

**A HEURISTIC STUDY OF THE MEANING
OF SUFFERING AMONG HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS**

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

in the subject

PSYCHOLOGY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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JUNE 1996

ABSTRACT

Is there meaning in suffering or is suffering only a soul-destroying experience from which nothing positive can emerge?

In seeking to answer this question, a heuristic study was made of the experiences and views of the famous Auschwitz survivor, Viktor Frankl, supplemented by an exploration of the life-worlds of other Nazi concentration camp survivors. The underlying premise was that if meaning can be found in the worst sufferings imaginable, then meaning can be found in every other situation of suffering.

Seeking to illuminate the views of Frankl and to gain a deeper grasp of the phenomenon of suffering, the theoretical and personal views of mainstream psychologists regarding the nature of man and the meaning of his sufferings were studied.

Since the focus of this research was on the suffering of the Holocaust survivor, the Holocaust as the context of the present study, was studied as a crisis of meaning and as psychological adversity.

In trying to establish the best way to gain entry into the life-world of the Holocaust survivor, the research methods employed in Holocaust survivor studies were reviewed and, for the purposes of this study, found wanting.

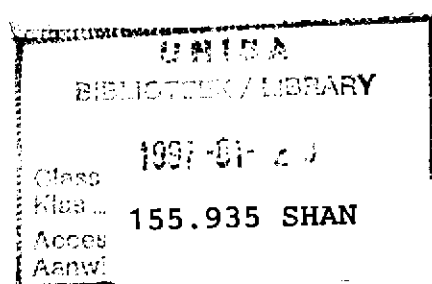
The choice and employment of a heuristic method yielded rich data which illuminated the fact that, through a series of heroic choices Frankl, and the survivors who became research participants, could attain spiritual triumph in the midst of suffering caused by an evil and inhumane regime. Hitherto unexplored areas of psychological maturity were revealed by these heroes of suffering from which the following conclusions could be drawn:

- * Man attains the peaks of moral excellence through suffering. Suffering can have meaning. Suffering can call us out of the moral apathy and mindlessness of mere existence.
- * The Holocaust, one of the most tragic events in human history, contains, paradoxically, a challenge to humankind. Resisting the pressure to sink to the level of a brute fight for mere survival, Frankl and the research participants continued to exercise those human values important to them and triumphantly maintained their human dignity and self-respect. Evidence was provided that man has the power to overcome evil with good.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The financial assistance of the Center for Science Development of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC South Africa) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the Center for Science Development.

Indebtedness is also expressed towards the University of South Africa for the granting of a Senior Travel Bursary which allowed the researcher to attend a three week course on the Holocaust at the Yad Vashem (Holocaust Memorial Museum) in Jerusalem.



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A heartfelt word of thanks is offered to

Prof. Cora Moore and Dr Willem Schurink, who so loyally supported this research effort and who, in their role as mentors and promoters, expressed their confidence in me by not sparing me the rod of discipline and correction;

Mrs Christa Barrish, who undertook the mammoth task of typing the manuscript in its many transformations till its final and present format;

my husband, **David Shantall**, relentless but beloved critic and editor of my work;

my children, **Millie and Samuel**, and dear friend, **Mrs Yvonne Malherbe**, and my colleagues at the Department of Psychology at Unisa, for their encouragement and support;

my mother, **Mrs Fien Botha**, who has such faith in me and who has so keenly anticipated the completion of this dissertation.

There is no adequate way to express my gratitude to the research participants: **Mrs Esther Weisz, Mrs Magda Haydu, Mrs Sarah Leibowitz, Mrs Dinah Benedikt and Mr Don Krauz** whose lives had so strongly impacted on mine. This dissertation is dedicated to them.

I also honour **Dr Viktor Frankl** who, through his teaching and influence, has become a model of a man who has lived his life and has borne his sufferings on the dimension of Meaning.

To the Unknown God, who is known among men through the image they bear of Him.

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FOREWORD

Heuristic inquiry, one of the new paradigm research orientations, is the method of research employed in the present study.

Heuristic research can be defined as a **passionate and discerning personal involvement in problem solving**, an effort to know the essence of some aspect of life through the internal pathways of the self (Douglas & Moustakas, 1985). The reader will, therefore, find many evidences in the present study of what heuristic inquirers see as valid ways in the search for knowledge and understanding. This includes personal experience, imagination, intuition and self-reflection in the formulation, investigation and discussion of the research topic: the meaning of suffering among Holocaust survivors.

Launching his or her research from a platform of personal experience of the phenomenon of research, the heuristic researcher can seek to further illuminate the phenomenon through literature searches, visits to places and institutions and finally, also through intensive and in-depth dialogue with those who have experienced the phenomenon first-hand, that is, in their own lives.

Heuristic research is a journey of discovery. In the present study, the process of exploration of the phenomenon of the meaning of suffering has taken the following course:

- * **A contemplation of a personal experience of the meaning of suffering** (cf. Chapter 1 & 2). The experience of the death of her father while attending a course on the meaning of suffering given by Viktor Frankl, deeply sensitized the researcher to the question of the meaning of suffering. Frankl, who is a survivor of the Auschwitz extermination camp, also awakened the researcher's interest in the subject of the Holocaust and its meaning in the context of Jewish and world history.

- * **an exploration of the meaning of suffering through an in-depth study of Frankl's writings on the subject** (cf. Chapters 3 & 4). Frankl's teachings had great impact of the researcher's life. For that reason, his writings on the meaning of suffering, were explored. The aim was to illuminate the researcher's own experience of meaning in suffering. Through a heuristic and phenomenological analysis of Frankl's writings, the researcher could arrive at an essential description of the concept: meaning, and in Chapter 10, of the concept: suffering.

- * **a study of the theme of the meaning of suffering in mainstream psychology** (cf. Chapters 5-9). Frankl's view of man as a free agent, seeking meaning in life, runs contrary to most psychological theories on man with which the researcher was confronted in her own training as a psychologist. However, all theorists are **men**, unable to escape the experience of pain and suffering. How did the mainstream psychologists (Watson and Skinner; Freud; Allport; Maslow and Rogers) arrive at their interpretations of who man is; how did they deal with the fact of man's failures, his sufferings, his death? What meaning did they attach to these inescapable realities of life? These searching questions provoked an intensive study of the personal lives and views of mainstream psychologists concerning suffering and its meaning. The aim was to further clarify the researcher's own impressions of these phenomena and to

generate more illuminating questions around the topic of research. On the basis of the researcher's consequent deeper comprehension of the subject, some preliminary impressions of suffering and its meaning were formulated (cf. Chapter 10).

- * **a study of the Holocaust both as a crisis of meaning and as psychological adversity** (cf. Chapter 11). It was the ability of a survivor like Frankl to deal with a suffering inconceivable to the mind of the researcher, that provoked an intense interest in the history of suffering of the Jewish people. The Holocaust represented a climax of suffering in the history of the Jews. How could a people come to terms with a suffering like that? How did individual Jews who suffered in the Nazi death camps, and who managed to survive, deal with their terrible sufferings and losses? The Holocaust, the context of this study, was therefore studied as a crisis of meaning both in a historical and personal sense. The aim was to gain a better understanding of the life-world of the Holocaust survivor; of the sufferings with which he or she had to contend.
- * **a review of the field of survivor studies** (cf. Chapter 12). How can the life-world of the survivor best be studied? The research methods employed in the field of Holocaust survivor studies were reviewed. This review indicated the need for a more profoundly humanistic approach in order to gain an understanding of the life-world of the Holocaust survivor.
- * **an exploration of new paradigm research approaches** (cf. Chapters 13 & 14). The aim in this section was to validate the choice of a heuristic method of research in the present study. Contrasting new paradigm research with traditional approaches, it could be concluded that only a new paradigm research orientation and a heuristic method of study would afford the researcher a sensitive entry into the life-worlds of Holocaust survivors.
- * **an entry into the preparatory phase of a heuristic study of the life-worlds of Holocaust survivors** (cf. Chapter 15). Avenues were pursued which would more directly acquaint the researcher with the life-worlds of Holocaust survivors. These included visits to the Yad Vashem of Holocaust Memorial Museum in Jerusalem, the most comprehensive archive on Holocaust literature and documentation in the world; the joining of an organization of Holocaust survivors called: the She'erith Hapletah, (a Biblical term meaning: the surviving remnant), based in Johannesburg; the attendance of monthly meetings of this organization over a two-year period in the research capacity of participant observer. During the period of participant observation, the research question was clarified; the aid of mentors was elicited, and the survivors, who became research participants, were singled out.
- * **the clarification of the process of acquiring, explicating and presenting the data of research** (cf. Chapter 16). The acquisition of the data by means of heuristic interviews and the ways in which the data was to be explicated and presented, were considered.

* **the formation of research relationships with and compilation of portraits of the research participants** (cf. Chapter 17). A research relationship with each participant was formed. As these relationships evolved over the period of interviewing and the research participants shared their Holocaust experiences with the researcher, a portrait of each could be compiled.

* **a compilation of a composite picture and a creative synthesis of the data** (cf. Chapter 18). A **composite picture** of the data of all the research participants could finally be drawn. As a **creative synthesis** of the data, the main themes of the composite picture of the phenomenon of the meaning of suffering among the five research participants were pursued in the life and Holocaust experiences of Viktor Frankl himself. A comparison of the story of Frankl with those of the research participants clearly illuminated the following:

Suffering can have meaning. Suffering can call us out of the moral apathy and mindlessness of mere existence; can cause us to grow and mature and live our lives, no longer mindlessly, but with meaning.

What could finally be highlighted, were aspects of maturity revealed by those who had the courage to learn from their sufferings. These were characteristics of the **optimally mature** person: the one who lives his or her life on the dimension of meaning.

* **a reflective review and critical evaluation of the present study** (cf. Chapter 19). It was considered whether the research objectives were met; what contributions were made; and what questions raised in illuminating the phenomenon of the meaning of suffering among Holocaust survivors. The value and limitations of the present study could then be ascertained and recommendations for further study made.

In not following the exact and concise path of traditional approaches, this research did not lead to a final discussion of conclusive findings. A synthesis was offered but it was left to the reader to ponder the issues raised, discussed and considered throughout the entire study.

In conclusion, it is to be noted that humanistic research carries a social responsibility. It is never neutral, but seeks social change (Bugental, 1967). As the reader is led through the research process as set out above, he or she will also be led into the life-worlds and experiences of the research participants. Through a mind's journey, the reader will be taken into the darkness and horror of the Nazi concentration and death camps. The struggle of the survivors to find the meaning of their sufferings, offers a challenge to the reader to consider his or her own way of dealing with suffering, and confronts him or her with the issue of what can and must be done to alleviate the needless suffering of others.

Note: In the text of this dissertation, the word "man" will be used to denote both male and female. This is the Biblical use of the word "man": "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27).

The U.S. spelling of English will be used.

PART I: ORIENTATION

As has been stated in the foreword, and as it will become clearer in a discussion of the heuristic method of research in Chapter 14, the researcher forms an integral part of the heuristic research process. Heuristic research is launched from a platform of a personal experience of the phenomenon being researched. It is therefore important at the outset to explain how the researcher's personal experiences played a role in the instigation of the present study and how it led to the formulation of the research objectives.

Part I consists of two chapters.

Chapter 1 describes the experience of the death of her father while the researcher attended a course on the meaning of suffering given by Viktor Frankl, a survivor of the Nazi death camps. This experience awakened the researcher's interest in the meaning of suffering and was the inspiration behind the present study of the meaning of suffering among Holocaust survivors.

Chapter 2 contains the research objectives of the present study. These objectives were formulated after a preliminary study of the psychological literature on suffering and its meaning. The desire to research the theme of the meaning of suffering in mainstream psychology; to study the Holocaust as psychological adversity; to find a research approach that would do justice to the sufferings of the Holocaust survivor; to discover the personality strengths of survivors; are directives for the course that the present study will take in the chapters to follow.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Research Focus

The meaning of suffering is an urgent question for all of us. There are many positive things in life which we ordinarily experience as meaningful. In the experience of these positive things, we readily concede that life is something meaningful. But do we hold the same view when life becomes problematical, when we are faced with hardship and suffering? Does life retain its meaningfulness during times of adversity, that is, can we find and experience meaning even in suffering?

To suffer is, according to the Oxford Dictionary, "to undergo, experience or be subjected to pain, loss, grief, defeat, change, damage, disablement or wrong.." It can be a distress of body or mind (Websters Dictionary), usually both. Suffering that we bring upon ourselves, maybe through foolishness or wrongdoing, we can understand and in future, avoid. The suffering that is much more difficult to understand is the suffering caused by an inescapable, unavoidable stress or grief situation; the suffering we experience in the face of a tragedy or a fate which cannot be changed. This is the kind of suffering which, in most instances, evokes the cry: "**Why? ... What is the meaning of this?..**"

The question to be considered is: Can meaning be found, and a consequent sense of psychological well-being be experienced, during and despite situations of unavoidable suffering? Is there, furthermore, anything meaningful about such suffering or is it only a soul-destroying experience from which nothing positive can emerge?

What do we understand by meaning? How does it feature in man's life? If man is intent on experiencing his life as meaningful, this intent can be expected to become manifest **especially** during times of great personal suffering.

The question of meaning and, particularly, of **man's will to meaning**, is addressed in the existential theory of **Viktor Frankl**, a survivor of Auschwitz. Subjected to a depth of suffering unknown to most of us, survivors of the Nazi death camps provide of the most riveting answers to the question of the meaning of suffering.

The testimonies of the fast diminishing number of Holocaust survivors should therefore be a matter of most urgent concern to scientist and laymen alike, to all, in fact, who seek to understand the meaning of the suffering of humankind.

A Personal Provocation to study the Meaning of Suffering

Viktor Frankl is an Austrian neurologist and famed psychiatrist, living in Vienna. He is also a Jewish Holocaust survivor. Frankl's particular psychotherapeutic approach is termed **Logotherapy**. **Logos** is the Greek word for "meaning". Logotherapy, therefore, literally means **healing through meaning** (Frankl, 1967).

With the establishment of his first logotherapy clinic in America at the University of the United States in San Diego, California, in 1970, Frankl delivered a series of lectures entitled: **The meaning of suffering**. I was attending these lectures at the invitation of Frankl to whom I had written shortly before, explaining my disillusionment with the psychoanalytical training I was undergoing at the Tavistock Clinic in London. During this training, which also involved a personal analysis, I had begun to feel increasingly restless about the fact that, in focussing on the problems of childhood and the influence of past experiences on present behavior, psychoanalysis lacked the dimension of a future orientation.

The training of prospective psychoanalysts is need-focussed. With my analyst, I was delving into frustrations and unsatisfied needs in seeking ways to resolve conflicts and to reach a greater feeling of happiness and satisfaction. The origins of these conflicts could invariably be traced to repressed childhood experiences. Getting the past "sorted out" was one thing. But the opportunities presented by each new day, seemed to come from the **future**. I was somehow missing to fully live my present life with an eye to a future that was "waiting" to be reached out to. My life seemed to lack vision - a dream to realize or ideals to be inspired by. I was being absorbed by my own needs and fantasies and could not escape the uncanny feeling that life was passing me by, that time was running out - and when would I have time to catch up with what I was **now** missing out on?

I had no sooner joined Frankl in America when I experienced the shocking news of the death of my father back in South Africa. A spell of intense grief followed, during which I was particularly plagued with the remorse over lost opportunities. In many ways my past had been wasted, since the kind of life I had been living was a trial-and-error and a type of haphazard way of being. I had to find some defined destination for my life or it was not worth living anymore. I had to know more clearly where I was going and **go there. Nothing else would do.**

As much as it was a point of utter determination, it was also a point of **surrender**. I had given up on myself, on the self-centered way of living my life. I was aching for something different, for something beyond the narrow confines of mere day-to-day existence.

I fell into an exhausted sleep and dreamt that I had written a loving letter to my father which I was about to mail. I woke up with a painful start, agonizingly realizing that I would never be able to communicate with him again.

Just then, I remembered the diary he had given me as a parting gift. With crystal clear clarity, I felt that he expected me to fill up the yet empty pages of that diary with the events of my life that I would now undertake to live fully and with care. I felt his presence with me. He was there, for those few awesome moments, like a strong witness for life, waiting for me to accept the commission before he would take his place on the grandstand of time to watch me winning the race, that I too had to run, yet a race, strangely, set out **only for me**. It was **my** race which could only be run by me! The pain

that I had felt a moment before, changed to a surge of inspiration which seemed to have sprung up from some deep and innermost region, like some **core experience**, which pushed through my whole being, **filling**, what I only then realized, was an all-pervading emptiness. I felt brim-full with joy - such a paradoxical feeling in a grief situation.

The dawn was breaking outside. As I stepped out into the new day, I was struck by the clarity with which I was seeing everything. It was as if the scales of an inward-looking type of living had fallen off my eyes and that I was now, and perhaps for the first time, able to see life clearly.

This experience presented a real turning point in my life. I began to base my actions and attitudes much more clearly on **choice**, rather than **inclination**. On many crucial occasions thereafter, such considered decisions ran **contrary to** pressing needs and coercive circumstances.

My own psychodynamics, which I had explored during years of psychoanalysis, began to fade in importance or, most surprisingly, began to take on a refreshingly new and **deeper** meaning - my "hang-ups" began to serve me! In the well-known areas of personal conflict, I now experienced compassion and sensitivity, a depth of insight into the problems of others. My own vulnerabilities became an openness, a greater tenderness towards others. I felt inter-dependently related to my fellow-man in a communal kind of way.

This experience of a breakthrough of meaning in my own suffering, with the added bonus of a greater sense of responsibility as I came to see my life as a gift which I could either use or abuse, lent very real impetus to an interest in the the amazing phenomenon of being able to experience a sense of deep meaning as a result of intense personal suffering.

It took well over 20 years of many other sensitizing experiences before the provoked interest in and personal experience of meaning during times of personal suffering became the topic of scientific investigation. As one of the founder members of the **Viktor Frankl Foundation of South Africa**, and as a member of the **S.A. National Yad Vashem Foundation**, an organization linked to the Yad Vashem (the Holocaust Memorial Museum) in Jerusalem, I extended my activities in this field by joining the **She'erith Hapletah** (the Holocaust survivors' organization).

It was in attending the meetings of the survivors that the interest in the experience of meaning despite and in situations of even extreme suffering, developed into the present research undertaking with Holocaust survivors residing in South Africa. The incident that sparked off the present research that first evening among the survivors, in August 1988, was a passionate remark made by a fiery little red-head, a survivor who had spent more than three years in Auschwitz: "Hitler could not kill my idealism, my romanticism, my values. He could kill my body, but he could not get at me!"

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

A preliminary study of the literature on suffering and its meaning, indicated that an intensive or scientifically rigorous study of the experience of meaning in suffering within the parameters of psychology, is called for. There has been a growing body of interesting research on closely related concepts such as **hardiness** and **coping** in the context of **stressful life events** (Hamburg & Adams, 1967; Holahan & Moos, 1985, 1986; Kobasa, 1979; Kobasa, Maddi & Kahn, 1982; Visotsky, Hamburg, Goss & Lebovits, 1961). Research on the coping behavior of Holocaust survivors in the psychological stress situation of concentration camps has also been undertaken (Chodoff, 1970; Dimsdale, 1974). The focus of the research on the coping behavior of individuals under stress is on **stress management** however, and not on the phenomena of meaning and suffering per se. "The experiential character of tragedy has yet to be fully articulated within psychology as a whole", remarks Carrere (1989). Research on Holocaust victims specifically, has been almost exclusively focussed on the psychopathology of survivors (Antonovsky, 1971; Barocas, 1970; Chodoff, 1963; Davidson, 1980; Dor-Shav, 1978; Eitinger, 1961, 1973, 1981; Kijak, 1982; Klein, 1974; Lelav & Abramson, 1984; Luchterhand, 1970; Yael, 1981).

The interest in the personality strengths of Holocaust survivors has only begun to emerge (Harel, Kahana & Kahana, 1988; Lee, 1988). Frankl (1967) speaks in this context about **the defiant power of the human spirit** which describes the resilience and strength shown by those who refuse to capitulate under the stress of adverse circumstances. It is the aim of this study to further explore this perspective. The specific aim and main objective of this research will be to study the phenomenon of meaning as it is questioned, desired and searched for, and is also experienced and embraced by individuals during times of deep suffering. Our research participants are Holocaust survivors.

In pursuing the main objective: to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning of suffering, more particularly, among Holocaust survivors, the following research objectives come into focus.

What have the theories of man in the history of psychology to say on the subject of the meaning of suffering? In hoping to cast light on this question, the works of Viktor Frankl will be used as a base in the study of the theoretical and personal views of mainstream psychologists on man and on the meaning of his suffering.

In dealing with the Holocaust as a crisis of meaning and as psychological adversity, and by using Holocaust survivors as research participants, it is also hoped **to make a contribution to Holocaust research.**

Since elusive concepts such as meaning will be dealt with, the objection can be raised that the research is no longer scientific, that it is going beyond what is commonly accepted as the boundaries of psychology as a science. It is exactly this position of traditional psychologists that will be contested. Another major aim of this research is **to enter the debate on what constitutes a human science.** An effort will be made to lend definite proof to the argument that there can be a human science, a science which includes a study of uniquely human phenomena on the higher levels of human existence. This is done by undertaking a research of highly abstract, basically, **spiritual phenomena**, using an approach

which the researcher hopes to demonstrate is both **appropriate** and **scientific**. The heuristic method that will be employed in this research is one of the many methods known as new paradigm research. Another aim of this research is, therefore, **to demonstrate the scientific merit of a new paradigm research approach in psychology**.

