



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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### **MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.**

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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The importance of my self, 1951.

779

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MY SELF

December 2, 1951

When I announced my subject last Sunday morning, "The Importance of My Self", a dear old lady of 90 was heard saying, "I should like to come next Sunday morning to Temple because I should like to know a little more about the Rabbi." Well, I am not going to speak this morning about the importance of myself - or rather, I am going to speak this morning about the importance of my self and your self and everyone's self.

Principles, my dear friends, are important. Institutions are important. Systems are important. But most important of all is man himself. All principles and all institutions and all systems exist for man, and are determined by him. If man is regarded as insignificant and unimportant, then all these principles and institutions and systems have no point of reference. They become social aberrations, agencies of human degradation. On the other hand, if man himself is base and inferior, then his principles and his institutions and his systems will share in that baseness and inferiority.

Everything in our social life begins with man - I, you, he or she, individuals. The rabbis say that only one single man was created in the beginning of the world so that everyone will have the right to say, "For my sake was the whole world created." One human life is as important as the whole world. "He who preserves one human life," say the rabbis, "it is accounted unto him as if he preserved the whole world. He who destroys one human life, it is charged to him as if he destroyed the whole world." Man is equated with the whole world.

According to our tradition which, when not taken literally, reveals a profound spiritual truth always. Adam and every one of his descendants was created in the image of God. . Man is excelled, is preferred from among all created things because he was created in the image of God. And the rabbis say that he wisely, that this fact conferred upon man meant not only distinction and importance but uniqueness.



"Man stamps many coins with one die, and they are all like one to another. But God has stamped every man with the die of the first man, and yet not one of them is like his fellowman." There is difference, there is distinctiveness to every human being. Nevertheless, they must all be united in divine kinship, one with another.

Man is important and man is unique. "When a man goes on his way," say the sages, "a troop of angels precedes him, and they proclaim, 'Make way for the image of the Holy One, blessed be He'."

Emerson said the very same thing in another way. "There is a great responsible thinker and actor moving wherever moves a man." "A true man is the center of things." Now, man does not derive his importance from the fact that he is perfect. Man is not perfect. Man is limited in many ways. His days upon earth are few. He is born unto trouble. He is given to sin and to backsliding. No, his importance does not rest on the fact that he is a perfect being. In fact, he is full of imperfections. "What is Man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of Man that Thou takest cognizance of him?" Nevertheless, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels and hast crowned him with glory and honor."

In our sacred literature, dear friends, God always addressed himself to one single individual, the Man. Revelation was always personal, except the one revelation, according to our tradition, at Mt. Sinai, when it appeared to all those who stood at the foot of the mountain that God spoke directly to every one of them immediately, individually. The Ten Commandments were given by the One to the one. "I am the Lord, Thy God.... Thou shalt - thou shalt not! Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," Second person ~~is~~ singular.



And similarly, the true believer saw himself in a very direct and personal, unmediated relationship to his God. "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want..." "The Lord is my light and my salvation..." "I sought the Lord and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears." It's amazing when you read through the great book of Psalms, the outpouring of the religious soul of man, how much of it is written in the first person singular and directed towards God.

Every man is important, and not only the mind of man, not only the spirit of man, but the body of man, too, is important. The great Hillel once took leave of his disciples, and they asked him why he was leaving them for a time, and he said, "I am going to bathe. I am going to perform a pious deed." And they said to him, "Why, is this a pious deed?" "Why," he said, "certainly. Did you ever see the temples and the circuses of the pagans? They have there the images of their kings and their rulers, and they charge a man to wash those images, polish them out of respect for their idols, for their images. How much more so must I, who am made in the image of God, polish, wash my body, which is the temple of my soul in which the spirit of God resides."

All that is normal in man, that is unabused and unperverted of his desires, of his pleasures, are important, for they help to bring enjoyment and happiness and satisfactions in his life, and these enjoyments and satisfactions are important. They help to preserve his life normally and to preserve the order of things. Man is, of course, not an island unto himself. He is born into a family and becomes a member of a community, and he is subject to the influences of environment and heredity. He is inextricably linked to numerous relationships as son, daughter, brother or sister, husband or wife, father or mother, neighbor, friend, citizen. As a man develops and grows, the number and the variety of his associations and his identifications, his fellowships in his business, in his profession, in his vocation, multiply and extend. The more interests which a man comes to develop in life, cultural



or social, the more contact he makes, the more bonds he establishes, the more involvements and commitments ensue. A man becomes part of a veritable network of associations in which he must find outlet for himself and fulfillment as well as balance and harmony between the obligations demanded of each one of his relationships which at times are in conflict, one with another.

But always, in the midst of all these numerous connections and associations, always at the core of all things remains the Man himself and his undissolved and inviolate personality, the center of all things. Society is made up of individuals. The community is a fellowship of individuals. Governments exist to make secure the lives of individuals and to adjust their conflicting differences and to advance their common good.

Now, this has not always been the accepted doctrine, and in our day it has been most violently, and I am afraid, to a large degree, successfully challenged. Behind the totalitarian systems of Fascism and Nazism and Communism are doctrines and philosophies which either negate altogether or depreciate the importance of the individual, which exalt the all-importance of the State, of the community, of the collective. In varying degrees and emphases they all share this concept of the unconditional supremacy of the community over the individual, of the monolithic society, of the thorough coordination, the "Gleichschaltung" of all men.

Now, it is not that these new systems give society or the community priority over the interests of the individual. That, even democracies have to do, but after all, the very welfare and progress of the individual is contingent upon the progress and the preservation of the community as a whole. But these new philosophies, these pseudo-philosophies, claim for the community and for the group, for the collective - whatever it may be - a self-centeredness, an independence and sovereignty all of their own. They claim for them inherent rights, inherent authority, which they regard as prior to the rights not only of a given individual, but of all



individuals, or of a majority of the individuals. The individual to them is only a representative, an expression of the group. His life has meaning only as it is related to the all-dominant and overwhelming group. His rights derive from his group. He has no inalienable rights of his own. There is no primary and independent spiritual franchise for man in this system of thought. Man fulfills himself not through the development of his unique personality ~~and~~ or of his special endowments, through cooperative effort with fellow human beings, but man fulfills himself, according to this philosophy, through complete self-surrender, self-effacement, and the total immersion in some kind of tribalism, whether it be the tribalism of the "folk", of a blood cult, or a proletarian class, the tribalism of some closed group.

And as a corollary to all this, the sublimation of the collective and the subordination of the individual, there follows, of course, the doctrine of the omnipotent leader, fuehrer, duce, who becomes the true embodiment of the omnipotent state or society, and the unconditional obedience of everyone else. That, of course, is the basis of all forms of dictatorship. And dictatorship is the death of all the ideals of human equality and human freedom.

