

The Ethic of Human Repair[©]

humanity has suffered enough

the 1st gate: self-control

To heal yourself, you must first know yourself.
To know yourself, you must understand human nature.
To understand human nature you must learn ...

The Logic of Free Will

Francis Bacon, the founder of the scientific method, believed that the pursuit of knowledge was blocked by conventional ways of thinking and weaknesses in human nature and perception, *which he attributed to*: “the idols and false notions which are now in possession of the human understanding”.¹

¹John Langone, et.al., Theories for Everything, National Geographic, p. 251

Table of Contents

Dedication

Preface

Introduction

Section I – Preparing the Soil of the Soul

1. The Human Condition: *something is missing*
2. About Transformation and Redemption
3. The Optimal Approach for reading Human Repair
4. Secrets about Secrets

Section II – Planting the Logic of Free Will

1. The Language of Free Will
2. The Survival Imperative
3. Principles of Paradox
4. The Primacy of Perception
5. Causality, Power and the Will
6. The Structure of a Self-fulfilling Prophecy
7. Personal Freedom

Section III – Gardening the Soul aka Curing a Chronic Personal Problem: an application of The Logic of Free Will

1. What Chronic Personal Problems and Idolatry have in Common
2. Worship, Prayer, Repentance and Forgiveness
3. Doing Good for G-d sake
4. The Cemetery

Final Remarks

1. Rectification of the Human Condition: an Embodied Vision
2. Implications for the field of Psychotherapy
3. Torah – A Chosen Source of Wisdom

Dedication

For my dear deceased mother, Alice Messing, whose suffering **The Ethic of Human Repair** avenges.

Grounding, 2005

thank you for my life
thank you for my wife
thank you for my children
thank you for my parents
thank you for my brothers
thank you for my aunt Marcelle
thank you for my stepmother Sylvia
thank you for my extended family
thank you for my community
thank you for my health
thank you for my intellect
thank you for my financial security
thank you for my job
thank you for all the trials and tribulations
 that have shaped who I am and
 enable me to serve others in Your Name
thank you for my transformation
thank you for my well being
thank you for inspiring me to thank you
I am complete
I see the calling
I am ready to serve
Use me quickly
Guide me with wisdom and insight
Continue to show me the signs
Provide me with fellow travelers
To build an open structure
Where many others can find
And come to know
The great Giver of grace, love and joy
In just being human
So we can all be grateful always

Richard Scott Messing

Grounding, 2009

Standing before You as Your humble servant,
Waiting.
You tested me, You healed me.
Nothing more to ask.
Just waiting for Your call.

You prepared me to serve You,
Demystified.
Nothing to fear, only You.
Standing before You as your humble servant,
Waiting.

I here, You call.
Use me now, don't wait.
My remaining days, take.
So the past be not in vain.

Richard Schwartz-Messing

DISCLAIMER

Given that I have not read every published document nor been exposed to all technologies or schools of thought pertaining to the study of human behavior, I cannot claim that any of the ideas in this text are original. The content of this book was derived from my experiences, education, observations and investigations during the course of my life. If by coincidence I have included content that someone else originated at an earlier date, I apologize in advance and will give credit to its author in future revisions.

King Solomon said there is nothing new under the sun.² My only claim is that **The Ethic of Human Repair** is a modern rendition of a very old song.

PREFACE

I could not bear the thought that all the suffering I experienced in my life had no purpose, that it was random and meaningless or just bad luck. I hoped at least that my problems were meant to teach me something. Were they some kind of test; why were my three brothers spared similar challenges? To satisfy this yearning to demystify my life, I became a seeker, seeking to understand why I was different. One day I realized that the extent a person does not understand human nature, at least to that extent one does not know oneself. Based on this simple logic, I started a research project to study human nature, to learn what

makes everyone the same. This book is my way of sharing how I discovered why I was different and with the same knowledge how you and I are very much the same.

My personal problems started during my pre-school years. Toilet training was prolonged, lasting until I was about 5 years old. I developed a speech impediment in elementary school lasting well into my teenage years. I was a very poor reader. Even though by the time I entered college I stopped talking about and using the reading problem as an excuse, the reading problem persisted throughout my adult life.

I started experiencing episodes of depression when I was seventeen. The episodes would recur approximately every year or so and were usually precipitated by an event such as college graduation, breaking up with a girlfriend or visiting my older brother while on vacation. During two episodes, the depressions became so severe that I experienced what some might call a nervous breakdown.

Once I had the mood swings under control, I was at least in a state where I could pursue what I was really after, referred to here as 'transformation' or 'redemption'. My aim was to stop suffering and to become vibrant and happy like others and like I remember I once was. I wanted to be the author of my life instead of always at the mercy of forces beyond my control.

In my efforts to stop suffering, I have been pursuing three bodies of knowledge. The first body of knowledge is the conventional and scientifically oriented field of psychology in which I obtained an undergraduate degree. I spent thousands of hours in and thousands of dollars on conventional psychotherapy, but unfortunately I must say, talk therapy was not effective in the discharge of my chronic personal problems. In Section III, I will explain why the current model of modern psychotherapy failed me.

The second body of knowledge I have been pursuing is philosophy and new age experiential seminars. Unlike talk therapy, I found the knowledge acquired through philosophical and experiential investigations useful, even though in retrospect, detrimental in certain cases.

Theology is the third domain of knowledge I have been pursuing. By studying the Torah (Old Testament) and observing G-d's commandments through the practice of Judaism, I discovered parallels between religion, secular philosophy and science. For example, the second commandment forbids the practice of idolatry. However, knowing idolatry is forbidden is not enough, because unless idolatry is completely understood, a person may inadvertently become idolatrous without realizing it. To protect myself from this pitfall, I conducted a thorough study of idolatry and found that it explains, in biblical terms, certain modern-day psychological disorders such as chronic anxiety, lack of confidence, depression, etc. Theology proves to be much more informative about human nature than either psychology or philosophy alone. Judaism incorporates principles of behavior and addresses human problems that are in common with secular philosophy and psychology, unifying all three disciplines into one divine vision.

When I finally pieced together all that I had learned about human behavior and suffering by using myself as the focus of my investigations, I discovered the origin of my chronic personal problems – why I was different and why I was suffering. I found I was suffering

from an incorrect image of what a human being is, myself included, that I possessed false knowledge about human nature. With the 2nd commandment, the Torah confirms that it is inevitable for all human beings to possess incorrect images of the world, which is perhaps the ultimate origin of human suffering. A student of human behavior and suffering need not look much further than the surface of the Torah for this insight.

As my investigations into human suffering progressed, the level of anxiety in my life diminished. I no longer wish different my life now or my past then. I don't regret anything anymore. I now understand what happened needed to happen precisely the way it happened. I lost the desire for unnecessary extravagances such as fast cars, a big house and lavish vacations. I discovered the root cause of my depressions and learned how to defeat the underlying hidden forces that kept the disorder intact. Instead of feeling bitter about the painful ordeals I had experienced throughout my life, I transformed those memories into tools for serving others. I am now fully engaged in my purpose and calling in life, which is to eradicate unnecessary suffering by serving those who have that objective. Toward that end, I present to you **The Ethic of Human Repair**.²

SECTION I – Preparing the Soil of the Soul

Several years ago my wife and two boys observed Passover in Chicago with my brother and his family at their home. We spent twelve days in Chicago and by the twelfth day I did not want to leave. I felt absolutely content like nothing was missing, simply being together with my brother, his family and mine; I was afraid I might lose that feeling upon returning to New York. Back in NY, the only thing I could think to do to maintain this elevated state was to start praying every day. Daily prayer is the traditional practice for a Torah-observant Jew. The next morning, I went to my local synagogue and joined one of the minyans, a prayer group. Ever since, I've been praying three times a day, every day. Never before did I have a desire for daily prayer and now I can't imagine living any other way. I exited Passover that year transformed.

The Human Condition: *something is missing*

“And the woman perceived that the tree was good for eating and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable as a means of wisdom, and she took of its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized that they were naked; and they sewed together a fig leaf and made themselves aprons.”

For many of us, personal satisfaction and fulfillment are elusive and for this reason we believe that being satisfied and fulfilled at all times is fantasy and foolish to pursue. So we end up settling for less, often a lot less. We all experience satisfaction and fulfillment from time to time but it usually doesn't last very long. Because of its fleeting nature, we attempt

² 'Human Repair' is an abbreviation for the book title, The Ethic of Human Repair

³ Tanach (The Stone Edition), Mesorah Publications, Ltd., Brooklyn, NY, 2001, Vol. I: The Torah, Genesis (Bereishis), 3:6-7

to shape our lives like the past by trying to remember and repeat what we did when life was once good – in the end something always seems to be missing.