Extraordinary personality strengths are called for in dealing with suffering such as Holocaust victims had to contend with. This research with Holocaust survivors will, therefore, hopefully serve to contribute to a greater understanding of the higher levels of psychological functioning or personality development. An effort will be made **to study man on the psychospiritual dimension of being**. This will hopefully enlarge the body of research on psychological maturity done by the humanistic psychologists.

A study of the meaning of suffering among Holocaust survivors will, therefore, involve the following research objectives:

1. to illuminate the theme of the meaning of suffering in mainstream psychology
2. to contribute to the psychological research on the Holocaust
3. to explore the issue of what constitutes science in the field of the humanities by demonstrating the scientific merit of a new paradigm research approach
4. to enlarge the existing body of knowledge on psychological maturity.

The above objectives will serve as directives for the course that the present study will take in the chapters to follow.

In order to illuminate the theme of the meaning of suffering in mainstream psychology, the theory and views of Frankl will first be discussed (Part II). Thereafter, the theoretical and personal views of mainstream psychologists on man and on the meaning of human existence will be explored (Part III). The question of suffering in mainstream psychology, in the existential school of thought, and particularly in the existential theory of Viktor Frankl, will then be considered (Part IV).

In seeking to contribute to the psychological research on the Holocaust, the Holocaust will be studied as the context of the study of the meaning of suffering among Holocaust survivors (Part V). The literature on Holocaust survivor studies, will then be reviewed (Part VI).

In entering the debate on what constitutes science in the field of the humanities, the new paradigm research approaches will be contrasted to traditional approaches to highlight the applicability of the heuristic method of research in the study of the life-worlds of Holocaust survivors (Part VII).

The heuristic method yielded rich data on the phenomenon of the meaning of suffering among Holocaust survivors. The data will be explicated and discussed in the concluding section of this study. **The psychological maturity** of Frankl and the research participants, who are survivors of the Holocaust, will be highlighted (Part VIII).

In a reflective review, it will be considered whether the research objectives, as set out above, have been met (Part IX).

PART II : THE MEANING OF MEANING

We have considered how strongly Frankl's person and teachings have impacted on the researcher's own life. The researcher's quest into the meaning of meaning itself, now needs to be briefly highlighted.

After experiencing a sense of meaning in the paradoxical situation of mourning the death of her father, the researcher became fascinated with the subject of meaning. The fact that the researcher, at that very time, was studying the phenomenon of the meaning of suffering in a course offered by Frankl on the subject, made a personal experience of it, that much more riveting. That which Frankl could testify as having experienced as a reality in his suffering as a Nazi death-camp victim, namely, **meaning**, the researcher was given an experience of in her own suffering.

The following questions initiated a research into the phenomenon of meaning: What then is meaning? How do we experience it and under which circumstances? Why do we need to find our lives meaningful? Why, if we do not find our lives meaningful, does the will to live diminish? With a sense of meaning, our lives seem to have lustre; without it, we seem to merely exist. A will to meaning therefore seems fundamental to who we are as human beings.

In setting out on the present study, an exploration of the works of Frankl on the above questions seemed the most obvious course to follow.

In Chapter 3 the works of Frankl will be explored in order to arrive at an **essential understanding of the concept: meaning**. In Chapter 4 the theme of the meaning of meaning will be continued in considering Frankl's view of **man as a meaning-directed being**. Of fundamental importance is Frankl's view that meaning emanates from a trans-human dimension; that it is not merely something that man assigns to events, but a reality that he experiences or **finds** in every unique situation life offers him. It is the view of Frankl that man wants to **find** meaning and that such meaning **exists** and can be experienced irrespective of race, sex, beliefs, age or circumstances of the seeker. This contention will be briefly considered in a discussion of Frankl's belief in the reality and existence of a Transhuman dimension.

CHAPTER 3

WHAT IS MEANT BY MEANING?

Defining the term: Meaning

Frankl (1970) devotes a chapter to the answering of the question of what is meant by meaning. My own efforts to compile a short definition of meaning from his writings proved most unsatisfactory. The concept "meaning" would, in a sense, not be "pinned down". It was only when I started asking myself and others what and how something is **experienced** as meaningful, that the concept started **opening up** to my understanding. I was now of course approaching the subject **phenomenologically**, the approach Frankl himself used in elucidating the phenomenon of meaning! "As I understand it, phenomenology speaks the language of man's **prereflective self-understanding** rather than interpreting a given phenomenon after preconceived patterns" (Frankl, 1967, p. 2). This links up with what Scheler (1972) had to say in discussing the views of Husserl, the father of phenomenology.

Reality is to be **realized** and **described** - "to be brought to self-givenness in **immediate intuitive evidence**". Those things "given" by reality, things which cannot be reduced to other things and cannot be explained from them, are to be **looked at** and **represented**, since a definition, in the strict sense of the word, is impossible. (p. 7)

In reading and re-reading the ideas of Frankl, in thinking about the truth of his statements in my own experience of meaning, in asking what made others experience a feeling of meaning, and how they experienced meaning, what was being clarified for me was not so much the concept of meaning, but the way in which such a phenomenon could be known.

The phenomenon of meaning, Frankl (1970) points out, belongs to the immediate data of our experience. It is real and factually existent. Yet, it is in the nature of such phenomena not to yield to the cold and critical eye of reason, but to be accessible only to the **intuitive grasp** of an open mind.

Frankl's elucidation of the concept "love" may serve as an example. The essence of a person's self, according to Frankl (1968), is its **otherness**. To grasp another person in his or her otherness or **uniqueness**, means to love (**appreciate** and let him or her into our **inner knowing** or **experience** of) them. "Love is the only way to **grasp** another human being in the innermost core of his personality. No one can become **fully aware of the very essence** of another human being unless he loves him. By the spiritual act of love he **is enabled to see the essential traits and features** in the beloved person" (Frankl, 1968, p. 113). In the same way, meaning, like love, cannot be forced or willed. It cannot be "demanded, commanded or ordered" (Frankl, 1970, p. 43). It is not within the domain of man's manipulation, and cannot be dissected by man's reason.

In what follows, an attempt will be made to grasp Frankl's thinking on the subject of meaning by describing the ways in which meaning is experienced, according to him. From these discussions, an essential description of the concept: "meaning", will be extracted.

The Ways in which Meaning is Experienced

Frankl (1970) contends that existence would falter unless there is "a strong idea"* (p. 50) or a strong ideal or important values in life to hold on to. We need to feel that there is a goal to strive towards, or that there is something to live for, that life has a purpose. We experience life as meaningful when we feel that we have a vocation in life, or a mission in life to fulfill.

Frankl (1968) is fond of quoting Nietzsche who said: "He who has a **why** to live for, can bear with almost any **how**." (p. xi) People are prepared to endure hardship and to make sacrifices for the sake of a cause they have made their own. Frankl speaks (1967) about a person "losing himself for the sake of a cause" (p. 82), yet in doing so, finding meaning in his life.

According to Frankl, therefore, meaning is experienced within the context of personal ideals and values, life's goals and purposes. It is seen as a cause that is to be served, or as a vocation or mission in life which we feel called upon to pursue. Such a meaning-orientation has an inspiring and uplifting effect upon us.

It is indispensable to mental well-being, Frankl (1967) contends, to experience the tension between how things **are** at the moment and what they **could** or **should** or promise to be like, or as Frankl puts it, to experience the tension between **being** and **meaning**, that is, "meanings to fulfill or values to realize" (p. 10). This is the tension which is created by direction. "It is the meaning of meaning to set the pace of being" (Frankl, 1970, p. 51).

For meaning to set the pace of being, meaning must be **ahead** of being. This means that "the meaning which a person has to fulfill is something **beyond** himself, it is never just himself" (Frankl, 1967, p. 11).

Something meaningful draws us out of ourselves - it enlarges our vision, enriches us and causes us to grow: to become bigger and better than we are. Frankl (1967) quotes Goethe as saying: "If we take man as he is, we make him worse; if we take him as he ought to be, we help him become it" (p. 12).

Things that are experienced as meaningful, are like pointers or guideposts along the road that stretches **before** us, as something we are called upon and have yet to do and which, in the doing, causes us to make **progress**.

Frankl (1967) uses the example of a story in the Bible: when the Israelites wandered through the desert, God's glory went before in the form of a cloud; only in this way was it possible for the Israelites to be guided by God. Imagine, he says, what would have happened if God's presence, the cloud, had dwelled in the midst of the Israelites; rather than leading them the right way, this cloud would have clouded everything, and the Israelites would have gone astray. They would never have reached the promised land!

* Frankl refers here to Freud (1927) who stated: "Men are strong as long as they stand for a strong idea" (p. 113).

Trapped in a maze of confusion, people without a **meaningful** aim or purpose in their lives, are landed in a vicious circle, ending nowhere but in themselves. Meaning seems to be in the nature of **clear vision**, much like the liberating effect of a profound truth: "now I see, now I understand.."

"Now I know what to do.."

Of interest were the remarks made by some of the people I had casually questioned concerning the experience of meaning in their lives. "There must be an **effective or correct focus..**", one person contended, "**not a selfish aim**". Another said: "if I had only myself, if I was not really needed, if I did not touch other people or mean something to them, my life would be meaningless."

Frankl (1967) uses the analogy of a boomerang to point out the uselessness of vain or selfish endeavors. An aim other than a meaningful one, will boomerang on us. We will fail to find the fulfillment we are looking for - a boomerang returns to the hand of the hunter when the target has been **missed**. Such lives remain empty, **devoid of meaning**.

The true principles or characteristics of a meaningful life is voiced, says Frankl, by Hillel, the great Jewish sage who lived nearly two millennia ago. He said, "If I don't do it - who will do it? And if I don't do it right now - when should I do it? **But if I do it for my own sake only - what am I?**" (Frankl, 1970, p. 55).

According to Frankl, therefore, meaning can be seen as something beyond and ahead of us which draws us out of the narrow and closed circle of total self-concern. It is something which enlarges our vision, enriches us, gives us a sense of direction and causes us to make progress in the sense of personal advancement.

When we experience meaning, Frankl (1967) contends, we feel **directed towards the future**. There is something to reach out to and to accomplish. In this way, the future is **opened to us**. It is before us like an open possibility. This open possibility is not experienced as an emptiness or a void, however. There is something **waiting** in the future.

Fulfilling the commissions we feel are **set before us**, we feel **met**, experience a sense of accomplishment. We gain a vantage point and get a sense of perspective. It is, therefore, in the nature of these meanings as ideals or visions that they come to us **from the future**, inspiring the endeavors of every day, flooding our lives with meaning, so to speak. Of interest in this regard is another remark made by one of the people I questioned concerning the experience of meaning: "it is a satisfactory answer for the things that I strive after and brings a sense of order and harmony in my life." This is reminiscent of Frankl's (1967) saying: "Like iron filings in a magnetic field, man's life is put in order through his orientation toward meaning" (p. 21).

The most vivid example of the future-orientation inherent in our experience of meaning, according to Frankl (1970), is that of **faith**, which he defines as: "an unconditional trust in ultimate meaning" (p. 156).

The experience of faith includes the belief that what we do not understand now, we will understand **later**. Faith is the belief that everything will make sense **in the end**, the consolation that "it will be all right or work out all right" or "will be worth it all" **in the long run**.

Reaching out towards that long-term goal, each situation along the way is seen and

experienced as a step towards it. In the realization of the meanings in each situation of every day, we experience fulfillment and are encouraged and strengthened to strive towards the goal which ever remains yet ahead of us, since it is ever beyond, above or bigger than ourselves. "Ultimate meaning necessarily exceeds and surpasses the finite intellectual capacities of man. .. Logos is deeper than logic" (Frankl, 1968, p. 120).

Because nothing is seen as happening blindly, or without reason; since everything "will be explained in the end", faith floods all of life with meaning, not only our present lives, but retrospectively, also our past lives. One moment of profound illumination, can make us understand the course of our entire lives (Frankl, 1969).

According to Frankl, then, meaning is contained in a sense of future-orientation.

Meaning is experienced as something that is **found** and not as something that is created or invented, contends Frankl (1967). This means that meaning is more than a mere self-expression, or a projection of the self into the world.

Phenomenologists, through the analysis of man's consciousness, have pointed out its **intentional** nature. Consciousness **intends** something, points towards something **outside** itself. Consciousness never exists in a subjective vacuum but is always consciousness of something. Consciousness, therefore, can never be separated from the objective world the person is busy experiencing (has consciousness of) (May, 1965). Frankl (1970) takes this phenomenological position regarding the experience of meaning. We are meaning-orientated. We want to find meaning in our lives. Yet there is no way that meaning can be found except through an **experience** of meaning. **We subjectively experience the objective reality or real existence of meaning.** Meaning is not something concrete that can be pointed to and observed. We cannot demonstrate or prove its existence in a tangible way. We can only **testify** to its existence through our personal experience of meaning. The temptation, therefore, is to regard meaning as belonging only to the person who testifies to it, that is, as something purely **subjective**. Because meanings are subjectively experienced as existing on an **intangible** level beyond the concrete, it appears as if meaning is just something we ascribe to or project into the things around ourselves, things which in themselves are neutral. In the light of this neutrality, Frankl (1970) concedes, reality may well seem to be just a screen upon which we are projecting our own wishful thinking, a Rorschach blot, as it were. If that were so, meaning would be no more than a mere means of self-expression, and thus something profoundly subjective. **The only thing which is subjective, however, is the perspective through which we approach reality,** and this subjectiveness does not in the least detract from the objectiveness of reality itself. What is seen **through** the perspective, however subjective the perspective may be, is the objective world, also the objective world of meaning.

According to Frankl then, meaning is experienced trans-subjectively - the objective existence of meaning is given to us subjectively. Only through subjective experience, in other words, can meaning prove itself real.

It follows from the above discussion that meaning can only be experienced by being open and receptive to its existence.

In the introduction to the discussion on what is meant by meaning, the difficulty I experienced in trying to define the term, seems to demonstrate Frankl's point that meaning cannot be encompassed by a purely rational act, but can only be comprehended through an act of **intuitive knowing**. This implies an **orientation of openness - a readiness or willingness to experience** meaning. More than intellectual inquisitiveness is required. There is an **involvement of our total being** in the experience of meaning. "What we have to deal with is not an intellectual or rational process, but a wholly existential act." (Frankl, 1967, p. 57).

According to Frankl (1958) the best example of intuitive knowing and which is also the most encompassing framework for an experience of meaning, is that of **faith**. Frankl (1967) speaks of an "**Urvertrauen zum Dasein**, the basic trust in Being." "I believe.." is an act of **declared openness** to receive **evidence** of the existence of that which is believed in. The eyes of faith see "**transparently**, namely, in the light of Transcendence" (Frankl, 1967, p. 57). It is the man or woman of faith that can in spite of all say "**yes**" to life under all conditions and circumstances (Frankl, 1958).

A most important point is, however, that this receptivity to meaning need not necessarily rise to the level of faith in the **ultimate meaning** of life (Frankl, 1958). The more immediate levels of experience, which could be regarded as closer, more immediately given manifestations of **Supra-meaning**, could also be reached out to - like the act of appreciating and deeply enjoying art, literature or music, or the beauty and harmony of nature. A person can also be uplifted by an illuminating experience of a revealed truth, or by a greater understanding of or insight into any subject or field of interest.

Our philosophical attitude affords us a view of a cross-section of the world. However, "our vision is limited by our individual perspectives" (Frankl, 1958, p. 33). Our vision is as big or as small as our individual perspectives will allow. It also follows that the depth of our knowing or of our experience of meaning is determined by **the extent of our experience** of the reality of meaning in our lives. Expertise is based on highly informed and intimate acquaintance with a subject. For example, a person must first be introduced to, or **awakened** to the value and beauty of music by actually listening to it and experiencing it, before he or she can have any informed opinion or understanding of it and develop a love for and a need of music in their lives. What is true in the experience of the meaning of music, is true of meaning in every other sphere. "**If the will to meaning is to be elicited, meaning itself has to be elucidated**" (Frankl, 1970, p. 43).

According to Frankl, therefore, meaning can only be experienced through the intuitive grasp of an open and receptive mind. The more meaning is experienced as a reality in our lives, the more exercised and refined is our faith in the reality of its existence and the broader is our experience and awareness of the deeper meanings of life.

Something as abstract as the essential nature or ultimate meaning of life can be experienced through the concrete performances of the duties of every day, in the enjoyments of seemingly simple pleasures, or in meeting the challenges that come to us in seemingly ordinary ways. According to

Frankl (1969) **objective values are cast in the form of the demands of every day and in personal tasks. The values lying back of these tasks can be reached for only through the tasks. It is quite possible that the whole, of which all concrete obligations are a part, never becomes visible to the individual person, who is limited by the perspective of his day-to-day responsibilities.**

A phenomenological analysis of the ordinary man-in-the-street's experience, shows that meaning is found by doing a job well; by having made or created something good or beautiful or of merit; by deeds of which the person feels proud (like taking good care of his or her family, being a good father, mother, husband or wife; rendering any service which is regarded as valuable). "Men can give meaning to their lives by realizing what I call creative values, by achieving tasks" (Frankl, 1969, p. xii).

The littleness or bigness of these tasks is irrelevant since "**a whole world of values**", **lying back of whatever task is being wholeheartedly performed, is being tapped.** It is a matter of indifference what a person's occupation is, or at what job he works. The crucial thing is **how he works**, whether he in fact fills the place in which he happens to have landed. "The radius of his activity is not important; important alone is whether he fills the circle of his tasks" (Frankl, 1969, p. 34).

We are not only assigned tasks by life, but we are also offered many experiences which, if not neglected or pushed aside as of lesser importance, are rich with meaning.

The experience of in-touchness and life-connectedness that solitude, quiet communion or meditation in a situation of aloneness or, on the other hand, that an exclusive or intimate togetherness with loved-ones can bring; the joy a sense of team-spirit or friendship can give; the warm feeling of belonging that is experienced by being an inherent part of a close-knit community; the replenishing and invigorating joy that goodness, truth, beauty in culture and in nature can give us; these are all meanings that are indispensable to our well-being and sense of fulfilment as human beings. Rich meaning is given to our lives by experiential values, the greatest of which is love: the knowing, appreciating and respecting of others in all their uniqueness and singular worth. Frankl (1969) believes that life can be worth the living if only for the experience of one ecstatic moment. For even though only a single moment is in question - the greatness of a life can be measured by the greatness of a moment (which) can retroactively flood an entire life with meaning.

But even in the face of life's perplexities, difficulties and problems, in its hardships and sufferings, values can be realized, maintains Frankl (1970). What matters in these cases, is the attitude the person chooses to have: the way in which these situations are handled, the way in which suffering is borne. These attitudinal values offer man the most magnificent opportunities to attain human greatness. The noblest appreciation of meaning is reserved for those people who, deprived of the opportunity to find meaning in a deed, in a work, or in love, **by the very attitude which they choose to this predicament, rise above it and grow beyond themselves.** "What matters is the stand they take - a stand which allows for transmuting their predicament into achievement, triumph, and heroism" (Frankl, 1970, p. 70).

We can summarize Frankl's thinking as discussed in this section as follows: Meaning is experienced every day by ordinary men and women in three principal ways: the first is what they give

to the world in terms of their tasks, duties or creations; the second is what they receive or take from the world in terms of their encounters and experiences; and the third is in the stand they take in their predicaments and sufferings.

The **demand or task quality of life**, already evident in the previous discussions, is a facet of meaning that also needs singling out. "Meaning is not only an emerging from existence itself but rather something **confronting existence**" (Frankl, 1968, p. 100).

The more we grasp this task quality of life, the more meaningful our lives will appear to us - the more we will feel **called-upon or needed**, the more **involved** with the whole process of living we will be. "The man who is not conscious of his responsibility simply takes his life as a given fact. Existential analysis teaches people to **see life as an assignment**" (Frankl, 1969, p. 47).

Frankl (1967), in reviewing the psychological thinking in this century, says that if we want to obtain an appropriate view of **human reality in its full dimensionality**, we must go beyond both necessities and possibilities and bring in - in addition to the "I must" and "I can" aspects of the total "I am" phenomenon - that dimension which can be referred to as the "**I ought**". "What "I ought" to do, however, is in each instance to fulfill the concrete meaning which challenges me in each situation of my life. In other words, at the moment when we bring in the "I ought", we complement the subjective aspect of human existence, **being**, with its objective counterpart, which is **meaning**.

According to Frankl, therefore, meaning has a demand-character: it confronts our existence with an "I ought" imperative.

With the above stated imperative, the matter of our conscience comes into play. Frankl (1970) states that meaning cannot be given arbitrarily but must be found responsibly. It must be sought for conscientiously. Man is guided in his search for meaning by conscience. Frankl (1970) defines conscience as the intuitive capacity of man to find out the meaning of a situation. What is being required of him in any specific situation? Conscience spells out man's responsibility in every situation of life.

Within the framework that Frankl presents, we are not put under the imperative of guilt or fear, both of which have a "must" character in the punitive sense, subjecting us as slaves under the dictatorship of merciless and cold rulings. Within the framework of **meaning-fulfillment**, conscience takes on an entirely different character, the character of **freedom and personal responsibility**. "There is always **freedom** involved: the freedom of man to make his choice between accepting or rejecting an offer, i.e., to fulfill a meaning potentiality, or else to forfeit it" (Frankl, 1970, p. 101). This immediately implies that it is **up to us to decide** before what or whom we feel accountable: whether to society, humanity, our own conscience, or to God (Frankl, 1968). This liberty also means that it is our prerogative to decide how far in our commitments we want to go. If we cannot embrace as real that which we cannot understand, it in no way detracts from the value of what we **have** embraced as real (Frankl, 1967). We also have the prerogative to reject what we are personally convinced are **pseudovalues**, or mere hypocrisies or societal niceties. We may even feel called upon to refuse to accept the yoke of real values which, however, have been turned into legalisms or set rules or dogmatic

teachings that are being indiscriminately and judgementally enforced, no matter who the person or what the circumstance. Apart from being intuitive, conscience is creative. Time and again, an individual's conscience commands him to do something which contradicts what is preached by the society to which the individual belongs. "**.. Conscience has the power to discover unique meanings that contradict accepted values**" (Frankl, 1970, p. 63).

