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**Has the Family Evolved into a Better Form or
Has it Foundered upon the Rock of Modernism?**

THE CONCEPT OF FAMILY

*Morality, Individuation, and Reason
As Uniting Forces in Married Life*

by Paul Dennis Sporer

Over the course of many generations, the concept of family has served a vital function in every community. It has always had the power to transform a household, from a mere collection of persons, into a healthy, solid base from which individuality can naturally spring forth. Family stands as a vanguard in civilized society, and in fact, it is the only place where consideration, respect, and mutual reliance can effectively interact to create a nurturing environment. The loss of support within the childhood home can lead to potentially devastating consequences later in life, due to poorly conceived attitudes about relationships.

The Concept of Family, by Paul Dennis Sporer, is a valuable contribution to the field of family studies. Through a comprehensive investigation, this work reveals many of the most overlooked issues concerning family life. In his research, Sporer has discovered, that contrary to popular opinion, people living before the modern age were morally stronger and more individualistic than in our time, and men and women were able to co-exist harmoniously with each other in happier relationships. European societies have for centuries endeavored to give everyone the platform upon which to build a distinctive, fulfilling life, by developing the individual's mental faculties through the positive interactions found in the family home. Such inner strength meant that our ancestors could achieve success in business and community while maintaining their individuality, oftentimes with relatively few resources.

The book elucidates the reasons for this traditional superior standard of individual accomplishment. Older European cultures believed it was important to teach children about mutualism and reciprocity from a young age, by elaborating on those aspects that strengthen and solidify a relationship. Family structure factors were significant, since positive mental qualities could only be gained in households where one-to-one relations provided meaningful information, advice, and training. In these families, children developed evaluative mechanisms early in life, allowing them to correctly ascertain appropriate behavior. Further, parents encouraged their children to form their own rules and values, as preparation for the day when they would take their position in a complex and changing society. Perhaps most importantly, parents wanted their children to look at all facets of a situation, not only parts of it. Social principles are ineffective when applied piecemeal, and so children were motivated

to prioritize and bring together these ideas into an integrated whole by using mature, advanced methods.

Yet, despite the importance of creating healthy individualism, in modern society the concept of family is poorly integrated, because many men and women find themselves drawing their experiences about “family” from unrewarding and disjointed situations. Thus, in considering the pitfalls inherent in contemporary cultures, it is apparent that social factors exist that can overpower the process of individuation. Sporer concludes that, even in an environment where there are many failed relationships resulting from immaturity and selfishness, there are still effective ways to find a marriage partner without compromising moral principles or personal goals. To this end, the dynamics of companionship must be adequately assimilated in childhood, so that, as adults, men and women can apply this wisdom to the family that they will establish. It is indeed difficult to bring into reality the ideal relationship that one holds in the mind, but *The Concept of Family* facilitates the realization of this elusive image of fulfillment by revealing what lies behind the great intrinsic need for genuine respect and considerate behavior.

Paul Dennis Sporer is the author of *Liberating Love, Dimensions of Companionship*, and *Equal but Different*; he has also edited more than 30 culturally and historically significant books, including *Painting Explained*, by Thomas Gullick; *Is Secession Treason?*, by Albert Bledsoe; *The Heart of Aryavarta*, by Lawrence Dundas; *Beauty and Art*; by Aldam Heaton; *The French at Home*, by Albert Rhodes; *From Slave Cabin to Pulpit*, by Peter Randolph; *Newer Ideals of Peace*, by Jane Addams; *Views of Old Europe*, by Bayard Taylor; *Gentle Measures*, by Jacob Abbott; *Finding a Way Out*, by Robert Moton; *The New Birth*, by Austin Phelps; *The Missionary*, by Samuel Mazzuchelli; *Half a Century*, by Jane Swisshelm; *Born Three Times*, by Thomas L. Johnson; *Dark Hollow*, by Anna Katharine Green; *The Vizier of the Two-Horned Alexander*, by Frank R. Stockton; and *1492: Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, by Mary Johnston.

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