

The SPINOZA

QUARTERLY

SPRING ISSUE

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EDITORIAL NOTES

MANY of us are interested in perfecting the existing social order. But not enough of us realize that ethics offers the only real solution.

We have depended on politics too long. No doubt, politics is a most important phase of social life, but we have failed to perceive that politics without ethics is unbalanced. The governmental confusions existing today are not due to the fact that there is an insufficiency of laws, nor because there are not enough men to partake in the political affairs of the nation. They exist because there are not yet men capable of becoming true leaders. A true leader is a man who is devoted wholeheartedly and unselfishly to the formation of "a social order such as is most conducive to the attainment of an ethical character by the greatest number."

How can there be political progress while parties and politicians are interested merely in their own petty successes and the defeats of their opponents rather than in the welfare of those whom they represent? As long as politics continues to be a means of satisfying selfish and low-minded desires at the expense of other human beings, political retrogression must continue.

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Civilized man has succeeded in formulating general laws dealing with natural phenomena. The scientific method has

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helped him to transform the physical aspect of his life. Science has become one of the most efficient instruments for man in his study of the physical universe. Indeed, the contributions of science have been a great help to man in the improvement of his physical welfare. But why has not humanity used science as an aid to mental and spiritual well-being?

There are, we must remember, not only natural laws to be studied and understood in the universe, but also biosophical laws. Without an understanding of these deeper laws in human nature we cannot appreciate the nobler values of life nor realize ethical-social freedom. In this regard Buddha, Laotze, Christ and Spinoza, who were occupied solely with the endeavor to comprehend the unity existing between the Soul and the whole of nature, stand out as the most unique teachers. Their principles are dominated throughout by the ethical-social motive, which alone is the true key to the highest destiny of man.

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Man still lives by bread alone. He still lives in the darkness of cold reason and not in the light of his intelligence. He is not yet enlightened enough; not yet open-minded enough. Therefore, he cannot be free. Is there anything more important for us than mental freedom? We already have institutions and sciences to take care of our "physically sick" people. But where are the institutions to help our "physically healthy" people—the politicians, teachers and preachers—to improve their desire to reach the goal of true character-education? We cannot be said to be biosophically emancipated until we have learned to open our minds and to release our characters. This emancipation will enable us to create a new society based on culture and friendship.

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True self-education is a process which can free man from his passions. The intelligent activities which education can teach will bring man nearer to perfection. If, however, education does not bring man nearer first of all to ethical cooperation it cannot be classified as true education. Throughout the world we already have schools for academic instruction. But we have no institutions as yet for character-education. It is the task of such education to solve these two problems:

1. How to think clearly and adequately
2. How to live ethically

The practice of biosophical character-education can bring about ethical-social interdependence. As a rule we are interested merely in the social side of life. But unless we understand the ethical phase of human nature all the existing problems in the world will never be solved. Man is not only a political creature; he is also an ethical-social being. The goal of man, therefore, is self-improvement through self-education.

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The world of today is in a state of turmoil and unrest both economically and spiritually. Every now and then an outcry arises for the salvation of humanity. At present, one of the panaceas suggested to bring about world peace is that of debt settlement and disarmament. There has been talk of disarmament since the end of the World War. The League of Nations and Disarmament Conferences have been of no avail. We need only cite Japan's aggressive policy in China in defiance of the League. If world peace today will be made to depend on disarmament there never will be peace. For, how can we disarm if the doctrine of nationalism continues to be instilled into the hearts of

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people? As long as there will be Germans, Frenchmen, Japanese, Chinese and Americans, instead of world-citizens, the world chaos and unrest will continue. The only true remedy is universal interest in biosophical character-education. This does not imply that man must neglect the political and economic factors in society. It means that in addition to these considerations man must begin to strive for a new understanding of himself, of society, and of the world. What else, but this new understanding, can usher in the new democracy based on the liberation of the character-qualities in man?

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We are still living in the Middle Ages—in the theological period of civilization. We cannot and shall not remain there. The higher desires in man must finally assert themselves, and the new era of biosophy, bringing with it the age of ethical thought-discipline, must become a reality. Man has made great advances, but he continues to be dominated by theological motives. On the whole, mankind still is in the first act of the drama of human evolution; it still is in the era of theology—theology that is covered up now by national selfishness, now by mere materialism. The second or biosophical act of the drama will begin as soon as man, thinking intuitively, will understand and realize the deeper values of life.

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The world, it is true, is moving onward. But physical movement does not necessarily signify human progress. Unless we advance from the physical to the ethical-social or biosophical viewpoint, we cannot be said to truly advance. To understand man biosophically we must recognize that

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he has not only physical powers but also the capacity to think; that man has qualities and abilities within his character just as well as in his physical nature. Harmonization of these powers is the key to the new era of biosophy. The more individuals there will be in the world who will be able to think biosophically, the sooner will we have the new era of light, life, love and liberty.

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The new era will be established by a new type of human being. Such characters must come from among the youths of the present—from those who are not yet entirely corrupted by the ugliness and selfishness that surrounds them on all sides; from those who are preparing themselves for such activities by a redirection of ethical understanding and character-development. They shall learn the meaning of mutual striving and unselfish co-enjoyment. The road that leads to the divine and noble in man lies before them. These youths shall be the true leaders of the new era of ethical-social freedom.

SPINOZA—MAN OF CHARACTER

By Frederick B. Robinson

President, College of the City of New York

MARVELOUS indeed are the material creations of man. They range from the small and simple to the vast and complicated; from those of merely utilitarian significance to embodiments of beauty that thrill the ages. But the most important creation of each of us is his own personality, which gives direction to all that he thinks and says and does. That personality shines forth in his works and sets the limits of his services to humanity.

Baruch Spinoza, the craftsman, selected crystals of uniform clarity and polished them carefully so that their true and delicate curves and their homogeneous substance would catch the light and help men to see further and more clearly; but he was also engaged daily and hourly in the continuous refinement of his own mind and spirit.

