

# Letter from the Editor

As I read your manuscripts, I am constantly reminded of the tremendous impact Dr. Dreikurs had on all of us who apply Adlerian concepts in our work. Because of his special commitment to this journal I felt it appropriate on the Fifth Anniversary of his death to mention that Janet Turner and Bill Pew have written a biography, *The Courage to Be Imperfect*, which will be available from Hawthorn Books, Inc., this spring. In addition, I would like to share with you this "Remembrance" which was delivered in Israel last June (1976) by Natan Izhaki, a member of the Histadruit.

## Remembrance of Rudolph Dreikurs

Rudolph Dreikurs is counted as one of those rare men of science who never shut himself in an ivory tower to limit himself to the confines of his profession, and who, on the contrary, extended himself to society. He saw in man his very essence, and in human society he saw its very core and purpose.

We learned from Dreikurs to see man and society as one. Man in the human democratic epoch is no longer a passive victim of circumstance and environment, but a man who is master of his own fate, one who decides independently and who bears the responsibility of his own doings.

Dreikurs taught us human respect — to love others. With all his heart he renounced the humiliation of man, haughtiness, coercion, and exploitation of human weakness. From this, perhaps, his great contribution is the development of the idea of equality and the emphasis on the need for encouragement. Dreikurs went all out against the competitive society which is acquisitive and materialistic.

After Auschwitz and Hiroshima, after countless disappointments and the collapse of entire ideological worlds, in the reality of the technological society and cruel competition within it, it is not a simple matter to speak of faith in humanity, the value of human equality and great hope for the future and humanity. Naive dreams of romantic youth have vanished. We have learned from Dreikurs to respect our fellowman and to believe in his future, to differentiate between man and his deeds. And so, we have been liberated from the stress of judgment of ourselves and others, from worthless struggles over imagined prestige, from status, and power, and the eternal need to prove our moral superiority and to emphasize our loft characteristics as it were. He taught us to respect man for man himself, as he is, unconditionally and without appraisal, to evaluate his contribution to us and to society and especially to relate with respect to human weakness.

He believed in man and in man's hidden potential, in man's ability to develop, to grow, and to contribute towards mutual social interest, being

liberated from the chains of tradition and the concepts of the autocratic past. There was nobody like him in the work of natural direct encouragement. He knew how to arouse interest in a matter, to infect others with his enthusiasm, to guide in the right direction, yet leaving the decision in the other's hands.

In his latter days Dreikurs stressed the need for new social leadership patterns. He was anxious for the future of society which stands on the precipice of destruction, and well did he see the hidden danger in social differentiation, estrangement, and frustration, the cause of which is the emphasis on segregation and separation rather than unification and cooperation. Many thought the professor a naive and eccentric man living in a world of wishful thinking, who broke convention and offended "holy" values. But fundamentally Dreikurs was very sharp in his view of society and reality. He dared to relate to things as they are, without silk gloves. He daringly and uncompromisingly knew how to hold his own in his ideological fight.

In his latter years it was as if the boycott on his teachings was banished and the way was paved for the acceptability of his ideas. He sensed it, went about as in a dream, and rushed towards his goal. He cared not for his time or his health, but lived with the feeling of a fateful mission. His words during his last visit to Israel were heard as a legacy to his disciples.

Above all, Dreikurs was a great humanitarian who loved with all his heart and soul, both life and man, and believed in the future. He simply could not remain indifferent to man, his struggle, his pain, and his way of life, and he endeavored to help, to encourage, and to guide. He had within him an unusual passion for the love of life, unending optimism, innocent curiosity, ever readiness for great deeds and a constant expectation of lofty and beautiful things which would happen in the near future.

We, his pupils and friends, were loved by him with all his heart, and he had great faith in us. He did not see himself as one who stood at the helm, haughty and superior over his admirers, but instead placed himself in the center of the group as one of us, an equal among equals, a friend among friends. He taught and learned, spoke and absorbed, advised and took counsel, gave and received. He was a comrade and a friend to each and every one of us. In his sharp wit, in his spirit of courage, and in the warmth of his heart, he won us to him and found a way to our hearts.

The "mishnah" says "make yourself a rabbi and buy yourself a friend," we gained a teacher and friend all in one. As such, he will remain in our hearts. The spiritual fortune with which he enriched us and which he bequeathed unto us, we will continue in his way — our way.

Udelle Friedland  
Editor