Just as creative conscience can contradict accepted values, it can equally, of course, affirm it. What is of importance, according to Frankl (1970), is the **personal** evaluation in each case. An **authentic** value system is what is of importance. A value can only be **meaningful** to a person, if it stands the test of **personal** conscience.

According to Frankl, therefore, meaning is discerned through conscience which is the intuitive capacity to discern the unique duty or obligation of every situation, independent of any particular set value system.

A most important aspect of Frankl's thinking concerns the **uniqueness of meaning**. Meaning is not revealed in exactly the same way to any two persons, nor even to the same person in any two situations of his or her life. **Meaning is unique to the singular moment**. "Meaning is what is meant, be it by a person who asks me a question, or by a situation which, too, implies a question and calls for an answer" (Frankl, 1969, p. 62).

He goes on to say: "Man is responsible for giving the **right** answer to a question, for finding the **true** meaning of a situation. There is only one answer to each situation, the **right** one" (Frankl, 1969, p. 17).

This fact places us before an awesome responsibility: It is **fearful** to know that at this moment we bear the responsibility for the next, that every decision from the smallest to the largest is a decision for all eternity, that at every moment we bring to reality - or miss - a possibility that exists only for the particular moment.

By realizing opportunities that come to us hour by hour, day by day, we store them in the past where everything is not irrecoverably lost but irrevocably stored, Frankl (1967) maintains.

Our lives become rich with fulfilled meaning. "The past of an individual is the part of his life in which he has overcome transiency and achieved eternity" (Frankl, 1967, p. 84). "Having been is the surest form of being." (Frankl, 1967, p. 109).

We therefore give meaning to our lives by fulfilling meaning in our lives. Since the meaning of our lives is mapped out by the realization of the responsibilities of every moment, it makes little sense to seek the meaning of our lives in an abstract or general way. Ultimately, man should not ask what the meaning of his life is, but rather he must recognize that it is **he** who is asked. "In a word, each man is questioned by life; and he can only answer to life by **answering for his own life**" (Frankl, 1968, p 111).

We have no other life to live but our own. Nobody can live it for us either. Our lives are given to us to be lived! Only in living our own unique lives fully and responsibly, do we fill the space that we have been assigned or ordained to occupy, otherwise that space will remain empty forever.

According to Frankl, therefore, meaning is experienced uniquely by every one of us as we go about realizing the opportunities and performing the tasks life puts before us every day. In fulfilling these responsibilities we give shape to our lives that are and become ever more irreplaceable and non-repeatable and that, therefore, have unique worth and meaning.

An Essential Description of the Concept: Meaning

From the foregoing discussions, it can be seen that meaning is experienced as a commission in terms of ideals, values, goals, purposes or as a vocation or mission in life - all of which have an inspiring and uplifting effect upon us; as being beyond and ahead of us, thus as leading us outside the circle of narrow self-concern, thereby enlarging and enriching us, giving us a sense of direction and meaningful progress towards the future that we feel is awaiting us; as found, in that we intuitively grasp its existence beyond and outside ourselves; as confronting us and having a demand character, thereby stirring up our consciences; above all, as coming to us in a highly personal way in our own lives in the tasks, experiences and choices presented to us every day.

The following is an essential description of meaning which implicitly contains all the above mentioned features:

Meaning is the unique opportunity, task or duty intuitively discerned by our conscience as a choice which, put before us in the unique situations of our own personal lives, if responsibly realized or met, relates us to life in a vital and growth-provoking way by purposefully directing us towards a future which beckons, inspires and sustains us.

CHAPTER 4

THE EXISTENTIAL THEORY OF VIKTOR FRANKL

From a discussion of the concept of meaning in Chapter 3, Frankl's particular view of man has been implicitly elucidated. A brief pinpointing of his basic assumptions, upon which logotherapy, Frankl's particular school of psychotherapy is based, is however necessary.

We will need a clear point of contrast when other psychological theories, which are important in terms of our understanding of meaning, are discussed.

The Basic Tenets of Logotherapy

Three facts are fundamental to human experience, Frankl (1967) asserts. These are: freedom of will; the will to meaning; and the meaning of life.

The Freedom of Will

Our freedom of will belongs to the immediate data of our experience. Frankl (1967) states that only two classes of people maintain that their will is not free: schizophrenic patients suffering from the delusion that their will is manipulated and their thoughts controlled by others, and alongside of them, deterministic philosophers and theorists!

To be human, means to be free. Our freedom of will is the distinguishing mark of our humanness. As humans we are free to direct our own behavior. We are not patterned, but are **free to choose** how we are going to react, what we are going to do. Our freedom involves the ability to place ourselves at a distance from ourselves and the world. We have **self-detachment** which enables us to **think**, to reflect and meditate, form opinions and have value-judgements about ourselves and the world. We can weigh up different alternatives and decide on one course of action rather than another. This course of action is not determined, or need not be, since we can even choose against our own inclinations, sometimes at painful cost to ourselves.

We share certain properties with the animal and are subjected to some of the same conditions, but we are **humans** and not beasts precisely because we have the freedom to rise above these conditions in being able to think and also **do** something about them. We can **change** our environments, just as we can change ourselves. We have, in other words, the capacity of **self-transcendence**. The animal adapts to an environment; we relate to a society of our **own making**.

Self-detachment and self-transcendence are uniquely human capacities and are to be found on a dimension of being not accessible to a beast. This uniquely human dimension Frankl has termed the spiritual or noölogical dimension. (The term: noölogical is derived from the Greek word noös, meaning: mind). "**Man is spirit**" (Frankl, 1967, p. 63).

Man, unlike the animal, **experiences** his body and his psyche and his social setting in unique ways. He **interprets** his biological processes and psychological needs and his environment and

attaches unique meanings to them (Frankl, 1967). Every human act is, therefore, an expression of the person **behind** the act.

Human behavior, therefore, is not analogous to animal behavior. The sexual act between humans, for example, is not merely the release of biological tension through the satisfaction of the sex drive. Through the sexual act, humans can be expressing their love for one another and be experiencing a union of their unique beings in an unique moment of togetherness (Frankl, 1969).

In fact, a mere lusting between humans is a **less than human** act, since the person of the partner is **willfully disregarded** and only his or her body is used for the purpose of sexual satisfaction. "It is love that makes sex human" (Frankl, 1977, p. 90).

Possessing freedom of will and action, humans are not totally fused with or taken up by their instincts. Humans are inherently **distanced** from their instincts. They know that they have them, but do not always know what to do with them. Man either learns to direct his own drives, to deny, suppress or postpone them or he allows himself to fall victim to them by giving himself over to his lusts. He can even laugh at them! "No animal is able to laugh, least of all at himself" (Frankl, 1967, p. 4). Only man can get his own soul into possession, that is, gain mastery over himself and let his instincts and needs become infused with higher meaning. A man can become so inspired by love, for example, that **unfaithfulness** to his beloved does not even tempt him as an option.

If we wanted to define man, we would have to call him that entity which has freed itself from whatever has determined it (determined it as biological-psychological-sociological type); that entity, in other words, that transcends all these determinants either by conquering them and shaping them, or by deliberately submitting to them. (Frankl, 1969, p. 61)

Freedom, in setting us at a distance from ourselves, others and our world, immediately **faces us with or places us before** ourselves, others and our world. There is an implicit **injunction** to do something with what we are faced with. Freedom implies **accountability**. If we **can** make a choice, we can be held responsible for the choices we make or fail to make. (It is **our** actions or inactions). "During no moment of his life does man escape the mandate to choose among possibilities" (Frankl, 1967, p. 62).

It is clear that as humans we are not free from conditions, that is, totally free. We are absolutely subjected to certain physical laws in order to survive (we can decide to stay without food or to suffer privation for the sake of something or other, but only up to a point, unless we decide to die a martyr's death!). But we are free to do something with what we have or the situations which we face, even if this can only be reflected in the stand we take and the attitudes we choose to adopt. Human freedom is thus a freedom of a specific kind: "Human freedom is not a 'freedom from' but a 'freedom to' - a freedom to accept (or not to accept) **responsibility**" (Frankl, 1969, p. 42).

The Will to Meaning

Frankl (1967) considers man to be primarily motivated by a search to find meaning in his life. Man is not primarily interested in **pleasure** or **power**, in any psychic conditions of his own, but rather

is oriented toward the world of potential meanings and values which are waiting to be fulfilled and actualized by him. Man is motivated by **the will to meaning**.

Where this will to meaning is not manifest, it is Frankl's (1970) contention that it has not yet been evoked, or is frustrated or even suppressed. Man cannot experience optimal well-being without a strong sense of vital and purposeful life-connectedness or meaning in his life. "Man's heart is restless unless he has found, and fulfilled, meaning and purpose in life" (Frankl, 1970, p. 55).

The Meaning of Life

Man is open to the world. He is so in contrast to animals, which are not open to the world (Welt) but rather bound to an environment (Umwelt) which is specific to their species. The environment contains what is of appeal to the instinctual makeup of the species. By contrast it is a characteristic constituent of human existence to **break through the barriers** of the species homo sapiens. "Man is reaching out for, and actually reaching, finally attaining, the world - a world, that is, which is replete with other beings to encounter, and meanings to fulfill" (Frankl, 1970, p. 31).

Man does not merely exist. He is geared towards having meaningful encounters with others, towards experiencing his life as worthwhile and meaningful. To illustrate this point, Frankl (1967) uses the analogy of an airplane: The airplane will not prove to be a true airplane until it rises into the air, into the dimension of space. The same holds true for man. As the airplane becomes an airplane only by rising into the third dimension, so man manifests his humanness only by **transcending himself**, that is, by living on a dimension of meaning fulfillment.

It follows that a **complete** and, therefore, **true** depiction of man is only possible when he is viewed from the perspective of and within the uniquely human or **spiritual** dimension of his being. Trying to explain human behavior only in biological and psychological terms, will amount to presenting an **incomplete** and, therefore, **distorted** picture of man. This critical fact is discussed by Frankl in what he has called dimensional ontology.

Dimensional Ontology

Dimensional ontology is an effort to understand man in the unity of his biological, psychological and spiritual dimensions of being. The dimensional ontology as Frankl (1970) has propounded it, rests on two laws.

The First Law

One and the same phenomenon projected out of its own dimension onto different dimensions lower than its own, is depicted in such a way that the individual pictures contradict each other.

Frankl (1970) uses the example of a cylinder, say, a cup or glass which, if projected out of its three-dimensional space onto the horizontal and vertical two-dimensional planes, is portrayed in the

first case as a circle and in the second case as a rectangle. These pictures contradict one another.

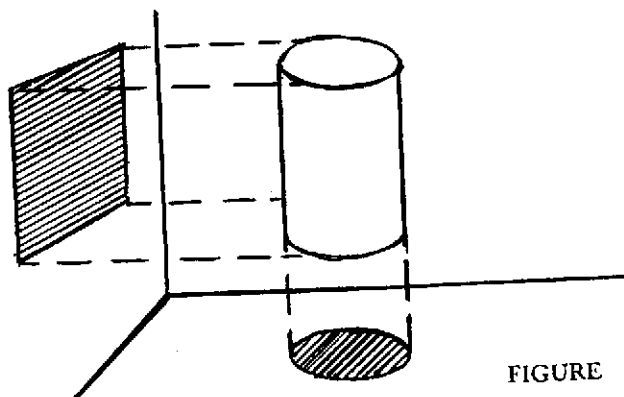


FIGURE 1

Applied to an understanding of man, this means if we ignore the uniquely human characteristics of man, that is, his freedom and self-transcendence, evident on the higher, uniquely human dimension of being, and exclusively study him on a lower or subhuman dimension, we may get a distorted picture of the entity: man, and for several reasons.

- * Findings on one subhuman dimension of being will **contradict** the findings on another subhuman dimension of being:

Studied in terms of his biology alone, man appears to be nothing but a biological organism. Studied only with regard to his psychological aspects, man appears to be nothing but a psychological mechanism. Which one is he? Both, says Frankl (1970) and neither. Man **has** a body which functions according to certain specific laws, just as he has a psyche which is also subjected to certain functioning principles. But man is neither the one or the other. He is both **and more than** both. The circle and the rectangle are both projections of the cup, but the cup is not contained in either, it is more than both. The rectangle and the circle are two-dimensional, the cup is three-dimensional. It is the cup which contains within itself, as it were, the rectangle **and** the circle.

- * Different findings on the different lower dimensions of being can suggest that man is composed of different parts.

The body/mind dualism in psychology has been a problem since the days of Descartes (1596-1650). The dimensional ontology of Frankl (1970), in his own words, is far from solving this problem, but it does explain why the mind-body problem cannot be solved.

The unity of man - a unity in spite of the multiplicity of body and mind - cannot be found on the biological or psychological dimension, but must be sought on the noölogical or spiritual dimension out of which man has been projected in the first place. However much the bodily and mental aspects of human existence might contradict one another, seen in the light of dimensional anthropology, this contradiction no longer contradicts **the oneness** of man. It is **man** that has a body and a psyche. His body and his psyche are the dimensions through which he lives and expresses himself. **Only when**

man is seen in his three-dimensionality, that is, from the perspective of his spiritual self or being, can he be seen as a unity, despite the multiplicity of body and mind. Nobody would claim that the glass is composed of a circle and a rectangle. Neither can we claim that man is composed of parts, such as a body and a psyche. Man is a whole that is **more than** the sumtotal of his parts - this is the nature of his essential spirituality. "The spiritual core, and only the spiritual core, warrants and constitutes oneness and wholeness in man" (Frankl, 1977, p. 27). Wholeness in this context means the integration of somatic, psychic and spiritual aspects. It is only this three-fold wholeness which makes man complete. In no way are we justified in speaking of man in terms of only a somatic-psyche whole. Body and psyche may form a unity - a psychophysical unity - but this unity does not yet represent the wholeness of man. **Without the spiritual as its essential ground, this wholeness cannot exist.**

It needs to be stressed that man, in Frankl's thinking, **is** spiritual - man does not have a spirit or a self, he **is** (him)self. "I am not really justified in saying my self, not even myself, since I do not have a self, but **I am a self**" (Frankl, 1977, p. 27). However, it can be said that a person has a body and psychological needs and processes. "The personal center is encompassed by the peripheral psychophysical layers" (Frankl, 1977, p. 27). Man, as a spiritual being, thus has a psychophysical overlay. This is the ground plan and context of all human functioning and personality development. Put simply, man is never devoid of himself, his spirituality - **he is always there, in everything he does.** This fact explains the essential unity and wholeness of man.

* Viewed from the lower or sub-human dimensions, man appears as a closed system.

Alongside the problem of mind versus body, there is the problem of determinism (Frankl, 1970). To return to the analogy of the cup which, if projected out of its three-dimensional plane, casts a shadow which in one case, looks like a circle, and in another case like a rectangle. Both these figures are **closed** whereas the cup, essentially, is an **open** vessel. Another contradiction. Man too, projected on to a dimension lower than his own, **appears to be a closed system** with no freedom of choice and no will other than, say, biological survival or psychological equilibrium. His essential **openness or self-transcendence, a mobility on the level of freedom of choice,** is missed. If we view man only from the lower or sub-human dimensions of being, phenomena from the noölogical or spiritual dimension have been filtered out and will, therefore, entirely escape us. **"We need to think here only of things like meaning and value; they must disappear from our field of vision as soon as we consider instincts and dynamics as the only valid criteria, and indeed they must for the simple reason that values do not drive - they pull"** (Frankl, 1967, p. 141). A great difference exists between driving (being determined) and pulling (being addressed in our freedom), which we must recognize whenever we seek, in the sense of a phenomenological analysis, an access to the total unabridged reality of being human. In an exclusively psychodynamic approach, the genuinely human is necessarily portrayed in **distortion.**

* If we view man only from a lower dimension of being, we may fall prey to reductionism.

It is in the nature of science to methodically disregard the full dimensionality of reality and to be based upon, what Frankl (1967) calls, the indispensable **fiction** of a unidimensional world. "Science must even treat man in this way", but "if this does not occur with a full consciousness that a specific methodological approach has been chosen, then it can completely lead us astray" (p. 141). We can come under the impression that the human properties of freedom and self-transcendence, are **non-existent**.

Man has a body and a psyche and he is subjected to the functioning of the laws of both these aspects of his being. It would be wrong, however, on the basis of what we discover in each of these areas, to move out of our areas of specialization and to generalize, that is, make our findings applicable to every other aspect of man's being. We may, for example, claim that man is **nothing but** a biological organism or a psychological mechanism and, in a sense, force all other facts to fit our theory.

Frankl (1970) uses a striking example in the field of neurology. One neurologist defined man as "**nothing but** a complex biochemical mechanism powered by a combustion system which energizes computers with prodigious storage facilities for retaining encoded information" (p. 21). As a neurologist, says Frankl (1970), he stands for the justification of using a computer as a model for the activity of the central nervous system. "In a certain sense the statement is valid: man is a computer. However, at the same time he also is **infinitely more than** a computer. The statement is erroneous only insofar as man is defined as nothing but a computer" (p. 21). The point is, we will not be able to infer from only one dimension of man's being what he is like on the other or what he **essentially is** in the totality of his being.

The Second Law

Different phenomena projected out of their own dimension onto one dimension lower than their own are depicted in such a manner that the pictures are ambiguous.

Frankl (1970) uses the example of a cylinder, a cone and a sphere. The shadows they cast upon the horizontal plane depict them as three circles which are interchangeable. We cannot infer from a shadow what casts it, what is above it, whether a cylinder, a cone, or a sphere.

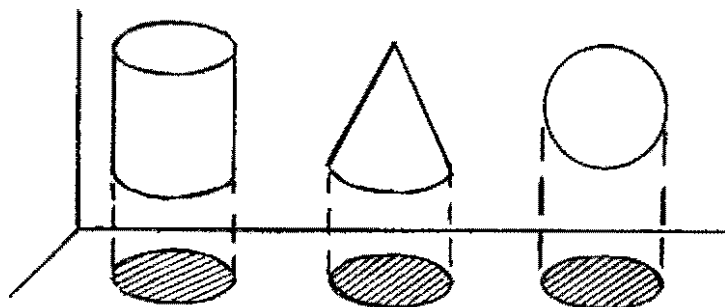


FIGURE 2

Applying this principle to man, we cannot exactly conclude what we are seeing on only one and a lower dimension of being. Frankl (1970) uses the example of neuroses which can have a somatic, a psychogenic and a noögenic origin. To the degree that the etiology of neuroses is multidimensional, the symptomatology becomes ambiguous. As we cannot infer from a circular shadow whether a cylinder, a cone, or a sphere stands above it, we cannot conclude whether e.g. hyperthyroidism, castration fear, or an existential vacuum stands behind a neurosis when viewed from only one and a lower dimension of being. **The unique nature of any phenomenon is lost in applying a uniform law to different phenomena that are only peripherally related e.g. in terms of common symptoms.** Frankl (1970) uses the striking example of the historic figure, Joan of Arc. This saintly woman was, without doubt, a schizophrenic. But she was also much more than only a schizophrenic. On the spiritual level, she was a saint. She was, therefore, saint and schizophrenic at the same time. **A most important point is that we can overlook the unique capabilities, the heroic choices of people who may be psychologically handicapped in other ways.**

Frankl's views cast new light especially on psychotics, whom we label as having *lost* their minds, and on psychopaths whom we have labeled as having no conscience. Frankl points out the fascinating fact that some paranoid schizophrenics **murder** their imaginary persecutors, whereas other paranoids **forgive** them. Certain choices within the psychotic state are **still** made. Even though severely curtailed, a vestige of freedom still remains. There is another fascinating example of twins who had the same criminal inclinations. One became a criminal, the other a criminologist.

The great variety of possible reactions, the uniqueness and diversity that is found on the uniquely human dimension of being, are brought down to mere generalities, uniform patterns and types when viewed alongside related phenomena on a lower dimension of being.

It is clear that man's totality and wholeness are to be found on the uniquely human dimension of his being. What he reveals himself to be on this third level of his being, is also what he is in **essence**, at the ground of his being. This thought is clarified in Frankl's exposition of **the spiritual unconscious**.

The Spiritual Unconscious

Frankl (1977) asserts that "in its origin, the human spirit is unconscious spirit" (p. 30). Human existence in its depth is essentially unconscious. This is due to the fact that spiritual activity so absorbs the person as the executor of spiritual acts that he is not even capable of reflecting on what he basically is. "The self does not yield to total self-reflection" (Frankl, 1977, p. 29).

This explains the following confounding fact: people will easily recognize the fact that they have sexual needs for example, they can **feel** themselves having desires, yet they can categorically deny that they are essentially **spiritual**, since they cannot **feel** their spirituality. However, by their thinking, deciding and acting, they are giving expression to it - **to themselves**. Frankl (1977) quotes a saying to explain this important fact: "That which does the seeing, cannot be seen; that which does the hearing, cannot be heard; and that which does the thinking, cannot be thought" (p. 30).