The world has known many a scientist and philosopher who went far in his day to extend the bounds of knowledge and to fit together fragments of truth for the purpose of revealing glimpses of a coherent whole. These men we call learned. Spinoza was one of them and in that respect his personality was rich and luminous with understanding. But he had in a surpassing degree another attribute which wins our highest admiration; he had the will to be true to the eternal light within him and to shun the seductive shadows of transitory temptation. It is this which marks him as a man of character. Why is it that few of us are able con-

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sistently to practice what we preach or, better still, live up to our own highest ideals of conduct without burdening others with preachments? It is because we have not the strength of character to keep our minds steadfast upon the cool, true, inner light which we may call conscience, when in the presence of tawdry and dull, though seemingly dazzling, baubles of transitory experience. It is because our light is not strong and clear enough to differentiate between the true and false, the temporary and permanent, the seductive and the good. It is also because gusts of passion—of greed and ambition, desire and hate, jealousy and fear, blow the flame, dim its brilliance and even extinguish it altogether.

A careful study of Spinoza's life shows that, endowed by nature with extraordinary general intelligence, he used it in his youth to criticise and expose fallacy, and in his maturity to apply it to the constructive task of expounding truth, or better still, to perfect a method for the progressive yet never ending pursuit of truth. But again it is to be insisted on that, above all, his words and conduct were kept constantly in harmony with his belief; he was first and foremost a man of character who never tried to deceive himself or others.

We could give many examples of learned men who lacked character. Let us consider but one in contrast with Spinoza; I select Francis Bacon. This philosopher, author of the *Advancement of Learning*, the *Novum Organum*, and many erudite essays and treatises, knew as much about ancient lore and current thought as did Spinoza, but he lacked character. He was beguiled by the pursuit of wealth, fame and sensuous pleasure. He knew their nature, but he was not strong enough to push them aside. He deliberately fawned upon the powerful in order that he might, through the patronage of an Elizabeth or an Essex, reap riches and achieve fame;

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yet he betrayed all his benefactors. Spinoza consorted with those who were poor in the world's goods, but rich in mind and spirit; he refused material benefits even from those who would assist him without thought of practical return. Bacon tried repeatedly and finally succeeded in marrying for money; Spinoza, disappointed in woman's love, had recourse to the love of truth. Insisting upon the principle that he should receive his rightful inheritance, he gladly yielded the concrete goods to his sister; Bacon, made Lord Chancellor and elevated to the position of viscount, sacrificed honor for bribes. Spinoza never sought earthly honors and was loyal to his friends even at the risk of his life. Bacon accepted the teachings of established religions and preached piety while shattering the decalogue in practice; Spinoza advanced a conception of God as pure and majestic as that of Buddha and the Man of Galilee, and he never swerved in his efforts to become more and more perfectly a part of the eternal substance.

Whether or not we accept in full Spinoza's ideas concerning God, nature, man and the state, is of little moment; our high tribute goes to him as a humble seeker after the truth, who had character so strong that he could not be beguiled from the path of righteousness as he saw it. What was his reward? The greatest that any man can have. The abiding joy of an inner sanctuary of peace within his soul; a shrine that could not be invaded by any force; a temple of serenity in which were found wisdom and love and hope. His rewards were the blessings of which the Prince of Peace spoke when he said:

*Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*

SPINOZA—MAN OF CHARACTER

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.
Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely—Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward.*

The force of so blessed a character lives through the ages. I close with a beam reflected from the great light of Spinoza after it had flashed over an interval of nearly three hundred years. One of my own students at The City College was Julius Drachsler who later became our Professor of Sociology and who was taken away too soon by the same ailment which ended Spinoza's life. In February of 1927, Julius wrote this sonnet in commemoration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Spinoza's death:

*Spinoza! Prophet of the Timeless Truth!
Accursed of thy people, driven hence,
Spat on, anathema to age and youth,—
Yet calmly polishing thy crystal lens
That brought Eternity within thy view.
Frail was thy body, yet thy spirit strong
With all the matchless strength of one who knew
God and loved him! Thy life a sad, sweet song
Had all but died away on mortals' lips
When lo! it lives again. Oh gentle soul,
Would thou couldst teach an age at deadly grips
With false and futile gods, and make it whole.
When men love Truth more than they love their gold
Then wilt thou walk among us, meekly bold.*

"CANIMUS SURDIS"

By Nicholas Roerich

"**W**E ARE singing to the deaf!" sorrowfully exclaims the great Italian poet. Again we have an avalanche of news! And again regarding the same things!

A publishing house in Germany has been suspended. There are financial difficulties in the scientific circles of Holland. There is some economic distress in Bulgaria.

Useful publications are being discontinued in Calcutta. There are some terrifying figures of the unemployed in America. During the last months, in Chicago alone thirty-eight banks have failed. There are difficulties in Sweden. A beautiful project of a children's theatre has failed of realization. Also it has been impossible to commemorate a historical anniversary. H. G. Wells, well known for his foresight, urges the necessity of the construction of a new Noah's Ark for the salvation of culture and civilization. Endless depression! Endless distressful news in letters and newspapers. Everywhere the dark forces are attacking, first of all, cultural manifestations. It seems as if culture hinders them from carrying on their satanic plans to destroy the world.

Among these waves of chaos, one hears isolated voices, dreaming that everything will be restored to the old by means of a magic wand. Baldwin advised: "Buy wisely and freely!" THE NEW YORK TIMES has bold head-lines:

"CANIMUS SURDIS"

"Trade revival is essential if the unemployment situation is to improve." "Urges normal buying!" A leader advises: "Buy motor cars!" What can be better?

May the position of ten millions of unemployed improve! May joyful buying return! But these calls are like the foam of waves against the rocks. From foam perhaps some useful product can be made! Perhaps, but so far the titanic waves of disastrous news rear up, and thunder furiously against culture.

Even kind-hearted citizens begin to whisper: "Is it the right time to think of culture?"—"What good is civilization if we have nothing to eat?" Strong forceful men fight the gigantic waves that threaten our crumbling culture. One has only to read the words of a well-known author, written with his heart's blood: "Our personal position is indescribably difficult, yet we fight with our last efforts, keeping up our trust and vigor and love towards sincere friends. The only advantage of our position is the complete absence of fear of tomorrow, because in any case it cannot be worse than today. But we are exhausted and have become ten years older. Yet in order to stand up under the burden of debts for eight years, without the possibility of doing what is most important, one must be of steel and as resistant as an oak. The end of the world is nearing!"

We answer this strong and glorious fighter: "On a cross road, the passers-by were asked with what they were building the future age? One sneered: "With poison gas!" Another hissed serpent-like: "With submarines!" The third laughed: "By short-selling!" The fourth: "With golf." The fifth: "With narcotics." The sixth: "Apres nous le deluge." The seventh: "Through culture!"