Now, these aberrations, these philosophies have had a great vogue in our generation. They are responsible for many disastrous political experiences in the world, including a tragic world war. Judaism has always waged war upon these concepts of the absolutist ruler and the transcendent and impeccable state. Judaism has always emphasized the importance of the individual and of Man himself. Man possesses certain rights which are his inalienably, which have been given him not by the state or by society or by the class, but by God, his creator. And all men and all races are equal in the sight of God, and are distinguished only by the merit which they achieve, by the worth which they acquire personally, by the service which they render to God and to mankind. And every man, whatever his race or his color,



every man, whatever his position in life, is precious in the sight of God. And every human being, however humble, is made secure within a law, within an inviolable moral law which is binding upon every one, whether he be king or nobleman or commoner, whether he be an individual or the collective. They are all subject to an over-arching law. The State can sin. The collective can do wrong. The King can sin, and the nobleman and the priest and the rich and the poor and the employer and the employee - they can all and do all sin. They are all accountable to a supreme, impartial, universal, eternal moral law. And every sinner is free to repent, to return, to be saved.

This new conception which is endangering our world, which is in defiance of the whole Judeo-Christian tradition, is properly characterized in this paragraph which I am reading to you from Bertrand Russell's little volume called "Authority and the Individual".

There are some among philosophers and statesmen who think that the state can have an excellence of its own, and not merely as a means to the welfare of the citizens. I cannot see any reason to agree with this view. "The state" is an abstraction; it does not feel pleasure or pain, it has no hopes or fears, and what we think of as its purposes are really the purposes of individuals who direct it. When we think concretely, not abstractly, we find, in place of "the state", certain people who have more power than falls to the share of most men. And so glorification of the "state" turns out to be, in fact, glorification of a government minority. No democrat can tolerate such a fundamentally unjust theory.

Well, today the status of the individual is endangered by this concept of the omnipotent state. There were other ages in which this status of the individual was endangered by other social or even theologic considerations. There were those theologians who endeavored to exalt to such heights the omni-importance of God, and so they reduced man to a state of utter abject lowliness and worthlessness. We find that point of view held by religious people from time to time challenged in the book of Job. Then Job refuses to justify the ways of God by charging himself with sins which he knows he did not commit and which his friends are endeavoring to persuade



him that he must have secretly, knowingly or unknowingly, committed. Job would not do violence to the integrity of his own personality in order to vindicate the justice of omnipotence.

In the sight of God, I am important, you are important, to a degree undreamt of in modern society where the individual is being reduced to an automaton, to a robot, to a frightened and abashed subject, in a ruthlessly domineering society.

Well, the importance which my religion ascribes to me, dear friends, and to you does not derive from place or position, from wealth or ancestry. These are badges which men display from time to time to impress their fellow-men. But intrinsically they are not indices of importance. Importance stems from within, from character, from our intellectual and spiritual aspirations. It wells up from the internal seas of our personality. A radiant soul is a man's true dignity and is the real testament of his importance to himself and to society.

"It is not the place which a man occupies"

"It is the man

who honors the place." The "importance of my self is to be found in what I earnestly and sincerely and worthily try to do - that's what makes me important."

Now, being important and feeling myself important does not mean feeling myself self-important or self-satisfied, self-sufficient, proud. God hates pride and arrogance. And so do men. Man's pride will bring him low. A man who is aware of his importance to himself and to others will have the imagination to be humble. "The greater thou art, we read in the book of the Apochrypha, "the more humble thyself. Thy shalt find favor before the Lord."

Torah,

learning, wisdom are acquired through humility. Now, humility is neither weakness nor self-effacement. Humility does not derive from timidity or servility, but from strength and wisdom. Humility, in the last analysis, is a kind of reverence in the sight of the majesty and the mystery of all that is baffling and unpredictable and impenetrable and glorious in life and nature and man. Humility is that kind of



reverence in the presence of one's own place and role in this tangled skein of things, reverence in the presence of our own baffling personal destiny.

And so a wise man is a humble man, a modest man. Now, a modest man is not a leaning willow. A modest man can be tempered steel. He knows his worth and will not permit anyone to trespass upon the sacred precepts of ~~his~~ being. But a modest man will never give offense by thrusting his self-estimate upon others, nor will he stultify himself or impede himself or embarrass himself socially by egotism because egotism is really only the ugly rash of personality small-pox.

Because I am important, much is expected of me and much must I expect of myself. I must live up to the promise and the challenge of my life. I must educate myself to the utmost and to the very end. I must explore every cranny of my heart and of my mind for no one knows his own true resources until he has explored them. You never know what you are, what you are capable of, until you have tried to find out.

Because I regard myself as important, I respect myself. Reverence of self is the beginning of all virtue. Because I revere myself, I have reverence for my being, I will try not to stoop, not to truckle under, not to be cheap, not to sell myself cheap, not to do the things which degrade - not out of fear of being found out or fear of punishment, but out of reverence for myself or the God that is in me. Because I think myself important, I will try to rely on myself at all times until the utmost, drawing upon my own confident strength as far as possible, remembering always, of course, that often we need the help or the strength of others. I must therefore be prepared to share my strength with others when they need it. No man is completely sufficient unto himself. But one must not build his life upon the backs of others, nor must one in every crisis of his life, rely upon others, and failing to rely upon himself, to resign himself to utter defeat.



Because I think of my life as important, I will on occasions make sacrifices for other lives which I regard as as important and perhaps more important than mine. Noblesse oblige. To be noble is to act nobly. Nevertheless, I will refuse to make needless sacrifices for the sake of others who may be less important and for causes which I regard as less important than myself. I will refuse to be exploited by others who would live off me, and I see no reason for sacrificing myself for others. My life is as important as the life of my neighbor.

I will live for myself, but in so doing, I must live for others.

not  
"If I am/for myself, who will be for me?"

"But if I am for myself only, what am I?" Because I regard myself as important, I must learn to stand alone sometimes and to differ with the people about me. When my convictions run counter to theirs, I must learn to defend my ideas, once I have assured myself of their validity, of their tenuousness - I must learn to defend them. I must learn to speak the truth in kindness, to be sure, but always to speak the truth. It is sometimes imperative for the salvation of my soul and for the vindication of myself to defy the whole world. I must learn the importance of being important. "In the place where there are no men," said Hillel, "strive thou to be a man," - to be thee man. And when we are once constrained to do just that and the world's displeasures are visited upon us, we must learn to suffer and endure indignity as befits the son of God.

Now, in this vast impressive world in which we find ourselves, dear friends, we are prone to think of ourselves as more or less helpless human beings. What can we do about all that is wrong in the world today? What can I personally do? I can do nothing. Many people feel that way about it. They are overwhelmed by the machinery, by the apparatus, by the organization, by the scale and mass of everything about them. They regard themselves inadequate to affect the course of things.



That, of course, is the end of democracy and of freedom in the world, and that is the end of the development of human personality. We ought to remember at all times that whatever is done in this world is done by men like ourselves, for good or evil, for weal or woe; whatever happens in this world is the work of human beings, of men.

