

A PHILOSOPHER'S LIFE, EXCESSIVELY MEANINGFUL

The ancient Greeks believed that the death of a person had a great deal to say about his life. Henri Bergson died on January 3rd 1941 of pneumonia after having waited hours in the queue in order to get his David star as a French Jew, as the Germans, who had occupied France, dictated.

By 1941, Bergson was a famous philosopher and a Nobel Prize winner. At the beginning of the German occupation, he had been offered the chance to become an Honorary Aryan in order to avoid the coming persecution. That he denied. Some years before, as we learn from his Testament of 1937, he had abandoned the idea to convert to Catholicism, to which he was feeling closer, because he was seeing the emerging anti-Semitism and wanted to stay with those who were about to be persecuted in the future. Bergson decided to have a destiny he could have avoided. His stance seems to be in accordance with notions found in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1932).

There, Bergson speaks of an open society based on an inner moral impulse beyond conventions, and of a dynamic religion based on love and an activist mysticism exemplified by Saint Francis of Assisi and Jeanne d'Arc.

Philosophers' lives can be excessively meaningful tales. And some tales are better than others. Not because of wisdom, but because of courage.

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