

EINSTEIN'S DESK, AS HE LEFT IT, HOLDS HIS PIPE AND PAPERS. HE WAS USING EQUATIONS ON BOARD IN SEEKING NEW WAYS TO EXPRESS RELATIVITY THEORY

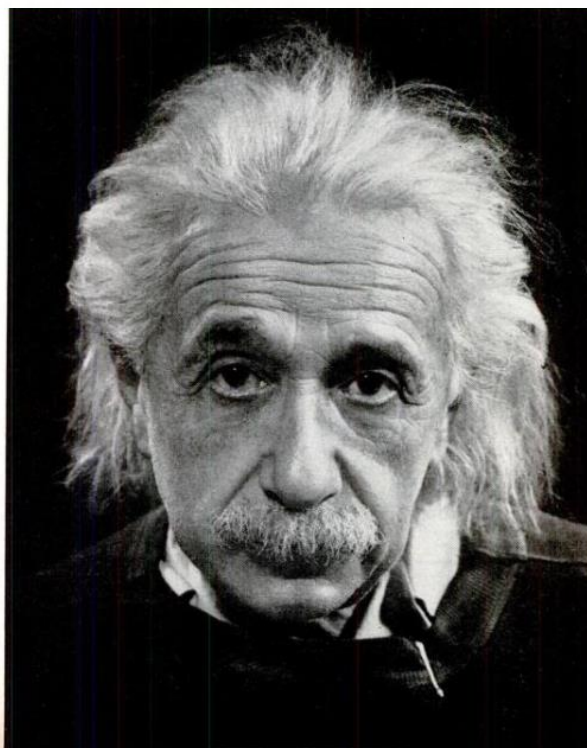
## DEATH OF A GENIUS

### His fourth dimension, time, overtakes Einstein

The empty chair by the formula-filled blackboard looked as if the scholar who usually sat in it had merely stepped away, perhaps to gaze reflectively at the meadow which rolls past the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study. But the chair would not again be filled. Last week the entire world went into mourning for the greatest scientific thinker of his age, the man who had painted a new picture of the universe with his concept that time is the fourth dimension. Victim of a ruptured artery, Dr. Albert Einstein had died in his sleep at the age of 76.

For 50 years the world had been heaping honors on him, but Einstein remained indifferent to worldly glory. Dressing in baggy old clothes, he shut himself away in lonely contemplation of the massive intellectual problems he alone could solve. But he emerged to champion the ideals he cherished: justice, freedom, peace. He believed in his own form of "cosmic" religion. "I do not believe in the God of theology who rewards good and punishes evil," he said. "... the presence of a superior reasoning power . . . revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God." The day he died, his body was cremated. Without ceremony, family and friends said a last farewell at the cemetery. Einstein's brain had been removed for scientific study, a last gift to man's knowledge.

1947 PORTRAIT BY PHILIPPE HALSMAN WAS AN EINSTEIN FAVORITE



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## OLD MAN'S ADVICE TO YOUTH: 'NEVER LOSE A HOLY CURIOSITY'

*As a scientist Einstein's creative imagination wrought the greatest revolution of our time and also touched man's everyday life. His famous formula,  $E=mc^2$ , proving that matter is concentrated energy, ushered in the atomic age. His photoelectric law, for which he won the Nobel Prize in 1921, led to the development of the photoelectric cell, which has been put to a thousand practical uses. His theories on the structure of solids paved the way for transistors, the tiny devices that now are revolutionizing electronics. His theory of relativity made possible the atom-smashers.*

*Just as his ground-breaking scientific conclusions were unconventional, so were Einstein's philosophical concepts. In politics he took sides that were unpopular with Americans. In the sphere of religion his views contradicted strongly held beliefs. But because of his unwavering rectitude Einstein was regarded as one of the most unselfish men of his time. An intimate glimpse of Einstein's personal manner is afforded by this personal memoir by one of LIFE's editors, William Miller:*

SOME months before Einstein's death I drove up to the scientist's small house at 112 Mercer Street, Princeton. Two others were with me, my son Pat, a Harvard freshman who had long made Einstein one of his personal heroes, and a friend, Professor William Hermanns of San Jose, Calif., who had known Einstein years ago in Germany.

It was not an errand of idle curiosity but planned in the hope that such a meeting might help give some inspiration to Pat. He had always shown a natural gift for the sciences, had managed to win the science prize at his prep school, but at college had bogged down into a sort of philosophical nihilism, asking himself what significance there was to human endeavor if the universe was dying.

Our intermediary, Dr. Hermanns, a German from a cultured and well-to-do family, had volunteered for World War I, lived through the indescribable carnage of the Battle of Verdun, been captured and imprisoned for three years by the French. Afterward he was a poet, then a fugitive from Hitler. In his 50s, he is a gentle man of transparent idealism and unselfishness. He was a friend of Bishop Fulton Sheen and hoped to get from his old friend Einstein a statement about the latter's concept of God which the bishop might use on his television program. We had chanced the trip without an appointment.

