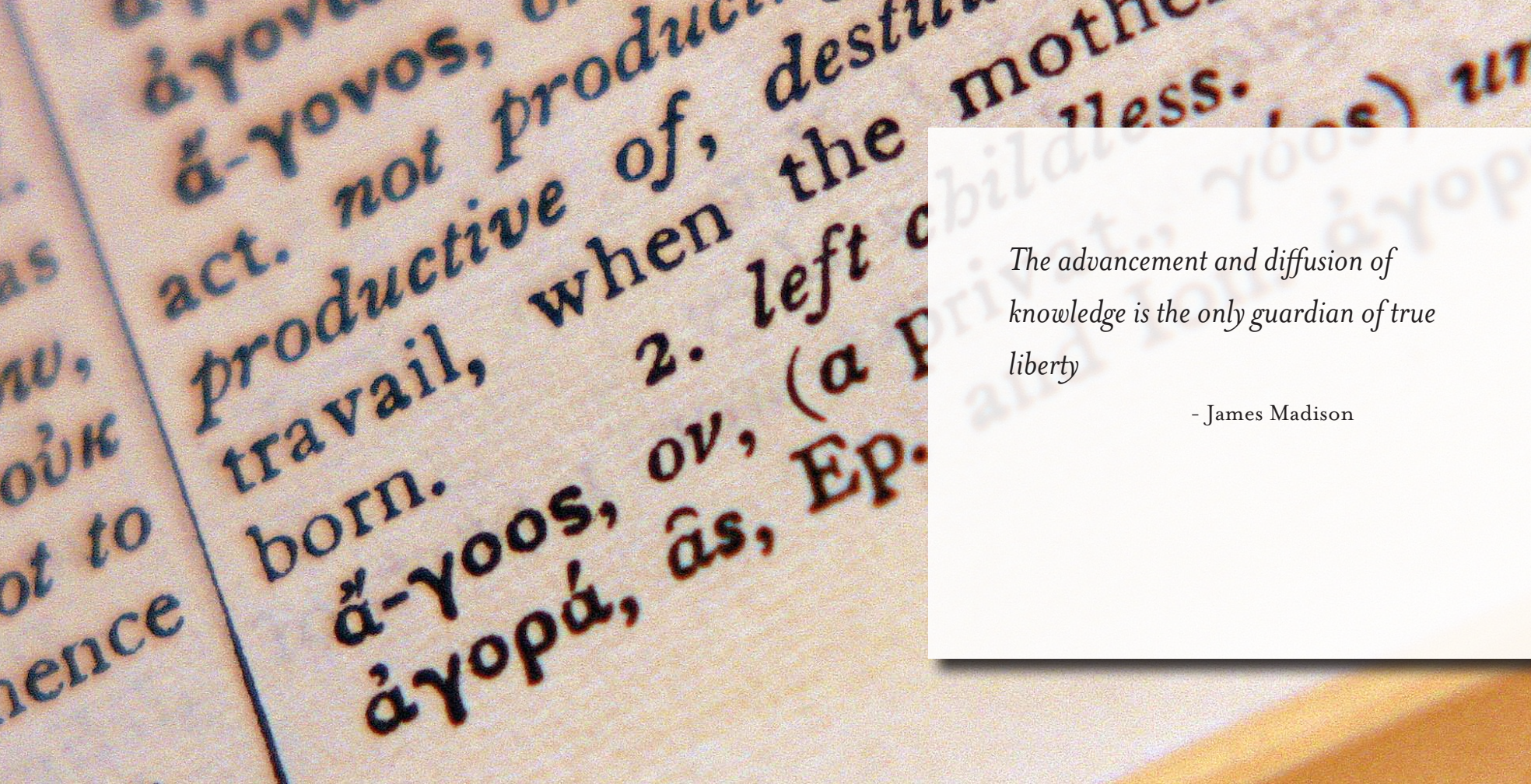




t h e  
**AGORA**  
f o u n d a t i o n

*[www.TheAgoraFoundation.org](http://www.TheAgoraFoundation.org)*



*The advancement and diffusion of  
knowledge is the only guardian of true  
liberty*

- James Madison

# *a study of the great books*

*The Agora Foundation* is a non-profit endeavor, providing seminars and other educational opportunities to those who are busy with careers, families, and daily responsibilities yet are seeking to further their education without the commitments a return to school would involve. The goal of these offerings is to provide an understanding of the ideas that shape civilizations. Such a formation enables participants to appreciate the intellectual foundations of society, and as a result, to gain a genuine freedom. In addition to the seminars we have been offering over the years, we intend to carry on other charitable and educational activities consistent with our mission.