Man's Quest for Ultimate Meaning

In his work: The unconscious God, Frankl (1977) raises the question of man's quest for ultimate meaning as an inherent part of his make-up. Frankl's contention is that every man stands in intentional relation to Transcendence, even if only on an unconscious level. If one calls the intentional referent of such an unconscious relation "God", it is apt to speak of an "unconscious God". This simply implies that **man's relation to God may be unconscious**. Frankl (1977) contends that within the spiritual unconscious there is unconscious religiousness. This unconscious religiousness is to be understood as a **latent relation to Transcendence inherent in man**. One may conceive of this relation in terms of a **relationship between the imminent self and a transcendent Thou**. "However one wishes to formulate it, we are confronted with what I should like to term **the transcendent unconscious**." (Frankl, 1977, p. 60)

Frankl contends that the will to meaning, if taken to its logical end, is a search for ultimate meaning. To be sure, it also is a reality that can remain, or again become, unconscious, or be repressed. But although concealed in the transcendent unconscious, repressed transcendence shows up and makes itself noticeable as an **unrest of the heart** (Frankl, 1970).

Frankl, in his dimensional ontology, has postulated the existence of a Supra-human dimension, the dimension of the Divine. How do we, on the human dimension, experience the divine? How does the existence of the divine filter through or manifest on the human dimension?

The Transhuman Dimension

Viewed within the context of Frankl's dimensional ontology, Supra-meaning is on a level higher than the human or third dimension. A higher dimension, by definition, is a more **inclusive** one. The lower dimension is included in the higher one; it is **subsumed** in it and encompassed by it. "Thus biology is overarched by psychology, psychology by noölogy, and noölogy by theology" (Frankl, 1970, p. 14). On the noölogical or spiritual level, we see the operation of a will to meaning and the human phenomenon of faith and trust expressed in a religious search for ultimate meaning. Only these human expressions are accessible to a psychological exploration. There is a dimensional barrier between the human world and the divine world, a barrier that prevents man from really speaking of God or of defining Him in human terms (Frankl, 1970).

God is beyond human investigation (or speculation).

Of psychological interest is that exactly the same principles apply in terms of viewing phenomena from the Transhuman to the human plane, as it did from the human to the sub-human planes.

* Seen from a lower plane, we cannot know the exact nature of that which lies above it.

A reflection from a higher plane, if viewed only on a lower plane, can only be a **partial truth** or a reflection of what can only be understood when viewed from a higher and more total and

inclusive dimension. Scripture itself confirms this in the Book of Corinthians, Chapter 13:12: "Now we see through a mirror darkly; but then, face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

- * Should we cut off the vital connection to a **higher dimension** and try to explain phenomena from a **higher dimension** in terms of its reflections on a lower dimension, we will end up with reductionisms or **distortions** of the truth.

The psychological fact of **conscience**, for example, is but the imminent aspect of a transcendent phenomenon. "It is only that piece of the whole phenomenon which seeps into psychological imminence" (Frankl, 1970, p. 53). Conscience, as we have seen, is that aspect of our awareness with which we intuitively discern the meanings of the life-situations which confront us. Through our consciences we discern "the voice of the Transcendent" as an objective reality **outside and above man**: "Through the conscience of the human person, a trans-human agent **personat** - which literally means, is sounding through" (Frankl, 1970, p. 52). Should we turn what is "sounding through" into rules and regulations which we, in the name of society or this or that religious persuasion, order men to obey, then we will have turned the living Laws from a Transhuman dimension into mere patterns of obedience on a human plane.

Their vitality or true nature will have been lost.

Demanding conformism by presenting human interpretations of divine injunctions as absolutes, turns man into a closed system. Individual man is denied free access to or a profoundly personal relationship with the Transcendent. He is denied the experience of feeling addressed by values and meanings through his own conscience. In fact, contends Frankl (1970), "if religion is to survive, it will have to be profoundly **personalized**" (p. 16) Religion is genuine only where it is existential, where man is not somehow driven to it, but commits himself to it by **freely choosing** to be religious. "The existentiality of religiousness has to be matched by its spontaneity. Genuine religiousness must unfold in its own time. **Never can anyone be forced to it**" (Frankl, 1977, p. 71).

- * Placing a false ceiling on the transcendent strivings of human existence, can have an oppressive effect on man's will to meaning - men can fall prey to reductionism, to the belief that ultimate meaning does not exist.

"Even in a manifestly irreligious person there must be latent religiousness", contends Frankl (1977, p. 70). The irreligious man has simply stopped short of seeking ultimate answers to life. He has, as it were, "not yet reached the highest peak, but rather has stopped at the next to highest" (Frankl, 1977, p. 70).

The freedom to say no, by deliberately refusing to accept any religious Weltanschauung (world view), is the prerogative of human freedom, maintains Frankl (1977). Often, however, men have become disillusioned or even **hurt** in their search for ultimate meaning and thus **thwarted** in their effort to find final fulfilment in life. **Once the will to meaning is repressed, the existence of meaning is no longer perceived.** Then not eros but logos is the victim of repression. Frankl (1977) speaks about **diseased religiousness**, which might be the outcome of such repression. Repressed religion degenerates into superstition. In our century, a deified reason and a megalomaniac technology are the repressive structures to which the religious feeling is sacrificed.

In Frankl's view, a will to be vitally related to that which gives our personal lives meaning in an ultimate sense, is a first and final stamp of our humanness. However, for very many reasons, the will to ultimate meaning can be thwarted and remain dormant. It can also be suppressed (denied). Man may rise no higher than mere superstition in his awareness of the Transcendent. He can also fall victim to unbelief and despair and convince himself that the Transcendent does not exist.

Concluding statements

It is essential that we spell out exactly what we have come to understand about human freedom and self-transcendence up to this point in the discussion before we proceed with a comparative discussion of other theories in psychology.

The fact of human freedom and self-transcendence: individualized being.

"Man is doomed to choice," is a famous saying of Sartre. As a result of his freedom, man finds himself at a distance from what he is and what happens to him. **He cannot else but think**, that is, form impressions about and interpret that with which he is confronted. No two people will be faced with the same situation in exactly the same way. Nor will any two people necessarily interpret or attach exactly the same meaning to what they perceive either about themselves, about others, or about the specific course of events they are exposed to in their lives. Nor are the responses, the actions they decide to take - the choices they make - circumscribed. The possibilities, since they have **open choice**, are boundless.

It is the prime characteristic of our humanness that we do not respond to pattern nor present ourselves according to type. The most central or pivotal point about human freedom is that it allows for highly individualized being.

Man's uniqueness is particularly the result of the fact that he is **personally**, that is, uniquely addressed by life through the unique meaning of every singular moment. **Life is in a private conversation with the individual person.** No two conversations can ever be the same.

In short, we cannot fathom the depths of another person's being or predict if and how any particular event will touch and **change** him. All we can know with certainty is that, inherent to man's freedom, is the possibility that **he can change at any moment, even change the entire course of his life in an instant.**

The only appropriate conclusion in the face of man's freedom is that we must view each individual life with **awed respect**.

The fact of human sovereignty: a case against evolutionism.

Central to the understanding of human freedom is that **man has the ability to direct his own life and behavior**. The animal, by contrast, is captive to and taken up by his instinct. Instinct directs the animal's responses to be totally adapted to his environment. The environment in turn, through stimuli, exercises a shaping influence on the animal's responses in a learning process that is totally focussed on the physical survival of the species. The animal, therefore, over millenniums of changing environments, is the end product of an **evolutionary process**. The animal is the product of evolution, perhaps each to his own kind.

The animal has evolution. Man, however, has history. Man enacts his history. As part of the entire cast of humankind, each individual player makes a unique contribution to the evolvement of the plot. Man writes his own script. One can speak of the **evolvement** of thought, of discoveries and inventions and of contributions to the field of human knowledge. However, because man can face even his history, he can reject tradition, revolutionize thought and change the future course of events. History does not make man, man makes history. This is because man **is addressed** by his history which he can either accept and defend, or reject and change.

One man's bold stand against beliefs that have held sway over the minds of men for centuries, can cause a sudden release of bondages to which men have allowed themselves to be kept captive. A whole revolution of thought can be the outcome. On the reverse side, the wisdom of ancient times can speak **anew** to modern man, despite all the advances in man's thinking. Men, at any moment of history, can also revert to brute barbarism and savagery, a culture can **degenerate**. History can only record men's actions **after** the event. It is man's choice that determines his future.

The statement with which we can conclude is the following:

Man, as a deciding agent, infuses every act with spiritual intent. There is meaning in everything he does, just as he attaches meaning to everything he experiences. Man himself is at the core or motivating center of his personality, not his physical processes, biological drives or psychological needs. It follows, therefore, that his functioning within any of these areas can never be fully understood or seen without him, the evaluating person.

PART III : THEORIES IN PSYCHOLOGY FROM A MEANING-PERSPECTIVE

Frankl's view of man as a free agent, seeking and finding meaning in life, runs contrary to most psychological theories on man with which the researcher was confronted in her own training as a psychologist. Realizing that all theorists are **men**, unable to escape the experience of pain and suffering, the researcher was intrigued to discover how mainstream psychologists came to observe man the way they did. Who was the man behind the theory? How did he deal with the issue of human suffering? How did the theory he formulated reflect his own personal conclusions regarding the tragic factualities of life?

A discussion of Frankl's dimensional ontology highlighted the fact that psychologists who view man only from a physical, psychophysical and psychosocial plane, confine man's life to **sub-human** levels of existence. Man is robbed of his essence: his **spirituality**.

If we are to now review the evolving theories of man over the history of psychology, the following will become evident: radical behaviorists stressed man's **physical being**; psychoanalysts shifted the accent to man's psychophysical or **psychobiological being**; humanists focussed on man's **psychosocial being**. Each of these perspectives can be expected, therefore, to neglect the uniquely **psychospiritual aspects of man's being**.

Discussing these mainstream theories from the perspective of Frankl's dimensional ontology, the aim is to investigate Frankl's statement that a full picture of man is only possible when he is viewed from the spiritual or uniquely human dimension of being.

Seeking to further illuminate the fact of man's freedom, his will to and experience of meaning, the discussions in the following chapters will focus on the views and persons of: J.B. Watson and Fred Skinner, fathers of the behavioristic school (Chapter 5); Sigmund Freud, the father of the psychoanalytic school (Chapter 6); Gordon Allport; Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, the fathers of the humanistic school (Chapter 7). The aim is to see how the views of these theorists oppose or complement the views of Frankl. What in effect we will be looking at is **an evolving theory of man over the history of psychology**.

Ending with a discussion of man on the psychospiritual dimension of being, a dimension highlighted by the existential school of thought, and by Frankl's existential theory, the aim is to understand man on a level of being where he not only has to deal with the tragic factualities of life, but where he is challenged to find the meaning of suffering (Chapter 8).

CHAPTER 5

MAN ON THE PHYSICAL DIMENSION OF BEING

Introduction

It is a fascinating exercise to view theories in psychology from a meaning-perspective. Psychological theorists are **men**, dealing with the subject matter: **man**. No theorist can escape taking some stand on the issue of the meaning and purpose of man's life, even if the theorist is of the opinion that there is no special meaning to man's existence at all. No theory can fail to have an underlying **philosophy of man** - a view on what man is and what human existence is about.

The Theories of J.B. Watson and B.F. Skinner

Radical behaviorism is of particular interest in that it most strongly **opposes** the views of Frankl.

Radical behaviorism is committed to a positivistic theory of science. Philosophical positivism, as originally formulated by Comte (1798-1857), sought to dispense with all theological and metaphysical concepts in an exclusive focus on the natural world. Radical behaviorists contend that only the dimension of the natural or physical, **the observable and manipulable**, is the domain of science. In the quest to be rigorously scientific and nonmetaphysical, the research method of the natural or exact sciences is emulated. Man is to be impassively studied as an **object**. All human phenomena are to be **reduced** to a pragmatic, concrete and physically observable level.

The focus is on the input-output function of behavior in the adaptive interplay between behavior and the forces of man's environment. Psychology as a science, radical behaviorists believe, should confine itself strictly to the study of observable behavioral responses and their environmental determinants. Abstract and elusive phenomena such as meanings and values, experienced through the inner grasp of an intuitive conscience, falling as they do within the subjective experiences of the evaluating individual, are confounding in their complexity and cannot be comprehended within the boundaries of what has been defined as "pure" science. Declaring that such phenomena fall outside the domain of **science**, the radical behaviorist dismisses such phenomena as **irrelevant** in the explanation of human behavior.

The extreme behaviorism of John Watson (1878-1958) and B.F. Skinner (1904-1990) most clearly reflect the ultra stand of radical behaviorism. Watson (1913) introduced the radical behaviorist point of view by stating that psychology is a purely objective experimental branch of natural science. **Its theoretic goal is the prediction and control of behavior.** Introspection forms no essential part of its methods, nor is the scientific value of its data dependent upon the readiness with which they lend themselves to interpretation in terms of consciousness. **"The behaviorist, in his efforts to get a unitary scheme of animal response, recognizes no dividing line between man and brute"** (Watson, 1913, p. 158).

Psychology, therefore, must **discard** all references to consciousness. In the same vain, Skinner

(1953) stated: "Since mental and psychic events are asserted to lack the dimensions of physical science, we have reason for **rejecting** them" (p. 31). The behaviorist must drop from his scientific vocabulary "all subjective terms such as sensation, perception, image, desire, purpose, and even thinking and emotion as they were subjectively defined" (Watson, 1930, p. 6).

According to Skinner (1971) behavior is shaped by or is learnt as a consequence of **positive reinforcers** or "values" (that is, positive or pleasant reactions from the environment) and **negative reinforcers** or "values" (negative or unpleasant reactions from the environment). The latter include **punishment** (the withholding of a positive stimulus or the application of an aversive stimulus) and **extinction** (the withholding of any form of stimulation, whether positive or aversive). The intricacies of the learning process (respondent and operant conditioning) do not concern us. Of importance only, is Skinner's view that the individual should be treated as a black box which, though it may not be empty, need not be looked into in an effort to understand behavior. The responses constituting behavior are tangible and can be (and are, therefore,) controlled by manipulating the external stimulus environment. Man is programmed by his environment. So much is this the case, that Watson (1931) imagined the following as a possibility:

Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own world to bring them up in and I'll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select - doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief and yes, even beggar-man and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations and race of his ancestors. (p. 104)

Both Watson and Skinner showed intense interests in gadgets and in the designing and building of laboratory equipment. Both looked upon themselves as **behavioral engineers** and viewed psychology as a technology of behavior.

Watson (1930) stated that the behaviorist naturally is not interested in the individual's morals except as a scientist; in fact he doesn't care what kind of man he is. "It is part of the behaviorist's scientific job to be able to state what the human machine is good for and to render serviceable predictions about its future capacities whenever society needs such information" (p. 145).

Behaviorism thus espouses an input-output, functional or **mechanistic view of man** - man's behavior is under the control of the environment and is programmed by environmental influences in one direction or another.

The Theories of Watson and Skinner from a Meaning-perspective

Viewed against the background of Frankl's dimensional ontology, the theories of Watson and Skinner provide a most vivid example of what Frankl (1970) describes as **reductionism**. Phenomena on the **uniquely human** or **spiritual** (third dimensional) plane, are reduced to a lower, or physical dimension of being. Man is presented as a closed system.

According to Frankl (1970), a theorist holding such a one-sided and restricted view of man, will experience several vexing problems. Can man be made to fit theory?

- * **By excluding man's will to meaning as a central aspect of his being, this one factor that harmoniously unites otherwise seemingly disparate aspects of being is removed. Man will emerge at odds with himself and the different areas of his life, disconnected or in conflict.**
- * **By presenting man as a closed system in placing a ceiling, as it were, on his freedom to find meaning on a higher level of being, the fact of man's freedom will become problematic. Freedom for what and to what end?**

The mind/body problem

A perplexity which arises when man is viewed from a lower dimension of being, Frankl believes, is the insoluble **dualism** of mind and body. Mind and body will seem to be disconnected aspects of being if the third aspect of being: man's free will, is disregarded. It is man who directs his behavior towards a specific end and who will employ strength and determination, body and soul, to achieve such an end.

Only on the third or spiritual dimension of being, therefore, will the **unity** of behavior be perceived. Man's spirit, his essential freedom, makes him a whole that is **more** than a sumtotal of his parts. Without this holistic context, man seems to be composed of separate parts or independent areas of functioning.

It is this seeming disparity between different aspects of man's being, when the self-transcendent essence of human motivation is ignored or missed, that Watson and Skinner, in their reductionistic view of man, could not else but observe as a problem! "No psychology which included the religious mind-body problem could ever arrive at verifiable conclusions" (Watson, 1931, p. 5).

To think along mentalistic lines, Watson and Skinner concluded, is to introduce too many confounding variables and to be saddled with unworkable concepts. There are too many loose ends. The scientific solution is to **eliminate** these elusive factors by **explaining** them in simple, concrete terms. Skinner (1971) stated that it is always the environment which builds the behavior with which problems are solved, even when the problems are to be found in the private world inside the skin. If our understanding of contingencies of reinforcement is not yet sufficient to explain all kinds of thinking, we must remember that **the appeal to mind explains nothing at all**. "A great deal goes on inside the skin, and **physiology will eventually tell us more about it.**" (Skinner, 1971, p. 190)

Presenting reductionism as a solution to the mind/body dualism, Skinner (1971) set himself the task to "explain" so-called higher strivings and motives.

Long before anyone formulated the "norm", Thou shalt not steal, people attacked those who stole from them (and who threatened their own physical survival). At some point stealing came to be called wrong and as such was punished even by those who had not been robbed. "Thou shalt not steal", as one of the Ten Commandments suggests supernatural sanctions. Relevant social contingencies are implied by "You ought not to steal", which could be translated, "If you intend to avoid punishment, avoid stealing", or "Stealing is wrong, and wrong behavior is punished". Such a statement is no more normative than "If coffee keeps you awake when you want to go to sleep, don't drink it" (Skinner, 1971, pp. 113-114).

Why give man a false freedom and a false dignity as an autonomous individual, Skinner (1971) asked? Why think in terms of a person directing his behavior? It is the other way round. "The picture which emerges from a scientific analysis is not of a body with a person inside, but of a body which is a person in the sense that it displays a complex repertoire of behavior" (p. 195).

As behavioral scientists we are to look **beyond freedom and dignity**, and see man for what he is: an animal. His behavior may be more sophisticated, but it is still the outflow of an interaction with his environment. There is no referent (a spiritual dimension) outside this framework. "He differs from the other animals not in possessing a moral or ethical sense but in having been able to generate a moral or ethical social environment" (Skinner, 1971, p. 172).

For psychology to take its place next to the other natural and objective sciences, **the inner or subjective world of experience must become completely externalized**, Watson (1931) believed. "No one has ever touched a soul, or seen one in a test tube, or has in any way come into relationship with it as he has with the other objects of his daily experience" (Watson, 1931, p. 3).

Watson's answer to the mind (psyche, soul)/body dualism, therefore, was to rid psychology of the notion of psyche or soul. **Man must be studied one-dimensionally, that is, as a physical unit or entity.**

All things connected to the vague concept of mind, psyche, or soul such as "states of consciousness" (which was the subject matter of the introspective psychology of Watson's day) are not objectively verifiable and for that reason can never become data for science. "You will find, then, the behaviorist working like any other scientist. His sole object is to gather facts about behavior - verify his data - subject them both to logic and to mathematics (the tools of every scientist)" (Watson, 1931, p. 3).

The Problem of Human Freedom

It is in the nature of human freedom, Frankl (1970) contends, that it is not a **freedom from** (conditioning factors and forces) but a **freedom to** (responsibility). Within a spiritual context, freedom is man's ability to seek, find and commit himself to meaning which, essentially, emanates from a Transcendent or Supra-human dimension and which "sounds through" or is presented to man as a call to responsibility.

Freedom outside a context of meaning, Frankl (1970) contends, is arbitrary and senseless. Freedom for what and to what end? If human freedom is not seen as presenting man with the responsibility of choice and accountability, the possession of freedom will be paradoxical. Human freedom will take on a **nuisance value** - exactly as Watson (1931) and Skinner (1971) perceived it!

The phenomenon of freedom impressed a behaviorist like Skinner (1953) as "**interfering** with causal relationships which makes the prediction and control of behavior **impossible**" (p. 7). To solve this problem, recourse is once again taken to reductionism.

If reduced to a physical dimension, freedom is perceived as confined and under the control of the laws of physical determinism. The free, determining person, the spiritual dimension of being, is out

of sight. Behavior looks as if it is being externally evoked by stimuli in the outer or inner (in the sense of changes in the physical) environment.

If it can be **proved** that in fact there is this cause and effect pattern to behavior, the question of so-called freedom would be solved.

Skinner (1953) fully acknowledged that a science which sets out to explain human behavior in a deterministic way, is "a threat to freedom": "To suggest that we abandon the view of an internal **will** .. is to threaten many cherished beliefs. **It challenges our aspirations, either worldly or otherworldly**" (p. 7).

Behaviorism as a Reaction against the Stranglehold of Religious Dogmatism and Philosophical Mysticism

Watson (1929) called religion and philosophy "the two great bulwarks of medievalism" (p. 1). He felt strong objection to what he perceived as the church's dictatorial sway over the ignorant and superstitious minds of men. At the other extreme, he believed, philosophers indulged in useless speculation.

With the development of the physical sciences which came with the renaissance, Watson (1931) saw "a **certain release** from this stifling soul cloud" (p. 3). Chemistry and physics were seen by him as having "**freed**" themselves and zoology and physiology as being in the process of becoming "**emancipated**" (Watson, 1931, p. 3).

