sincere, the honest, the forthright, the kindly, and the martyr. In your thought there are the rich, the poor, and the beggared. My thought holds that there are no riches but life; that we are all beggars, and no benefactor exists save life herself. Your thought sees power in armies, cannons, battleships, submarines, aeroplanes, and poison gas. But mine asserts that power lies in reason, resolution, and truth. No matter how long the tyrant endures, he will be the loser at the end. Your thought differentiates between pragmatist and idealist, between the part and the whole, between the mystic and materialist. Mine realizes that life is one and its weights, measures and tables do not coincide with your weights, measures and tables. He whom you suppose an idealist may be a practical man. Your thought advocates fame and show. Mine counsels me and implores me to cast aside notoriety and treat it like a grain of sand cast upon the shore of eternity. Your thought is interested in ruins and museums, mummies and petrified objects. But mine hovers in the ever-renewed haze and clouds. Your thought begets dreams of palaces with furniture of sandalwood studded with jewels, and beds made of twisted silk threads. My thought speaks softly in my ears, "Be clean in body and spirit even if you have nowhere to lay your head." Your thought makes you aspire to titles and offices. Mine exhorts me to humble service. You have your thought and I have mine. --Kahlil Gibran (excerpts)