In order to fill the void of an unfulfilled life, people try to get more of what they already have especially money, muscle and votes; or they will resort to trading their primary assets - cars, houses and lovers for newer versions. Every once in a while, they get the bright idea that they have too much, so they purge themselves only to realize they still don't know what they are missing.

The misguided search for satisfaction and fulfillment can badly back-fire, especially when mistaken for pleasure seeking. Pleasure in moderation is healthy, but when pleasure seeking is too frequent and becomes the main objective unnoticed, terrible forms of suffering often result, such as obesity from over-eating, addiction to drugs and sex or severe injury from the thrill of flirting with danger. The suffering from bad habits of the human inclination for pleasure seeking (vs giving) has created the demand for huge state sanctioned institutions and service industries, such as psychotherapy, drug abuse rehabilitation, philosophical counseling and life coaching, to name a few. The unrealized promise of these 'professional' services stems from the fact that those who deliver them have in common the same inherited language, thinking patterns and habits as the clients they are licensed and hired to treat. No wonder why these service providers, especially the individual practitioners, rarely publish or at least measure their track record. What's the big secret?

The divorce rate, now over 50 percent, is one of the strongest indicators of the wide-spread ignorance of our time. If you think this problem does not pertain to you, perhaps you fall into the group of marriages that remain intact despite its misery. Maybe you are more fortunate because your marriage, on the surface at least appears to be working even though the love you and your spouse once had now escapes you – deeply disappointing when reminded of how you felt on your wedding night.

Given the high risk of divorce, isn't it odd that most people engaged to be married do not go for premarital counseling or at the very least attempt to read a book on the subject? Even though the statistical reality and financial cost of divorce is so widely known, the romantic fantasy of marriage overpowers the imagination, rendering the prospect of divorce irrelevant and the need for its prevention seem unnecessary. Then when it happens, without fail the spouses blame each other foolishly, if not out loud at least to themselves. This is beyond mysterious – something immensely profound is missing from this picture.

Not so obvious are those who know how to put on a good face, to cover-up the pain and strain by making sure they look good at all times, always in control. They never express painful emotions in public and rarely in private because they mistakenly believe it is a sign of weakness to be kept secret. This unhealthy suppression of the natural bodily need to emote can take its toll medically. Since the medicine of emotions is so poorly understood, 'good luck' when doctors default to the treatment of 'stress', an appealing diagnosis for a large number of otherwise unexplainable ailments. Even though the infliction remains, the patient pays, the doctor reigns and most important, everyone cooperates to save face.

After striving long and hard for satisfaction and fulfillment, a person eventually becomes resigned to their own idiosyncratic human condition of suffering. Resignation is the end

point of a long process of erosion - it occurs naturally and gradually as the prospects for a better life fade into the distance. This kind of silent resignation is accompanied by the loss of vitality where happiness and joy are reduced to the petty pace of getting through the day with as little discomfort as possible. Personal growth wanes and life becomes routine and burdensome – gravity takes over. The evidence is all around us - look no further than the sagging strained faces, the bent bodies and the overall absence of zest in our demeanor. Resignation is so pervasive, being normal is its camouflage.

* * *

On an average summer day, I walked into Modern Samari to attend my weekly karate class. One of the teenage students walked up to me all excited because he witnessed a car accident and the news media interviewed him on the scene. He told me that a young college student who was hit by the car lost both his legs. As I listened to him tell the story, I noticed how excited he was to be on TV, but smiling after witnessing something so horrible. At the time I chalked it up to his youth and immaturity.

A few months later, during a business trip, I had a similar experience except this time it was with a very intelligent respected colleague of mine. The plan was to meet a group of fellow employees in the hotel restaurant for breakfast. I decided to arrive early since there were several people I hadn't met yet and whom I wanted to welcome. I was the second team member to arrive at the restaurant. We introduced ourselves and started chatting. He asked me if I had heard on the news what happened at the 'big dig' in Logan Airport; I said no. The 'big dig' is a large construction project that was infamous for budget overruns and mismanagement. The news report described how a section of the tunnel leading out of the airport collapsed, crushing a car and killing a newlywed. The groom crawled out from under the demolished car and survived.

What struck me about this story was that same smile again - how someone could smile while telling such a sad story was beyond me. Could anything be more tragic than the senseless death of a newlywed on the way to their honeymoon, only one day after the wedding? It was then that I recalled the first story from months earlier, about the college student who lost both legs in a car accident. In both cases, instead of these stories evoking pity, compassion or horror, the stories evoked a perverse sign of pleasure on the smiling face of the storyteller. Had these two storytellers been sociopaths, perhaps their lack of indifference for the victims could be explained. But in these two cases, the storytellers were typical people just like you and me, who added insult to injury unnoticed. I couldn't reconcile how pleasure can so casually coexist with tragedy in the same breath. Was I missing something? I needed to find out what must be lying in-wait behind such a smile.

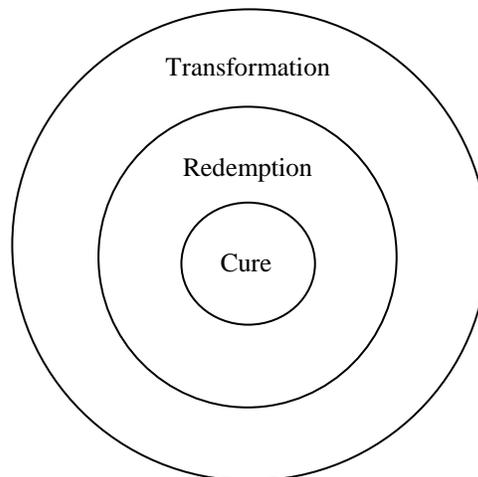
* * *

Just as the ethic of charity obliges the rich to help the poor survive, so does the ethic of human repair oblige the wise to help free the suffering. The troubling gap between what we know in our hearts to be human verses the degrading human condition in which we live, is a frightening mystery. Despite thousands of years of courageous effort to close this haunting gap, the unknown powerful forces at its source continue to evade us, beyond our control. **Human Repair** demystifies the chronic nature of the human condition by disclosing these

forces through a series of logical moves, imagination and specific acts of free will, that guide the reader to a more accurate understanding of how the human being is constructed and has been corrupted.

The core offering of **Human Repair** is The Logic of Free Will, a body of philosophical principles that describe and explain human behavior and suffering. As a remedy for chronic personal problems, the application of The Logic of Free Will establishes its validity and power to transform human life. **Human Repair** settles for nothing less.

A novel or more accurate vision for understanding the human condition often makes for interesting and even provocative reading. If this is our main accomplishment, **Human Repair** will be reduced to fiction, failing you in the process – this is unacceptable. Please read no further unless you have something more important at stake, something very human to achieve besides intellectual curiosity. If not, **Human Repair** will only be another ‘one of those’ self-help books, at best a fad that fades as its novelty wears off. Our collective success depends on the extent to which you consume this text as both a tutorial on free will and as a prescription for curing the chronic personal problems that you are no longer willing to endure. As a tutorial, this book will be of marginal value. However, if you proactively apply this text for the purpose of curing a chronic personal problem, the knowledge will transform your ability to exercise your will freely in general and specifically in the problematic aspect of life from which you are suffering.



About Transformation and Redemption

“Before the Lord’s Presence – did I, the earth, tremble ... Who turns the rock into a pond of water and a flint into a flowing fountain.”⁴

The word ‘transformation’ has entered the mainstream of societal discourse and is often used loosely, bearing the risk of meaning different things to many different people. In **Human Repair**, the word ‘transform’ is not a synonym for the word ‘change.’ People change their lives all the time, they change jobs, they change addresses, they change spouses, etc. – and sometimes they try to change themselves. ‘Change’ is an updated version, a more/better/different extension of a familiar past. People only try to change what is already within their scope of observation. In contrast, ‘transformation’ is a departure from the past, achieved via the destruction of the current state and displaced by a brand new unfamiliar state. Unlike ‘change’, ‘transformation’ pursues the heretofore unobserved, the hidden or the concealed.

For the purposes of **Human Repair**, we consider two general types of human transformation: Externally focused verses internally focused.

Externally focused transformation is initiated by an act of education - the acquisition of missing knowledge that generates new and more accurate perceptions required for new and more effective behaviors. For example, the permanent ability to ‘balance’ on a bicycle depends on the coordinated and unified interaction of perceptual nuances and subtle motor adjustments, a form of knowledge which when acquired produces a brand new bicycle rider. We label this type of transformation ‘external’ because during the learning process, the student must focus their attention on objects outside the body – peddles, handlebars, looking ahead, etc. Like the conception of a fetus, new perceptions and motor skills fuse together to unify, giving rise to the labor of balance then the birth of a newly formed bicycle rider.