Is it not a miracle if out of seven passers-by, one still remembered culture? And not only remembered, but even was not ashamed to pronounce this word, so inconvenient

for many. Who knows, perhaps by this one word this passerby already brought persecution upon himself.

But even so, it sounds miraculous if in the turmoil at the cross-road this sacred, inspiring, uplifting conception was yet pronounced. My friend thought that only one passerby in a hundred would pay respect to the very foundations of life, which created the epochs of renaissance, all joy, all prosperity, all daring and all achievements.

Verily if this panacea would be granted, without toil, far from the rim of the precipice, away from the cross, and without the danger of a cup of poison, it would not be that precious gem—the very foundation of life. If difficulties are blessed, then verily it is in the name of culture, which embodies the light, the great service, unwaveringness of achievement, all beauty and all knowledge.

If obstacles contain in themselves potential possibilities, then sufferings for the cause of culture will blossom in the precious silver Lotus within one's heart. Only not to lose the entrusted Stone and not to spill the Chalice. Infinity is boundless. Not abstractness, but life itself! Nowadays the list of failures is longer than the list of successes because mankind has rejected culture. Humanity has violated culture by regarding it as luxury. Nobody will assert that we are now going through normal times. Even bandits, racketeers selfishly understand the abnormality of conditions, and apply ingeniously their looters' tricks, in order to make the best of this hour of darkness. But there are many young hearts which respond to light. One must only realize how urgently we must turn to everything cultural, to everything that ennobles the taste and all strivings of life. Although conscious fighters for culture are few, yet the greater thanks and honor is due to those who stand as guardians of the true treasures of mankind. As antennae, they sound over

the whole world and receive and send calls for nobility, refinement and constructiveness.

I remember, in Mongolia when the expedition miraculously escaped a most dangerous situation, a grey-haired Buriat solemnly raised his hand and exclaimed: "Light conquers darkness!" This was not something abstract, not a dream! The wise dweller of the desert understood the reality of the great light, he understood that darkness was finally doomed to defeat. Thus those who walk with light will be victorious in the end, but the wavering one will be precipitated into the abyss of darkness. Is it possible that there are so many of the deaf?

Sometimes it seems as if the path of culture and the conditions of life have separated. But when the levers of a machine lose coordination, then naturally one cannot expect full speed and one cannot avoid disastrous lapses.

Even the mind of a child understands that enlightenment, education, culture are as fuel to a motor.

The troglodyte threatens: "To hell with culture; cash first." But by reason of this very nature he is called a troglodyte, and his place is in a cave, not in the hall of culture.

Even during disaster the troglodyte finds sufficient gold to secure himself the bloody spectacle of a bull-fight, of a cock-fight, of races, or to delight himself at sight of the breaking of the cheek-bones or the dislocation of limbs or in some carnal pleasures. For such entertainments, money is always plentiful. He will even find some hypocritical excuses, by mumbling something about physical health. But as soon as we approach the urgent questions of the ennoblement of taste, the questions of creativeness and ascension of the spirit, we find ears and eyes are closed. Thus one understands the origin of the old French proverb: "He is especially deaf, who does not want to hear." The Italian

poet who exclaimed: "Canimus surdis," knew also these deaf ones.

At the same time one also reads news about a new bullet which pierces all armour, of new shields which protect the back in attacks which demand crawling, of new especially deadly gases and similar "humanitarian" appliances.

On the same pages some voices rise in indignation against fratricide. But the troglodyte roars with triumphant laughter, because he thinks that he has succeeded in disjoining the levers of the machine. The saturnine *Alberich* and *Mime* hope that their rule is at hand, when everything connected with light will be debased and Satan himself, without any trouble, will receive the full of his desires.

The apparition of troglodytes is fearful; this is not exaggerated. The advertisements in the press, of evening gowns, festivals, dinners, and races do not hide the misfortunes. Practically in every newspaper one sees news of the curtailing and discontinuation of cultural undertakings.

Thus the troglodytes triumph; they think that their doctrine of gluttony and lust has already triumphed above all circumstances. It seems almost as if special Internationales of light and darkness were being organized. No competitive fanfares will deaden this Armageddon.

Is it not the last hour for everyone to whom culture is not an empty sound to unite? Is it not the last hour to arrest the strangulation of everything valuable, creative and young?

When you speak of gluttony, lust, speculation, then perhaps your sincerity will not be questioned; but every attempt to turn to beauty, to knowledge, to the meaning of life, will be followed by mistrust and suspicion of insincerity. Well, may you say, that the proverb "*lupus est homo homini*"—one man is a wolf to another, dates not from yesterday and that the moon and the sun are still the same.

It is true that long ago another poet exclaimed: "In eternal beauty shines indifferent nature," and "To good and evil we are shamefully indifferent." But these lines about indifference referred to people, who knew, it would seem, far less than the people of today.

At present even nature is not quite indifferent. Even in remote mountains people speak of unusual earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, of sun-spots. And an institute at Nice comments in almost astrological expressions upon the influence of sun-spots on human beings, if one is to believe the latest communications of "*Matin*."

But the present persecution of culture is not due to sun-spots. And the dark spots of irresponsibility upon human conscience are by no means caused by the sun. These spots of irresponsibility are due to darkness, to ignorance.

"Ignorance is the greatest crime"—so was it ordained in the ancient commandments. He who dares to say: "To hell with culture," is the greatest criminal. He is the seducer of the coming generation, he is the murderer, he is the sower of darkness, he is the suicide.

"We are singing to the deaf"—sorrowfully exclaims the poet of Italy. But the poet-author of "*Beda, the Preacher*" answers with cosmic vigour:

"Silent became the sage, drooping his head.

"But before he had ceased, the stones from all the world's ends

"Thundered, Amen!, in answer."

GIVING THE UNIVERSE ANOTHER CHANCE

By Harry A. Overstreet

Professor of Philosophy, College of the City of New York

"WHEN I am dead, I shall be simply and completely dead," said a student with emphasis.

I find that this is the sophisticated view nowadays. To venture a belief that the view is not correct, to reply, "No, when you are dead, I believe that you will be more alive than ever," is to invite a raising of the eyebrows and a wonder how one can be intelligent and yet so naive.