When we knocked at Dr. Einstein's door we were told he was having tea with guests and could not be disturbed. But after Dr. Hermanns explained his old acquaintanceship Dr. Einstein's secretary admitted us to a small parlor, separated by drapes from the dining room. Beyond them we could hear voices and the occasional clink of spoons. The drapes parted and Einstein came through them, his magnificent face wreathed in its halo of flowing white hair, his childlike eyes looking from face to face with impartial serenity, benignity and angelic indifference. He was wearing sandals, baggy slacks and a gray woolen pullover sweater, a tieless shirt open at the neck.

Looking about the room, I was struck by the porcelain figure of a Madonna and Child in one corner. Meanwhile Dr. Hermanns talked with Einstein. He was getting nowhere in his quest for a definition of Einstein's religion. But looking at Einstein's face one had the feeling of seeing a living saint. The lucid windows of his eyes seemed to reveal not a man but an embodiment of pure thought.

"I came because I am concerned about the growth of anti-Semitism," said Dr. Hermanns. "The anti-Semites spread it by saying that you want to share our atomic secrets with Russia."

Einstein leaned back in his old-fashioned rocker and, chuckling mildly, said, "Whoever said that is just another liar. The problem is one of human survival. If the nations do not agree on basic principles first, all our treaties and armaments are for nothing. There is no security for one if not for all; security is indivisible. Only a supranational government, including all nations, can save us."

Dr. Hermanns changed the subject to religion. "I believe you once said that one could name the *Urgesetz*, or law of laws, God."

"You are in full liberty to call any power you believe in God," said Einstein, shrugging. "But if you say this, what are you telling me? I cannot accept any concept of God based on the fear of life or the fear of death, or blind faith. I cannot prove to you that there

is no personal God, but if I were to speak of him I would be a liar."

But was there no message, asked Dr. Hermanns, which he could take Bishop Sheen? "If you must tell the bishop something about me," he said genially, "tell him I am an honest man."

At this point my son asked if there was anything in which one could believe. "Certainly there are things worth believing," said Einstein. "I believe in the brotherhood of man and the uniqueness of the individual. But if you ask me to prove what I believe, I can't. You know them to be true but you could spend a whole lifetime without being able to prove them. The mind can proceed only so far upon what it knows and can prove. There comes a point where the mind takes a leap—call it intuition or what you will—and comes out upon a higher plane of knowledge, but can never prove how it got there. All great discoveries have involved such a leap."

"Does experience give us truth?" asked the young man.

Einstein warmed to the boy's search for guideposts. "This is a difficult question," he said, a slight lisp noticeable in his voice. "One is always seeing things without being sure that one does see them. Truth is a verbal concept, which cannot be submitted to mathematical proof."

Dr. Hermanns asked whether truth were not inherent in man. "You once told me that progress could be gained only by intuition and not the accumulation of knowledge."

"It is not quite so simple," said Einstein. "Knowledge is necessary too. A child with great intuition could not grow up to become something worthwhile in life without some knowledge. However there comes a point in everyone's life where only intuition can make the leap ahead, without knowing precisely how."

"You do believe in a soul," persisted Dr. Hermanns.

"Yes, if by this you mean the living spirit that makes us long to do worthy things for humanity."

I broke in to describe my son's philosophical impasse: "Now he can find no reason why he should strive to achieve." Einstein looked at Pat and simply asked, "Does not the question of the undulation of light arouse your curiosity?" (The nicest thing about the question was his simple assumption that the boy would understand it.) "Yes, very much," said the boy, his interest brightening.

"Is not this enough to occupy your whole curiosity for a lifetime?"

"Why, yes," said Pat, smiling rather sheepishly. "I guess it is."

"Then do not stop to think," said Einstein, "about the reasons for what you are doing, about why you are questioning. The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existence. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery each day. Never lose a holy curiosity. Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value. He is considered successful in our day who gets more out of life than he puts in. But a man of value will give more than he receives."

At this point, feeling we had perhaps intruded too much on the great man's time, I interrupted and asked, if in leaving, I could take some motion pictures. As I shot the films Pat pointed toward a tree in the yard and asked whether one could truthfully say it was a tree. "This could all be a dream," said Einstein. "You may not be seeing it at all."

"If I assume that I can see it," persisted the student, "how do I know exactly that the tree exists and where it is?"

"You have to assume something," said Einstein. "Be glad that you have some little knowledge of something that you cannot penetrate. Don't stop to marvel."



FINAL WORDS OF COUNSEL were offered by Einstein to Pat Miller (right) standing on porch with Dr. Hermanns as the visit to the scientist ended.