The Stalins and the Hitlers and the Mussolinis are just ordinary human beings, ordinary in terms of the common destiny which they share as human beings with all other human beings. And so are the great and the good of the world who have helped to advance the progress of mankind. They, too, are human beings like ourselves.

We must not depreciate ourselves, our importance. We can affect the course of things if only within the little world in which we move and have our being, within the circumference of our life's influence, and of tens and thousands and millions of other human beings because aware of the strength which is in them and pool their strength together, that force becomes colossal and irresistible. We owe it to ourselves to regard ourselves important and then to proceed to acquaint ourselves with all that is happening about us, to ascertain the facts, not to be victimized by propaganda, not to howl with the mob, not to be stampeded by slogans and catchwords - that is, to sacrifice your individuality, but to sift, screen, test and analyze to the best of your ability everything that you see or hear or read. Not everything that you read in the columns of your newspapers or hear over the radio is so. Much of it isn't so at all. Much of it is only partially so. Use your knowledge, your insight, your wisdom, your moral sense to weight and measure and balance and arrive at your own conclusions, and when you have arrived at conclusions, then learn to speak up - speak up unafraid. You will inspire others to do likewise. When the voices of men of good will are heard in the world, the action of the dark forces may be checked.



Organize with other men and women and express your power through your ballot, through other vehicles and agencies available to you. Activate your personality! Give it social significance by active participation in the life of your community, of your city, of your state, of your government. Because of our weakness, because we are accepting that which the dictators of the world want us to accept, that individually we are of no account, can do nothing, we have been prone to shake off our personal responsibilities by loading our government with all that's wrong in the world today. Whenever we find anything wrong, we blame authorities & the state government or national government. Well, it isn't that they are free of all blame - far from it! But after all, in the last analysis, if there is anything wrong in the world, if there is anything wrong in government, which is permitted to endure for long, the wrong is with ourselves - us, you and me, individuals - and therefore, we must begin the improvement of society with ourselves. We must go back to the idea the the moral injunctions were given to us as individuals. "Thou shalt! Thou shalt not!"

And so perhaps our age needs a new emphasis today. The emphasis of the individual, the importance of the individual, the dignity of the individual life, the inviolability of personality - but at the same time, the mandates and the sanctions and the duties, the compelling duties incumbent upon the individual, to do what he can, to make straight all that is crooked, and to set right what is wrong in the world.



1) Principles are important. Institutions are important. Systems are important. But most important of all is Man. (1)

all pre-wired systems exist for Man - and are determined by Man.

If Man is regarded as unimportant and unsignificant - that they  
 have no point of reference  
prim-wit-system where social alternatives - agencies of world  
 If Man is weak - base - inferior - so will be the prim-wit system

2/ Every thing <sup>in my social life</sup> ~~they~~ was with Mam - "I - Jan - He - She" - both the ind. d. -

"Only one single man was created in the world, so that every one will have the right to say: 'For any sake was the world created'"

Our human life is as important as the whole creation. He who pre-  
serves one human life it is accounted to him as if he had preserved  
the whole world. He who destroys ... "Man is equated with the whole world"  
פס' 2 לזכ' פס' 2127

the whole world. He who destroys ...  
 Adam +: every one of his descendants  
 Every man was created in the image of God & that conferred upon  
 him not only importance - but also uniqueness - destiny -

"Man stamps many coins with one die, and they are all like to one another: but God has stamped every man with the die of the first man - yet not one, there is like his fellow. Diff. & distinct - yet united in divine kinship one with another."

Man is important and unique - When a man goes on his way  
a troop of angels precedes in front of him and proclaims: "Make way  
for the unique, the Holy One, Blessed is He" אֲנִי ה' יְהוָה יְהוָה יְהוָה

Emerson  
"There is a great reformable Therapist and Actor moving wherever

3/ In an "Ishered" like. God addressed himself always to an individual -

\* Revelation was personal - (except the revelation at Sinai when it appeared to them present as if God spoke to each and every one, then directly & individually) +

Ab 10 cm - are proven ~~in~~ by the law to every one individual.



"I am the Lord, thy God - Thou shalt - thou shalt not!" (Exodus 20:1-3)

4/ Similarly the believer saw himself in a very direct, personal and unmediated relationship to his God. "The Lord is my Shepherd" "I shall not want" ... "The Lord is my light and my salvation."

"I sought the Lord, and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears." Everything about Man is important. His body is well on this world - He is born into a family and becomes a member of a community. He is subject to the influences of environment and heredity. He is inextricably linked to numerous relationships - son (or daughter), brother (or sister), husband (or wife), father (or mother), friend, citizen. He is as he develops and grows the members of his various associations - identical teachers and philosophers and others who are involved in his life and development. The more interests which a man comes to develop and extend, the more contacts he needs, the more involvement and commitments come - He becomes part of a veritable network of associations wherein he must find outlet for his life, for his self-expression, as well as balance and harmony between the conflicting obligations demanded of him by each of his associations which are at times in conflict with one another.

6/ But always there remains at the core of all these commitments and associations the Man himself, with his underlying superior and individual personality. "the center of all things". Society is made up of individuals in the community is a fellowship of units - each exists to make secure the life and well-being and to adapt their conflicting interests and advance their common good.

7/ This has not always been the accepted doctrine - and in our day it has been voluntarily and successfully











11). Being & feeling <sup>myself</sup> ~~important~~ important does not mean feeling ~~myself~~ <sup>myself</sup> ~~important~~ self-important - ~~self~~ - self-satisfied - self-referential - proud.  
- Gods hate pride and arrogance - and so do men!

And a man's pride shall bring him down!

A man who is aware of his importance to himself - and to others has the imagination to be humble. "The greater man humbles himself."  
"The greater thou art, the more humble thyself, and thou shalt find favor before the Lord!"

Humility is ~~not~~ neither weakness nor self debasement. It derives not from timidity or servility but from strength, ~~and~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~idol~~ <sup>reverence</sup> in the sight of the majesty and the mystery ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> all that is baffling, unfathomable, unpredictable and glorious in life, nature and man, and of his own place and role in the ~~scheme~~ <sup>targeted story</sup> of things, and of his own baffling destiny.

A modest man <sup>Casper M. Eggen</sup> is not a ~~clever~~ <sup>clever</sup> willow. He can be tempted ~~steal~~ <sup>steal</sup>. He knows his own worth - and will not permit anyone to ~~boast~~ <sup>boast</sup> when the need ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> his ~~personality~~ <sup>being</sup> - but he will not ~~boast~~ <sup>boast</sup> of his ~~personality~~ <sup>personality</sup> by ~~thrusting~~ <sup>thrusting</sup> his self-esteem upon others - nor will he ~~insult~~ <sup>insult</sup> himself ~~with~~ <sup>with</sup> egotism - which is the ~~very~~ <sup>very</sup> ~~personality~~ <sup>personality</sup> ~~small-pox~~ <sup>small-pox</sup>!!

12). Because I am important, much is expected of me and much must I expect myself.