Religion, to Watson's mind, had no legitimacy since it was seen to have no effective or positive influence on the down to earth and practical lives of men and women. People who involved themselves with religion, therefore, were indulging in folk lore and fantasy, for this, Watson (1929) assumed, was the origin of religion:

Magic lives forever. .. Almost every era has its new magic, black or white, and its new magician. Moses had his magic: he smote the rock and water gushed out. Christ had his magic: he turned water into wine and raised the dead to life. As time goes on, all these critically undigested, innumerable told tales get woven into the folk lore of the people. Folk lore in turn gets organized into religions. Religions get caught up into the political and economic network of the country. **Then they are used as tools.** The public is **forced to accept** all the old wives' tales, and it passes them on as gospel to its children's children. (p. 2)

Skinner (1976) held religion in the same contempt, describing it as "a device used to explain what we cannot explain in any other way". Man as an elevated, spiritually minded and autonomous being is a figment of our imagination, "constructed from our ignorance, and as our understanding increases, the very stuff of which he is composed vanishes". Science must abolish "autonomous man - the inner man, the homunculus, **the possessing demon**, the man defended by the literatures of freedom and dignity". Only by "dispossessing" man of the elusive and "unreal" qualities of a so-called spirituality, can we discover the "real causes of human behavior". "Only then can we turn from the inferred to the observed, from the miraculous to the natural, from the inaccessible to the manipulable"

(p. 196).

Skinner (1987) adamantly believed that in the strict avoidance of inner searchings into the mysteries and meaning of life, man can gain a much greater mastery over the complex business of living.

In his applause of a biographical work on the biologist, Jacques Loeb, entitled: Controlling Life: Jacques Loeb and the Engineering Ideal in Biology, Skinner (1987) strongly identified with the biologist's ideas that **it is possible to manipulate life without understanding it**, to treat the organism as a black box from which all manner of behaviors could be coaxed by environmental cues. **Scientists, rather than searching vainly for true causes, should really be concerned with producing effects.** Like Loeb, Skinner (1987) wanted to be "an engineer of living substance", attempting to "manipulate life processes in the absence of an understanding of mechanisms" (p. 305).

A Thwarted Search for Meaning: The Life of B.F. Skinner

In Walden Two, a fictional outline of a modern utopia set in America, Skinner (1946) offered behavioral guidelines aimed at de-mystifying the intricacies and confusions of human life and relationships. These guidelines were suggested ways in which human conflict and suffering could be diminished and even eliminated.

A most fascinating personal motivation to better the human condition by such simplification is found in Skinner's (1976) autobiography: Particulars of my life. (All quotes in the following discussion are from this source).

Skinner published his autobiography in 1976, the same year that Walden Two, first published in 1948, was reissued. The coincidence seems amazing. His final and convincing argument for his stand as an avowed behaviorist, presented in Walden Two, is placed side by side with an autobiography which contains the deep emotional struggles, poignant searchings and finally, despair, of Skinner's pre-behaviorist life.

Skinner's autobiography, covering the period of his childhood and life up to his decision to follow in Watson's footsteps, reads like a last will and testament of pain. In its strong and final decision to bury the past's futile searches along emotional and spiritual lines and to concentrate rather on the hard facts of science, it puts a case before the reader which he or she is asked to consider. Indeed, this is the task Skinner gave his reader by quoting this portion from Henry IV, Part I, at the beginning of his autobiography: "Do thou stand for my father and **examine me** upon the particulars of my life" (p. 1).

The eldest of two sons, Skinner grew up in a typically Victorian, that is, sexually repressive and ethically rigid atmosphere. Sex was an obviously taboo subject, an attitude that was passed down especially from his maternal grandmother's side. He suspected his mother to be sexually frigid, and saw his father as the more timid and weaker partner. "My mother was in many ways the dominant member of the family. She had consented to marry my father, and there was an element of consent in her behavior with respect to him throughout his life" (p. 44). She was also the one with uncompromisingly high moral standards. "Perhaps the most important role my mother played was that

of confessor. I doubt whether my father ever made a mistake that he did not report to her" (p. 44).

The family was Protestant and anti-Catholic. Religion was something Skinner saw people observing without question out of a sense of mindless and inbred loyalty. "Before I had satisfied myself in unbelief, I was torn by the inbred religion in me" (p. 61).

From an indoctrinated fear of punishment and damnation accompanied by feelings of deep shame, self-condemnation and tormenting guilt, to flights of fantastic fancy, young Skinner one day announced to his teacher that he no longer believed in God.

With his brother's sudden and tragic death during his college years, his father's deep distress and emotional collapse unnerved Skinner. "Poorly prepared for almost everything he did, my father was totally unprepared for sorrow" (p. 209). Skinner himself felt bound by passivity. "I submitted to that tragic loss with little or no struggle. **..There was nothing I could do**" (p. 210).

When he left home for college, he felt ill-prepared for emotional independence. What was at first an exciting dream: "with what interest he would watch his mental powers expand, growing proficient in the things he wanted to do!", collapsed into deep disillusionment. "Eight months later, indifferent to the world, the boy looked upon a broken air castle. .. The Great Change was far from the change he had expected", and bitterly he wrote: "The only broadening given me is the enlargement of my own self-centered microcosm; the only agility of mind I have acquired is wasting itself in a ruinous flight toward selfishness" (p. 211).

What he described as his Dark Year, saw him coming to a dismal conclusion about his life up to that point. Reading Bergson's Creative Evolution, he made the following comments in his notebook, which at the time, was his only source of conversation with himself: ".. the Universal Secret has apparently begun to crack.. the oil of self-exaltation has run out; for man is discovering his place in the world, but he has discovered that it is a mean place. Above all else, perhaps, but not far above" (p. 280).

E.A. Burt's Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science, provoked the following comments from Skinner:

Man can know only those things which with his senses he perceives. ..there is no reason to believe that could we be sensitive to life in its entirety we could understand it. Above and apart from pure sense knowledge we should probably know no more of the secret than a child who has finally explored the innermost stuffings of his doll. (p. 281)

Skinner brought his reader along a life's path which led, inevitably, to dead-end conclusions. His poems reflect his feelings of futility. The most painful of all, were his feelings of abandonment in the area of sexual intimacy or of deep emotional involvement in a highly personal sense. What he looked for, he did not find.

VACANT STORE

Behind your dusty windows,
 Like the second meaning in the eyes of an abandoned woman,
 Your beckoning:
 For Rent.

Skinner felt thrown back on himself, left with no more than his own fruitless searchings.

CONCUPISCENCE

An Old Man, sowing in a field,
 Walks with a slow, uneasy, rhythm.
 He tears handfuls of seed from his vitals,
 Caressing the wind with the sweep of his hand.
 At night, he stops, breathless,
 Murmuring to his earthy consort,
 "Love exhausts me!"

Every effort of Skinner to reach **beyond himself**, came to nothing.

SAMUEL WINTERS - ASTRONOMER

I lived an eternity of nights
 With the stars.
 I was a discoverer;
 But though I searched the heavens
 And found new stars and asteroids,
 There was one thing
 I never found in all space:
 When a student asked me,
 "Do you see God out there?"
 I could answer only,
 "I see - Law."

"**Meaning**", Skinner wrote, "**is relation**" (p. 297), yet this is the one thing he never really experienced. The area of meaningful and intimate contact with others remained **empty, a lifeless vacuum**: "It derives from time, space, and space time and from nothing else.." (p. 297). In much the same way, the ritual and mechanics of religious observance seemed to him devoid of real life or spirit. An interest in the super-natural was by now to him "a **curious** digression from the path of science" (p. 297).

"**With a two dimensional understanding..**", the phenomena from "**the fourth dimension**" "**retrogressively**" impressed him as **fairy tales** (pp. 297-298). "I began to look at myself as a person: **what I achieve I despise**" (p. 281).

He saw himself as the hapless victim of circumstances: "greatness is merely the result of a happy combination of trivial circumstances, the great man cannot help being great, the poor man cannot help being poor. My ability to trace my own development shows this to me again and again" (p. 282).

His only hope lay in the fact of perhaps "discovering that I am wrong about my inexorable evolution - that perhaps I have imagined it" (p. 282). Maybe he was not as helpless as he felt. If he took a hand in what was being done to him by his all but positive circumstances, there could perhaps be **a different outcome**. He had to try and change his moldings, cast himself into a different shape, **conceive himself anew and give different birth to himself**: "Desire may move the world but intellect may mold desire" (p. 282). **Yet a mysteriously unexplained longing after what he had looked for but had not found, remained and was difficult to suppress: "Intellect molds desire (however) only when desire desires to be molded.."** (p. 282).

Behind all his searchings for emotional contact and confidence, there had been **a desire for meaning**. It was this search for true meaning in his life, that was thwarted time and again. "Nothing is worth doing. .. I see clearly now that the only thing left for me to do in life is to justify myself for doing nothing" (p. 283). He was giving up the search. **"The retreat was now a route"** (p. 283).

It was no easy decision, however. **He was turning his back on spiritual freedom**. He was overcome with a sense of loss and fell into a deep depression, verging on the brink of a complete mental breakdown. "I was floundering in a stormy sea and perilously close to drowning, but help was on the way" (p. 298). That help was the firm footing of J.B. Watson's behavioral science which he discovered just at that time. **"Here was a different approach to meaning and a theory of knowledge"** (p. 298).

Skinner began to define himself as a behaviorist. "I moved from 'philosophy' toward an empirical analysis" (p. 299).

"I had still a long way to go, but I was on my way" (p. 300).

As his decision grew stronger, he gained confidence in his new way of living: **what he never found in inner mastery, he now began to manage in outward control**. The Skinner that would move "beyond freedom and dignity", was in the making.

Meaning in the Lives of Watson and Skinner

Watson (1931) and Skinner (1971) both concluded that there is no metaphysical reality, no deeper meanings in life. Turning against what they perceived as the destructive effects of the religious dogmatism of their day, they sought more down to earth answers for human living. They observed (and experienced) how morally oppressive social rulings, based on strict religious laws, saddled man with crippling feelings of self-condemnation and guilt. Such dictatorial systems, they believed, forced man into the pathetic position of having to appease what he fearfully and superstitiously perceived as a punitive and despotic Deity.

Man was to be freed from "the stifling soul-cloud" (Watson, 1931, p. 3) of religion and its counter-part, philosophy. Seeking practical and **real** (workable) answers for human living through a psychology that was based on the solid ground of science, Watson and Skinner hoped to put an end to

what they perceived as futile meanderings and searchings which, in effect, led nowhere.

Giving what they believed were much more practical and real guidelines for the otherwise impossibly complex business of living, filled both Watson and Skinner with a sense of exhilarating achievement and, in a very real sense, **meaning**.

"**Here was a different approach to meaning and a theory of knowledge**", Skinner (1976, p. 298) exclaimed upon his discovery of the theory and work of Watson. His own searchings in the direction of literature and the arts, had badly disillusioned him. Finding in the behaviorism of Watson a secure footing, Skinner (1976) could announce that a search for meaning through the highly subjective avenue of a literary and artistic grasp, was nothing but fraudulent. "The facile liar has a great deal in common with the artist. If art should be vicarious experience.. the tragic question is why should we make others even feel?" (p. 266)

However, in confining himself to the physical world of the natural sciences and in renouncing faith in the possibility of any Transcendent dimension of meaning, Skinner (1976) experienced a sense of real loss. Maybe he was giving up on something he very much needed and wanted to find. If the solution to the state of human misery through a cold-blooded science was to be a real one, such a thought had to be vigorously suppressed. "I was clearly ambivalent. At times I was quite violent: literature must be demolished. But I continued to read poetry and fiction. I could justify that as pleasure; to get down to business I would turn to science" (pp. 291-292).

It is clear from the writings of both Watson and Skinner that, however adamant their behavioristic stands, **it was at the cost of a tremendous struggle against doubt**.

Religion remained a thorn in the flesh to Watson (1931). He struggled against religious inclinations in himself.

The extent to which most of us are shot through with a savage background is almost unbelievable. Few of us escape it. Not even a college education seems to correct it. Some of our greatest biologists, physicists, and chemists, when outside of their laboratories, fall back upon folk lore which has become crystallized into religious concepts. (p. 2)

Skinner (1971) presented the story of Walden Two in terms of an argument. The Behavioral Manager is the expounder of the behavioristic vision, opposed by a critic who wistfully represents "the good old days, when the inherent dignity of man and the importance of spiritual values were recognized" (pp. 208-209). The narrator is a neutral observer, who eventually becomes an ardent follower of the behavioristic dream. It is of interest that the critic is given a role in the first place, and that he also succeeds in upsetting the Manager and in unnerving the narrator, until the case is successfully argued against him. Whatever the efforts to win him over, however, the critic leaves Walden Two **unconvinced**.

Did Skinner argue a case of which he himself was not **absolutely** certain? Was he reinforcing his behavioristic leanings by taking an ultra stand **against all doubt**? Did, however, a nagging restlessness remain?

In his later years Skinner (1990) wrote: "As the senses grow dull, the stimulating environment becomes less clear. When reinforcing consequences no longer follow, we are bored, discouraged and depressed" (p. 14). Still adamantly resisting any reference to his own inner experience of life, he wrote

in an article he finished the night before he died: "The body-cum-brain obeys the laws of physics and chemistry. It has no freedom and makes no choices. .. There is no place in a scientific analysis of behavior for a mind or self" (p. 14). Meticulously hidden from view, was Skinner, the man, as his daughter, Julie, remembered him. She described how her dad, putting her to bed, would squeeze her hand before leaving, and there would be tears in his eyes (Lovaas, 1991). This was the sensitive and vulnerable part of Fred Skinner that Skinner, the scientist, did not grant the right and freedom to be.

Evaluation

Radical behaviorism has left a legacy of **restlessness**.

Reactionary movements in psychology, in leaving the platform of radical behaviorism, seem to express the view that the final word has not yet been spoken.

However, the behavioristic theories of Watson and Skinner served the valuable purpose of bringing the feet of psychology onto solid ground. It provided the foundation upon which other theories could extend themselves in an investigation of human behavior on higher levels of human functioning.

Could advances in the direction of discovering the realities of the human spirit and of meaning on the higher dimensions of being, ever have been made had psychology remained a slave to religious dogmatism or if it had kept itself bound to philosophical mysticism?..

A wealth of data concerning the principles of learning and the influence of environmental conditions has been unearthed and put to productive use in learning programs and in the creation of more conducive learning and social environments. Behavioral techniques in therapy have also proved to be ingenious and most effective in the area of the mastery of fear and of gaining control over the intimidating influences in a person's life. As evidenced in Skinner's own life, the control, through behavioral techniques, over behavioral complexities that have an immobilizing effect on the individual, can serve as a foundation or as a foothold in an otherwise catastrophic situation. From this solid platform, a more adventurous and courageous (confident) launch into a life of quality becomes possible.

Contemporary Behaviorism

Contemporary behaviorists have elaborated their theories considerably in an effort to deal with the greater complexities of human behavior. **Social learning theory** places emphasis on social variables as determinants of behavior and seeks to remedy the overdependency of earlier behaviorism on principles derived mostly from studies of animal learning.

There is the clear recognition that a simple stimulus-response understanding of behavior is only possible in the case of lower animals. Human behavior is not inviolately constant and attempts to

measure and shape it are not that simple. Too many inner and outer variables intervene to confound the picture. Berlyne (in Maddi, 1980) points out that contemporary behavior theorists make copious use of intervening variables. These are essentially mathematical devices to make cumbersome relations between inputs (stimulus-variables) and outputs (response variables) conceptually manageable.

A greater sophistication has been added in contemporary behavioristic thought by including as responses not only the tangible, directly observable behavior, but also such internal, relatively unobservable states such as thoughts and feelings. There has been the recognition that the human ability to symbolize (to think, attach interpretations to events and to change behavior accordingly) creates havoc with attempts at behavior shaping. Bandura (1974) points out that after individuals discern the instrumental relation between action and outcome, contingent reward may produce accommodating or oppositional behavior **depending on how they value the incentives, the influencers and the behavior itself, and how others respond**. Thus reinforcement, as it has become better understood, has changed from a mechanical strengthener of conduct to **an informative and motivating influence**. "Theories that explain human behavior as the product of external rewards and punishments present a **truncated image of man** because people partly regulate their actions by **self-produced consequences**" (Bandura, 1974, p. 860).

The radical behaviorism of Watson and Skinner has, therefore, been replaced by a far more cautious and self-critical approach among contemporary behaviorists. The cardinal recognition has been that, unlike Skinner proposed, behaviorism cannot be practiced without a due acknowledgement of man's inherent **freedom and dignity - his right to decide for and be himself**.

CHAPTER 6

MAN ON THE PSYCHOBIOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF BEING

Introduction

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), is the father of psychoanalysis. His views represent the orthodox or ultra stand in psychoanalytic theory. As in the case of the ultra behaviorists, man is presented by Freud as a **closed system** (that is, as having no openness to a Supra-human dimension of meaning).

Whereas behaviorism sees man as programmed from without, Freudian theory sees man as programmed from within - both theories mechanize human behavior and subject the human will to forces of brute determinism. Behaviorism espouses environmental determinism: man is the product of the shaping influences of his environment. Freud's theory is built on the premise of **psychic determinism**: man's behavior is shaped by psychological needs and desires which, in essence, are **the transformations of chemical and physiological processes from the physical or biological dimension into experienced desires and needs (instincts) on the psychological dimension of being**. Man's **mental apparatus** is geared to finding ways and means by which satisfaction of such experienced biological drives can be procured. **All behavior is thus aimed at the establishment of psychological equilibrium through the relief of tensions aroused by instinctual demands**. Far from subjecting himself passively to the shaping influences of the environment, Freud sees man as actively **using** the environment for his own purposes. Man is not subject to the environment, but man subjects the environment to serve the function of satisfying his own needs and desires. In Freudian thinking, therefore, **the environment is little more than a mere means to the end of need-satisfaction**.

What makes a consideration of Freudian theory especially significant in our exploration of Frankl's theory of man's will to meaning, is that Freud's views afford us a most illuminating look at man from **the psychological dimension of being**. The theories of Watson and Skinner gave us a vivid **one-dimensional** view of man, that is, a view of man on the physical dimension of being. Freud's views present man as a **two-dimensional** being: his biology is impressed upon and is seen as operating within **the parameters of his psyche**. Not only the peripheral or more physical or **outer** aspects of being, but the **inner** or emotional aspects, come into focus. That is why Freud's theory is best described as **psychobiological**.

The Freudian Theory of ManMan as an Id-directed Being

"The instincts are the ultimate cause of **all** activity," Freud (1974, p. 27) contended.

Freud postulated a number of instincts that are common to all human beings as an inherent, unchanging aspect of their nature. The first group of instincts function to preserve biological life.

These are the **self-preservation instincts** for food, water, air and the like. However, Freud's chief focus was on the **sexual instincts** which, together with the self-preservation instincts, are categorized as the life-instincts or **Eros**. The driving force or energy of these instincts, Freud termed: **libido**.

Even though the sexual instincts also serve a survival purpose through procreation, the experience of pleasure is sought for its own sake. The sexual instinct includes a wide variety of sensually pleasurable experiences focused on different areas of the body. Freud depicted personality development as proceeding through different psychosexual stages (e.g. the oral, anal, phallic, latent and genital stages of development).

In the later part of his life, significantly also during the time when the dark clouds of the impending Second World War were gathering and as a Jew, found himself a vulnerable part of a German society where Nazism was beginning to raise its threatening head, Freud occupied himself with an analysis of what he called the death instinct or **Thanatos**. The driving force behind the aggressive, sadistic or life-destructive instincts of Thanatos, Freud termed **destrudo**.

Freud believed that in the normal course of events, the life instincts are stronger than the death instincts. During psychologically catastrophic times, the death instincts can become stronger. In certain disordered personalities the destructive instincts override the life instincts and become a compelling force in directing behavior.

Most instincts are fusions between the two primal forces in varying proportions, Freud (1927) contended. "The two kinds of instinct seldom - perhaps never - appear in isolation from each other, but are alloyed with each other in varying and very different proportions and so become unrecognizable to our judgement" (p. 119). Freud (1927) cites the sexual act as an example: The sexual act is an act of aggression having as its purpose the most intimate union. Modifications in the proportions of the fusion between the instincts have the most noticeable results. A surplus of sexual aggressiveness will change a lover into a sexual murderer, while a sharp diminution in the aggressive factor will lead to shyness or impotence.

The interaction of the two basic instincts with and against each other gives rise to the whole variegation of the phenomena of life.

In Freudian terms, therefore, human behavior has a **biological blueprint**. **By the source of an instinct is meant the somatic process which occurs in an organ or part of the body and whose stimulus is represented in mental life by an instinct** (Freud, 1927).

The instincts, being the core determinant of behavior, are registered in the deepest, most inaccessible and unconscious layer of the mind, which Freud termed the **id** (which is the Latin word for "it"). **Man's behavior is thus directed by "it" forces**. He is, at the core of his being, an "it".

Freud (1974) believed that **the power of the id expresses the true purpose of the individual organism's life**. This consists in the satisfactions of the individual organism's innate needs. **This essential core of man's nature is totally blind to human values**. "The core of our being is formed by the obscure id, which has no direct relations with the external world" (p. 8).

Maddi (1980), commenting on Freud's position, writes that the wishes and emotions of the id are deeply self-centered, indeed selfish in nature. These are the wishes and emotions expressive of the person's basic, unadulterated, biological nature. There are no social refinements in them. "People

want what they need when they need it and without regard to what other people may need, prefer, or insist upon. Looked at as an individual, man is basically selfish and uncivilized" (p. 32).

The one and only endeavor of the instincts is toward satisfaction. The instincts, being blind to the demands and opportunities of the outside world, need an effective tool in the outside world in order to obtain satisfaction and ensure the survival of the organism.

The second agency of the mind, which Freud termed the *ego* (the Latin word for "self") is, in a sense, **forced** into existence. According to Freud (1974) this subsystem of the personality develops "out of the cortical layer of the id" (p. 9).

The Captive Ego

At birth, the infant's mind is entirely comprised of id wishes and emotions, which operate entirely according to **the pleasure principle**. But, as experience accumulates, part of the mind differentiates from the id and becomes ego which not only recognizes the id demands, but also can think about relevant action to satisfy those demands. The ego, therefore, becomes a medium or bridge between the id and the external world.