In our context of human repair, an internally focused transformation is initiated by an act of re-education, specifically the dispossession of false knowledge via the acquisition of missing knowledge. Similar to an externally focused transformation, an internally focused transformation generates new and more accurate perceptions required for new and more effective behaviors. We label this type of transformation ‘internal’, because the focus of attention is on objects inside us - thoughts, feelings, emotions, body sensations, decisions, beliefs, ideas, imaginings, memories, etc. An internal transformation that repairs does so by correcting the false knowledge that distorts the perceptions underlying the dysfunctional behavior of chronic human problems.

For example, when an alcoholic falsely believes they are not an alcoholic, they watch their life deteriorate without seeing the connection between the two. The fateful day of redemption arrives when the alcoholic **acknowledges** their alcoholism, which begins to

⁴ Artscroll Transliterated Linear Siddur, Mesorah Publications, 1998, ‘Hallel’, p. 649

correct their inaccurate perception that they have control of their drinking. Only by first knowing and then telling the truth about their alcoholism does the life of an alcoholic become redeemable.

Personal Darkness - the problem of false knowledge.

*“Who can discern mistakes?
From unperceived faults cleanse me.”⁵*

No one yet completely understands human nature. If someone did, surely we all would have heard about it by now. It is safe to say everyone suffers from false or missing knowledge about human nature to some extent. When the extent of the suffering reaches the level of a chronic personal problem, the sufferer is compelled to seek a remedy. Humbled by the recognition of their own ignorance, the sufferer seeks an alternate source of knowledge. The typical sources are books, friends, health professionals and clergy, or if humbled enough, G-d Himself – often the last resort. Regardless of the chosen source of knowledge, all seekers are looking for personal redemption, to be extricated from the false knowledge that lurks behind their lingering personal problem.

False knowledge is highly resistant and defensive when under pursuit, as would be any entity whose existence is being threatened. In the field of psychotherapy, the principles of psychic resistance and defensiveness are well known. The same principles are found in Judaism, alluded to in the Torah by the term, ‘stiff-necked’, the inclination to resist the truth and to flee from misperceived dangers paradoxically imposed by G-d’s loyal decrees. The absolute blinding effect of false knowledge makes personal redemption difficult to achieve, and is the reason the remedy always appears at first to be paradoxical and confusing.

False knowledge is especially problematic because its possessor mistakenly believes the knowledge is true, giving false knowledge the instant status of a secret. Unlike secrets that keep others in the dark, false knowledge is a secret that keeps oneself in the dark. False knowledge operates like a spy, pretending to be a friend while circuitously causing a person to suffer. Dispossessing oneself of false knowledge requires the same three steps needed to defeat a spy:

1. discovering that a spy is lurking within you,
2. identifying and observing the spy,
3. catching the spy in an act of disloyalty.

Once these three steps are achieved, the false knowledge is defeated automatically by the body itself. Like the biological immune system that heals by detecting, targeting and destroying foreign microorganisms, when false knowledge is systematically detected, targeted and destroyed, chronic personal problems clear up naturally.

⁵ The Artscroll Tehillim, Mesorah Publications, 1988, Psalms 19:13

Personal Redemption

The term 'personal redemption' refers to the experience of an internally focused transformation that cures. Personal redemption is subdivided into two stages:

Stage 1 – redemption from chronic personal problems

Stage 2 – redemption from the human condition of suffering itself

Personal redemption restores the sufferer back to a time before inflicted by their chronic personal problem. Being redeemed from a chronic personal problem constitutes a complete cure such that the symptoms of the chronic personal problem disappear without any risk of relapse. Redeeming oneself from a chronic personal problem is far more difficult than simply recovering from it, because redemption involves uprooting the original hidden cause. In contrast, recovery only requires an ability to observe the disorder well enough so that the sufferer can learn to live with it by managing its symptoms. Qualitatively speaking, personal redemption is experienced as freedom, wellness and self-control, whereas recovery is experienced as coping, maintenance and tolerance; the former is a cure and the latter is a life-long treatment plan indicative of alcoholics and others trying to recover from their disorder.

To illustrate an externally focused transformation, consider what it means to become a 'bicycle rider'. When you first start learning to ride a bicycle, the constant frustration, pain and fear of falling makes learning how to balance on a bicycle seem impossible. Nevertheless, the observation that so many others can, motivates you to get back on the bike and solve the mystery of balance. Once your perceptual system acquires the knowledge of 'balance', a transformation occurs - a new 'bicycle rider' is born and as with any birth comes a new world of freedom, opportunity and choice. A new bicycle rider can choose to: 1. Enjoy the experience of simply riding a bike; 2. Exercise in a new way; 3. Compete in a new sport; 4. Travel to distant places, etc. The ability to balance transforms from a mystery to second-nature, knowledge never to be lost nor forgotten. Transformations endure.

Like falling off a bicycle over and over again, a chronic personal problem is in effect a repetitive symptom of a hidden problem itself imperceptible and secret-like. Only by solving the original problem, will the pattern of symptoms disappear. When a symptom is mistakenly perceived to be the problem itself, the treatment or solution will lack efficacy. In such cases, incremental improvements may be observed even though the treatment is aimed at the symptom instead of the problem but unless and until the origin of the problem is uprooted, there will be no cure. The origin of a chronic personal problem is false knowledge about human nature, hidden inside the body like a secret.

To illustrate personal redemption, consider what it means to be an alcoholic. At first, everyone else except the alcoholic is able to observe the alcoholism. Since the alcoholic perceives themselves in control of their hands, arms and mouth whenever they take a drink, they experience having self-control not alcoholism. The intoxication of their perceptions keeps the disorder a secret, blocking the alcoholic from recognizing the vicious self-deluding

nature of their illness. In almost all cases, alcoholics are unable to save themselves – rescue comes from the loyalty of those who can accurately perceive their enemy.

Even though the life of an alcoholic may have been redeemed through treatment, they are susceptible to relapse because the original forces that drove them to drink remain concealed within them. For this reason, recovered alcoholics claim always to be in a state of recovery. According to most mainstream experts, there is no cure for alcoholism - once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic. If a former alcoholic were able to drink socially in moderation without relapsing into alcoholism, this would constitute personal redemption from alcoholism.

Less severe idiosyncratic chronic personal problems, notably those that end in some form of separation or divorce, also have this viciously defensive self-fulfilling nature, preventing the sufferer from recognizing their problem until it is too late. Marital divorce is the most notorious, where two people once very much in love gradually lapse into a state of turmoil and suffering, beyond recognition. What characterizes all such cases is the inability to exercise free will while erroneously believing the opposite – an unconscious state of confusion correctable by acquiring The Logic of Free Will.

Life as an ongoing transformational experience engenders a moment-by-moment richness, ongoing fulfillment, exciting anticipation, renewal, joy, wholeness, continual growth and the sense that life is following in your wake. Once transformed, you feel free, un-stuck, out of the rut because your past is no longer determining your future, you are. Nothing seems missing anymore; incessant wanting stops and in the silence appears a desire to serve. The mystery of life morphs into a profound understanding of why and how life turned out the way it did. Unpleasant memories and regrets convert to tools for serving others. Happiness, confidence, authenticity and freedom find their reserved seats.

Fears and anxiety dissipate, bad habits fade, haunting personal problems vanish. You become comfortable with yourself in all situations, always appropriate to the immediate circumstance with the courage to deal with whatever life throws at you. Situations that appear difficult to evaluate, you now welcome as challenges from which to grow rather than to avoid or flee from.

If this all sounds too good to be true, it should because an untransformed life doesn't allow for this. To not know of your own ignorance is bad enough; far worse is to not know that ignorance is at the very bottom of the human condition. The ignorance of human ignorance is total blindness to your own humanity and the humanity of everyone else, the darkness that may account for the grotesque lack of peace in the world. Disadvantaged by the ignorance of ignorance, an untransformed life is inherently and inevitably perplexing and in the end of life accounts for the sadly private unsolved mystery one faces when looking back for the last time. This is true even for the most conventionally successful person, who may have all the trappings of society, yet deep down remains trapped and unfulfilled.

In his translation of *The Bhagavad Gita*, Antonio T. de Nicolas, a leading contemporary philosopher of Indian culture, interprets how the Gita presents the transformation of Arjuna, the warrior in crisis, who finds himself stuck, unable to take decisive action on the battlefield of life. The following passage from Professor de Nicolas' introduction succinctly describes the radical overhaul human transformation has on a person in crisis:

The strangeness of the new situation demands a critical change, not only in conceptual structures, but also in relearning of the new process of body-mind-feeling, a re-education of the muscular and nervous systems, and above all a change in the conceptual structure that will account for the new situation. This is the change, during which a whole new style of embodied interpretation is assembled, but this is not achieved without an intellectual bereavement. This can only proceed to relearn its own process of formation step by step, action by action – how to talk, sing, dance, even eat leftovers.⁶

Not only is Arjuna in battle to save his culture, Arjuna battles to find meaning for his own existence, for his own identity as an authentic and victorious warrior. In the modern era, a chronic personal problem is in essence an idiosyncratic identity crisis yearning to be resolved. Like Arjuna, the sufferer must do battle with their own self, to defeat the forces of enslavement that take a costly toll on the quality of a human life.