*an education for a lifetime*

# the seminar method

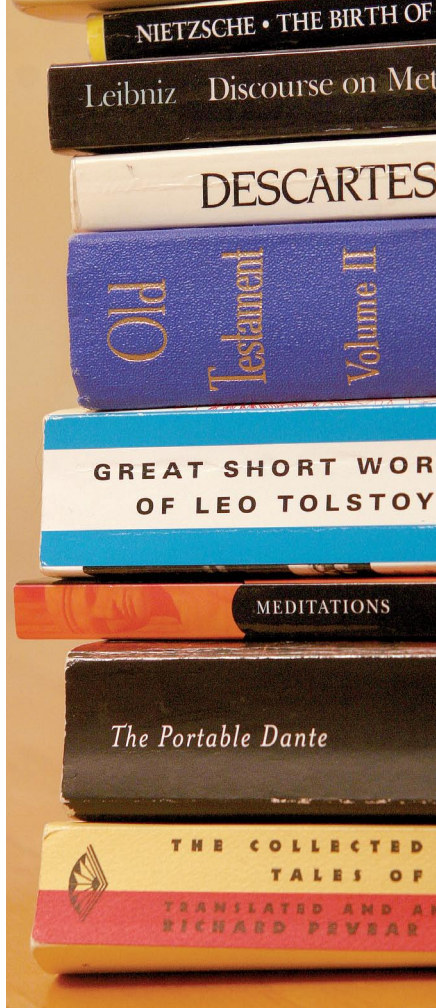
*The Agora Foundation* proposes that a sound intellectual formation, one that helps the mind to think clearly about the most important things, can be obtained by bringing skilled teachers together with eager learners in an approach to education that is at once centuries old but refreshingly new. The weekend seminars we offer are devoted to careful reading and discussion of the most influential thinkers, on the most pressing issues that are as relevant today as they have always been.

It is the view of *The Agora Foundation* that one does not become a truly educated person by just reading any book, or even many books, nor are we guaranteed to think well about things simply by talking to others. A genuine education occurs when one is led by **the best minds**, proceeding in **the right order**, and in **the best way**. It is also the case that it is never too late to learn how to do this.

How do we find the best minds to educate us? One way is to look to **the great books**. These are the books that have stood the test of time. They are not works written to appeal to our baser instincts, nor do they contain the latest intellectual fads. Rather, these works have provided the basic ideas that have formed societies over the centuries. So by reading the great books we become students of the greatest teachers who have ever lived.

*Desire to know why, and how... is in no living creature but man:  
so that man is distinguished, not only by his reason,  
but also by this singular passion.*

- Hobbes, *Leviathan*



Finally, the most productive way to approach the greatest teachers is in a way that engages them **actively**. It is generally accepted that if one can be active in one's learning, one will learn more effectively. No doubt anyone can learn by attending lectures, reading a good book, or by speaking with a wise friend; but it is our experience that if we engage the works of the greatest thinkers, in a discussion with sincere participants, the knowledge that we attain becomes more fully our own. That is, we become not merely informed but educated, because we come to see things in a way that has been made intimately our own.

Please visit [www.TheAgoraFoundation.org](http://www.TheAgoraFoundation.org) to view our upcoming seminar schedule and to learn more about us.

You may also contact us by phone: (805) 231-5974, or email: [greatbooksojai@gmail.com](mailto:greatbooksojai@gmail.com).

*engaging the best minds*



Michael McLean

*we hope you will join us*

*We will be better, braver and less idle, if we believe that one must search for the things one does not know, rather than if we believe that it is not possible to find out what we do not know.*

- Plato, *Meno*

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