It is a curious pass to which we have come. Individuals seem rather to like to believe in their earthly doom. There is, of course, something courageous about their attitude. Such individuals refuse to lower themselves to what they would call "wish-thinking." They decline the easy comfort of ancestral illusions about a life after death. They prefer to be men, strong enough to face, without wincing, their eventual obliteration.

If it were merely an attitude of skepticism, one might well approve it, for an individual might quite easily maintain the position that death is so baffling a mystery one must in all honesty hold one's judgment in suspense. But curiously enough, the matter goes beyond skepticism. A new dogmatism seems to have taken possession: "When I am dead I shall be simply and completely dead." That is a pretty emphatic statement. One wonders, however, whence the certainty. . . .

Is it possible, upon this question, to open our minds freely

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once more? Many a scientific and religious dogmatism about the world we live in has been overthrown. And we are more than ever aware of the precariousness of our so-called knowledge. Where, a few decades ago, we had our blue-print of the universe all clearly drawn, we are now in much perplexity. We really know far less than we thought we knew even about such apparently obvious matters as space, time, and the physical world. And as for that mysterious interloper, called spirit, we really know almost nothing about it.

In the midst of all this very real uncertainty, might we not be a little more daring about life? Is it quite necessary for us to lie down, with a kind of courageous melancholy, before an accepted—and perhaps altogether gratuitous—cosmic doom?

It is difficult to conceive of our achieving genuine happiness in a universe in which we fundamentally disbelieve. Some taint of bitterness must mar even our most exalted moods. To turn, for example, from the contemplation of an individual whom we greatly love and reverence to the supposed ruthlessness of the cosmic machine, is to experience a curious depression of spirit. We may, indeed, solace ourselves by being proud of the life that we love and reverence—proud that it has played a brief part nobly; but we should like, also, to be proud of the universe that gave it birth and that sustained it through its struggles.

May we not be proud of it? Is it not possible, that, in these recent days, we have altogether misunderstood our universe? And because we have misunderstood it, is it not possible that we have likewise misunderstood ourselves, undervalued ourselves, taken out of our life genuine stimulus and justification?

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Nothing more wholesome has occurred in the past few centuries than the overturn of the childish superstitions of the past. We are emancipated from at least that much of the error of the ancients. But to have proved to our satisfaction that *their* world was not as they thought it to be is not to reveal to us what *our* world is. We need profoundly nowadays to know what our world really is. We have made remarkable strides in the discovery of some of the relationships whereby we have been able to control certain aspects of the physical world. But our science has not gone beyond a commerce with the externals of life. It has not yet penetrated to the Holy of Holies—to the creative center of ourselves and the universe. It has left the mystery of life and spirit very nearly as much of a mystery as ever. Until we clear up more of that mystery, we can say almost nothing about our genuine significance and destiny.

Although it may seem a surprising thing to say, it nevertheless may be confidently affirmed that evidence has been accumulated in the last three-quarters of a century which merits most careful examination, and which, if examined, may throw a new light upon the human and the cosmic processes. It may also be affirmed that the revolutionary changes the physical sciences themselves have undergone within the past three decades make possible a significant re-reading of the cosmic map. And finally it may be affirmed that a new understanding of the relativity of the human powers has made a fresh venture into the mysteries of the universe and of human life not only possible but imperative.

I know of no more fascinating adventure that is today open to the human spirit than this one of exploring that marginal, supernormal area of human life where the clue to its significance and destiny promises to be found. We

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may not, indeed, find the clue, but it would be singularly curious not to be curious. For after all, as Aristotle long ago said, philosophy begins in wonder, and to refuse to wonder about those aspects of life that are still tantalizingly beyond our understanding is to surrender the precious gift of being genuinely human.

* * *

BARUCH SPINOZA

*"Impious wretch, vile atheist,
Why hast thou forsaken the faith of thy fathers?"
Busily grinding his lenses,
He heard these imprecations,
But he heeded them not.
His thoughts were with the One,
The all-absorbing, the all-inclusive God,
The infinite, the eternal, the ineffable.
With the Brahmins of old,
Singing their Vedic hymns,
He penetrated the veil of Maya,
And saw only reality, saw only truth,
Behind the phantasmagoria
Of things in space and time.
A passionate longing to know God was his,
A benign resignation to life was his,
A blessed peace that passeth understanding was his.
In meditative solitude he found joy,
In pantheistic contemplation he found truth,
This God-intoxicated philosopher.*

*Gabriel R. Mason, Principal,
Abraham Lincoln High School.*

WHY SPINOZA STILL SPEAKS TO US

By Paul Arthur Schilpp

Professor of Philosophy, College of the Pacific

IT IS three hundred years since Baruch Spinoza was born in the Netherlands. During the intervening period, long enough to sober us of any mere adolescent enthusiasms on the one hand or of mere fanatical criticism on the other, the shadow cast by this great mind upon the intellectual history of the race has become not only longer but increasingly more dominant. It may be true that there are no Spinozists today to do him honor in the same sense in which there are Hegelians or Kantians. However, one is tempted to suggest that this very fact redounds to the honor of Spinoza. For, since he was much more interested in the sincere and honest search for truth than in any notion of having its finality in his possession, Spinoza would look much more approvingly upon minds who, in their pursuit of truth, would venture out courageously to find their own best rational answers to the riddle of the universe than he would upon those who find it necessary slavishly to follow in the philosophical footsteps of another or others, however great.

Be that as it may, the voice of Spinoza is far from having been silenced. Even to this enlightened (?), scientific, pragmatic, and materialistic age he still speaks. Or, rather, it is just this kind of an age which simply cannot afford to play deaf to the message of the grinder of lenses. For some of the intellectual lenses ground out by his fertile mind are

WHY SPINOZA STILL SPEAKS TO US

very much needed today, if we would not go to pieces on the shoals and shallow break-waters of a superficial utilitarianism.