The transformation from crisis and suffering to peace and freedom is also rendered in the Torah when G-d freed the nation of Israel from Egyptian bondage, then guided the Jewish people to the promise land. The Torah is about freedom both national and personal. During the pagan era, the Egyptians themselves were enslaved by the idolatry (worship of false gods) of mainstream Egyptian society. Thus, the Jewish people were enslaved by slaves, a horrible plight which we will find later to be no different in essence than the human condition in our modern era. Like the enslavement of Arjuna by his own culture and the enslavement of the Jewish people by Egyptian idolatry, a chronic personal problem is a crisis of enslavement by the unconscious false knowledge (idols) that wreak havoc on the sufferer. Personal redemption starts with an exodus from false knowledge, endures a natural battle fought by the will, followed by a reconciliation and healing, finally ending in the remembrance of a former life departed.

The Game of Human Repair

I once participated in a seminar where the leader defined a 'game' as any situation where 'what isn't, is more important than 'what is'. For example in sports, where the ball is not located, namely the goal, is much more important than where it is, so the goal of the player is to place the ball where it isn't, at which point the play ends. Likewise the game called life for most of us is about what we don't have rather than what we do have, never quite satisfied with our lot. Perhaps this is so because human life from the start is a futile losing proposition as the seconds, minutes, hours, days, and years that pass continually diminish our portion unabated. In the meantime, we are propelled to win the prevailing game of

⁶ The Bhagavad Gita, translated and introduced by Antonio de Nicolas, Nicolas-Hays, Inc. 1990, p. 14

survival and wealth, an ethically empty inheritance that constantly tries to distract or uplift us from our terminal fate.

This book could have been written solely as an intellectual exercise about human behavior, suffering, redemption and free will, where the prevailing game is to become a best seller. But I did not write this book for its own sake, simply to be understood, enjoyed, praised and bought, only to be consumed by the same futile game of life that leaves us wanting. To prevent repeating the same fate, **Human Repair** invites you to play a different game, a game that transcends personal survival and wealth, a game where suffering is the ball (subject), wisdom is the bat (object) and human freedom is the goal (destination).

Before you start playing the human repair game, you must bring a chronic personal problem onto the field. Unless you have a personal problem at stake in the game, you will not learn The Logic of Free Will sufficient for your personal redemption. If you are one of the lucky ones devoid of chronic personal problems, the following questions may help you qualify for the game:

1. Do you have any persisting unwanted conditions or complaints about yourself related to any of the following aspects of your life:
 - a. Career, Finances
 - b. Goals or Aspirations
 - c. Relationships or Family
 - d. Body or Possessions
 - e. Habits or Self Expression
 - f. Health or Recreation
 - g. Meaning/Purpose or Religion
 - h. Feelings, Moods, Emotions, Thoughts
 - i. Memories or Life style

2. Do you have any regrets?

Regret makes life now dependent on the past, because regret assumes life now would be better had the past been different. To make your life now and in the future no longer an extension of your past, you must nullify your regrets. Start by listing them.

3. Which secrets are you most reluctant to tell?

Almost all secrets are motivated by fear of what might happen if the secret was disclosed. Therefore, even though you may not regret having the secret and the secret does not noticeably cause you to suffer, nevertheless, the fear is true and the secret acts as a lie that serves to conceal the fear. To begin learning about how your life is being powerfully shaped by your fears, make a list of your secrets. If you are not sure if a particular secret is important enough to list, add it to the list anyway.

Now put the book down and spend some time now making a list of any chronic personal problems (unwanted persisting conditions), regrets and secrets, as described above. At any time, add to the list when new ones occur to you.

The Optimal Approach for reading **Human Repair**

- **WARNING** -

This warning is primarily for those readers who are currently in psychotherapy or any other form of counseling for resolving, curing, managing or coping with a chronic personal problem. Do not, under any circumstances, use **Human Repair** as a reason, excuse or justification to disengage from these other services. The unconscious forces that are causing your problems will use any vehicle, including this book, to discourage you from activities designed to defeat them. If you are in therapy or counseling, don't drop out; if you meditate, continue meditating; if you exercise, continue exercising; if you take medicine, continue taking the medicine. Use **Human Repair** to help you gain more value from these other services, not to separate yourself from them.

The purpose of **Human Repair** is to enable you to relieve your own suffering by learning how to exercise free will in ways you did not know were possible. This book only provides knowledge and guidance. You cannot approach the reading of **Human Repair** casually and expect results. The kind of learning required to cure your chronic personal problem will occur only if you apply what you have read – reading alone is not sufficient. After you finish studying the material in this book and follow its suggestions, if you do not experience a reduction in suffering, it will be due to at least one of the following four reasons :

1. You did not fully invest yourself. Unless you can honestly say to yourself that you did your utmost to learn and apply the principles of **Human Repair**, it would be disingenuous to blame the book – personal redemption requires a full effort on your part and must be your highest priority. The onus is on you to bring forth your own transformation using **Human Repair** as a reference tool.
2. You may not fully understand the critical ideas of this book. As mentioned earlier, The Logic of Free Will is composed of principles that may at first appear paradoxical and confusing. Your transformation depends on you resolving these paradoxes. If you fail to resolve these paradoxes, you will not acquire the necessary logic for personal redemption. Resolving the paradoxes through dialogue with a study partner can be helpful and enjoyable. Video tutorials (tbd) of The Logic of Free Will may be found online at www.remedy4suffering.com.
3. You did not follow the instructions.
4. The book may be flawed.

There is the risk that you will spend a lot of time reading this book and never experience personal redemption. By the same token, you may spend a lot of time living your life never to become satisfied nor fulfilled. Because life is finite and inherently risky, we must do our best to maximum the value of what we do. With respect to the game of human repair, value is a function of two modes of play: the self-serving mode or the mode of serving others. Both modes are legitimate, however, serving others subsumes self-service, but not vice versa. In other words, if your primary purpose is to serve others by playing the game of human repair, you will serve yourself more so than if your primary purpose is solely to serve yourself. Most people play the human repair game for their own sake; only a small minority plays this game to help others. If you authentically shift your mode to serving others, your personal redemption will progress more rapidly.

It is your choice – the final outcome depends solely on you – all you can do is put forth your best effort - do not second-guess yourself. Observe and learn from every move/choice/decision you make. Choose whether or not to play the game of human repair, then give it your all until the game ends, i.e. until you no longer suffer from the chronic personal problem you are reading this book to solve.

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Your approach to **Human Repair** will determine the transformational impact you experience. For example, if your objective is simply to learn new concepts, then there will be very little transformational impact. If your objective is to learn facts, then there will be very little value in reading this book. The transformational value lies not in the knowledge you acquire from the text, but rather from the knowledge you acquire after applying this remedy to your chronic personal problem. Your game plan needs to be a rigorous and disciplined inquiry into yourself and your world by making self-observations using The Logic of Free Will as a lens.

This book does not provide information to memorize nor try to persuade you to adopt a new belief system. Nothing is being sold here, rather this text intends to confront your incumbent belief systems in order to break the stranglehold they have on your experience, behavior and will. When your beliefs are confronted, they will automatically temp you to disagree with whatever opposes them. Conversely, when confronted by something in harmony with them, your beliefs will temp you to agree. In both cases, your beliefs will successfully solicit your loyalty even though you admit to yourself what you believe is woefully inadequate for solving your chronic personal problem. People who always want to be ‘right’ and tend to make others ‘wrong’ are enslaved by their belief systems. Beware of this pitfall by catching yourself agreeing or disagreeing with the reading material. Instead, **Human Repair** recommends using a scientific approach for choosing what to believe and for deciding where to place ones loyalty.

A Scientific Approach

The most formidable communication challenge in the domain of **Human Repair** is that human transformation requires the introduction of new principles that defy our usual criteria

for validity. Whether true or false, belief systems are self-reinforcing to ensure internal consistency, however consistency does not ensure validity. A belief system may possess the attribute of self-awareness, i.e. memories of its own behavior, a prerequisite for observing and transforming itself, but transformation does not ensure validity. To ensure validity and to be life affirming, a belief system needs the attribute of self-correction with the right criteria for judging correctness (validity). The ethic of human repair mandates that we always admit when incorrect, seek what needs correction about ourselves and correct ourselves immediately when the opportunity arises. However, self-correction is no better than its criteria for judging correctness.