- I must live up to the promise and challenge of my life.
- I must educate myself to the utmost and to the very end.
- I must explore every corner of my heart and mind and the man knows one's true resources until one has



fully explored them  
I will rely on myself to the utmost - drawing upon my  
strength as far as possible - remembering always, however,  
that often we must need the help of others - and must  
share our strength with others when they need it. No man  
is completely sufficient unto himself. - But one must not  
begin by building his life on the backs of others - and in only  
crisis rely upon others, or else resign in silent defeat.

11. ~~Make sacrifices~~ - needs sacrifice - for people recognize but understand them  
- if, n, i, n, c, n, c, p, l, c  
To differ

13. I must learn to stand alone - when necessary -  
with the people about me - when my convictions run  
counter to theirs - we must defend our ideas, once we have assumed  
I must learn to speak the truth in kindness - but to  
speak the truth!

It is sometimes imperative for the salvation of your soul  
to defy the world - (also public place)  
I must learn the importance of being independent  
- And when, as we are constrained to do that, and the world's  
displeasure is visited upon us - we must learn to suffer  
and endure in dignity - as befits a ~~child~~ / God.

14. To-day - Imperial world - What can I do?  
- revolution is due - is the work of my hands -  
- Begin improvement of society with myself -  
- ~~organize~~ - ~~Vote~~ -  
- ~~organize~~ - ~~Vote~~ -  
- ~~organize~~ - ~~Vote~~ -



Herod left his disciples: - "Whither are you going?"

To execute a prison deed! What may that be?

To bathe! - Is that a prison deed?

"Men are appointed to polish and work the images of  
Kings whose are set up in theatres and circuses - and  
are rewarded for it -

Why should not I work and polish my body, I who  
have been created in the divine image and likeness

Body is Temple, Soul!

= How different - despised Body - Soul caught in  
the defiling corruption, the body - - aim to purify  
1. John



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THE IMPORTANCE OF MYSELF

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Sermon, The Temple,  
December 2, 1951

Principles are important. Institutions are important. Systems are important. But most important of all is man himself. All principles, institutions, and systems exist for man, and are determined by him. If man is regarded as insignificant and unimportant, then all these principles and institutions and systems have no point of reference. They become social aberrations, agencies of human degradation. On the other hand, if man himself is base and inferior, then his principles and his institutions and his systems will share in that baseness and inferiority.

The rabbis say that only one single man <sup>was</sup> created in the beginning of the world so that everyone will have the right to say, "for my sake was the whole world created." One human life is as important as the whole world. "He who preserves one human life, it is accounted unto him as if he preserved the whole world. He who destroys one human life, it is charged to him as if he destroyed the whole world." Man is equated with the whole world.

According to our tradition, Adam and every one of his descendants <sup>were</sup> created in the image of God. Man is preferred from among all created things because he was created in the image of God. And the rabbis say that creation conferred upon man not only distinction and importance, but uniqueness. "Men stamp many coins with one die, and they are all like to one another. But God has stamped every man with the die of the first man, and yet not one of them is like his fellow-man." There is difference, there is distinctiveness to every human being. Nevertheless, they must all be united in divine <sup>K</sup> kinship, one with another. Man is important and man is unique. "When a man goes on his way," say the sages, "a troop of angels precedes <sup>him</sup>, and they proclaim, 'Make way for the image of the Holy One, blessed be He.'"

Emerson said the very same thing in another way. "There is a great responsible <sup>thinker</sup> and actor moving wherever moves a man." "A true man is the center of things." Now, man does not derive his importance from the fact that he is perfect. Man is not perfect. Man is limited in many ways. His days upon earth are few. He is born unto trouble. He is given to sin and backsliding. His importance



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does not rest on the fact that he is a perfect being; in fact he is full of imperfections. "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou takest cognizance of him?" Nevertheless, "Thou hast ~~made~~ made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor."

In our sacred literature, God always addressed Himself to the single individual, the man. Revelation is always personal, except the one revelation at <sup>Mount</sup> Mt. Sinai, when it appeared to all those who stood at the foot of the mountain. God spoke ~~and~~ directly to every one of them. The Ten Commandments were given by the One to the one. "I am the Lord, thy God..." "Thou shalt..." "Thou shalt not..." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Second person singular.

Similarly, the true believer saw himself in a direct, <sup>personal</sup> and unmediated relationship to <sup>his</sup> God. "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want..." "The Lord is my light and my salvation..." "I sought the Lord and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears." It is amazing when you read through the book of Psalms, the outpouring of the religious soul of man, how much of it is written in the first person singular, and directed towards God.

Every man is important, and not only ~~in~~ the mind of man, not only ~~in~~ the spirit of man, but ~~in~~ the body of man, too, is important. <sup>Once, as</sup> Hillel <sup>was</sup> once <sup>taking</sup> leave of his disciples, They asked him why he was leaving them, and he said, "I am going to bathe. I am going to perform a pious deed." And they asked him, "Is bathing a pious deed?" "Why," he said, "certainly. Have you ever seen the temples and the circuses of the pagans? They have there the images of their kings and their rulers, and they charge a man to wash those images, and polish them out of respect <sup>for</sup> their subject. How much more so must I, who am ~~made~~ made in the image of God, polish and wash my body, in which the spirit of God resides."

All that is normal in man, his unabused and unperverted desires, and pleasures, are important. They help to bring happiness and satisfactions to his life, and these enjoyments and satisfactions are important. They help to <sup>keep</sup> preserve



his life normally and to preserve the order of things. Man is, of course, not an island unto himself. He is born into a family, and becomes a member of a community, and is subject to the influence of environment and heredity. He is inextricably linked to numerous relationships as son <sup>or</sup> daughter, brother or sister, husband or wife, father or mother, neighbor, friend, citizen. As a man develops and grows, the number and the variety of his associations and his identifications, his fellowships in his business, in his professions, in his vocation, multiply and extend. The more interests which a man develops, cultural, or social, the more contacts he makes, the more bonds he establishes, the more involvements and commitments ensue. A man becomes part of a veritable network of associations in which he must find outlet for himself and fulfillment <sup>for himself</sup> as well as balance and harmony between the <sup>obligations</sup> obligations demanded of each relationship.

But always, in the midst of all these numerous connections and associations, always at the core of all things, remains the man himself and his undissolved, inviolate personality. Society is made up of individuals. The community is a fellowship of individuals. Governments exist to make secure the lives of individuals, and to adjust their conflicting differences and to advance their common good.

This has not always been the accepted doctrine, and in our day and, it has been most violently, I am afraid, to a large degree successfully, challenged. Behind the totalitarian systems of Fascism and Nazism and Communism are doctrines and philosophies which either negate altogether or depreciate the importance of the individual, which exalt the all-importance of the State, the community, the collective. In varying degrees and emphases <sup>these systems</sup> they all share this concept of the unconditional supremacy of the community over the individual, of the monolithic society, of the thorough coordination, of the "Gleichschaltung" of all men.