There are any number of points in which Spinoza remains not only still a modern thinker after the lapse of more than two and one half centuries, but may in truth be called our contemporary. For purposes of the present discussion, however, we shall limit ourselves to three or four of the most important ones. It is only natural to begin such a discussion with Spinoza's idea of causal determinism. His insistence on absolute causal determination fits most admirably into the contemporary (twentieth century) picture of the natural sciences. This is still true despite all the wild speculations started afloat since the announcement of Heisenberg's famous "principle of uncertainty." Certain discoveries in the realm of sub-atomic phenomena have indeed badly shaken the faith of our natural scientists in their present ability to explain the physical universe completely. What thinker would not welcome this admirable change from the childish credulity of the scientist in his omniscience to the sober reflection brought on by the discovery of facts which, as yet at any rate, have balked at every attempt of his to explain them in terms of his past knowledge and accepted principles? But it is equally hasty and unscientific to jump from these facts to the conclusion—page Mr. Bertrand Russell!—that there is not only no order in the universe but no universe at all, nothing but blind chaos. As a matter of fact, Dr. Robert A. Millikan knows undoubtedly what he is saying when, in one of his most recent statements, he affirms that, with all the tremendous developments in the physical sciences during the last generation, a physics textbook which was thoroughly adequate in the eighteen nineties would still be quite adequate—as far as it went—in 1933. In other words, when it comes

to the most fundamental concepts of physical science even the Einsteinian revolution—more revolutionary though it be than was even the Copernican—has *not* necessitated any perceptible change. Causality and causal determination may still be an unsolved *philosophical* problem of the first magnitude—after all, it has been just that ever since David Hume delivered his telling blows against causality—, but for the natural sciences it remains, as always, one of the basic *sine qua nons* of scientific presuppositional principles. Spinoza's tireless insistence upon such absolute causal determinism, therefore, so far from having been outgrown in the twentieth century, still marks one of the major bulwarks of the natural sciences even in the age of Einstein and Planck, of Heisenberg and Wittgenstein. Moreover, it might as well be admitted that if the day should ever come when causality is no longer a basic pre-supposition of the natural sciences, in that day there will no longer *be* any science in any sense in which we now understand the term. For *our science is unthinkable* without the causal principle; and no dispute concerning the Heisenberg "principle of uncertainty" can deny or do away with this fact. More than that! With science would go any ordered comprehension of our universe. But we are, at present, quite far from having reached that conjectural state of affairs. Nor is it very likely that we shall ever reach it. Till then, at any rate, Spinoza may be counted among the prophets of the modern age who, despite his rabbinical and "divine revelatory" up-bringing, sought to find a natural process of universal being and becoming and found it in the basic scientific principle of absolute determination.

If Spinoza is still our contemporary in his views on causality, he is not exactly behind the times in his views of man either. It is true, he might not fit into the exact grooves of contemporary American experimental psychology. Al-

though, in his insistence that physically and physiologically man is just as much a part of the universe of absolute order and necessity as is anything else, he certainly would not feel out of place even among our psychologists. But, after all, Spinoza still belonged to an age which, while scrupulously scientific in the realm of physical phenomena, was not yet afraid of metaphysics and, in addition, still had profound respect for the basic and *a priori* principles of logic and of reasoning. As such Spinoza saw that, while man belonged in the animal realm biologically speaking, his real essence lay elsewhere. Following on the heels of Descartes, Spinoza rediscovered the tremendous fact that *man can think!* It may be admitted that there are times when one is seriously tempted to doubt the universal applicability of this statement. But surely Spinoza himself saw and experienced as much of human bigotry, fanaticism, and thought-stifling ignorance as do any among us today. None of these experiences, however, were capable of shaking the confidence of his assertion concerning the fundamentally rational nature of man. For Spinoza free, rational action constitutes the very essence of human nature. Nor can man do more or better than to express this, his essential nature. To do that is virtue, is the *summum bonum*. "The essence of reason," we are told, "is nothing but our mind, in so far as it clearly and distinctly understands. Therefore all efforts which we make through reason are nothing else than efforts to understand. Again, since this effort of the mind, by which the mind, in so far as it reasons endeavors to preserve its being, is nothing but the effort to understand, it follows that this effort to understand is the primary and sole foundation of virtue, and that we do not endeavor to understand things for the sake of any end, but, on the contrary, the mind, in so far as it reasons, can conceive nothing as being good for itself except that which conduces to

understanding." (IV 26.) Moreover, "the mind possesses no certitude, unless in so far as it possesses adequate ideas, or (which is the same thing) in so far as it reasons. We do not know, therefore, that anything is certainly good, excepting that which actually conduces to understanding, and, on the other hand, we do not know that anything is evil excepting that which can hinder us from understanding." (IV 27.) On the basis of understanding, therefore, achieved through reason, to act rationally—this is most truly and most essentially to express our fundamental human nature; it is to be most truly ourselves. In fact, it is only in such action, based on the knowledge and understanding which comes from "adequate," i.e., rational, ideas, that freedom becomes possible for man. For, according to Spinoza, it is only in thought that the mind can become really free. And freedom simply implies the possibility through rational understanding to express your own essential (human) nature. It is freedom from external restraint in the achievement of your truest self.

It may appear surprising that these commonly known and understood views of Spinoza should here be singled out for special comment. However, such surprise can be natural only on the part of one who walks through our present age intellectually blindfolded. For, if ever there was a time when men needed to be reminded of their basically rational nature and of the primary need not merely for knowledge (of which we have, of course, considerably more than was available in the seventeenth century) but for actual *understanding, ours is that time*. I am not concerned just now with the particular metaphysical underpinnings from which Spinoza found himself led to these views. These particular underpinnings may or may not be acceptable to the twentieth century mind. And while it must be granted, of course, that in Spinoza his practical ethics and rational-

istic outlook cannot be divorced from his basic metaphysical position, I am at present simply concerned with the tremendous need, in our own day, for a new rediscovery of this fundamentally rational character at least of man's potential nature. Our whole economic, social, political, and international life today constitutes, to any truly reflective mind, such an unspeakably irrational and indefensible crazy puzzle that one can but stand aghast at the horrible mess we enlightened (!) twentieth century moderns have made of things. Nor, to be perfectly frank, am I, for one, particularly surprised at our chaotic state of affairs. An age which had succeeded in reducing men to mere mechanical automata and had explained thinking and reasoning as nothing more or less than the purely mechanically operating and externally aroused and determined motions of the larynx (cf. the general tendencies of contemporary American psychology in this direction), such an age really has no right to expect reason to assert itself. For, having nothing but the motions of their larynxes with which to think, I should, in fact, say that humanity is doing surprisingly well—even in the midst of the present universal chaos.