Ethical people, by definition, are committed to correcting themselves. A serious ethical person is always aware of the risk of behaving unethically given the likelihood of not knowing every ethical nuance or the possibility of having learned an incorrect ethical principle. Wanting to be ethical is simply not good enough; correct ethical behavior requires a correct education in ethics. For a truly ethical person to avoid hypocrisy, acquiring knowledge of ethics is an ongoing obligation. **Human Repair** reduces to a minimum this ethical risk, by choosing 'relief from suffering' as the criterion for correctness.

A normal person always knows with certainty when they are suffering, when they are not suffering and when they experience relief from suffering. When a normal person says to himself or herself they are suffering, they must be correct – this is self-evident. Relief from suffering then is an ideal criterion for correctness - it is unambiguous to the sufferer. Therefore, when you apply The Logic of Free Will to your chronic personal problem and relief from suffering results, your confidence in the correctness of the logic will grow. Greater confidence will encourage you to make more choices based on the same logic. If the logic is correct, relief from the chronic personal problem should continue, causing you to naturally adopt the logic. This dynamic cycle of empowerment will eventually cure your chronic personal problem and you will have learned how to exercise your free will in a new way.

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Now that we have established solid unambiguous criteria for judging the correctness (validity) of our beliefs, our knowledge and our actions, we need a protocol that prevents our old thinking habits from undermining our quest for personal redemption. **Human Repair** chooses a scientific protocol because the job description of a scientist matches the work needed to be done for human repair. Scientists discover new knowledge by searching for what is hidden and unknown. Likewise, to cure a chronic personal problem, the sufferer must seek to discover the unknown false knowledge and false beliefs hidden within them. We will borrow from the enterprise of science a thinking habit composed of four distinctions:

1. **Observe**
2. **Theorize**
3. **Test**
4. **Judge**

In the normal course of life, people make observations all the time and then automatically explain the observations to themselves using what they already know and believe. If you

have a chronic personal problem, then you already recognize that your explanations, your knowledge base and your beliefs are failing you. **Human Repair** considers it a sacred privilege to offer some other options for you to consider. Instead of trying to get you to believe in these other options, this text insists that you test them before deciding what to believe. This is the general approach **Human Repair** recommends and includes guidance on what phenomena to observe, what theories to consider, and what experiences to give yourself for testing purposes. Judging the validity of The Logic of Free Will rests on whether or not you experience relief from suffering.

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We know from the natural sciences that our external behavior emanates from signals occurring inside our bodies. If we want to learn about and perhaps change our external behavior, observing our internal behavior should bring us closer to its origin. We all pay attention to a greater or lesser extent to both our internal and external behavior, however, since curing a chronic personal problem requires discovering the origin of the problem, you will need to increase the amount of time you spend observing your internal behavior. By observing your internal world, you will become more familiar with the unique automatic recurring content and tactics your body uses to secretly influence your free will.

For example, consider the following experience from my personal life where I used the scientific approach to eliminate a major source of anxiety. For a long time I had anxiety about money. I often worried about having enough money to cover my childrens' college education and my retirement. I also had anxiety about my job security even though there were no indications that my job was at risk. I finally decided this is no way to live, to be constantly worried about money all the time. So by closely observing my thoughts and feelings, I discovered my anxiety occurred only when thoughts about money appeared automatically and uninvited. In other words, I realized I wasn't intentionally choosing to think about money. Rather, the money-related thoughts would enter my awareness on their own, enticing me to think more about money, fueling my concerns and making me anxious. At that time in my life, my incumbent strategy for reducing anxiety about money was to spend more time working, trying to make more money which caused the side-effect of a work-life imbalance. When I made the observation that my anxiety was linked to thoughts that were automatic and uninvited, I began to theorize that perhaps the thoughts emanated from an entity separate and distinct from my free will.

I then speculated that if I freely chose to stop paying attention to these automatic uninvited thoughts, my anxiety about money might stop. To test this hypothesis, I decided to do the following experiment, to give myself the following experience:

1. To rigorously observe my thoughts, distinguishing those that appear automatically and uninvited verses those that I intentionally think-up.
2. Whenever I observe myself paying attention to an automatic uninvited thought, choose whether to continue or to shift my attention to something of more importance.

The experiment was a complete success. Within a week or two, the anxiety about money stopped and the recurring bothersome thoughts about money and my job diminished

significantly. What changed? Prior to the experiment, because I did not distinguish between my intentional thoughts and unintentional thoughts, the unintentional thoughts would capture and hold my attention. I was paying attention to all my thoughts because I assumed they were all coming from the same source, namely me. In other words, I misidentified myself as the source of all my thoughts, when in fact one only sources their intentional thoughts by definition. Learning to distinguish between intentional and unintentional thoughts provided me with a new degree of freedom, like setting foot in a new land where new choices abound.

Splitting the Sea

The story of the Exodus, the emancipation of the Jewish people from ancient Egyptian slavery, sheds light on the power of making distinctions as illustrated above by the anxiety-about-money chronic personal problem. After releasing the Jewish people from slavery and allowing the entire Jewish nation to leave Egypt, the Egyptian Pharaoh changed his mind. As the Egyptian army pursued and overtook them, the Jewish people became frantic and Moses started to pray. Then G-d said to Moses, “Why do you cry out to me? Speak to the children of Israel and let them journey forth! And you – lift up your staff and stretch out your arm over the sea and split it; and the Children of Israel shall come into the midst of the sea on dry land.”⁷ Moses touched the water with his staff and the sea split allowing the entire Jewish nation to escape and to enter a new land virtually unscathed. At the same time, the entire Egyptian army drowned when the parted waters returned to its original state.

By distinguishing between intentional versus unintentional thoughts, I split my sea of thoughts into two distinct observable types. New observations make possible new ways of acting freely, such as in this case, by switching my attention away from the anxiety-provoking thoughts to an affiliated choice. After a week or two of controlling the focus of my attention in this disciplined way, I felt relief from anxiety as the unrelenting legion of money-pursuing thoughts washed away.

Don't wait; start now!!

The act of distinguishing two types of thoughts followed by the free willful act of switching ones attention from one type to the other, re-educates the body through the memories of these acts, only if one is disciplined to keep up the exercise long enough. **Human Repair** suggests you, the reader, start now by making the distinction for yourself that you have unintentional automatic uninvited thoughts that rapidly and often capture your attention unnoticed, and these automatic uninvited thoughts have an agenda not necessarily in your best interest. If you notice some of these thoughts are associated with anxiety or worry, practice shifting your attention onto something totally unrelated. You may not find this easy to do at first, but it does get easier if you continue working at it. By adopting this practice, this text predicts you will experience relief from suffering and discover a new powerful way to exercise your will freely.

⁷ The Torah, Exodus (Shemos), 14:15-17

Secrets about Secrets

Knowledge of Darkness is the Light

Definitions:

1. Intentional – for a known purpose.
2. A Secret – information kept concealed for a known or unknown purpose.
3. A Lie – that which conceals the truth; a lie has the status of a secret.
4. Lying – the act of concealing the truth.
5. Normal – average, typical, common.
6. Free Will – the ability to exercise the will, i.e. to create or make choices, without influence from a force or entity outside the will.

Why learn about secrets?

We are learning about secrets because secrets are uniquely human. There is nothing more intimate, more private nor more telling about a person than their secrets. For this reason, secrets are an ideal starting point for investigating the nature of free will, self-control and suffering.

What if someone offered you a million dollars to publically disclose all your secrets - would you go through with it? Despite your strong desire for the million dollars, the consequences of telling all your secrets would be too frightening. There is certain information you would find very difficult if not impossible to disclose, especially the secrets others told you in confidence or the details that describe the intimacies you had with them. There is one extreme universal secret you would never disclose, even in exchange for a hundred million dollars – the disclosure of your personal ID, your identity, along with the access codes to your bank accounts, because if you did the prize money would not be secure and neither would you. Fear appears to be the unrecognized force behind most secrets.

Even though it is obvious that humans traffic in secrets by continually concealing information from each other, it is not so obvious why. The need to have secrets suggests we are all afraid of each other - that we do not trust each other with the information we each possess. However this does not explain why we keep secrets even from those we trust the most. Is it possible that we are permeated with fear to such an extent that we are compelled to keep secrets even from those we love and to whom we are most loyal? If fear is the underlying

motivation for a secret, then the secret is not an act of free will because no one freely chooses fear - fear comes upon us automatically, uninvited. This suggests that a fear-based secret is disguised as an act of free will, giving the illusion of self-control even though the opposite is true.