The ego is the agency of the mind we feel most familiar with, since its operation is mostly on the level of awareness or intelligent thinking. It is the agency of the mind that is in direct contact with the outside world and which, therefore, operates according to **the reality principle**. The ego mediates between the demand made by an instinct and the consequences in real life of satisfying the demand. It is an intellectual activity that calculates the risk involved. "The ego comes to a **decision** whether the attempt to obtain satisfaction is to be carried out or postponed or whether it may be necessary for the demand of the instinct to be altogether suppressed as being dangerous" (Freud, 1974, p. 10).

The Origin of Norms and Values

According to the Freudian view, man is basically animalistic. He differentiates himself from the animal only in having acquired greater intelligence and sophistication of needs.

Freud was heavily influenced by Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and his theory of evolution. This influence is reflected in Freud's postulation of the beginning of civilization in his book: Totem and Taboo (1952).

It is interesting that Skinner (1971) focussed on **the outer man** and his material possessions in using the example of the Commandment: "Thou shalt not steal," to explain how civilization and its norms came about. Freud (1913b) focuses on **the inner man** and his emotional desires in using the example of the Commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery," to postulate how the norms of society came into being:

In the primal family comprising a despotic father and his wives, the sons, lusting for sexual pleasure, murder their father to have incestuous relations with their mothers. "Sexual desires do not unite men but divide them", Freud (1913b, p. 144). Though the brothers had banded together in order to overcome their father, they were all one another's rivals in regard to the women. Each of them

would have wished, like his father, to have all the women to himself. A most violent battle for the desired objects ensues. A frustration of their desires is the result. Consensus is reached among the sons that some set of social rules is necessary in order to give them all a fair chance of satisfying their needs.

In the Freudian view then, social norms (taboos) are instituted to ensure maximal gratification of the needs of its members without having to resort to violence in order to secure what each member needs. For those born into the system, however, these social rules, designed for their protection, inevitably restrict and confine them since it is in their nature to seek **boundless** pleasure. Social rules and regulations cannot be but experienced as enforcements from without which are incorporated as a sense of restraint, a form of conscience, in the growing child's mind. Freud termed this sense of restraint: **super-ego**.

The Origin of Conscience

The super-ego as the third component of the mind is experienced in terms of **guilt**. A person reacts with guilt, according to Freud, in the face of his own aggressiveness and seeks to avoid the expression of it out of a fear of a loss of love and protection.

Freud (1927) traced the human sense of guilt back to the killing of the primal father. The sons of the primal family not only hated their father as a rival, but also loved, admired and needed him as a protector. This **ambivalence**, the eternal struggle between Eros and the instinct of destruction or death which, is an **inborn conflict**, is inextricably bound up with an experience of a sense of guilt.

After their hatred had been satisfied by their act of aggression against the primal father, the sons realized that they also loved him and felt **remorse** for the deed.

It set up the super-ego by identification with the father; it gave that agency the father's power, as (an agency of) punishment for the deed of aggression they had carried out against him, and it created the restrictions which were intended to prevent a repetition of the deed. (1927, p. 132-133)

The children of successive generations, in their experience of what Freud termed: **the Oedipal complex** (in the case of sons) and the **Electra complex** (in the case of daughters), only **imagine** such acts of aggression against the rival parent, the satisfaction of which must also be renounced since it conflicts with the child's need of the love and protection of the parent. The child finds his way out of this impasse in much the same way as the guilt-laden sons of the primal family did. "By means of identification the child takes the unattackable authority into himself. The authority now turns into his super-ego and enters into possession of all the aggressiveness which a child would have liked to exercise against it" (Freud, 1927, p. 129).

Any form of parental (or social) censure which blocks or thwarts the child's wishes or needs, provokes aggression. Unbridled aggression would make the child run the risk of losing the care and protection of the parent and incurring his or her wrath. The child, therefore, defuses and avoids this threat by turning his aggression against himself - his own super-ego begins to deal with him as he imagines the parents would have done had they been aware of his hurtful and aggressive designs.

The super-ego thus operates like a prying third eye of the ego, observing it, giving it orders, correcting it and threatening it with punishments, exactly like parents whose place it has taken. As a result of the superego's relentless censure, the ego is itself forced into the role of hiding undesirable behavior by repressing it into the unconscious or distorting it through a variety of defense mechanisms in a way that makes its underlying intent unrecognizable, **even to itself**.

Freud believed that a breakdown of the elaborate defense system would result in acute anxiety and excessive self-condemnation. This sometimes occurs under circumstances of severe psychological or physical stress. If the defenses are not reinstated, madness or the catastrophic disintegration of the personality can occur.

The Concept of Mental Health: Psychological Equilibrium

Maximal psychological functioning or health implies a softening of the restrictions of an overly severe superego. A more tolerant, benign superego will allow the ego to function with less restraint and guilt.

Defense mechanisms such as **sublimation**, the most mature and least rigid of the defensive processes, and which involves the vicarious gratification of an instinct through a safe medium other than the original (illicit and, therefore, dangerous) one, can then be employed. Freud (1974) stated that the most important vicissitude which an instinct can undergo seems to be sublimation. Both object and aim are changed (there is a transfer of libidinal cathexis from one area to another), so that what was originally a sexual instinct finds satisfaction in some achievement which is no longer sexual but has a higher social or ethical valuation. The artist, for example, by painting pictures of nude women, sublimates this need in a socially acceptable and serviceable way. Expression of instincts in literature and other art forms, social services, professions and the sciences, pays a productive allegiance to society while at the same time providing vicarious satisfaction of hidden needs.

Man is a creature of pleasure: the aim is always discharge accompanied by satisfaction.

The end-goal of all behavior is **psychological equilibrium, a state of happy homeostasis**.

The Illusion of Religion

Freud (1933a) energetically repudiated the need to see man other than as a closed system. He enthusiastically endorsed the natural scientific psychological viewpoint claiming that "the intellect and the mind are objects for scientific research in exactly the same way as any **non-human things**" (p. 623).

The contribution to science of psychoanalysis, Freud (1933a) believed, was that it extended research to the mental field. Psychoanalysis is to be regarded as a **natural science**, since "no new sources of knowledge or methods of research have come into being. **Intuition and divination would be such, if they existed; but they may be safely reckoned as illusions, the fulfillments of wishful impulses**" (p. 623).

According to Freud (1933a), faith is but a disguised psychological expression of need. The idea of God has been created in the mind of the child and represents a type of introjected father-figure functioning in the superego as some sort of ultimate controlling and protecting power. "Religion originated from the helplessness of children" (p. 631).

In adulthood man recognizes that his father is a being of narrowly restricted power, and not equipped with every excellence. He therefore harks back to the mnemonic image of the father whom in his childhood he so greatly overvalued. He exalts the image into a deity and makes it into something contemporary and real. To make anything more of such phenomena, according to Freud (1933a), is dangerous, since it would invest superego-functions with excessive (pleasure-restrictive) power causing "severe inhibitions in the subject's conduct of life" (p. 635). Science must take note of the fact that **the human mind produces these demands** and must be ready to examine their source; but it has not the slightest reason to regard them as justified. "It would be **illegitimate and highly inexpedient to allow these demands to be transferred to the sphere of knowledge**", Freud (1933a, p. 623) stated, for this would be to lay open the paths which lead to psychosis, whether to individual or group psychosis. It would withdraw valuable amounts of energy from endeavors which are directed towards **reality** in order, so far as possible, to find satisfaction in it for wishes and needs.

Of the three powers which may dispute the basic position of science, **religion alone is to be taken seriously as an enemy**. Art is almost always harmless and beneficent since it does not seek to be anything but an illusion. Philosophy, even though it behaves like a science, clings to the illusion of being able to present a picture of the universe which is without gaps and is coherent, one "which is bound to collapse with every fresh advance in our knowledge" (Freud, 1933a, p. 624). It is treading a dangerous path, however, in over-estimating the epistemological value of our logical reasonings and by accepting other sources of knowledge such as intuition. Philosophy has no direct influence on the great mass of mankind; "it is of interest to only a small number even of the top layer of intellectuals and is scarcely intelligible to anyone else" (Freud, 1933a, p. 625). Religion, on the other hand, exercises an immense power over masses of people and has a strong grip on the irrational emotions of man. Only religion, therefore, ominously invades the realm of reality. It is the task of science to illuminate this irrationality and dispose of it since "religion, in the evolution of mankind, appears not as a permanent acquisition but as a counterpart to the neurosis which individual civilized men have to go through in their passage from childhood to maturity" (Freud, 1933a, p. 632).

Freud (1933a) concluded that "our best hope for the future is that intellect - the scientific spirit, reason - may in process of time establish a **dictatorship** in the mental life of man" (p. 635).

Freudian Theory from a Meaning Perspective

Freud restricted the understanding of human behavior to man's psychological level of functioning. Man's **psyche** is the dominant force in his life. Psychological motives are behind most of what man does.

In contrast to the assertion of Skinner (1971) that man's **physiology** will eventually explain all the mysteries of human behavior, even those found in "the private world inside the skin" and that "the

appeal to mind explains nothing at all" (p. 190), Freud (1933a) looked forward to the day that the mind, intellect or reason, would establish its dictatorship in the mental life of man. But to both these theorists, trying to understand man only from the physical and psychological, the first and second level of being, spiritual aspects of behavior connected to a so-called third or higher dimension of being, were an anathema.

We have considered how Watson and Skinner perceived spiritual phenomena from man's physical level of functioning. In limiting himself exclusively to the psychological level of man's functioning, how did Freud perceive the phenomena of free will, conscience, meanings and values - phenomena from the third and higher dimension of human functioning?

It is most fascinating to observe that, because Freud refused to accept the reality of man's spiritual life, the evidences of such spirituality in man's behavior impressed him as **unreal**. The much more immediate, obvious clamor of passion, the commanding claim of instinctual tension and pressure seeking for relief or release, make the fainter, far more distant and removed reality of spiritual strivings and values seem like little more than discomforting and bothersome censures and interferences or, more benignly, like wistful dreams or wishful thinking - mere illusions of thought!

The Freudian view of man is especially fascinating from a meaning perspective, in that we are presented with man as he is all too commonly known: as self-centered, self-pleasuring and vain, not open to reason and unanswerable to any authority beyond the dictates of his own urgent wants, whims and fancies.

The Veiled World of the Psyche

In Freud's view **the whole drama of being is enacted on the stage of the psyche. The player, man, is totally blinded to anything beyond the stageplay of psychobiological need and conflict.** The Supra-human dimension in Freudian thinking remains obscure. Ethical norms, moral values and religious beliefs are not seen as **authentic** human phenomena but are interpreted in terms of illusions or as projections of psychological needs onto the so-called higher level of being. In a letter Freud (1897) wrote:

Can you imagine what endo-psychic myths are? They are the latest offspring of my mental labors. **The dim inner perception of one's own psychical apparatus stimulates illusions of thought which are naturally projected outwards and characteristically into the future and the world beyond.** Immorality, retribution, life after death, are all reflections of our inner psyche. psycho-mythology. (no. 78)

Spiritual phenomena are therefore **reduced**, that is, seen only as "illusions of thoughts" from within the narrow confines of an exclusively psychological dimension of being. It is on this point, especially, that Frankl voiced his opposition to Freudian thinking.

Frankl (1967) contended that meaning can only be fully comprehended within its true context: a higher, spiritual dimension of being. Meaning is something infinitely more than "a mere self-expression, or a projection of the self into the world" (p. 16). Frankl (1967) reacts to the psychoanalytic theorizing that values or meanings are "nothing but defence mechanisms, reaction

formations, or rationalizations of instinctual drives" by saying: "as for me, I would not be willing to live for the sake of my defence mechanisms, much less to die for the sake of my reaction formations" (p. 10). Who can be inspired by or devote his life to mere distortions or illusions? Frankl (1968) believed that if meanings and values were just something emerging from the subject himself - that is to say, if they were not **something that stems from a sphere beyond and above man** - they would instantly lose their demand quality. **They could no longer be a real challenge to man, they would never be able to summon him up, to call him forth.** "Values do not drive a man; they do not push him, but rather **pull him**" (Frankl, 1968, p. 101). Any exclusively psychodynamic investigation can in principle only reveal what is a driving force in man. Meanings and values appear **unreal** when they are perceived through the eyes of **need**. The full significance of spiritual phenomena is veiled to a person who is taken up with himself - such a person can be said "to see and **not see**, to hear and **not hear**."

Following on from Frankl, we can say that self-absorption pulls the veil of a complexity of **self-defensive** psychological mechanisms (e.g. repression, projection, reaction formation, rationalization, regression and fixation, displacement and sublimation etc.) over all behavior. Psychological subterfuge hides not only the real needs of the person, **but the person himself**.

In Freudian thinking there is never a disentanglement to the point where the individual man and woman can be in an authentic **face-to-face relationship with or commitment to the uniquely other-than-self person or cause**. There is very little evidence of **true encounter**. Man can never fully be trusted to mean what he says, or to be what he appears.

Love, for example, is always a sublimation for sex. Sex is never an expression of love. Sex, as Freud (1974) perceived it, has an aggressive (totally selfish) component. Sexual partners are "attacked" to take from them the deepest pleasure possible. Since sexual pleasure is primary, the person (value) of the partner is secondary. Significant figures in an individual's life are those who have been invested with instinctual energy. Parents, for example, are of great cathetic importance to the child. On them his survival (his protection and satisfaction of his needs) depend. The marriage partner as a legitimate Oedipal replacement, becomes cathetically also of great importance, especially since the satisfaction of other needs: to procreate, for security and safe belonging, are also invested in the marriage mate. **The less cathetic importance people have, the more easily they can be discarded and replaced.** Freud (1974) contended that the object is less closely attached to the instinct than was at first supposed; it is easily exchanged for another one.

Missing from the Freudian view of man, is a more mature emergence of man on a level where he gains in stature and dignity in his ability to responsibly commit himself and constructively devote his energies to spiritual, that is, **selfless** causes.

Psychoanalysis is a science of the couch. Man is placed on his back, and in a dream-like fashion experiences his inner world of fantasies and wishes and its intricate entanglements with the outside world. A face to face relationship with a separate and authentic other, is out of sight - the analyst sits behind the couch and with the help of his notes, interprets or brings to light the hidden and unconscious wishes **behind** the patient's words.

An American doctor in Vienna once asked Frankl to tell him the difference between logotherapy and psychoanalysis in one sentence. Frankl invited him first to tell him what he regarded as the essence of psychoanalysis. When he replied: "During psychoanalysis, the patient must lie down on a couch and tell you things that sometimes are very disagreeable to tell", Frankl jokingly retorted: "Now, in logotherapy the patient may remain sitting erect, but must hear things that sometimes are very disagreeable to hear" (Frankl, 1968, p. 11).

The Muted Call of Conscience

Man's focus in the psychoanalytic framework is **need-centered** - the world of meanings evoking man's sense of responsibility, is shut out of conscious awareness.

A ceiling is placed on man's psyche, its rulings made absolute. There is, Freud (1927) asserts, no appeal to a court above reason.

Freud's conception of conscience is a case in point. Conscience is a super-imposition, dictating and curbing the actions, the efforts at need-satisfaction (on the part) of the ego. **Censure and appeasement** is the interplay between super-ego and ego. The best solution possible, the highest state of mental health and equilibrium, is a state of happy **compromise**. The inspiring call of values that transcend man and release him from the narrow confines of self-centeredness into a joyous commitment to causes outside himself, causes for which sake he will even happily **deny** himself, is far removed from the Freudian view of captive man.

It is clear that Freud's conception of conscience radically differs from Frankl's understanding of conscience. The very term: super-ego, is indicative of the fact that **Freud has completely compartmentalized the phenomenon of conscience as a possession of the psyche. It is no more than an extension of the self or ego.** There is no third-dimensional view of conscience as a sounding board on the uniquely human dimension for meanings from the Transcendent or Supra-human dimension.

The Problem of Human Freedom

Like in behaviorism, Freudianism, even though espousing total determinism, cannot do away with human freedom. Again man is portrayed as more than mere brute. In behaviour theory, man uses his freedom to create a society that can condition him in such a way that there can be social harmony and peace (a conflict-free adjustment to demands that are beneficent). In Freudian theory, there is a great deal of intelligence and decision as to how needs can be disguised and others can be manipulated in order to gain maximum need-satisfaction.

Viewed one-dimensionally, that is, only from the level of man's physiological functioning, human freedom presents less of a problem than it does on the psychological level. If a certain input is certain to produce a predictable output, man's unruly and self-seeking behavior can be brought under lawful control. This is what Watson and Skinner believed: man's behavior can be understood and be limited to his functioning in a physical context. If however, a two-dimensional or psychological view of man is accepted, psychodynamics enter the picture. Every seemingly simple need gets infused with

emotion and fantasy. Man not only acts or functions in a certain predictable way, he also confoundingly feels and has imaginations in myriads of ways! Most often, therefore, his actions are far from straight forward and simple - there are hidden (and devious) motives behind what man says or does.

The Freudian view of man, to behaviorists like Watson and Skinner, cannot be but annoyingly complex. Yet it is unnervingly **real**. Freud graphically presents us with a picture of a pleasure-lusting, self-willed and rebellious man: "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; **who can know it**" (Jer. 17:9)?

No theory in psychology has so honestly presented us with the reality of mindless passion, savagery and down-right wickedness as undeniably part of the human package, as has Freudian theory.

The Dictatorship of the Mind: The Freudian Solution to Lawless Behavior

Freud believed that man is less conditioned by outside forces, by his environment, than behaviorists such as Watson and Skinner postulated. Man is driven by his lusts and would connive, twist and bend social rules, behavioral guidelines and conditionings, even abuse and subject his environment to his own need-satisfying ends.

Freud's observations cast a sobering light on the utopian ideals of Watson and Skinner. Is it realistic to suppose that all human behavior can be brought under lawful control and conditioned to the point that there will no longer be, as Watson (1931) put it, any "group-antagonistic behavior"? (p. 145) "In reality, there is no such thing as **eradicating** evil tendencies", Freud (1939, p. 7) contended. Even though instincts are neutral, that is, neither good nor evil, they are **blind** - they push towards satisfaction without any regard of person or situation. Man is by nature **selfish**, Freud (1939) contended. It is in this sense that the instinct-driven individual is as a matter of consequence, **anti-social**. What is more, the greater the effort to curb and control or impose limits on human behavior, the greater the build-up of the tension of non-gratified needs and the more likely the outbreak of **rebellion** and the overthrow of even a **good** order!

The masses, according to Freud (1939), are "lazy and unintelligent, have no love for instinctual renunciation and support one another in giving free reign to their indiscipline" (pp. 8-9). Freud (1939) concluded, therefore, that greater **outer** control will not work. He proposed that men should be helped to control themselves.

Freud stressed the necessity of **inner control** which is the result of **inner involvement**. Such involvement requires the freedom of inner exploration and experiment which will lead to the discovery and establishment of more acceptable avenues for instinctual gratifications. Psychoanalysis is a model of how this is to be brought about. Psychoanalysts are (or should be) men of **inner mastery**. Such men are required as leaders, primarily as models to emulate. Educators must be persons who possess **superior insight** into the necessities of life and who have risen to the height of mastering their own instinctual wishes. The experiment has not yet been made; Freud (1939) believed. Probably a certain percentage of mankind (owing to a pathological disposition or an excess of instinctual strength) will

always remain asocial. If, however, the majority that is hostile towards civilization could be reduced into a minority, a great deal would have been accomplished - perhaps all that can be accomplished.

Self-controlled behavior, Freud (1939) pointed out, involves the sacrifice and compromise of instinctual satisfaction. "Civilization is the fruit of **renunciation** of instinctual satisfaction" (p. 9). Whether men would ever be able to exercise such mature control over their own behavior, remains questionable. Freud (1939) believed that only many ages of **genuine** cultural evolvement, can perhaps result in the "ennoblement of instinct" (p. 8). For the moment we are faced with the fact that only a few men are truly evolved and act according to the dictates of sanity and reason. The masses, including many intellectuals, are swayed by their irrational, primitive emotions.

Freud's sober observations of the human condition led him to pessimistically question any, including his own, utopian ideals for mankind. Of interest are Freud's reactions to Nazism and Communism, the two great social evils of his day.

The brute force of aggressive instincts unleashed through the Nazi sanction of racial prejudice, hatred and bigotry, came as no surprise to Freud. Freud (in Jones, 1967) somberly predicted that there is probably no holding up the Nazi invasion. His prediction proved true. Nazism provided the opportunity to let us see man behind the mask of civilization. Under the sway of sanctioned savagery during the Nazi reign of terror, most men regressed to primitive modes of functioning. Soberly, Freud (1939) commented: "in reality our fellow-citizens have not sunk so low as we feared, because they have never risen so high as we believed" (p. 7).

More of a surprise, was the less than positive consequences for people under the communistic regimes. Freud (1939) could align himself with the communistic belief that religion is the opium of the masses. What he was less ready to expect, was that the ruthless abolishment of religion in no way improved the human lot. "We find to our astonishment that progress has allied itself with barbarism" (p. 54).

Freud could not else but be enforced in his rather depressing and pessimistic view that man's so-called culture is no more than a veneer. He had reasoned that the more advanced man's culture, the more intelligent would be the consent of its leaders, and under their directing influence, also the consent of the members of society, to master and control their unruly and a- and antisocial natures. The German culture was one of the most advanced in the world. Yet the German society, under the strain of trying times following the First World War, gave rise to one of the most barbaric regimes ever witnessed in the long and tragic history of mankind. Trial and hardship seemed to bring out only the worst in most men. Even otherwise decent citizens could be moved to partake in, or at least condone and allow, or turn a blind eye to the most savage and unjust behavior if their own safe, secure and comfortable positions were in any way jeopardized.