It is not <sup>just</sup> that these new systems give society or the community priority over the interests of the individuals. That, even democracies have to do. After all, the welfare and progress of the individual is contingent upon the progress and the preservation of the community as a whole. Rather, these new philosophies,



these pseudo-philosophies, claim for the ~~community~~ community and for the group, for the collective - whatever it may be - supreme independence and sovereignty. They claim for them inherent rights, inherent authority, which they regard as prior to the rights ~~of~~ not only of a given individual, but of all individuals. The individual to them is only an expression of the group. His life has meaning only as it is related to the all-dominant and overwhelming group. His rights ~~derive~~ <sup>derive</sup> from his group. He has no inalienable rights of his own. There is no primary and independent spiritual ~~franchise~~ <sup>franchise</sup> for man in this system of thought. Man fulfills himself not through the development of his unique personality or his special endowments, or through cooperative effort with fellow human beings; but man fulfills himself, according to this philosophy, through complete self-surrender, self-effacement, and the total immersion <sup>in</sup> ~~in~~ some kind of tribalism, whether it be the tribalism of the "folk", of a blood cult, <sup>of</sup> a proletarian class, or ~~the tribalism~~ <sup>other</sup> of some closed group.

Start: As a corollary to the exaltation of the collective and the subordination of the individual, there follows the doctrine of the omnipotent leader, fuehrer, duce, who becomes the embodiment of the omnipotent state or society, demanding the unconditional obedience <sup>of</sup> ~~of~~ everyone else. This theory is the basis of all concepts of dictatorship. And dictatorship spells ~~the~~ death to all the ideals of human equality and human freedom.

These aberrations have had a great vogue in our generation. They are responsible for many disastrous political experiences in the world, including a tragic world war. Judaism has always waged war upon the concept of the absolutist ruler and of the transcendent <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ impeccable state. Judaism <sup>has always</sup> emphasized the importance of the individual, of man himself. Man possesses certain rights which are his inalienably, which have been given him not by the state or by society or by the class, but by God, his creator. All men and all races are equal in the sight of God, and are distinguished only by the merit which they achieve, by the worth which they acquire personally, by the service which they render to God and to mankind. Every man, whatever his race or color,



every man, whatever his position in life, is precious in the sight of God. Every human being, however humble, is to be made secure within <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ law, within an inviolable moral law which is binding upon every one, whether he be a king or nobleman or commoner, whether he be an individual or the collective. The state can err. The collective can do wrong. The king can sin and the nobleman and the priest and the rich and the poor and the employer and the employee <sup>m</sup> they all can, and all do, sin. They are all accountable to a <sup>supreme</sup> ~~surpeme~~, impartial, universal, eternal moral law. And every sinner is free to repent, to return, to be saved.

This <sup>of the supremacy of the state</sup> new conception, which is endangering our world, and is in defiance of the whole biblical tradition, is properly characterized in this paragraph from Bertrand Russell's little volume "Authority and the individual":

extract

There are some philosophers and statesmen who think that the state can have <sup>an</sup> excellence of its own, and not merely as a means to the welfare of the citizens. I cannot see any reason to agree with this view. "The state" is an abstraction; it does not feel pleasure or pain, it has no hopes or fears, and what we think of as its purposes are really the purposes of individuals who direct it. When we think concretely, not abstractly, we find, in place of "the state", certain people who have more power than falls to the share of most men. And so glorification of "the state" turns out to be, in fact, glorification of a government minority. No democrat can tolerate such a fundamentally unjust theory.

Today the status of the individual is endangered by this concept of the omnipotent state. There were other ages ~~when~~ in which the status of the individual was endangered by other social or even theological considerations. There were theologians who endeavored to ~~exalt~~ exalt the omnipotence of God to such heights that they reduced man to a state of abject lowliness and worthlessness. We find that point of view challenged in the Book of Job. Job refuses to justify the ways of God by charging himself with sins which he knows he did not commit and which his friends are endeavoring to persuade him <sup>m</sup> that he must have, secretly, knowingly or unknowingly, committed. Job would not do violence to the integrity of his own personality in order to vindicate the justice of omnipotence.



~~...that is, in the sight of God, I am important, you are important, to a degree undreamt of in modern society, where the individual is being reduced to an automaton, to a robot, to a frightened and abashed subject, in a ruthlessly domineering society.~~

~~...the importance which my religion ascribes to me and to you does not derive from place or position, from wealth or ancestry. These are badges which men display from time to time to impress their fellow men. But Intrinsically they are not indices of importance. Importance stems from within, from character, from our intellectual and spiritual aspirations. It wells up from the internal seas of our personality. A radiant soul is man's true dignity and is the real testament of his importance to himself and to society.~~

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"It is not the place which a man occupies, ~~אלא הוא מכבד את מקומו~~ it is the man who honors the place." <sup>My</sup> ~~The~~ importance of myself is to be found in what I earnestly and sincerely and worthily try to do, ~~that is what makes me important.~~

Being important and feeling myself important does not mean feeling ~~self~~ self-important or self-satisfied, self-sufficient, <sup>or</sup> proud. God hates pride and arrogance. And so do men. Man's pride will bring him low. A man who is aware of his importance to himself and to others will have the imagination to be humble.

"The greater ~~thou~~ thou art", we read in the Apocrypha, "the more humble thyself. Thou shalt find favor before the Lord."

<sup>and</sup> wisdom are acquired through humility. Humility is neither weakness nor self-~~ef~~ <sup>face</sup>ment. Humility does not derive from timidity or servility, but from strength and wisdom. Humility, in the last analysis, is a kind of reverence <sup>before</sup> ~~to the sight~~ of the majesty and the mystery of all that is baffling, and unpredictable and impenetrable and glorious in life and nature and man. Humility is <sup>a</sup> ~~that~~ kind of



reverence in the presence of one's own place and role in this tangled skein of things, reverence in the presence of our own baffling ~~personal~~ destiny.

~~And~~ So a wise man is a humble man, a modest man. Now, a modest man is not a leaning willow. A modest man can be tempered steel. He knows his worth and will not permit anyone to trespass upon the sacred precepts of his being. But a modest man will never give offense by thrusting his self-estimate upon others, nor will he stultify himself or impede himself or embarrass himself socially by egotism, because egotism is really only the ugly rash of personality small-pox.

Because I am important, much is expected of me and much must I expect of myself. I must live up to the promise and the challenge of my life. I must educate myself to the utmost, ~~and to the very end.~~ I must explore every cranny of my heart and of my mind, for no one knows his ~~own~~ true resources until he has explored them. ~~You never know what you are, what you are capable of, until you have tried to find out.~~

Because I regard myself as important, I respect myself. Reverence of self is the beginning of all virtue. Because I revere myself, I have reverence for my being. I will try not to stoop, not to truckle under, not to be cheap, not to sell myself cheap, not to do the things which degrade <sup>me</sup> not out of fear of being found out or fear of punishment, but out of reverence for myself <sup>and of</sup> the God that is in me. Because I think myself important, I will try to rely on myself <sup>to</sup> ~~at all times until~~ the utmost, drawing upon my own confident strength as far as possible, remembering always, of course, that often we need the help or the strength of others. I must therefore be prepared to share my strength with others when they need it. No man is <sup>self-</sup> ~~completely~~ sufficient, ~~unto himself.~~ But one must not build his life upon the backs of others, nor must one in every crisis of his life, rely upon others, and, failing to rely upon himself, ~~to~~ resign himself to ~~the~~ defeat.



