



Mortimer J. Adler

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91

THE GREAT IDEAS ONLINE

If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people.

—*Chinese Proverb*

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Edited by Mortimer J. Adler & Charles Van Doren

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Nature and the Natural. The Nature of Life. Cause. Chance. Motion and Change. Space. Time. The Universe or Cosmos.

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The Distinguishing Features of Religion. Judaism. Christianity. Church. God. Gods and Goddesses. Angels and Devils. Worship and Service. Heresy and Unbelief. Prophecy. Miracles. Superstition. Sin and Temptation. Redemption and Salvation. Heaven and Hell.

BOOK REVIEWS

WONDERFUL!

Reviewer from Boston

The Great Treasury is, without a doubt, the most useful and interesting book I have in my possession (it is my father's, but I "acquire" it from time to time). Brimming with insight into just about everything, this compendium is essential to any scholar or "backyard philosopher" you know. It contains insight from almost every major philosopher, encapsulating many topics. It is also brilliantly indexed, and flipping to your topic of choice is simple and easy. I believe that it is an essential part of everyone's library, and if its presence is missing, then it should be bought.

A WORLD OF IDEAS

Reviewer from South Africa

This is a wonderful book for anyone interested in ideas and prepared to distill the essence of what has been thought on major topics. There are thousands of entries. (The index alone is some 350 pages.) It's far more than a book of quotations although that too. Few books contain such extensive extracts running to several pages of normal print. The content has been brilliantly categorized by theme and what I found invaluable was to sweep through history and notice the changing views of philosophers, essayists, and major poets over time. Virtually all the major western thinkers are featured. If you are interested in finding out what major thinkers thought, this could be your starting point. It'll take you three months to read through if you tackle the whole thing at a go as I did. Excellent value for money.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From some of the participants in our recent Online Seminar on the Great Idea of Equality:

Dear Max:

Kudos to you and Jay Gold on the outstanding job with the equality seminar. The participants did an excellent, if sometimes verbose, job of expressing their respective views.

I would suggest as further or complementary reading the recent work of Alan Dershowitz entitled "The Genesis of Justice" and the essay on equality in John Updike's "More Matters." There is also a book treating imprisonment which I cannot immediately find.

I did not participate because I was going to be away for part of the time and because I have eye and back problems at present. Also, frankly, because when I saw that the topic was equality, I hadn't a clue as to what it might encompass. The seminar did seem to wander at times, and I was surprised that no one reached the inevitable conclusion that life, being an inalienable and Creator given right, precludes abortion.

I was also surprised that no one pointed out that the three listed rights were not exclusive, and discuss what others there might be. Dr. Adler has said that Jefferson had it wrong and that men are equally created; not created equal. I don't recall that having been pointed out.

Someone asked if there were a transcript of the seminar q & a. I put all or most of it in WordPerfect and saved it. I could e-mail it to that person but I don't know who it is. Any suggestions?

As a lawyer I thought the observations on the judicial system were astute and the comments good. I didn't know the discussion was going to get so deeply into that area and perhaps I could have contributed to the common pool of knowledge.

I have purchased the latest Adler offering. It's like sailing the bounty main and finding a treasure chest with endless offerings, one more precious than the other. You have done an outstanding job of editing and organizing and this effort has enhanced the value.

I have also purchased a number of other works by Dr. Adler and am building a library of great value.

As for the Online issues, the Acrobat Reader and enhanced format is very nice. I do find that there is a lot of wasted space and this requires printing out more pages. Overall, it is an improvement though.

Thanks for allowing me the use of your valuable time.

Bob Heller

As a result of this seminar I have changed my opinion on capital punishment. I have been a staunch supporter of it all of my life. My support was predicated on revenge. I now know that it is morally wrong to take the life of another unless you are defending yourself or your family or country. I have Max and Jay and the participants to thank for that. I have thoroughly enjoyed this seminar and look forward to the next one.

Ken Beacon

Max and Jay,

I have gone a great distance in understanding the concepts of rights and equality, noted by the fact that my attitude towards the term "rights" is no longer immediately antagonistic.

My thanks for an inspiring and challenging seminar.

Janet Miller

Max & Jay,

Thank you for hosting and moderating this seminar -- a job well done. As in the past, my travel schedule made it impossible to participate actively. I could just keep up with reading the entries. Will this discussion be saved at some

online location that would allow one to reread the exchanges? I would be interested in reviewing the discussion.

Keep up the great work of making the Great Ideas accessible to all.

All the best,

Gary Schoepfel

My thanks to Mortimer, Max, Jay and all the rest of you. This was a useful and helpful discussion. I do wish that it could have been in person, but in spite of the difficulties, I would choose to do it again on another topic.

Have an enjoyable holiday weekend!

Richard Case

Thank you Max, Jay and all participants for another stimulating, enjoyable and profitable seminar.

Paul Harrison, South Australia

As others said, thank you for presenting and moderating these seminars. Even if such a discussion could be offered in-person locally, I suspect many of us would not be able to fit it into our (too?) busy schedules. And thanks to Mortimer Adler for a lifetime of work toward making philosophy everybody's business.

Terry Berres

Thanks for a lively and interesting debate. See you all next time.

Maria O'Ryan

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As always, we welcome your comments.
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