It is, then, at this point and for these reasons that I believe that Spinoza's clarion-call to fundamentally rational and thinking minds needs to be heard and heeded again. I am not saying that his solution of the problem needs to be ours nor even that it is possible for us to use his methods. What I am saying is this: we need anew to become aware of our essential human nature as rational creatures. We need to rediscover our birthright as thinking beings. We need to bring to bear upon all the multifarious perplexing problems of our day the best trained rational judgment and understanding of which we are capable. We must cease acting as mere mechanical automata and instead achieve our true selfhood as rational, thinking, knowing and under-

standing men and women. Such is our greatest and most basic need today. To such need Spinoza is still a modern prophet far ahead of the procession not only of his own age but of ours as well. Should we fail in such a rediscovery of our fundamental humanity, it will, in the long run, make little difference wherein else we shall succeed. For if we fail to achieve our birthright as rational beings nothing else will really matter. The clarity of Spinoza's vision on this point would be difficult to improve upon.

There is a point of even more distinctly ethical theory wherein, it appears to me, Spinoza has scored decisively. I am referring to his views on *happiness*. While, obviously, not a hedonist, Spinoza was very far from being a despiser or under-estimator of happiness. But, more clearly than most other ethicists, Spinoza saw that real happiness is to be found in the process, in the search, rather than in any actual possession. Happiness is to be found not in or after having reached any specific goal but rather in the striving for and moving toward the goal. Happiness most often vanishes with the actual achievement; but it is found in the work of achieving.

Perhaps this Spinozistic observation is simple and commonplace. It certainly ought to be just that in the mind of every thoughtful observer of human life. But the fact remains that the commonplace and obvious is sometimes overlooked not merely by the so-called average man but even by the philosopher. It is not given to every philosopher to see deeply enough to be able to discover the commonplace facts of human life and experience. This is true despite the apparently paradoxical character of this statement. For it is difficult to see why depth should, of necessity, make for unreality. Even the facts visible on the surface need not, for that reason, be superficial in the derogatory sense of this word. Reality has a surface as well as depth. To

leave either out of consideration is not to be true to all of the facts. No one, moreover, among philosophers is generally more prone to overlook the surface facts than is the rationalist. All the more honor, therefore, to Spinoza the rationalist who saw and was not ashamed to state this simple fact of universal human experience.

In view of the recent quadrennial national elections one can hardly forbear speaking of Spinoza's theory of the State. Here too it will be found that Spinoza is easily the contemporary of even the best of our present day thinkers. This is not to be taken to mean that no real progress has been made in political philosophy since Spinoza's day. But it does mean that in broad outlook and general vision Spinoza's political philosophy is still very much up-to-date. Witness, as proof of this fact, not merely Spinoza's claim that the State represents the social objectification of our human individuality as rational beings, but also his insistence that the State must justify its rational character "by its utility." Witness, moreover, the fact that Spinoza will not permit the State to become an end in itself, but only the social medium for a human cooperative society whose aim is the achievement of the rational life on the part of all individuals. And witness, finally, the fact that Spinoza admits that whenever all men have achieved the true rational nature of their essential being, the State will no longer be necessary since everyone will live the rational life and there will no longer be any need for a social objectification short of that of universal humanity. In other words, Spinoza transcends the boundaries of national statehood and looks toward the achievement of a stateless internationalism as the utopia of rational minds.

Certainly we appear to be still infinitely far removed from the achievement of such an international utopia. Yet the greatest political philosophers of the twentieth century

(of any nation) are looking in this same general direction. In their *minds*, at least, nationalism is to be replaced by internationalism and the universal brotherhood of man is to take the place of our present irrational and inhuman ways of dealing with our fellowmen of different nationality or race.

Nor can I neglect, in this connection, to call attention to Spinoza's views on *revolution*. Whenever the State fails to measure up to the requirements of reason and sinks to the level of representing merely man's organized passions, then, so Spinoza tells us, revolution is not only justifiable and right, but it becomes a necessity of reason.

Is this dangerous doctrine? Perhaps. But who, in sanity of judgment, would dare to gainsay it? After all, the deification of the State is infinitely *more* dangerous. If man was not made for the Sabbath neither was he made for the State. It is not too soon even for twentieth century States to try to learn and appreciate this fact. If they fail to learn this perfectly good Spinozistic doctrine of their own accord they may have to learn it through bitter experience. The pages of human history are covered with instances of just such cruelly enforced lessons after States had refused to learn the lesson voluntarily. A word to the wise—from Spinoza.

Enough. As one reads again the intensely fascinating pages of Spinoza's writings one keeps on being reminded, on page after page, how remarkably modern, up-to-date, and contemporary he is even with the best of our thought. This is not, of course, true in all matters, nor in most things in minor technical details. But it is true of many just such outstanding issues and problems as were those to which we have here called particular attention.

Spinoza still speaks to us. Wise the individual, the State, rational enough to listen to his message.

DECLARATION OF THE FIRST SPINOZA COMMUNITY

On November twenty-fourth, 1932, the Spinoza Center sponsored the tercentenary celebration of the birth of Benedict Spinoza, at Roerich Hall, 310 Riverside Drive, New York, in which many eminent leaders in various fields of endeavor participated. At this occasion, Dr. Frederick Kettner, leader of the Spinoza Center, made public the DECLARATION OF THE FIRST SPINOZA COMMUNITY.

Frederick B. Robinson, President of the College of the City of New York, was chairman. The speakers were Hendrik Willem Van Loon, Lewis Browne, Professor Herman H. Horne, Professor Horace M. Kallen, Louis Horch, Dr. A. Wolfson, Dr. J. Nowak, and Dr. Frederick Kettner.

THE HISTORY of mankind is a record of continuous growth and change. As we survey the succeeding eras of man's development, we become aware of a constantly recurring phenomenon: in almost every age there has occurred some revolt against the existing order; some indomitable minority has declared its right to abide by its own set of principles. For by nature man is a lover of freedom.

Biosophically, freedom is man's capacity to express his essential or eternal nature unlimited by all inward and outward bonds. Pursuing his subconscious desire for freedom, man has revolted, battled and struggled for its attainment. He has failed repeatedly because he did not pursue the proper direction in his quest. Instead of striving to free his mind, he attempted to change outward conditions.

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Whether the purpose was to inaugurate a new ruler or to give more privileges to a new class, the social changes, heretofore, cannot be classified as attempts to free the human mind.

In order to attain true freedom one must begin with the liberation of man's thinking capacities. Although there are many people who desire political or economic freedom, there are very few who strive for mental or inward freedom.