Freud (1939) concluded that if any society, however advanced, was subjected to a severe enough trial of the deprivation of basic and egocentric needs, all so-called civilized norms and values would collapse. This was Freud's own sad and tragic experience.

An Austrian Jew, Freud was strongly urged by colleagues and friends the world over, to flee an increasingly dangerous situation with the rise and spread of the fanatically anti-semitic doctrines and practices of Nazism. The world famous, eighty year old Freud, was finally persuaded to leave his

homeland and with the help of his many influential friends and colleagues, eventually found asylum in England. Not having any prospect of maintaining his entire family in London, where he established his new home, Freud had to leave his four old sisters in Vienna. At the outbreak of the Nazi persecutions, Freud (in Jones, 1967) felt heavy forebodings for what lay ahead. "My only hope is that I shall not live to see it" (p. 633). This wish was granted when he died of cancer of the jaw in his London home during September of 1939, before the terrible news of the death of his four aged sisters in Nazi death camps some years later.

Freud's point seemed proved. Cultured man is no more than a sophisticated savage.

A Suppressed Search for Meaning: The Life of Sigmund Freud

Freud took a long hard look at man and arrived at some shockingly depressing but, alas, undeniably realistic conclusions. The outlook for mankind, from Freud's vantage point, seems poor indeed. Protesting this dark pessimism, however, Frankl (1968) asks: "But what about human liberty? Is there no spiritual freedom in regard to behavior and reaction to any given surroundings? Does man have no choice of action?" (p. 65)

Must man be the inevitable victim of his passions? Is man so driven by lust and selfish needs that, if deprived, the force of want will totally deafen him to the voice of sanity and reason?

Is there, in fact, no court higher than reason? Is it useless to try and appeal to man on the basis of the moral right or wrong of a particular course of action? Is it impossible to stop man in his tracks, to call him to account before the bar of his own conscience?

The fundamental question is whether man is open to values that can address his conscience, that come from a source outside his own skin, or not.

If he is, he will be free to transcend the level of his own needs, to control and direct his behavior according to ethical norms, values or meanings that his own conscience can discern and embrace despite the cost in terms of personal satisfaction and comfort.

If man has no access to values that are valid in their own right and that can appeal to man or raise him to a level of awareness **beyond** the level of mere need-satisfaction, then his queerly unpatterned and unruly behavior must, as both Skinner and Freud believed, be brought under the control of outside agents. Through the reinforcement (either positive or negative) of socially desirable behavior, man must either be conditioned to behave correctly (Skinner), or be restrained from behaving incorrectly through the internalized censure exercised through the super-ego (Freud). Should we find man exercising control over his own behavior and endorsing a system of societal control, we can safely assume that he does so not out of a sense of genuine duty or commitment to a higher cause, but only out of a sense of fear (in a less developed man) or intelligent understanding (in the case of the more developed man) of what catastrophe will befall him if he does not.

The question, therefore, is whether man can be freely and proudly responsible or if he is no more than a well-controlled or not so well-controlled brute.

Freud, the Man

Freud was very much aware of the fact that he had always confined himself to the ground floor and basement of the edifice called man, a fact he confessed in a letter to Ludwig Binswanger (in Frankl, 1970, p. 10). From this lowly level, the view of man is dim indeed. Man without true principles or conscience, is man without dignity. If man, behind the veneer of being civil and decent, is set only on the satisfaction of his own desires, he commands little respect and indeed, can even fill us with revulsion. When we see man act with totally selfish and even savage unconcern for anybody but himself, we feel tempted to give up on him. Freud, in fact, lamented that he could find little in man to commend him.

However, is there only this ugly side to man? Is there no more to man than meets the eye of the disillusioned observer? What about the disillusioned observer himself? **What kind of man is this that can feel depression in the face of man's unsightly behavior and devious motives?**

What kind of man was Freud?

Ernest Jones (1967), a lifelong friend and colleague, has written a most extensive and illuminating three-volume biography on the life and work of Freud. Most of the material in a review of Freud's life, has been drawn from this biography. From it emerges a picture of Freud, not as a well-controlled and intelligent brute, but as a man of great dignity and honor, a man devotedly fulfilling meaning in his life.

Freud (1974) contended that psychological health was earmarked by an ability to love and to work. Both these values were practiced by Freud's family during his formative and childhood years and were greatly prized by Freud as an adult.

The Value of Love

Freud was a family man. He prized family values highly, values which were transmitted to him through his own father and mother.

Freud had a deep respect for his father, which sprung from love and not fear. His father was not at all the strict paternal type then so common, and he used to consult the children over various decisions to be made. On the other hand, the father was a Jewish patriarch and so demanded corresponding respect. Particularly revealing, was a remark made by his father on encountering an argument between a son and his father. "What, are you contradicting your father? My Sigmund's little toe is cleverer than my head, but he would never dare to contradict me" (in Jones, 1967, p. 33).

Freud was particularly devoted to his mother, the second and much younger wife of his father. She was a woman with a lively personality who referred to Freud as "mein goldener Sigi" (Jones, 1967, p. 32).

She had always fondly and proudly believed the prediction of an old peasant woman that she had brought a great man into the world, a belief she was not shy to proudly share with Freud at a tender age. Freud himself spoke of the inestimable, and virtually magical advantage that came to him from his mother's special regard (in Jones, 1967).

The warmth of the love and care Freud received in his formative years, Jones (1967) believed, provoked in Freud "a strong responsibility for all his relatives and friends" (p. 42), another key feature of his personality. He took a fatherly interest in his sisters, helping them with their studies and even exercising some censorship over their reading, telling them what they were too young to read.

A younger brother died at the age of eight months when Freud was 19 months old. In his personal analyses Freud uncovered strong feelings of jealousy towards this first newcomer. The evil wishes towards this little usurper at his mother's breast, turned to torturous self-reproach at the new infant's death. Strong conflict was also unearthed at the arrival of his first sister with whom he now had to share what had previously been the exclusive love of his mother.

Extremely hurtful was the influence of an old and ugly nannie, whom Freud's mother had employed to take care of him during her pregnancy with, delivery and early care of Freud's first sister. This Nannie, a strict and narrow-minded Christian, despite her affection for Freud, was overly severe in her punishment of his transgressions. A devout Catholic, she used to take the young Freud to church services. She implanted in him the ideas of Heaven and Hell, and of a punitive God. His own self-analysis at the age of 42, uncovered the harmful effects of such guilt-inculcations at the crucial stage of his own emergent Oedipal fantasies. His conflict over the perceived loss of his mother's affection to a rival-infant, got compounded by excessive feelings of guilt.

His self-analysis revealed the reality of what Freud later termed: the Oedipus complex (after the famous legend of Oedipus's incestuous relations with his mother). Freud could trace Oedipal fantasies to his tender boyhood years, discovering in himself the passion for his mother and jealousy of his father. His analysis also revealed, however, that his deep love of and respect for his father never allowed him to experience his father as a rival figure in the possession of his mother's love. Such aggressive impulses were always **displaced** onto other significant male figures. It was, in fact, his father's death in Freud's adulthood which he described as "the most important event, the most poignant loss, in a man's life" (in Jones, 1967, p. 281), that triggered off a deep depression around unresolved childhood conflicts. Of importance is the strength of restituting tendencies in the face of such uncovered aggressions, "an indication", remarks Jones (1967), "that love was stronger than aggression" (p. 44).

The ability to overcome guilt and restore broken relationships out of a deep and genuine love of a person, was greatly strengthened by the security of the love that Freud had experienced from the breast and throughout his formative childhood years.

So remarkably perfect and enduring was the relationship between Freud and his mother, that his love for her seemed free of the guilt of any aggression towards her. When she died, Freud experienced none of the grief of regret and repentance.

The Value of Work

Freud grew up not only in an atmosphere of family love, but also in a richly stimulating environment. Learning was held in high regard, as in most Jewish families, and Freud's studiousness was strongly endorsed. His bedroom was lined with crowded bookcases. He had an oil lamp to

himself, while the other bedrooms had only candles. Reading and studying, in fact, filled the greater part of his young life, this not as an escape from the vitality of living, but indeed as an inherent part of it.

An Impassioned Venture into the Complexities of Love

Freud felt deeply, his relationships with others were of great moment to him. Nowhere was it so graphically illustrated as in his passionate love for his wife, Martha. Martha came from an orthodox Jewish family, distinguished in Jewish culture and was herself well educated and intelligent. Freud's first glimpse of Martha, on an occasion of a visit to his family, was "a fatal one" (in Jones, 1967, p. 112).

Freud was, up to that moment, so engrossed in his studies that he never paid much attention to girls. He advocated greater sexual freedom, but added that "I myself availed myself but little of it" (in Jones, 1967, p.109).

As soon as Freud apprehended the seriousness of his feelings towards Martha, he hurried to bind her to himself "because any suggestion of artificiality toward such a girl would have been unbearable" (in Jones, 1967, p. 109).

He began courting her with a great and single-minded passion. There was to be no other woman for him, ever. Their relationship was carefully protected and concealed from the public eye. Martha would only hint at the fact that she had found her lover quite wonderful, that in her eyes he was quite perfect and gave her great happiness. It was only after Martha's death, that Ernest Jones was given access to the voluminous love letters she had preserved. Jones was the only person ever afforded this privilege.

From these letters (Freud wrote more than nine hundred letters to his betrothed!), the stormy and passionate course of their unfolding relationship could be traced. Freud jealously wanted to possess Martha, body, soul and mind, but Martha calmly resisted, retaining her own individuality. For this, she only gained his greater respect and love. Their relationship matured and he could write:

I renounce what I demanded. I do not need a comrade in arms, such as I hoped to make you into; I am strong enough to fight alone. You shall not hear another harsh word. I observe that I do not gain what I wanted in you, and I shall lose my loved one if I continue. I have asked of you what is not in your nature, and I have offered you nothing in return. (in Jones, 1967, p. 128)

Remarkable emotional flexibility and ability to change and mature, is revealed in the following reflection of Freud as he looked forward to the consummation of their love in marriage.

Society and the law cannot in my eyes bestow on our love more gravity and benediction than it already possesses. .. And when you are my dear wife before all the world and bear my name we will pass our life in calm happiness for ourself and earnest work for mankind until we close our eyes in eternal sleep and leave to those near us a memory everyone will be glad of". (in Jones, 1967, p. 138)

A Bold Exploration of the Hidden Depths of the Human Psyche

Freud qualified as a medical practitioner and specialized as a neurologist but at cost to his native boldness and imagination. He tried very hard to mold himself into the model of the exact scientist, but did not quite succeed. "During my first three years at the University I was compelled to make the discovery that the peculiarities and limitations of my gifts denied me all success in many of the departments of science into which my youthful eagerness had plunged me" he wrote (in Jones, 1967, p. 61).

Throughout his life Freud pursued that aspect of science which calls for intellectual integrity, a loyalty to the truth which is the scientist's sole pursuit. It was exactly this loyalty to the truth, however, that alienated him from another aspect of science: tedious exactitude. "To be tied down to exactitude and precise measurement was not in his nature. On the contrary, it conflicted with certain revolutionary tendencies that would burst the bonds of conventions and accepted definitions" (Jones, 1967, p. 62).

Even though Freud could never break free from the strict determinism espoused by the scientists of his day, he soon moved beyond the stipulated boundaries of science. "To discover something new and thus add to our stock of knowledge was perhaps the strongest motive in his nature", remarks Jones (1967, p. 74).

Freud felt apprehended for a cause he himself could not yet define, but knew existed. "I have often felt as if I had inherited all the passion of our ancestors when they defended their Temple, as if I could joyfully cast away my life in a great cause" (in Jones, 1967, p. 184).

His private practice, on which he had to depend for a living, brought him mostly neurotic patients. The problems they presented soon aroused his attention, and his interest in them rapidly grew. What was the relationship between body and mind, and how did man come to be a self-conscious animal?

Freud's genius lay in the fact that, contrary to his colleagues who regarded and still regard neuroses as mere abnormalities, as diseases that are deviations from the normal, he divined that psychopathology provides access to deep and otherwise hidden layers of the mind.

The work: Studies on Hysteria (1895), can be regarded as the birth of psycho-analysis. Whereas Freud had, up to that point, believed that the tales of childhood trauma, particularly of seductions, related by his patients were true, he now realized that these events never really occurred but were fantasies, an expression of hidden needs and motives. He also realized that in the unconscious mind there is no criterion of reality, so that truth cannot be distinguished from emotional fiction.

It is interesting to speculate that Freud needed the secure foundation of the exact sciences (a hold which he never completely let go of) from which to launch into the frighteningly unknown realm of the psyche. This, not from an inner weakness, but from "a terrifying strength, one he felt unable to cope with alone" (Jones, 1967, p. 255). Freud therefore always sought a soul-mate, someone to undergird him, before he launched out on his own. His close working relationships with selected colleagues, especially those who had the courage to express novel ideas in the field of science, bear evidence to this. These colleagues were drawn from the natural sciences. "It was safe to set the feared

demon of curiosity free, when he was guided by someone who believed in physics and operated in mathematical symbols", remarks Jones (1967, p. 257) in his comment on these, sometimes highly intense friendships.

Yet, a break from the views of these colleagues was inevitable, their restrictive views being a drag on Freud's painful progress from physiology to psychology. The break was represented by the inner crisis Freud experienced in trying to resolve feelings of deep depression by a journey into his own soul. There he could only go it alone. "It is my cross and I must bear it, but God knows my back has become distinctly bent from the effort" (in Jones, 1967, p. 262). In the summer of 1897 Freud undertook his most heroic feat - a psycho-analysis of his own unconscious. "It is hard for us nowadays to imagine how momentous this achievement was, that difficulty being the fate of most pioneering exploits. Yet the uniqueness of the feat remains. Once done it is done for ever. For no one again can be the first to explore those depths", Jones (1967, p. 271) aptly remarks.

Freud's strength of character is revealed in the fact that, throughout the ordeal that his self-analysis presented, he never ceased to function. Nevertheless, remarks Jones (1967) his sufferings were at times very intense, and for those ten years there could have been only occasional intervals when life seemed much worth living. "He paid very heavily for the gifts he bestowed on the world, and the world was not very generous in its rewards" (p. 264).

The greatest satisfaction, however, was not the world's due acknowledgement of his courage and genius, but the fact that he was true to himself, that he pressed through in what he perceived as his own particular life-task, that he did not waver in the face of great difficulties and pain.

A Ceiling of Reason on the Quest for Meaning

In one of his letters Freud (in Jones, 1967) wrote: "In my youth I felt an overpowering need to understand something of the riddles of the world in which we live and perhaps even to contribute something to their solution" (p. 54). We can trace several reasons perhaps, why this search for meaning was resolutely confined only to the psychological dimension of being, why Freud so sternly resisted any exploration beyond the realms of the psyche.

A distaste of vain speculation and of religion. Asked the question of how much philosophy he has read, Freud answered: "Very little. As a young man I felt a strong attraction toward speculation **and ruthlessly checked it**" (in Jones, 1967, p. 55). There is, Freud (1927) categorically insisted, "no appeal to a court above reason" (p. 28). Man's reason is his ability to **think**, the instrument through which he, of course, also comes to question the **meaning** of his life. Freud, however, put a ceiling to the reasoning of the mind. Reason, in Freud's estimation, has no other purpose but the intelligent resolution of psychological conflict as a result of unresolved, repressed and guilt-laden **need**. Philosophical speculation and religious belief **defy** the scientific boundaries of reason. They are **ill-founded and irrational wanderings of the mind** that are to be **checked** by reason. Reason has the task, in fact, of **disproving** these vague and ill-defined thoughts.

Freud (in Jones, 1967) asserted that there is nothing "out there" to which the mind is projecting itself. "I cannot find any transition from the fact that our ideas of perfection have psychological reality to a belief in their objective existence" (p. 472).

Reason, like conscience, are properties of the **psyche** and indeed its highest manifestations. **Reasonable** restraint, **intelligent** control of behavior are psychological achievements of the highest order, Freud believed.

To achieve the same control of reason is indeed a feat, Freud believed, since man is a basically self-gratifying and totally selfish creature. He acts socially only through the restraining influence of superego-demands. Conscience is the internalized censure of society seeking to protect itself from unrestrained instinctual gratification. Ideally, these internalized restraints should be **the reasoned and clear thinking, the sane realism of intelligent members**. The ideal society is one where its members have agreed upon and willingly exercise **reasonable** (safe and not destructive) ways of need-satisfaction.

Freud himself was a model of the man of reason and psychological maturity - a man of great culture, "ennobled instinct" and refined intelligence.

A most illuminating and interesting letter is one which Freud (1917) wrote in reaction to James Putnam's book entitled Human Motives in which Putnam made reference to an inherent will to meaning.

One could cite just my case for your view that **an impulsion toward the ideal** forms an essential part of our constitution. If only more of this valuable constitution were to be observed in the others! I have the secret belief that if one possessed the means of studying the sublimations of instincts as thoroughly as the repressions of them one might come across quite natural psychological explanations which would make your philanthropic supposition unnecessary. But, as I said, I know nothing about it all. Why I - and incidentally my six adult children also - have to be thoroughly decent human beings is quite incomprehensible to me. (p. 473)

Freud never cared to give real thought to anything beyond his own defined domain: the function of the human psyche. However, in this letter, Freud **admitted** to the fact that he may have been one-sided in his exclusive focus on the psyche. To Putnam's statement: "to accustom ourselves to the study of immaturity and childhood before proceeding to the study of maturity and manhood is often to habituate ourselves to an undesirable limitation of our vision with reference to the scope of the enterprise on which we enter", Freud (1917) commented:

I recognize that is my case. **I am certainly incompetent to judge the other side of the matter**. I must have used this one-sidedness to be able to see what is hidden, from which other people knew how to keep away. That is the justification of my defensive reaction. The one-sidedness had after all its own usefulness. (p. 472)

Was this simply a sane, scientific resolution, to limit himself exclusively to a specific field of interest, or did his **dislike** of venturing beyond this, a dislike which led him to make dramatically **negative** statements as to the reality of spiritual phenomena, also reveal an **emotional withdrawal** from spiritual matters as a result of **distasteful** or **unpleasant** experiences in the area of spirituality?

Referring in this letter to Jung's exploration of the spiritual properties of human nature, a break from orthodox psychoanalysis that was most hurtful and a source of great distress to Freud since he had hoped to turn a youthful Jung into his ardent disciple, Freud (1917) commented: "The publicity with which moral demands are made often makes an unpleasant impression on me. **What I have seen of religious-ethical conversions has not been very inviting**" (p. 473).

A most pronounced and negative influence had certainly been that of the overly strict and devoutly Catholic nannie on the receptive mind of Freud as a tender two-year-old. Like the young Skinner, Freud was also thoroughly frightened by the prospects of "eternal damnation" at the hands of a vengeful God, a God who needed to be appeased with a thorough denouncement of any wicked thoughts and deeds. Like Skinner, Freud experimented with these ideas, preaching sermons about God after being taken by his nannie on visits to the Church. A young Skinner reached the point of openly pronouncing that he no longer believed in God. Freud, in his adult years, implied such a stand, yet retained a deep respect for his own Jewishness and background. More clearly than in the case of Skinner, Freud was scathing in his attacks against religious dogmas and practices, rather than rejecting the existence of God Himself.

A desire for "truth in the inner man". What Freud saw of religious faith and practice, failed to impress him. Religion's strict rulings not only caused unnecessary guilt, but through its internalized source, the super-ego, exercised dictatorial control over natural desires. Psychic energy is wastefully used in employing a complexity of defensive maneuvers in an effort to **deny** or **hide** what the ego experienced as unacceptable and punishable wishes and needs. Frustration arouses aggression, another inherency of human nature, further compounding the problem by turning natural (and morally neutral) desires into "wicked" motives, causing even greater fear of exposure and censure, with an even deeper repression of need-conflicts into the unconscious. Psychological conflict in the deep recesses of the mind has such deleterious effect on the personality that development is thwarted and mental ill-health results.

In the development of psychoanalysis, Freud devoted himself as a servant of the **truth**. In uncovering hidden motives and desires and bringing painful conflicts to light, Freud sought to help his patients understand their conflicts and to gain healthier mastery of themselves. A greater acceptance of themselves, their own desires and wishes, softened the unreasonable demands of an overly severe super-ego. Their egos were **liberated** from the harmful effects of oppressive and destructive control, enabling them **to love and to work**, which to Freud's mind, were the ultimate criteria of mental health.

Imperative to the development and refinement of psychoanalytic skill and understanding, Freud insisted, was an absolutely **unbiased**, that is, unrestricted (unclouded) and **uncensored** look at the contents and workings of the psyche. Religious persuasion, to Freud's mind, was a moral dogmatism, an indoctrination that clouded perception by instilling a judgmental, indignant and intolerant outlook. The true scientist, of necessity, had to be a-religious. Freud believed it was because of his own undiluted (**religiously or morally unprejudiced**) approach, his single-minded focus on the contents and workings of the psyche, that he discovered what he did.

This was his justification in the face of the otherwise valid criticism that he limited his vision to the exclusively psychological realm and so failed to recognize the reality of spiritual phenomena on a higher dimension of being.

Freud's search into his own unconscious, which brought repressed sexual motives and wishes to light, was in the service of science (of truth). "He displayed less than the average personal interest in what is often an absorbing topic," writes Jones (1967) about him.

There was never any gusto or even savor in mentioning a sexual topic. He always gave the impression of being an unusually chaste person. Indeed, this must be the explanation of his almost naive surprise when his announcement of discoveries in this field met with such a cold reception" (p. 238).

