In this Issue

VITAL WISDOM by Professor Nicholas Roerich
A LETTER from Dr. Albert Einstein
THE FIRST SPINOZA GROUP
A LETTER FROM A STUDENT

Price Twenty Cents
Publisher's Note

It is with great pleasure that the Roerich Museum Press is cooperating with the Spinoza Center of the Roerich Society, in presenting its Quarterly, "Spinoza in America." The universal ideals of Nicholas Roerich, and the Banner of human understanding through culture, which he has unfurled, have attracted numerous groups and individuals throughout the world questing truth. Among these, one of the most vital, in its spirit of striving, is this group of young students working under the inspiration of Dr. Kettner, and seeking to transmit to contemporary life the credo of Spinoza, the liberator of thought, in whom they find inspiration.

Subsequent numbers of this Quarterly, "Spinoza in America," will be devoted to bringing new light upon this philosophy, thus finding the sesame to new limitless vistas of human evolution. In this dedication to the Future once again is confirmed Nicholas Roerich's great evocation to that highest reality of Culture which he pronounces in the "Realm of Light":

"Radiant is aspiration. The flaming aspiration is the threshold of Bliss. "Agni and Thought."
"Fiery are the wings of 'Sophia—the Almighty’s Wisdom'.
The remembrance of the Spinoza Center of the Roerich Museum will forever remain one of the most precious impressions for me. In our times of unrest and commotion, in these days of the crumbling of mechanical civilization, each sign of spiritual upliftment is especially valuable.

I always remember with what eagerness and perseverance Dr. Frederick Kettner came to me and what ardor I felt in his approach in the name of the great philosopher, Spinoza. No less precious was it for me to see the group of striving young workers united in the great ideas of Spinoza and the ardent spirit of Dr. Kettner. I do not exaggerate but wish to express that which I witnessed.

It is impossible that one should not be aroused to great spiritual joy at the sight of youth, working without great means, striving and self-supporting, that religiously gathers around a great name and uses all its leisure time for the study of a high philosophy. And they do not study for abstract purposes. Nay, they transform their lives through it, and within their hearts high ideals begin to live. These self-sacrificing torches illumine the surrounding darkness and form one more stronghold against ignorance. And we know how militant is ignorance and how contagious is darkness.

The leader of the group, Dr. Kettner, is a true teacher, for he not only guides the meetings and gives the lectures, but he is consulted in vital matters of life. He arms the young warriors with the most unfailing armors. He tells them how practical is the Good and how shameful and self-destructive is Evil. And the Good is there, where are creation, constructiveness and spiritualization. The Good is there where are containment, devotion and love. The highest is in the light of sacrifice and the basest is in the darkness of treason.

The abstract for the average brains, the conceptions of evolution and attainment, become the vital cornerstones of everyday life. Such foundations are affirmed there, where life is so difficult; there where the struggle often withers away the best forces.

Is it not remarkable to see that a numerous group of youth has chosen as its weapon so high a philosophy? They have evoked and surrounded themselves with the name of a sage, who so fearlessly and self-sacrificingly brought into life the regenerated conception of Be-ness. Under his perspicacious understanding, matter occupied its befitting place and was uplifted. To uplift is a noble action. In uplifting we unavoidably uplift ourselves, because
in creating the energy upward—everything from beginning to end, moves in this direction. With this noble upliftment comes also the quality of tolerance, so much needed. If we introduce tolerance only conventionally and superficially, nothing but hypocrisy can be created. Only through noble upliftment of the spirit, through incessantly realized labor comes this wonderful guest—tolerance. Precisely this quality when introduced naturally, creates the smile of Wisdom. I am speaking of that smile of Wisdom with which the Sage listens to the seeker. In his caressing eyes and the silent nod is expressed: “Try, my son! Never mind if thou walkest now by the side road. Only walk without looking back, not fearing the stones, nor the thorns. Remember, if the steep slope would be too smooth, the ascent would be still more difficult for thee. The stones not only do not hinder thee, but support thee. Do not forget it and bless these stones, for they may be used as steps.”

I recollect how once in the East a learned Rabbi said: “You also are Israel, for each one in the quest of light is Israel.” Thus was expressed the Wisdom of the immemorial ages. In it resounds upliftment as well as tolerance.

When you, the participants of our Spinoza Center, gather for a meeting, you garb yourselves in the festive cloth, because as I know it, this meeting is a festival for you. Such an attitude is already a pledge for this upliftment, and the consequence is tolerance and containment. You know how the great Spinoza suffered in his life only because he selflessly expressed true knowledge. But we know that martyrdom is but the tension of energies. In this tension you receive the right to knock at all gates where the useful construction can be strengthened. I repeat, you have transferred the philosophy from abstraction into life. In this you follow the beginnings of true evolution, for all Teachings and all philosophies are given for life. After all there is no high Teaching which is not also practical in the highest sense of the word. We can solve numberless problems of the contemporary disturbances only by the beautiful and highest consciousness. Only the Beautiful bridge will be strong enough for crossing from the bank of darkness to the side of light. You know what great significance is allotted in the sacred Teachings to the symbol of the bridge. Upon this bridge will come the Highest in glory!

I know that the Spinoza Center will grow, because it began upon sane principles, vital in tangible reality. Not mist, but light lies at the foundation of evolution. If we are capable of understanding that light is color and sound, we shall also realize that everything beautiful is also needed for the construction of the Temple of evolution. The Djinns helped King Solomon build the Temple. Invoking the light and the beautiful, we shall force even the Djinns to help in the great construction. In the name of great Knowledge and beautiful achievement, I welcome you!

A LETTER FROM DR. ALBERT EINSTEIN

S. S. BELGENLAND

den 21. Dezember, 1930

Herrn Dr. Friedrich Kettner,
310 Riverside Drive
New York

Sehr geehrter Herr Kettner!

Es war mir eine grosse Freude, Sie kennen gelernt und auch die jungen Maenner gesehen zu haben, welche sich mit Ihnen dem Studium Spinozas widmen. Gewiss wird die Beschaeftigung mit Spinoza immer eine Beschaeftigung fuer Wenige bleiben. Das hat sich der Meister gewiss selbst gedacht. Ich glaube aber, dass Ihr Kreis den Geist verkoepert, dem Spinoza mit solcher Leidenschaft diente.

Sie und Ihre jungen Freunde gruessst bestens,

Ihr
A. Einstein

It was a great joy for me to have made your acquaintance and to have seen those young people who consecrated themselves to the study of Spinoza. Indeed, there will always be just a few who are really fit to pursue the study of Spinoza; this was that great master’s conviction also. I believe, however, that your group is the embodiment of that spirit which Spinoza served so passionately.

Greetings to you and your young friends.

A. Einstein