Man has learned to abide by the laws of civilization, but he does not yet understand and practice the principles of culture. Civilization is founded on selfishness, but the Idea of Culture is based on the actual practice of unselfish principles, which is most difficult because man is not yet conscious of his higher nature. Present day society affords no opportunity for the development of character qualities. Most human beings go through their entire lives without ever realizing that there is an essential nature within them. When one does begin to strive consciously for this higher goal, he has to choose between his strong and dominant selfish instincts fostered by thousands of generations, and the spark of purity within him.

Slowly it has dawned upon man that he is the possessor of two natures. Step by step he has learned that his spirit is the manifestation of his higher being, and that true freedom is attainable only through unselfish activities.

Yet the growth of the soul is a very laborious process. Only by stumbling and erring, by making mistakes and by enduring intense suffering does that tiny spark of divinity within us make its way from obscurity into light. Then, grown clear and strong through constant striving, man becomes an aggressive pioneer in the realm of the invisible, and reaches at last the true freedom—the true understanding of life.

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DECLARATION

THE FIRST SPINOZA COMMUNITY

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E, THE MEMBERS OF THE FIRST SPINOZA GROUP, WHO HAVE PREPARED OURSELVES DURING MANY YEARS FOR THIS DAY, NOVEMBER TWENTY-FOURTH, NINETEEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-TWO, THE DAY OF THE TERCENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF SPINOZA, DO DECLARE THAT IT IS OUR PURPOSE AND PLAN TO DEVOTE OURSELVES BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND MUTUALLY TO THE REALIZATION OF THE PRINCIPLES WHICH SPINOZA HAS SET FORTH IN HIS ETHICS & THE SOCIETY OF TODAY IS IN A PERIOD OF TRANSITION AND SEEKS A NEW DIRECTION OF LIFE. HAVING COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE BEST WAY FOR US TO LIVE IS THE WAY WHICH SPINOZA POINTS OUT, WE HAVE THEREFORE RESOLVED TO CREATE A LIVING MONUMENT TO MAKE THIS DATE SIGNIFICANT IN THE HISTORY OF HUMANITY. THAT MONUMENT SHALL BE THE FIRST SPINOZA COMMUNITY, IN WHICH SHALL LIVE AND BE UNITED ALL THOSE WHO HAVE PROVEN THEIR DETERMINATION TO FOLLOW AND PRACTISE THE ETHICAL-SOCIAL IDEALS OF SPINOZA & THAT WHICH WE HAVE REALIZED UNTIL NOW IN OUR GROUP, WE DESIRE TO MAKE KNOWN ALSO TO THE WORLD. WE DESIRE THAT THE WORLD SHOULD KNOW THAT SPINOZISM IS THE FIRST SCIENTIFIC RELIGION OF LIFE AND FRIENDSHIP. WE WISH TO EXPRESS OUR CONVICTION THAT THERE IS AN ESSENTIAL NATURE IN ALL MEN, AND THAT UNITY ON THE BASIS OF THIS ESSENTIAL REALITY IS THE TRUE SPIRIT OF RELIGION & AS IT IS PART OF OUR PLAN TO CREATE A NEW KIND OF EDUCATION BASED ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL NATURE OF MAN, WE SHALL STUDY ALL SCIENCES AND THE WORKS OF THE GREAT ETHICAL-RELIGIOUS TEACHERS OF HUMANITY & IT IS OUR CONVICTION THAT ON THE BASIS OF SPINOZISM, WE, AS THE ETHICAL-SOCIAL MINORITY, SHALL BE ABLE TO LIVE RACIALLY AS HUMAN BEINGS, NATIONALLY AS WORLD CITIZENS, AND RELIGIOUSLY AS SPINOZAISTS. NO OBSTACLES SHALL KEEP US FROM THE REALIZATION OF OUR MUTUAL GOAL; NO PERSONAL SACRIFICE CAN BE TOO GREAT & WE WELCOME ALL THOSE WHO WISH TO BE CO-CREATORS OF SPINOZA COMMUNITIES. WE SEEK THE COOPERATION AND FRIENDSHIP OF ALL WHO LOVE HUMANITY.

NEW YORK,  
NOVEMBER 24, 1932.

*Frederick Kethner  
and  
The First Spinoza Community*

## *DECLARATION FIRST SPINOZA COMMUNITY*

### II

Three hundred years ago, Benedict Spinoza was born. He faced the same obstacles and difficulties that so many before and after him have encountered. But endowed with a surpassing keenness and daring, he overcame the hindrances that barred his way to freedom—and attained his goal.

The members of the Spinoza Center, striving for this same goal, have realized that their declaration must be a "Declaration of Ethical Independence." It is a document testifying to the trials and tribulations undergone by these seekers in their quest for freedom. It is evidence of their realization that freedom is contingent upon spiritual understanding. And it is the firm assertion of their determination to live according to the precepts of truth and reason, and to show the way to other seekers.

The declaration will no doubt be the cause of much surprise and questioning. We reproduce it here in its entirety and invite comment.

## BIOSOPHY AND CHARACTER-EDUCATION

By Frederick Kettner

### "BLOODLESS SURGERY"

Dr. Alfred Lorenz, 78-year-old Viennese exponent and practitioner of "bloodless surgery," is making his twelfth visit to America.

Dr. Lorenz first became generally known to Americans when he made a trip here years ago to treat Lolita Armour, little crippled daughter of the rich. Lolita was cured, grew to womanhood and was happily married. That was a celebrated case. But Dr. Lorenz used his skill on other afflicted children, obscure offspring of tenement families.

"All my life I have been straightening limbs," says Dr. Lorenz. "It is unfortunate that there is not also a method of straightening out the brains of men."

Perhaps there is. Only through selfishness and stupidity its development is slow and needlessly difficult. Certainly social science is turning more toward the attempt to "straighten out the brains of men."

It will be a great thing if American democracy shall discover and apply before it is too late, a "bloodless surgery" that will cure a crippled and now despairing society.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM,  
Saturday, January 21, 1933.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE ONLY way to "straighten out the brains of men" is to teach men to overcome their "selfishness" and to strive to improve their characters. This has always been the chief endeavor of the Spinoza Center. On the basis of this work we set forth in the ensuing essay the biosophical approach to a "bloodless" surgery that will cure a crippled and despairing society."