Because I think of my life as important, I will on occasions make sacrifices for other lives which I regard ~~as~~ as important as, and perhaps more important than, mine. ~~Noblesse oblige. To be noble is to act nobly.~~ Nevertheless, I will refuse to make needless sacrifices for the sake of others who may be less important and for causes which I <sup>disesteem</sup> ~~regard as less important than myself.~~ I will refuse to be exploited by others who would live off me, ~~and I see no reason for sacrificing myself for others.~~ My life is as important as the life of my neighbor.

I will live for myself, but in so doing, I must live for others. ~~וְאֵין אֶחָד מֵעָמָי לְעַצְמוֹ~~  
"If I am not for myself, who will be for me?"

But if I am only for myself, what am I?" Because I regard myself as important, I must learn to stand alone sometimes and to differ with the people about me. When my convictions run counter to theirs, I must learn to defend my ideas, once I have assured myself of their validity, ~~of their tenuousness,~~ I must learn to defend them. I must learn to speak the truth, in kindness, to be sure, but always to speak the truth. It is sometimes imperative for the salvation of my soul and for the vindication of myself to defy the whole world. I must learn the importance of being important. "In the place where there are no men," said Hillel, "strive thou to be a man", to be the man. And when we are ~~once~~ constrained to do just that and the world's displeasures are visited upon us, we must learn to suffer and endure indignity as befits <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ son of God.

Now, in this vast, impressive world in which <sup>we</sup> ~~we~~ find ourselves, we are prone to think of ourselves as more or less helpless ~~human~~ beings. What can we do about all that is wrong in the world today? What can I personally do? I can do nothing. Many people feel that way about it. They are overwhelmed by the machinery, by the apparatus, by the organization, by <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ scale and mass of everything around them. They <sup>believe</sup> ~~regard~~ themselves inadequate to <sup>a</sup> ~~effect~~ the course of things.



This kind of

*Resignation*

<sup>it</sup> ~~That, of course,~~ is the end of democracy and of freedom ~~in the world, and~~ <sup>and</sup> that is the end of the development of human personality. We ought to remember at all times that whatever is done in this world is done by men like ourselves, for good or evil, for weal or woe; whatever happens in this world is the work of human beings, of men.

The Stalins and the Hitlers and the Mussolinis <sup>is</sup> are just ordinary human beings, ordinary in terms of the common destiny which they share as human beings with all other human beings. ~~And so~~ <sup>men</sup> are the great and the good of the world who have helped to advance <sup>our civilization,</sup> ~~the progress of mankind.~~ They, too, are human beings like ourselves.

We must not depreciate ourselves <sup>nor</sup> our importance. We can affect the course of things, if only within the little world in which we move and have our being, within the circumference of our life's influence, ~~and it is~~ <sup>if it is</sup> and thousands and millions of other human beings <sup>become</sup> ~~become~~ aware of the strength which is in them and <sup>pour out their</sup> ~~pour their~~ strength ~~together~~, that force becomes colossal and irresistible. We <sup>owe</sup> ~~owe~~ it to ourselves to regard ourselves <sup>as</sup> ~~important~~, <sup>and</sup> then to proceed to acquaint ourselves with all that is happening about us, to ascertain the facts; <sup>not</sup> ~~not~~ to be victimized by propaganda, not to howl with the mob, not to be stampeded by slogans and catchwords <sup>not</sup> that is, <sup>not</sup> to sacrifice your individuality, but to sift, screen, test, and analyze to the best of your ability everything that <sup>we</sup> ~~we~~ see or hear or read. Not everything <sup>we</sup> ~~that you~~ read in the columns of your newspapers or hear over the radio is so. Much of it isn't so at all. Much of it is only partially so. Use your knowledge, your insight, your wisdom, your moral sense to weigh and measure and balance and arrive at your own conclusions, and when you have arrived at conclusions, then learn to speak up <sup>and</sup> speak up unafraid. You will inspire others to do likewise. When the voices of men of good will are heard in the world, the action of the dark forces may be checked.



Organize with other men and women and express your power through your ballot, through other vehicles and agencies available to you. Activate your personality! Give it social significance by active participation in the life of your community, of your city, of your state, of your government. ~~Because of our weakness,~~ ~~1st~~  
 Because we are accepting <sup>what</sup> ~~that~~ which the dictators of the world want us to accept, <sup>namely,</sup>  
 that individually we are of no account, can do nothing, we have been prone to shake off our personal responsibilities by loading ~~our~~ government with all that <sup>is</sup> wrong in the world today. Whenever we find anything wrong, we blame authorities <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ state, ~~government or national government.~~ Well, it <sup>is not</sup> ~~is not~~ that they are free of all blame <sup>But</sup> ~~far from it!~~ ~~But after all,~~ in the last analysis, if there is anything wrong in the world, if there is anything wrong in government, which is permitted to endure for long, the wrong is with ourselves - us, you and me, individuals - and therefore, we must begin the improvement of society with ourselves. ~~We must go back to the idea~~ ~~the~~ the moral injunctions were given to us as individuals. "Thou shalt!" "Thou shalt not!"

And so perhaps our age needs a new emphasis today. <sup>on</sup> The emphasis of the individual, the importance of the individual, the dignity of the individual life, the inviolability of personality - but at the same time, <sup>The emphasis on</sup> the mandates and the sanctions and the duties, the compelling duties incumbent upon the individual, to do what he can, to make straight all that is crooked, and to set right what is wrong in the world.



A

~~(Begin at:~~ "Principles are important. Institutions are important.

The Rabbis say that only one single man was created in the beginning

According to our tradition, Adam and every one of his descendants

Man is אדם ח'פ'ק הארץ א.א.א.

excelled, is preferred from among all created things because he was created in the image of God. And the rabbis say that this fact conferred upon man meant not only distinction and importance, but uniqueness.



"Man stamps many coins with one die, and they are all like one to another. But God has stamped every man with the die of the first man, and yet not one of them is like his fellowman." There is difference, there is distinctiveness to every human being. Nevertheless, they must all be united in divine kinship, one with another.

Man is important and man is unique. "When a man goes on his way," say the sages, "a troop of angels precedes him, and they proclaim, 'Make way for the image of the Holy One, blessed be He'."

Emerson said the very same thing in another way. "There is a great responsible thinker and actor moving wherever moves a man." "A true man is the center of things." Now, man does not derive his importance from the fact that he is perfect. Man is not perfect. Man is limited in many ways. His days upon earth are few. He is born unto trouble. He is given to sin and to backsliding. No, his importance ~~does not rest on the fact that he is a perfect being.~~ In fact, he is full of imperfections. "What is Man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of Man that Thou takest cognizance of him?" Nevertheless, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels and hast crowned him with glory and honor."