What is the risk in believing we freely choose our secrets if it isn't true? The epitome of self-control is the ability to exercise your will freely, to create and make choices without being influenced by forces outside your will. The opposite is the puppet pitfall, when one lacks self-control but doesn't know it, who believes they are choosing freely when in reality they are under the influence of unconscious hidden forces. A person is not fully in control of themselves to the extent they are unable to exercise their will freely, free of outside influences, whether they know it or not. Such is the case with secrets that are driven by fear, an emotion a person never wants nor freely chooses to have, with one exception - the fear of G-d - the only fear freely chosen, i.e. an act of free will.

Being out of control is bad enough. Far worse is to not know when you are out of control. Before the sufferer realizes their personal problem is chronic, they hope they have the problem under control until recurring failures, frustration, discouragement, depression, hopelessness, loss of confidence, etc., convince them otherwise. After every attempt to solve their problem fails, a rational person eventually concludes that something imperceptible must be controlling them. The imperceptible is itself a secret. Like a spy whose defeat depends on the disclosure of its secret identity, a chronic personal problem is resolved when the identity of its origin is no longer a secret, no longer concealed from its victim, at which point self-control is restored.

Because we bring secrets into and out of existence by decree with a simple internal speech act requiring no skill or resource, it appears as though we have complete self-control when we create, keep or tell a secret. We never suspect that what we say to ourselves, such as when we tell ourselves to keep something secret, is under the control of anything other than ourselves. If it can be shown that the human condition forces us to keep secrets, this would prove that a secret is not always an act of our free will. If a secret is not an act of free will, then what we say to ourselves is not always under our complete control contrary to common belief. The implication of such a widely held misconception is no less than monumental. Is it possible that humanity has been ignorant of something so fundamental to human nature as secrets? Perhaps we should not be so surprised how little we know about ourselves given the ubiquity of human suffering the world endures and how profoundly inept we are at eradicating it.

Before attempting to understand the hidden forces that influence what we say to ourselves, in particular our secrets, it must be shown that secrets are forced upon us, that in order to have a normal life a person must keep secrets - that there is no choice in this matter. Toward that end, the following proof will show that,

a normal person is forced to keep secrets.

We begin the proof by testing the authenticity of a person who claims to no longer keep secrets and attempt to show why such authenticity is virtually impossible to attain. To test the truthfulness of such a person, think up the most universally kept secret then ask them to disclose it to you. If they are unable to disclose this secret, then they are not truly a person who never keeps secrets.

What is the most universally kept secret? It should be obvious but it isn't. Which secret came to your mind first? If it wasn't the following secret, then the secret that just came to your mind may be more important to you than your own physical survival. Isn't this the most universally kept secret:

the name of your bank, your bank accounts and the access codes to your bank accounts?

If someone insists they do not keep secrets, then when asked for their ID and bank account information they must disclose it. It goes without saying, they certainly can't keep secret their no-secret status. Once their no-secret status becomes public knowledge, it would only be a matter of time before a criminal asks for their ID in order to pilfer their bank accounts. Inevitably, a person who refuses to keep secrets in today's world will lose their freedom. They will end up either homeless, confined to a mental hospital or dependent on a loved one, all of which are abnormal living conditions, proving we have no choice but to keep secrets in order to live a normal life.

Since a person is forced to have secrets to live normally, it must be true that not all secrets are acts of free will; therefore we are not always in full control of what we say to ourselves, contrary to common belief. To free ourselves of these controlling forces, we must investigate their nature so that we can observe, oppose and ultimately defeat them.

The following dialogue between a psychiatrist and patient provides further insight into the forces that underlie secrets. The dialogue will also show that the logic of secrets argues for the existence of the human unconscious. This insight is the gate through which one must pass to fully appreciate the following principle:

The course of a human life is determined either by a hidden self-fulfilling prophecy or its defeat through the exercise of free will.

After the dialogue, we will begin learning how and why the unconscious strives to control the Human will through unintentional acts analogous to idolatry, in its effort to survive in a hard and dangerous world.

Philosophical Counseling

Session #1

Dr – Psychiatrist

Pr = Patient who refuses to keep secrets

Dr: Do you know why you are being forced to live in this psychiatric hospital?

Pr: Yes. People think I'm self-destructive because I refuse to keep secrets.

Dr: Why don't you want to tell me what happened?

Pr: A stranger found out I don't keep secrets then asked me for my ID and the access codes to my bank accounts. He stole all my money. Doctor, does this mean I'm crazy?

Dr: No, you're not necessarily crazy, but I do think you are very confused and don't know it. If you continue not to keep secrets, you will never live a normal life because criminals, whose business depends on being secretive, will steal everything you own especially your identity. The safest place for you to remain is in the hospital until you realize you must keep secrets. Until then, I will not release you.

Was there a time when you did keep secrets like everyone else?

Pr: Yes.

Dr: What made you decide not to keep secrets anymore?

Pr: I was a very wealthy person. I was able to buy anything I wanted. Eventually I realized what I wanted more than anything else was to simply live in a world where people trusted each other; to live in a world where I don't have to be afraid of other people. I came to the conclusion that there is no worthier ideal, so I decided to devote the rest of my life trying to bring such a world into existence.

Dr: What a wonderful and noble cause! But why does this mean you can't keep secrets anymore?

Pr: Early one morning as I was waking-up, it occurred to me that if such a world existed, if everyone could be trusted, people should have no reason to keep secrets from each other. Why hide anything from someone who is loyal to you? That's when I decided to stop

keeping secrets, and by doing so I hope to get some insight into why the world is so disloyal. To understand anything fully, one must also understand its opposite.

Dr: What happened after you made that decision?

Pr: I immediately realized I was keeping other peoples' secrets, secrets they told me in confidence. I had to tell my friends and family I was no longer keeping their secrets secret, because had I not told them, I would have been keeping that fact a secret – I hate hypocrisy. As you can imagine, many of them became angry with me and some even threatened me. I thought they would be a little easier on me when I told them the humanitarian reason for my decision, but they didn't care about that at all. I lost several friends and was ostracized by some of my closest relatives.

Dr: The irony is, in your sincere attempt to create a more trustful world, you caused others to no longer trust you. I hope you can begin to see that refusing to keep secrets in a world where everyone else does is very problematic. You need to see the folly of your own actions.

Pr: I must admit I didn't thoroughly consider the potential risks and ramifications that might arise. I didn't fully appreciate the extent people use secrets to create and maintain their relationships.

Dr: Unless you understand the paradoxical nature of secrets, you won't understand how people function, especially yourself. To the extent a person lacks knowledge about human nature, at least to that extent they will lack knowledge about themselves and everyone else. It's no wonder so many people don't get along. You lost almost everything. Hopefully, you are open to learning from your mistakes so that you can improve your chances of accomplishing your noble mission. It behooves everyone to make learning about human nature the highest priority.

Pr: I'm open to learning but I'm not yet sure I made a mistake. I see how my decision to not keep secrets landed me in this mental institution; however, I'm not sure being here is a bad thing or the result of a mistake. There may be something very important I need to learn by being here. Maybe it is good that this happened to me. Maybe everything is ultimately for the good.

I still maintain that the world can function without secrets, assuming we were all loyal to each other? I admit this is hard to imagine given how little loyalty there is in the world today. I believe we all know in our hearts the goodness of loyalty, and the shame knowing we are not as loyal to each other as we ought to be.

Dr: I agree in theory that if everyone was loyal, the world could function without secrets. I think if we investigate the nature of secrets, we may come to understand more deeply the origin and purpose of the dark forces that compel us to have secrets, especially secrets that

are driven by fear.

Pr: What do you think I need to know about secrets I don't already know?

Dr: Let's look a little deeper into how people use secrets. Telling a secret is a private act of disclosure and concealment that creates trust. When people tell each other their secrets for the first time, trust enters instantly. Secrets are profound because they summon so many other human virtues such as courage, loyalty, confidence, vulnerability, intimacy, privacy and most important, honor.

Pr: I never gave it that such thought.

Dr: Most people haven't.

Telling a secret in confidence makes both people feel more secure. This can occur only if the giver of the secret has the courage to trust the receiver. When telling a secret, the giver voluntarily submits to the will of the receiver - a self-imposed act of subordination that places the receiver in a position of power over the giver. The receiver's power to disclose the secret against the giver's will, implicitly deters the giver from becoming disloyal, thereby making the receiver more confident. In return for this gift of confidence, the receiver secures the human bond by agreeing to keep the secret, "it shall go no further", establishing mutual trust, confidence and loyalty.

Pr: I guess that's why sometimes I feel a bit naked when I disclose a secret to someone for the first time. It's like undressing in front of a new potential lover, looking forward to a warm loving embrace, while at the same time being exposed to the potential pain of rejection or even worse, disloyalty. I can see how telling a secret is an intimate act, requiring the strength to be vulnerable and exposed.