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### Part One

#### OBJECTIVE OF BIOSOPHY

Improvement of the individual character and the

## BIOSOPHY AND CHARACTER-EDUCATION

realization of a new group life based on the understanding of man's essential nature.

### PRINCIPLES

- a. Openmindedness
- b. Otherness
- c. Mutuality
- d. Thought-relationship
- e. Unselfishness
- f. Group-consciousness
- g. World-unity

### METHOD

#### I. Mind discipline:

- a. Discrimination between false, fictitious, doubtful and true ideas
- b. The endeavor to act according to true ideas.

#### II. The overcoming of:

- a. Fears
- b. Hatreds
- c. Prejudices—  
religious  
national  
racial  
class

#### III. The realization of mental and emotional stability by means of:

- a. Changing the mental and emotional conflicts into problems.
- b. Arriving at an impersonal attitude towards these problems.
- c. Developing higher character qualities.

#### IV. Study of each individual nature.

- a. The student is treated not only as a physical being, but also as an individual with an emotional, mental and spiritual nature.
- b. The students are encouraged to understand each other ethically and to regard each other's shortcomings as problems to be understood and solved.

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- c. The biosophical education leads toward friendships based on unselfishness and the liberation of self from the blind emotions which enslave men.

### Part Two

#### I

We are living in an era of advanced civilization, reaping the benefits of scientific research and discovery. But we are not yet taking advantage of the discoveries which biosophy has made. It is not difficult to understand why. Biosophy demands individual enterprise and effort and cannot be appreciated except by the active individual. In order to enjoy the moving pictures, the aeroplane, or the radio, man does not himself have to think biosophically. But in order to enjoy the ethical-social life, he must devote himself to an understanding of the principles presented in biosophy. Humanity is nevertheless on the way towards a new era, an era of creative individualism and higher culture. True, this new era is still but an ideal and not yet a reality. Yet it looms more imminent today than ever before.

The truly cultured society of the future will be founded on mutual understanding, unlike the civilization of today which seems to be founded on mutual misunderstanding. This latter situation exists because people know very little about the fundamental character of man, although very often indeed has the old saying "Know thyself" been quoted. Human beings have learned to satisfy their physical needs. Why shouldn't they seek to come to the realization of their spiritual needs? Such realization will serve as the basis for a new kind of life both individually and socially.

The so-called democratic life of today is based neither on true democracy nor on true life, because the education of

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the higher mind (integration) in man has been neglected thus far. There is neither fellowship nor friendship in human society because the existing economic-political order is not in harmony with biosophical principles. Our interests, in short, are centered only on things, while we continue to devise and create more and more things. But are we deeply interested in understanding the essentialities of life and of human nature? Are we concerned with the improvement of human character?

Human development that is not based on character improvement can scarcely be called true development. Men's interests have remained on the surface long enough. It is time to find out what man really is, and what man's goal in life should be. Were such their interests, they would no longer desire to have only their daily bread but would also seek to gain their daily freedom from all the evils prevalent in human society today.

The world is in great need of a new kind of pioneer. It needs men and women who can dare to experiment with their mental misconceptions in order to purify and improve their minds. It is not enough that men have learned to extract wealth from the soil. They must also learn to seek in the depths of their own nature in order to uncover the wealth within their souls. As the root, so the fruit. The flowers in the garden can grow only in watered soil; the flowers of freedom only in the thinking mind.

The majority of men are motivated only by the instinct of making a living. They are concerned mainly with the objects of sense. But man is something more than a mere sense creature. He is a thinking being, and as soon as he realizes the truth of this he becomes conscious of the fact that there are deeper realities in life.

Money, no doubt, is of value in our daily life, but certainly it is not one of the deeper realities. Our everyday



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life becomes miserable if we center all our thoughts and efforts on the accumulation of wealth. Money and the ordinary kinds of pleasure appear to be the highest goods. But appearance and reality are two different things. And to be in harmony with the highest reality—infinite reality or true Life (Bios)—man must learn to make use of his deeper insight and his deeper convictions. In order to understand the highest reality he must make use of the highest kind of knowledge (sophia). This is the chief aim of Biosophy. In my book *Spinoza the Biosopher* I define Biosophy as follows:

"By the term 'biosophy' I understand that science of life which follows from the realization of our substantial nature as the cause of higher principles, laws and qualities of which we can become conscious and which we can apply in the creation of an ethical-social fellowship." (p. 132).

### II

Biosophy concerns itself with mutual understanding and with the realization of ethical-social life—with the first, because mutual understanding is the means of making essential values practical; with the second, because true life is the sum total of real values. Our most difficult task as students of biosophy is to find an adequate answer to the problem: What do we want? By putting a few words together it is simple to formulate this question. It is not easy, however, to answer it.

And yet the question: "What do we want?" must be answered if we are to understand biosophy. An adequate solution, however, can be realized only through the courageous use of our intelligence or deeper mind. The great difficulty is that humanity seems to be inimical to the use of true intelligence. The popular course of actions is contained in the popular expression, "Never mind." In other

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words, "Never use your real mind. Do not act intelligently, but talk, talk, talk."

Is, then, the faculty of speech to remain the foundation of society?

Man has accomplished marvelous results in the field of technology. Only a short while ago, for instance, television, which was an impossibility for many years, has become a reality. But if we have been able to make technical impossibilities possible why should we not learn to make biosophical impossibilities possible? Why can we not learn to open our spiritual eyes and see the biosophical truth? Had man not opened his physical eyes, inventors would never have been able to create television. The world is not yet interested in wisdom, friendship and truth because people have not learned to open the eyes of their soul. We realize what blind persons could see if they were able to open their eyes. What could we not see if we opened our hearts! To do that would make the impossible possible. For millions of people, for instance, is not friendship the greatest impossibility? What must we do, then, in order to realize such an impossibility? First of all, we must have the desire to improve our inward condition and disposition. To accomplish this we must learn to distinguish between two varieties of results: the finite, external and visible results, and the infinite, internal, invisible results. The former have to do with our false selves; the latter with our true natures. The former have to do with appearance; the latter with reality.

Appearances necessarily lead to false judgments. To consider the objects of sense as being of the highest value is to fall subject to the illusion (described in Buddhism) of considering painted forms as real men and women. The true value of anything depends on its content, and not on its surface. The biosophical or deeper understanding of re-