In our sacred literature, ~~dear friends,~~ God always addressed himself to one single individual, the Man. Revelation was always personal, except the one revelation, according to our tradition, at Mt. Sinai, when it appeared to all those who stood at the foot of the mountain, ~~that God spoke directly to every one of them immediately, individually.~~ The Ten Commandments were given by the One to the one. "I am the Lord, Thy God.... Thou shalt - thou shalt not! Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Second person singular.



And similarly, the true believer saw himself in a very direct and personal, unmediated relationship to his God. "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want..." "The Lord is my light and my salvation..." "I sought the Lord and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears." It's amazing when you read through the great book of Psalms, the outpouring of the religious soul of man, how much of it is written in the first person singular and directed towards God.

Every man is important, and not only the mind of man, not only the spirit of man, but the body of man, too, is important. The great Hillel once took leave of his disciples, and they asked him why he was leaving them for a time, and he said, "I am going to bathe. I am going to perform a pious deed." And they said to him, "Why, is this a pious deed?" "Why," he said, "certainly. Did you ever see the temples and the circuses of the pagans? They have there the images of their kings and their rulers, and they charge a man to wash those images, polish them out of respect for their idols, for their images. How much more so must I, who am made in the image of God, polish, wash my body, which is the temple of my soul in which the spirit of God resides."

All that is normal in man, that <sup>his</sup> is unabused and unperverted of his desires, ~~and~~ of his pleasures, are important, for they help to bring enjoyment and happiness and satisfactions <sup>to</sup> in his life, and these enjoyments and satisfactions are important. They help to preserve his life normally and to preserve the order of things. Man is, of course, not an island unto himself. He is born into a family and becomes a member of a community, and he is subject to the influences of environment and heredity. He is inextricably linked to numerous relationships as son, daughter, brother or sister, husband or wife, father or mother, neighbor, friend, citizen. As a man develops and grows, the number and the variety of his associations and his identifications, his fellowships in his business, in his profession, in his vocation, multiply and extend. The more interests which a man comes to develop in life, cultural



or social, the more contact he makes, the more bonds he establishes, the more involvements and commitments ensue. A man becomes part of a veritable network of associations in which he must find outlet for himself and fulfillment as well as balance and harmony between the obligations demanded of each one of his relationships, which at times are in conflict, one with another.

But always, in the midst of all these numerous connections and associations, always at the core of all things remains the Man himself and his undissolved and inviolate personality, the center of all things. (Society is made up of individuals. The community is a fellowship of individuals. Governments exist to make secure the lives of individuals and to adjust their conflicting differences and to advance their common good.)

Now, this has not always been the accepted doctrine, and in our day it has been most violently, and I am afraid, to a large degree, successfully challenged. Behind the totalitarian systems of Fascism and Nazism and Communism are doctrines and philosophies which either negate altogether or depreciate the importance of the individual, which exalt the all-importance of the State, of the community, of the collective. In varying degrees and emphases they all share this concept of the unconditional supremacy of the community over the individual, of the monolithic society, of the thorough coordination, the "Gleichschaltung" of all men.

Now, it is not that these new systems give society or the community priority over the interests of the individual. That, even democracies have to do, but after all, the very welfare and progress of the individual is contingent upon the progress and the preservation of the community as a whole. But these new philosophies, these pseudo-philosophies, claim for the community and for the group, for the collective - whatever it may be - a self-centeredness, an independence and sovereignty all of their own. They claim for them inherent rights, inherent authority, which they regard as prior to the rights not only of a given individual, but of all



individuals, or of a majority of the individuals. The individual to them is only a representative, an expression of the group. His life has meaning only as it is related to the all-dominant and overwhelming group. His rights derive from his group. He has no inalienable rights of his own. There is no primary and independent spiritual franchise for man in this system of thought. Man fulfills himself not through the development of his unique personality ~~and~~ or of his special endowments, through cooperative effort with fellow human beings, but man fulfills himself, according to this philosophy, through complete self-surrender, self-effacement, and the total immersion in some kind of tribalism, whether it be the tribalism of the "folk", of a blood cult, <sup>or</sup> of a proletarian class, the tribalism of some closed group.

~~And as a corollary to all this, the sublimation of the collective and the subordination of the individual, there follows, of course, the doctrine of the omnipotent leader, fuehrer, duce, who becomes the true embodiment of the omnipotent state or society, and the unconditional obedience of everyone else. That, of course, is the basis of all forms of dictatorship. And dictatorship is the death of all the ideals of human equality and human freedom.~~

Now, ~~these aberrations, these philosophies~~ have had a great vogue in our generation. They are responsible for many disastrous political experiences in the world, including a tragic world war. Judaism has always waged war upon these concepts of the absolutist ruler and the transcendent and impeccable state. Judaism has always emphasized the importance of the individual, and of Man himself. Man possesses certain rights which are his inalienably, which have been given him not by the state or by society or by the class, but by God, his creator. ~~And all men and all races are equal in the sight of God, and are distinguished only by the merit which they achieve, by the worth which they acquire personally, by the service which they render to God and to mankind. And every man, whatever his race or his color,~~



every man, whatever his position in life, is precious in the sight of God. And every human being, however humble, is made secure within a law, within an inviolable moral law which is binding upon every one, whether he be king or nobleman or commoner, whether he be an individual or the collective. They are all subject to an over-arching law. The State can sin. The collective can do wrong. The King can sin, and the nobleman and the priest and the rich and the poor and the employer and the employee - they can all and do all sin. They are all accountable to a supreme, impartial, universal, eternal moral law. And every sinner is free to repent, to return, to be saved.

This new conception which is endangering our world, which is in defiance of the whole Judeo-Christian tradition, is properly characterized in this paragraph which I am reading to you from Bertrand Russell's little volume called "Authority and the Individual".

There are some among philosophers and statesmen who think that the state can have an excellence of its own, and not merely as a means to the welfare of the citizens. I cannot see any reason to agree with this view. "The state" is an abstraction; it does not feel pleasure or pain, it has no hopes or fears, and what we think of as its purposes are really the purposes of individuals who direct it. When we think concretely, not abstractly, we find, in place of "the state", certain people who have more power than falls to the share of most men. And so glorification of the "state" turns out to be, in fact, glorification of a government minority. No democrat can tolerate such a fundamentally unjust theory.

Well, today the status of the individual is endangered by this concept of the omnipotent state. There were other ages in which this status of the individual was endangered by other social or even theologic considerations. There were those theologians who endeavored to exalt to such heights the omni-importance of God, and ~~that~~ <sup>so</sup> they reduced man to a state of utter abject lowliness and worthlessness. We find that point of view held by religious people from time to time, challenged in the book of Job. Then Job refuses to justify the ways of God by charging himself with sins which he knows he did not commit and which his friends are endeavoring to persuade



him that he must have secretly, knowingly or unknowingly, committed. Job would not do violence to the integrity of his own personality in order to vindicate the justice of omnipotence.