Dr: You're right. People yearn for intimacy. Our naked bodies are secrets we conceal with clothing. It takes courage to unclothe a secret especially the first time with a new person. Someone must have the courage to make the first move for a loyal and intimate relationship to emerge.

Did you ever notice that the words loyalty and royalty have the same root?

Pr: No.

Dr: These words are very closely related. The virtues of royalty are summoned when a secret is used to secure a human bond. Royalty derives its power from the reciprocal loyalty that the crown and their loyal subjects share. The job of royalty is to protect and nurture the kingdom in return for the praise, honor and loyalty of their people, who make the kingdom secure for all by submitting to the will of the crown. When this circular power of mutual loyalty breaks down, the royals are dethroned in spirit and eventually from office,

overthrown by a new and more popular regime.

Trust, confidence and loyalty are the royal pillars upon which both personal and national security rest.

Pr: I see why my friends and family were so harsh with me. When they learned that their secrets were no longer safe with me, the loyalty we once shared broke down, removing me from their royal inner circle.

Dr: You posed a threat to them. It takes courage to reveal a secret to someone who you've never trusted before. It takes courage to make the first move in a relationship with someone who hasn't yet risked disclosing to you one of their secrets. Sharing a secret is an act of human bonding, a private invitation to embrace, paid for with the intimate gift of self-imposed vulnerability. Secrets make people feel safe.

By the same token, some very private people lack inner strength because they can't tolerate being vulnerable. They rarely reveal their secrets but yearn for the secrets of others. Consequently, they tend to have very few close intimate relationships.

Pr: Are you suggesting that the way to build a more trustful world is for everyone to tell secrets to each other? That can't be right because if everyone knows everyone else's secrets, the secrets would no longer be secret. That doesn't make any sense.

Dr: You're right. Secrets become paradoxical at the extreme.

Pr: It almost seems counter-intuitive to ever tell anyone a secret, because a secret becomes less of a secret as more people know the secret? It is also ironic that people both keep secrets and tell secrets for exactly the same reason, to feel more secure. It is as though a secret is a traded security with intrinsic value, a kind of currency used for buying the royal assets of trust, confidence and loyalty.

Dr: It's sad that we still live in a world that makes us feel we need protection from each other.

Pr: This is precisely the reason I stopped keeping secrets; I decided I didn't want to live that way anymore.

Dr: Unfortunately, there are forces in our world that cause us to keep secrets. If we ignore these forces, we will suffer the consequences, as you well know. Let's approach the problem scientifically. Let's try to understand the properties of these disloyal forces so that we can learn how to observe, oppose and defeat them.

Pr: It boggles my mind that we know how to travel to the moon but we can't figure out how to live together in peace. Now that's a mystery.

Dr: I think the reason is relatively simple but the solution is complex. Imagine a world where

civilization as a whole does not yet fully understand its own nature, human nature that is. In such a world everyone would lack self-knowledge at least to the extent each person does not understand human nature. In such a world, wouldn't you predict that people would often misperceive, misjudge and unintentionally upset each other, making trust difficult to maintain even for among those with good intentions. Since no one fully understands human nature yet, it is a *faite comple* that our world lacks trust.

Pr: Are you suggesting people should become more knowledgeable in psychology to solve human problems?

Dr: There is no question that everyone needs to make it a high priority to learn as much as possible about human nature and the human condition. Psychology is only one perspective. Philosophy and religion have been around much longer and have much more to offer. As the philosophical issues we are discussing become clear, you will be able to see and understand yourself better. When this happens, you will make more accurate observations and more effective decisions in general. Over time, with proper discipline, you can master yourself to such an extent you will become free of worry and want for nothing.

Pr: But you are a psychiatrist. How can you completely dismiss the field of psychology?

Dr: I'm not completely dismissing psychology, but I understand its limitations. Psychology is a comparatively young field and in its current state is insufficient for understanding and effectively treating human suffering. Our dialogue will be very different than what you would normally expect from a psychotherapist. The vast majority of therapists do not spend their time teaching their clients principles of human behavior in the initial stages of their treatment plan.

Pr: Ok. So what philosophical issues should we talk about first?

Dr: We need to finish understanding secrets before we move on to a new topic.

Pr: I thought we were done with secrets.

Dr: We've learned a lot about secrets but haven't spent much time applying the knowledge to solve your problem. Let's see if we can analyze your situation using what we learned about secrets. Ok?

Pr: I'll try.

Dr: Good. I'm curious why the pain of losing your friends and family relationships didn't discourage you from living a life without secrets? Can you explain that?

Pr: I knew from the start that I was embarking on an ambitious and potentially difficult mission and that all such missions usually entail ordeals. I had prepared myself intellectually and emotionally for this. Gandhi and Martin Luther King risked themselves for the sake of

mankind. I certainly don't consider myself in their league, but these great men demonstrate that great missions sometimes call for taking risks.

Dr: It sounds like you are prepared to sacrifice a lot to accomplish your mission.

Pr: Yes. Since a utopia, by definition, has everything a person needs, a person should be willing to sacrifice almost anything to achieve utopia.

Dr: Even your marriage, your security and your freedom.

Pr: I see your point. Perhaps I have gone a bit overboard.

Dr: I believe you have one thing left worth sacrificing that will repair your life and move you one step closer to making the world more trustful.

Pr: Let me guess - my mission? You want me to sacrifice my mission - to stop pursuing a more trustful world?

Dr: No, not your mission; you have a great mission. I would never give that up. I recommend you sacrifice your unwillingness to keep secrets.

Pr: No one is going to force me to keep secrets.

Dr: A human being can't force you to keep secrets but the human condition can and is forcing you. You need to accept the fact that you don't have a free choice in this matter. There are forces that require you to keep secrets in order to survive as a normal person in this world. Aren't you forced to breathe, to eat and to go to the bathroom?

Pr: Yes.

Dr: Does it bother you that you are forced to do these things?

Pr: Not really. I accept them.

Dr: You also need to accept the fact that you must keep secrets in a world where everyone else keeps secrets, otherwise you won't survive - you can't live like a normal person otherwise. You breathe, eat and go to the bathroom to survive. I recommend you add keeping secrets to your list.

Look at it this way. Instead of keeping his identity a secret, had the thief disclosed his identity to you by admitting he was a thief, would you have disclosed your identity and banking information to him?

Pr: That's not a fair question because thieves, by definition, never disclose their identity – their

business depends on maintaining that secret.

Dr: Precisely and because thieves exist in the world, people are very reluctant to disclose their identity to a stranger because the stranger could be a thief. But you did it anyway.

Pr: I knew the stranger might be a thief, but I chose to trust him. Had I known the stranger was a thief, I would have given him my ID only after making a serious attempt at converting him, which is what my mission is ultimately about anyway— converting a disloyal corrupt world into a truly loyal and royal civilization.

Dr: I can imagine in an ideal world where secrets are not necessary, it would never occur to anyone to conceal their identity – there would be no reason to do so. By the same token, if the value system of the prevailing society considered secrets taboo, then people would never lie about anything because a lie is itself a secret. In such a world, keeping anything secret would be considered dishonest unlike in our world where secrets are normal, necessary and condoned.

Pr: Clearly, we are still living in a very dark world.

Dr: Did you ever discover how the thief learned about your no-secret status?

Pr: I still don't know. I really can't blame anyone because whoever made my no-secret status public had the right to assume I wasn't keeping it secret.

One day a seemingly nice person who I had never met, approached me in the supermarket and asked me if I was the person who didn't have any secrets. I said yes. That's when he asked me for my banking information. I immediately realized he could sell the information to someone else or steal all my money himself. I politely asked him not to. He said the only reason he asked me for my banking information was just to test if I really didn't have any secrets. He said he thought the idea of not having secrets was fascinating and he wanted to see if such a person really existed. He said not to worry, he wouldn't misuse the information.

Dr: Why didn't you rush to the bank to move your money into other accounts?

Pr: Had I done so, the other bank accounts would have become my next new secret. Anything I would have done to hide the money would have constituted a secret. My only choice was to trust the stranger.

Dr: Why didn't you anticipate that a thief might try to do this to you?

Pr: I've been rich for so long, it just didn't occur to me that someone could wipe me out this way, nor could I image ever needing money. I guess I was naïve.

Dr: That must have been a rude awakening.

Pr: I still find it hard to believe. As you can imagine, my wife was furious with me. So then I tried to find a job, but every company that interviewed me wanted me to sign a non-disclosure agreement. When I told them I didn't keep secrets, the interviews always ended abruptly. I quickly realized employers would not hire someone who couldn't promise to protect the company's trade secrets, understandably so. When I told this to my wife, she tried to convince me to give up my humanitarian quest for a world devoid of secrets. But when I refused, she committed me to this mental hospital and filed for divorce.

Dr: Your wife probably saved your life. You're lucky she didn't leave you homeless. At least in here you are safe and you can learn a few things that might help you be more successful at whatever you want to do with your life. I think it is safe to say that if you want to change the world, you need to be in-the-world instead of confined to a mental institution.

Pr: I don't want to live here but I won't lie to get out. I think you want me to say I have secrets even though I really don't. Lying will cause me to have a new secret.

Dr: Did it ever occur to you that you might have secrets you don't know you have?

Pr: What are you talking about? You can't keep a secret from yourself? That is logically impossible. Isn't it always true that a secret is only a secret if someone says so and therefore by definition a person always knows what secrets they have?

Dr: Actually, what you just said is a common but incomplete understanding of what secrets are. What you said is true only for a certain class of secrets. A secret is information that is concealed for some purpose whether or not the purpose is known. There are two classes of secrets: conscious secrets and unconscious secrets. Conscious secrets are perceived to be under the control of the person who harbors the secret. In stark contrast, unconscious secrets are secrets that control a person without them knowing.

If I can demonstrate that you have secrets you don't know you have, then you can tell people you have secrets even though you don't know what they are. This will stop you from telling people you don't have secrets which is what landed you in the hospital in the first place.

Pr: If I don't know what the secrets are, how do I know I have them?

Dr: To answer this question, first you need to learn what an unbreachable decree is.

Pr: What's that?

Dr: An unbreachable decree is a statement that is always true and therefore can never be used to lie with. For example, the statement, "I am alive", is always true because only a living person can say it. The statement, "I have secrets", is also always true but for a different reason. A person who says they have secrets cannot be lying because whenever a person lies they always

keep that fact a secret from the person they are lying to. Therefore, the statement, “I have secrets” is always true whether or not a person is lying.

Pr: Did you just say the statement, ‘I have secrets’, can’t be a lie.

Dr: That’s correct. If someone says they have secrets, it must be true.

Pr: That’s strange. I thought you can lie about anything. I thought free will makes it possible to lie about anything. Does this mean we don’t have free will?

Dr: No. Everyone has a free will, however most people mistakenly believe they are exercising their will freely at all times including when they are not. This is a common misconception and the source of much unnecessary suffering.

Pr: Earlier you said that a secret is something purposefully concealed. How can I purposefully conceal a secret I don’t know I have?

Dr: You can’t, but your body can. The body operates on its own, in case you haven’t noticed. Do you know who Sigmund Freud is?

Pr: He’s a famous psychiatrist.

Dr: That’s correct. Freud discovered the unconscious. It became his most important contribution to the field of psychotherapy. Simply put, the unconscious is the term that refers to the hidden secrets a person is unaware they possess. In other words, the unconscious consists of all the knowledge and forces that exist inside of a person that the person does not know are there.

Pr: If I’m not aware of these hidden secrets, what good does it do me to know I have them?

Dr: First of all, if secrets in your unconscious are influencing your behavior and you are not aware of it, you are like a puppet without self-control. This could explain why a person has chronic personal problems they are unable to resolve.

On the other hand, if you learn that you have an unconscious, then you can attempt to observe the effect your unconscious has on yourself even though you don’t yet know its purpose. If you can observe something, you then have the opportunity to study it and choose how to interact with it and by so doing, eventually understand and defeat it.

Pr: Someone once told me they knew there wasn’t anything in their unconscious that had a negative influence on their behavior. Is it possible to know this about yourself?

Dr: Impossible to know such a thing. That person must not understand the definition of the unconscious. By definition, a person cannot be conscious of the content of their

unconscious in the present – this is a contradiction in terms. One can only become conscious of what was in their unconscious from the past - a person cannot directly observe their unconscious in the present. Only through memory recall can a person trace how the forces in their unconscious influenced their past behavior. Then with this knowledge and a proper understanding of how the unconscious works, a person may be able to discern the psychological force, the hidden secrets responsible for their chronic personal problem. When an insight of this magnitude occurs, the pernicious psychological forces self-destruct, the symptoms clear up and in their place settles a wonderful sense of freedom and well being.

Pr: Your description of the unconscious seems to imply that it is a refuge for malicious psychological forces that cause a person to suffer? Are there any benefits to the unconscious, or is it only a source of suffering?

Dr: That's an excellent question. The unconscious has the potential to be both harmful or helpful, a blessing or a curse. I want to fully explain this to you starting the next time we meet because the answer to this question is what you need to know to get out of the hospital. The answer will explain why people have chronic personal problems and once you understand this, you should then see a much more effective way to make the world more trustful. You will start keeping secrets again and more importantly, you will see why repairing the human condition requires a person to have one foot in the old world and one foot in the new. To cause a transformation of such magnitude, one must live within a paradoxical gap, which in your case is the ironic necessity to keep secrets in order to bring about a world where secrets are unnecessary.

Without going into too much detail now, consider the following. There was only one time in human history when there were no secrets. Can you guess when that was?

Pr: I assume in the very beginning.

Dr: Yes. The only time in human history when there were no secrets was in the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve lived. Do you know the Garden of Eden story?

Pr: Not entirely.

Dr: Remember you said how sometimes you feel somewhat naked when you tell someone a secret?

Pr: Yes.

Dr: Adam and Eve were always naked and had no secrets until that fateful day when everything went wrong. Do you remember what happened?

Pr: Didn't they make a mistake and try to cover it up?

Dr: That's right. A friendly serpent convinced them to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, even though G-d commanded them not to. Immediately upon consuming knowledge from the forbidden tree they noticed for the first time that they were naked and that it was bad. Fearful that G-d would disapprove of their nakedness and punish them for disobeying, they tried to keep their mistake secret by covering their exposed bodies and hiding from Him, a classic case of folly.

Pr: Anyone who thinks they can hide from G-d must be very confused. Even if there is no G-d, a G-d fearing person must be confused if they think they can hide from their G-d.

Dr: I agree. There are two lessons from the Garden of Eden story I want to briefly touch upon today.

First, you must be very careful who and what you listen to, including yourself. People have all sorts of ideas about how the world works and we each think our ideas are very reasonable and appealing. So we listen to the voice in our head as if that voice is an authority. The serpent represents the friendly enticing voice in our head to which we love to listen, without considering the possibility that what may lie in wait behind the voice is the enemy.

Secondly, a person needs to be very careful what knowledge they consume. If the source of knowledge is flawed like the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, then in ignorance a person may learn something false and unwittingly believe it is true. Common sense tells us that false knowledge is potentially very harmful, leading a person down a dark road destined for suffering. False knowledge has the status of an imperceptible unconscious secret.

Pr: If a person doesn't know whether their unconscious contains false knowledge, then how can anything be done about it?

Dr: There is a way to defeat false knowledge that lives in the unconscious, but it is too late to get into that subject today. In the few minutes that are remaining, I'd like to know what you got out of our discussion. Did you learn anything useful?

Pr: I definitely learned something but I'm not sure yet how useful it is.

Dr: Ok. What did you learn?

Pr: I learned that in order to feel more secure, people use secrets to solicit loyalty from each other and to build intimate relationships.

Dr: Good. What else?

Pr: I learned it is human nature to have secrets that are hidden in our unconscious. Some

of these hidden secrets cause suffering, but how and why this happens I don't fully understand yet.

Dr: Very good. When we meet next week I'll go into more detail about how this works. Anything else?

Pr: I learned that the human condition forces people to keep secrets. For this reason some of the secrets we have must not be under our full control, especially secrets in the unconscious that influence, without our knowing, the choices we make and what we say to ourselves.

Dr: Excellent. You definitely learned the main points. So, do you have secrets?

Pr: None that I know of.

Dr: Do you have any unconscious secrets?

Pr: I think I must.

Dr: Why?

Pr: We know a person must have secrets if they say they do. Since a person can say they have secrets at any time, the secrets must already exist. In my case, since I refuse to keep secrets, the secrets must be in my 'unconscious.' Does this mean everyone has an unconscious?

Dr: Yes and congratulations. You are very close to being released from the hospital.

Pr: You said you would release me from the hospital if I admitted having secrets.

Dr: Yes, but I need to make sure you know how to handle any future confrontations with a potential thief. You admit to only having unconscious secrets. Your reputation of being someone who doesn't keep secrets is still out there, so even though you've stopped telling people you don't have secrets, another thief may still learn of your past and ask you for your ID again. I need to know you will keep your bank account information secret no matter what. Do you agree?

Pr: I would seriously consider it if you can show me a better way to accomplish my mission of making the world more trustful.

Dr: I will start doing that when we meet again next Tuesday.

Pr: Thank you, doctor.

(End of Section I – Preparing the Soil of the Soul)

Post your comments and questions, or learn more at the following locations:

[The Puppet Pitfall](#) aka The Ethic of Human Repair website

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I look forward to the dialogue!

Cordially,

Richard Messing

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