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Now, being important and feeling myself important does not mean feeling myself self-important or self-satisfied, self-sufficient, proud. God hates pride and arrogance. And so do men. Man's pride will bring him low. A man who is aware of his importance to himself and to others will have the imagination to be humble. "The greater thou art," we read in the book of the Apocrypha, "the more humble thyself. Thy shalt find favor before the Lord." *283, 2512, 2715* Torah, learning, wisdom are acquired through humility. Now, Humility is neither weakness nor self-effacement. Humility does not derive from timidity or servility, but from strength and wisdom. Humility, in the last analysis, is a kind of reverence in the sight of the majesty and the mystery of all that is baffling, and unpredictable and impenetrable and glorious in life and nature and man. Humility is that kind of



reverence in the presence of one's own place and role in this tangled skein of things, reverence in the presence of our own baffling personal destiny.

And so a wise man is a humble man, a modest man. Now, a modest man is not a leaning willow. A modest man can be tempered steel. He knows his worth and will not permit anyone to trespass upon the sacred precepts of his being. But a modest man will never give offense by thrusting his self-estimate upon others, nor will he stultify himself, or impede himself or embarrass himself socially by egotism because egotism is really only the ugly rash of personality small-pox.

Because I am important, much is expected of me and much must I expect of myself. I must live up to the promise and the challenge of my life. I must educate myself to the utmost and to the very end. I must explore every cranny of my heart and of my mind for no one knows his own true resources until he has explored them. (You never know what you are, what you are capable of, until you have tried to find out.)

Because I regard myself as important, I respect myself. Reverence of self is the beginning of all virtue. Because I revere myself, I have reverence for my being, I will try not to stoop, not to truckle under, not to be cheap, not to sell myself cheap, not to do the things which degrade - not out of fear of being found out or fear of punishment, but out of reverence for myself or the God that is in me. Because I think myself important, I will try to rely on myself at all times until the utmost, drawing upon my own confident strength as far as possible, remembering always, of course, that often we need the help or the strength of others. I must therefore be prepared to share my strength with others when they need it. No man is completely sufficient unto himself. But one must not build his life upon the backs of others, nor must one in every crisis of his life, rely upon others, and failing to rely upon himself, to resign himself to utter defeat.



Because I think of my life as important, I will on occasions make sacrifices for other lives which I regard as as important and perhaps more important than mine. Noblesse oblige. To be noble is to act nobly. Nevertheless, I will refuse to make needless sacrifices for the sake of others who may be less important and for causes which I regard as less important than myself. I will refuse to be exploited by others who would live off me, and I see no reason for sacrificing myself for others. My life is as important as the life of my neighbor.

I will live for myself, but in so doing, I must live for others.

not  
"If I am/for myself, who will be for me?"

SIC AN 14388 SIC 001  
"But if I am for myself only, what am I?" Because I regard myself as important, I must learn to stand alone sometimes and to differ with the people about me. When my convictions run counter to theirs, I must learn to defend my ideas, once I have assured myself of their validity, of their tenuousness - I must learn to defend them. I must learn to speak the truth in kindness, to be sure, but always to speak the truth. It is sometimes imperative for the salvation of my soul and for the vindication of myself to defy the whole world. I must learn the importance of being important. "In the place where there are no men," said Hillel, "strive thou to be a man," - to be the man. And when we are once constrained to do just that and the world's displeasures are visited upon us, we must learn to suffer and endure indignity as befits the son of God.

Now, in this vast impressive world in which we find ourselves, dear friends, we are prone to think of ourselves as more or less helpless human beings. What can we do about all that is wrong in the world today? What can I personally do? I can do nothing. Many people feel that way about it. They are overwhelmed by the machinery, by the apparatus, by the organization, by the scale and mass of everything about them. They regard themselves inadequate to affect the course of things.



That, of course, is the end of democracy and of freedom in the world, and that is the end of the development of human personality. We ought to remember at all times that whatever is done in this world is done by men like ourselves, for good or evil, for weal or woe; whatever happens in this world is the work of human beings, of men.

The Stalins and the Hitlers and the Mussolinis are just ordinary human beings, ordinary in terms of the common destiny which they share as human beings with all other human beings. And so are the great and the good of the world who have helped to advance the progress of mankind. They, too, are human beings like ourselves.

We must not depreciate ourselves, our importance. We can affect the course of things if only within the little world in which we move and have our being, within the circumference of our life's influence, and ~~if~~ <sup>become</sup> tens and thousands and millions of other human beings ~~become~~ <sup>become</sup> aware of the strength which is in them and ~~poor~~ <sup>poor</sup> their strength together, that force becomes colossal and irresistible. We ~~own~~ <sup>owe</sup> it to ourselves to regard ourselves <sup>as</sup> important, and then to proceed to acquaint ourselves with all that is happening about us, to ascertain the facts, not to be victimized by propaganda, not to howl with the mob, not to be stampeded by slogans and catchwords - that is, <sup>not</sup> to sacrifice ~~your~~ <sup>we</sup> individuality, but to sift, screen, test and analyze to the best of your ability everything that ~~you~~ <sup>we</sup> see or hear or read. Not everything that you read in the columns of your newspapers or hear over the radio is so. Much of it isn't so at all. Much of it is only partially so. Use your knowledge, your insight, your wisdom, your moral sense to weigh and measure and balance and arrive at your own conclusions, and when you have arrived at conclusions, then learn to speak up - speak up unafraid. You will inspire others to do likewise. When the voices of men of good will are heard in the world, the action of the dark forces may be checked.



Organize with other men and women and express your power through your ballot, through other vehicles and agencies available to you. Activate your personality! Give it social significance by active participation in the life of your community, of your city, of your state, of your government. ~~Because of our weakness,~~ Because we are accepting that which the dictators of the world want us to accept, ~~and~~ that individually we are of no account, can do nothing, we have been prone to shake off our personal responsibilities by loading our government with all that's wrong in the world today. Whenever we find anything wrong, we blame authorities - the state government or national government. Well, it isn't that they are free of all blame - far from it! ~~But after all,~~ In the last analysis, if there is anything wrong in the world, if there is anything wrong in government, which is permitted to endure for long, the wrong is with ourselves - us, you and me, individuals - and therefore, we must begin the improvement of society with ourselves. We must go back to the idea the the moral injunctions were given to us as individuals. "Thou shalt! Thou shalt not!"

And so perhaps Our age needs a new emphasis today. <sup>on</sup> The emphasis ~~of~~ the individual, ~~the importance of the individual, the dignity of the individual life, the~~ <sup>The emphasis on</sup> ~~inviolability of personality~~ - but at the same time, the mandates, ~~and the sanctions~~ and the duties, ~~the compelling duties~~ incumbent upon the individual, to do what he can, to make straight all that is crooked, and to set right what is wrong in the world.