It is interesting to speculate that much of the opposition to psychoanalysis was inspired by guilt and by fear and a defensive unwillingness to admit to the truth of its discoveries, just like an unsavory interest in the subject can spring from the same hidden motives.

Far from trying to **deny** the truth, Freud sought to **find** it, even at great cost to himself. If the reality of spiritual phenomena remained veiled to Freud, this was certainly not because of willful resistance or neglect. In a letter to Martha, Freud (in Jones, 1967) wrote:

Nature had endowed me with a dauntless love of truth, the keen eye of an investigator, a rightful sense of the values of life, and the gift of working hard and finding pleasure in doing so. Enough of the best attributes for me to find endurable my beggarliness in other respects. ... We will hold together through this life, so easily apprehensible in its immediate aims **but so incomprehensible in its final purpose.** (p. 123)

A search for happiness. Suffering the intensity of his own psychological conflicts and observing the stress suffered by his patients in the area of repressed need, there seemed to Freud nothing higher to gain in life than relief of the tensions of emotional conflict in the deep pleasure of satisfying those needs without undue conflict. With his beloved Martha, Freud sought to find a little world of happiness in the midst of a strife-torn society. This was the area of consolidation: to try and establish psychological equilibrium, to close the door against the intruding and unsettling presence of life's many vexing problems.

Happiness, however, all too easily eluded him. It sat all too lightly on the edge of experiences as a mere outflow of all too rare, fortunate circumstances. "His moods were certainly labile and when things were going well they could be markedly euphoric", Jones (1967, p. 164) writes about the youthful Freud. These were the times when Freud experienced "the precious enjoyment of feeling well." "The work is going splendidly and is most promising. I am altogether so passionate, everything in me is at present so intense, my thoughts so sharp and clear, that it is wonderful how I manage to keep calm when I am in company." "Since I am enjoying good health life seems to me so sunny." "Life can be so delightful." But his moods could rapidly change. In a letter on the 12th of March, 1885, he wrote: "I never felt so fresh in my life," but in a letter on the 21st of the same month: "I can't stand it much longer" (in Jones, 1967, p. 165).

How fleeting is the nature of happiness! Freud (1927) in his later years spoke of it as "an episodic phenomenon" (p. 77), that the possibilities of unhappiness lie so much more readily at hand.

Freud had suffered many deep disappointments, especially in the desertion of those whom he had regarded as trusted and loyal friends. He had also experienced many painful losses through the death of beloved family members. The terrible suffering of Nazi persecution, inflicted particularly on the Jews, was already being felt. The fact of his own approaching death was underlined by suffering from an extremely painful cancer of the jaw, a disease that could only be kept at bay but which finally failed to respond to further treatment. In the final stages of this dreaded disease, Freud experienced his world as "a little island of pain floating on a sea of indifference" (in Jones, 1967, p. 653).

Poignantly, in one of his last works: Civilization and its Discontents, Freud (1927) wrote: "The programme of becoming happy, which the pleasure principle imposes on us cannot be fulfilled; yet we must not - indeed, we cannot - give up our efforts to bring it nearer to fulfillment by some means or other" (p. 76).

Was Freud, in his own life, perhaps reaching for a goal **beyond** happiness, for something that would **endure** despite suffering, and would preserve, forever, beyond the threat of destruction, what he had so treasured in his own life? Was this yearning hidden in Freud's tenacious hope that happiness, despite his grave doubts about it, could **still** be achieved?

The Unanswered Question

On the level of the psyche, the ultimate aim of life remains a baffling mystery. "Only religion can answer the question of the purpose of life", Freud (in Jones, 1967, p. 76) acknowledged. In his youth, his interest in this direction was described by him as "**my ideal and problem child**". What he called: "**metapsychology**" was his earliest aim, "when I did not know what I was in the world for" (in Jones, 1967, p. 76).

Freud again ventured to give some expression to philosophical theorizing later in his life, but it remained something he distrusted, on personal as well as on intellectual grounds. "Perhaps," remarks Jones (1967), "we may even speak of **a fear of it**. At all events it needed to be sternly checked, and for that purpose he chose the most effective agency - scientific discipline" (p. 255).

Freud needed to base his discoveries in the psychological realm on what he believed to be the firm foundation of the anatomy and physiology of the nervous system. "It was **scientific**, assured, and a necessary check on **speculation**" (Jones, 1967, p. 259). Freud could never dispense with physiological principles completely and tried to explain man along evolutionary lines. "In the evolution of life, after the model of Darwinian thinking, there are no spirits, essences, or entelechies, no superior plans or ultimate purposes at work. The physical energies alone cause effects - somehow" (Jones, 1967, p. 64). However many loopholes and weaknesses this view proved to have, however many doubts Freud himself expressed against it, he never could get himself to abandon determinism for teleology.

Freud's life history seems to suggest that there was an emotional reason for his deliberate refusal to venture beyond the realms of the psyche. Was it a fear perhaps, that he would lose his

emotional footing if he ventured into the spiritual realms of life?

A characteristic that became more prominent in his old age, was Freud's great dislike of being in a position of vulnerability and helplessness and his consequent desire for and love of independence. The word: "No", could be a powerful word to him, a resistiveness, that was a **defense against** being too readily influenced by others (Jones, 1967, p. 476).

Freud defensively, even if heroically, stood alone. Even in deep suffering, Freud refused to open his heart to the experience of comfort and to the consolation of faith.

He is as stubborn as a Job in refusing to take comfort from words - even more stubborn, for he will not permit himself the gratification of accusing. The fact is as it is. Human life is a grim, irrational, humiliating business - nothing softens this judgement. (Jones, 1967, p. 19)

Freud insisted on negating the spirituality of his experiences by reducing them to and trying to interpret them as mere psychological phenomena. Of the death of his beloved daughter, Sophie, Freud said that it was a "deep narcissistic hurt". He implied a criticism of such a perception in admitting, however, that Sophie's death "hurt in a **more human way**" (Jones, 1967, p. 10). Was he implying that he was less stoical than he tried to give the impression of being? Can this also be surmised from the obviously great efforts he made in safeguarding himself against the brokenness of a man, who stripped of his feelings of self-mastery, would cry out to a God for assistance? Only on the occasion of the death of his four and a half year old grandson, Heinz, Sophie's son, was Freud known to have shed tears. Freud had a special love for this little grandson and he believed that the death of little Heinz marked the end of his affectional life.

His sufferings certainly did not make Freud more, but in fact **less** receptive to the possibility of the existence of a Supra-human world. The painful knocks life dealt him only resulted in his closing the door more firmly against the kind of questions he would be forced to ask had he allowed himself to function in a more fully human (and spiritual) way.

It seems valid to conclude that Freud's deliberate non-spiritual and anti-religious stand certainly mitigated against the kind of openness and trust that Frankl (1970) pointed out, are prerequisites to **an experience of the existence and reality of meaning on the spiritual dimension of being**. It certainly is clear that the question of the purpose of life is one that Freud deliberately chose **not** to answer. He found his calling, "what he was in the world for", in psychology and sought to contribute to this discipline what he hoped would be a service to mankind.

Meaning in the Life of Sigmund Freud

From the above discussions it is clear that Freud derived great meaning from his work, from loving and caring for his family, friends and patients and that he attached importance to upholding ethical principles. He only did not characterize these most valued things in his life as **meanings**, but chose rather to portray them as mere sublimations of psychological needs.

Frankl (1967) states that he is not willing to live for the sake of his "defense mechanisms", much less to die for the sake of his-"reaction formations" (p. 11). Freud was! He was even prepared to

give an open and honest account before God Himself of the way he lived (and died).

I have no dread at all of the Almighty. If we ever were to meet, I should have more reproaches to make to Him than He could to me. I should ask Him why He had not given me a better intellectual equipment, and **He could not complain that I had not made the best use of my supposed freedom.** (in Jones, 1967, pp. 472-473)

What we can be bold enough to suggest is that Freud could feel a sense of guiltlessness exactly because he **did** fulfill the unique and profound meanings of his life!

Psychoanalysis as a Mission

Freud strove to bring to light the hidden motives of the psyche (to open the black box which Skinner had preferred to leave tightly closed). No cost, criticism or reproach was too great to deter Freud from carrying out this most momentous task, the accomplishment of which forever changed the face of psychology and other disciplines dealing with the subject of man.

It is a fascinating exercise to trace Freud's experience of and response to what proved, beyond question, to be his unique calling or peculiar life-task.

From the very beginning of his life to the end, Freud had "a veritable passion to **understand**" (Jones, 1967, p. 43). The powerful operation of his **will to meaning** is reflected in his dauntless pursuit of what we have described as **truth in the inner man**.

It is one of Freud's major achievements that he **knew** himself. He had a sane and realistic assessment of himself and was keenly aware of the nature of his talents. "I have very restricted capacities or talents. None at all for the natural sciences; nothing for mathematics; nothing for anything quantitative. **But what I have, of a very restricted nature, was probably very intensive**" (in Jones, 1967, p. 461). In fact, he fully recognized and embraced the uniqueness (the intensity) of his own peculiar gifts, and greatly respected the value of the truths it enabled him to uncover. "I have a high opinion of what I have discovered, but not of myself" (in Jones, 1967, p. 471).

Once the field of his interests and talents became clear to him, he renounced all other options and responsibly gave himself in passionate service to its full realization. "I learned the truth of Mephistopheles' warning: **It is in vain that you range round from science to science; each man learns only what he can (Goethe)**" (in Jones, 1967, p. 61). Writing to Martha, Freud (in Jones, 1967) wrote about this decisive moment in his life as follows: "Everything that fell before the decisive break in my life, before our coming together and **my choice of calling**, I have put behind me" (p. 27).

Only when Freud began to devote himself to what captivated his interest and called upon his peculiar talents, did he experience what he described as: "rest and satisfaction" (in Jones, 1967, p. 61).

His tireless devotion to his work from that time onwards, his relentless pursuit of an understanding of man's psyche, is described by Joan Riviere, soon after Freud's death, in the following way: "One had always the impression of a certain reserve behind the eagerness, as though it were not for himself that he so peremptorily demanded to understand things, **but for some purpose outside himself**" (in Jones, 1967, p. 465).

Freud devoted himself to psychoanalysis as a sole and all important aim and task in his life.

A man like myself cannot live without a dominating passion: in fact, without a tyrant, to use Schiller's expression, and that is what it has become. **For in its service I know no moderation.** It is psychology which has been **the goal beckoning me from afar,** and now that I have come into contact with the neuroses the goal has drawn much nearer. (Jones, 1967, p. 297)

His devotion to psychoanalysis is something that gave his life authentic and deep meaning. Writing to his friend and colleague, Fliess, Freud (in Jones, 1967) said: "If we both are granted a few years of tranquil work we shall surely leave behind us something that may justify our existence" (p. 297).

Freud (in Jones, 1967) felt no depression at the thought that "none of the undiscovered provinces of mental life which I was the first mortal to enter will bear my name" (p. 297), that no recognition may come to him during his lifetime or perhaps ever. What mattered was the opportunity of achieving his goal, of realizing the task to his own deep satisfaction and fulfillment. (in Jones, 1967, p. 297)

Freud's discoveries rocked the scientific world at that time. The idea that the mind - not the brain, not the nervous system - might itself be the cause of its own malfunction, and even the cause of the body's malfunction, was worse than a professional heresy: it was a profanation of thought (Jones, 1967). The storm of outrage Freud raised against him, he met with "a magnificent imperturbability", Jones (1967, p. 461) observes. "No one writes to achieve fame," Freud commented, "which anyhow is a very transitory matter, or the illusion of immortality. **Surely we write first of all to satisfy something within ourselves, not for other people**" (in Jones, 1967, p. 461).

Freud felt that the task fell on him to bare the human soul or psyche and to illuminate, truthfully and without hypocrisy or shame, also the baser side of human nature. What he uncovered in the analysis of his patients' communications, were often disgusting, or morally repellent, and even personally affronting. This did not deter Freud. He treated his discoveries as ordinary contributions to science and hoped to be met in the same spirit. But the silence with which his addresses were received, the void which formed itself about him, the insinuations that found their way to him, caused him gradually to realize that one cannot count upon views about the part played by sexuality in the aetiology of the neuroses meeting with the same reception as other communications.

I understood that from now onward I belonged to those who have "troubled the sleep of the world", and that I could not reckon upon objectivity and tolerance. Since, however, my conviction of the general accuracy of my observations and conclusions grew and grew, and as my confidence in my own judgement was by no means slight, any more than **my moral courage,** there could be no doubt about the outcome of the situation. I made up my mind that it had been my fortune to discover particularly important connections, and I was prepared to accept the fate that sometimes accompanies such discoveries. (in Jones, 1967, p. 238)

The Moral Imperative of Love and Personal Integrity

As impressive and exemplary as his great commitment to his work, was Freud's devotion and loyalty to those whom he loved.

A non-sentimental, but profound and deeply committed love earmarked his relationships with his wife and daughters. He was also fiercely loyal to his friends, and expected the same loyalty from them. This loyalty was nowhere more evident than towards his wife. "Freud was quite peculiarly monogamous". "Of few men can it be said that they go through the whole of life without being erotically moved in any serious fashion by any woman beyond the one and only one" remarks Jones (1967, p. 474) about him. It was quite paradoxical that "the chaste and puritanical Freud ultimately made his discoveries in the field of the sexual life. "I stand for an incomparably freer sexual life", Freud said, "although I myself have made very little use of such freedom: only in so far as I myself judged it to be allowable" (in Jones, 1967, p. 473).

Freud impressed as a man who was realistically and non-spiritually, almost **naturally** moral. "What is moral is self-evident", Freud (in Jones, 1967, p. 472) contended. He never had any doubts about what was the right course of conduct. A clear conscience was to Freud, an essential trait of his personality. "I can measure myself with the best people I have known. I have never done anything mean or malicious and cannot trace any temptation to do so, so I am not in the least proud of it" (in Jones, 1967, p. 473)

Freud resolutely kept his focus on the psychological level, yet had no hesitation in obeying what impressed him as morally right and in avoiding what he conceived to be morally reprehensible. **We can venture to suggest that Freud obeyed, without question, imperatives from the spiritual realm of ethical norms and values as they were presented to him through his own conscience.** A portion in the Bible seems to lend striking support to this view. It makes reference to those who "**by nature do the things contained in the law.**" Such people are "a law unto themselves; who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another" (Romans 2:14,15).

Freud lived at a time when, in the face of Nazi atrocities that were being perpetrated in ever increasing measure, the world was slow to feel or even express moral outrage. His own German society lay in ruins. In a letter to the famous German Jewish writer, Stefan Zweig, Freud (in Jones, 1967) wrote:

I suffer from the times we live in just as you do. **The only consolation I find is in the feeling of belonging together with a few others, in the certainty that the same things remain precious to us, the same values incontestable.** ..Even if my defiance remains silent, it is still defiance and impavidum ferient ruinae (The falling ruins will leave him undismayed - Horace). (p. 634)

To the end of his life Freud was a man of ruthless honesty and integrity. He could not bear any lies about his cancer, for example, nor did he take any pain-killers to relieve the excruciating pain he was suffering after having undergone many operations to his jaw. He strongly believed in facing life's problems head-on and realistically. "What he seems to have specially minded was the implication that

he might be unwilling to face courageously a painful truth, since his ability to do so was one of his outstanding virtues" (Jones, 1967, p. 554).

Freud never questioned his sufferings. A grand control of emotion earmarked the man who exemplified what he believed should be an ideal: a man of inner mastery. For Freud life was something that was inherently hard rather than easy. It was something primarily to be endured. He did not see himself as a pessimist, however, rather as a realist, as **someone free of illusions**.

In a little essay on "Transcience" he describes as sheer nonsense the idea that the good things of life lost their value through their impermanence; **"if they lasted but a minute they could be good"** (in Jones, 1967, p. 470). We are strongly reminded of the saying of Frankl (1969) that "the greatness of a life can be measured by the greatness of a moment.. a single moment can retroactively flood an entire life with meaning" (p. 35).

Freud died as he lived, accepting unalterable reality and heroically resigning himself to it. The grandeur of his death was captured by Jones (1967) in the following way: "He opened his eyes, recognized me and waved his hand, then dropped it with a highly expressive gesture that conveyed a wealth of meaning: greetings, farewell, resignation. It said as plainly as possible, The rest is silence" (pp. 656-657).

A Tribute to the Unknown God?

Not caring to question (or to philosophically contemplate) the true origin of the meanings of work, love, moral responsibility and personal integrity, Freud very obviously deeply valued these meanings, even if he insisted that they were nothing but mere sublimations of blind instinct!

We have considered Frankl's (1970) statement that man can hardly escape his inherent will to meaning, even if he declares himself to be devoutly **non-philosophical** and **irreligious**.

In the case of Freud, one is strongly reminded of the incident where the Apostle Paul addressed the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in Athens, remarking that among all their idols (their fond theories, philosophies and ideas), there was an altar with the inscription: **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD**. This, he said, is evidence of the fact that they were worshipping (obeying) the One whom they did not know (Acts 17:22-34).

Freud, who did not care to make the spiritual leap of faith, was nonetheless a spiritual giant in being passionately devoted and obedient to whatever sounded through to him from a spiritual dimension and into his keen and sensitive conscience.

It is fascinating to consider that Freud had fulfilled a profoundly significant (a God-appointed) life-task in scientifically (with truthful objectivity) **exposing the baser side of human nature**.

It is especially in the area of **revealing the psychological damage and suffering caused by oppressive censure and moral rigidity on the developing personality**, that Freud made a unique contribution to our understanding of man.

What Freud had in fact illuminated was what the Bible describes as the yoke of the Law, of being oppressed by feelings of guilt and self-condemnation as a result of the loveless and harsh censure of external and strict (legalistic) behavioral rules and regulations which have been incorporated into the tyrant-like super-ego of the person.

Moral hypocrisy and a feigned front of obedience (appeasing subservience), and an almost obsessed interest in (and secret practice of) the forbidden, with an even more guilt-laden and captive (burdened) way of being as a result of thoughts and practices the person is ashamed of, are the outcomes of strictly enforced societal and religious laws of acceptable behavior. "The good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. .. Oh wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:19,24)

The tremendous value of his discoveries is reflected in the fact that it undoubtedly formed the basis and could be seen as the birth of psychotherapy as a **healing relationship**.

Freud saw mental health as the ability to love and to work. Through psychoanalysis, which essentially is a relationship of **trust** that allows the patient to reveal things to the analyst at an ever deeper and hitherto unexposed level, the guilt-stricken self or captive ego is released to become **more genuinely and creatively involved** with others and more able to devote freed energies creatively in the accomplishment of worthwhile tasks in life.

The person becomes more open to an experience of real meaning in life.

Working on the psychological level, a release of growth on a **higher** level of being is often the outcome of psychotherapy. Even a genuine faith (a profound trust in the ultimate meaning of life), can be such an unintended and unexpected outcome.

Evaluation

Psychoanalytic theory and research have vastly expanded our knowledge in the area of the complex structure and functionings of the human psyche. Man has not only a **body** but also a **soul** (an inner life of need, thought and fancy).

The Pandora's box of the hidden recesses of the mind has been opened, its contents spilt. The neat definition of human behavior as predictable and controllable patterns of conditioned responses, is shattered by the exposure of unruly motives of tameless passion, murderous aggression and cunning deception in the cesspool of the unconscious mind. Freud had irrefutably proved that there is much more to man than meets the eye!

Freud tried very hard to keep to the mold of the natural scientist. Daring to probe the depths of the human psyche, however, he uncovered more than the natural scientist could vouch for. He soon found himself forced to admit that he, in his scientific zeal, had burst the bounds of scientific convention.

Freud was, alas, a revolutionary.

What Freud was **not** prepared to admit, however, was that his genius opened up avenues of understanding **beyond** the human psyche. Daring to plumb the depths of his **own** psyche, the area which Skinner so very effectively **closed** and ruled out of scientific bounds, Freud came to glimpse what he, more openly than Watson and Skinner, expressed as **doubt**: there may be more to man than even the psychoanalyst can dream of!

In lifting the lid off the psyche, and casting light on the dark and deep workings of the human soul, a third dimension of being: **the human spirit**, came into view. Some of the aspects of this dimension caught the eye and became the focus of attention of psychologists after Freud's death.

Frankl (1969) refers to Freud as a giant in his enormous intellectual impact and profound influence not only on psychology but on every field of thought relating to man. Freud's discoveries opened vistas which otherwise would have remained obscure and hidden from the understanding of future psychologists in their study of the human psyche. Frankl (1969) graphically portrays the indebtedness to Freud by psychologists who followed in his wake and who made their own important contributions to our understanding of man, with the apt saying that "a dwarf standing upon the shoulders of a giant can see farther than the giant himself" (p. 3).

Developments in Psychoanalytic Theory

So prolific were Freud's writings, so productive in original ideas and discoveries, that he left a wealth of data unexplored. New workers in the field of psychology took up where Freud left off, expanding and also changing his original theories.

Melanie Klein

A most revolutionary development of Freudian ideas came from the work of Melanie Klein (1957, 1963, 1965, 1969) and her associates.

Klein's main discoveries relate to the very early phases of mental life. Freud's investigation of the unconscious mind had revealed childhood origins of psychological conflict and trauma. Before Klein, there had been little attempt to confirm these discoveries by a **direct study of childhood**. The idea occurred to Klein that the spontaneous play of young children might be used to supplement, or even replace, the material provided by adults in psychoanalysis of their childhood experiences through the method of free association.

Klein was the one to develop the play-technique of interpretation. In her psychoanalyses of children as young as two to three years of age, and through observational studies of babies, she was soon in the position to confirm, first hand, all that Freud had inferred from adult material concerning the hitherto unknown unconscious mind of the child.

In her work with children, Klein was led to the discovery that both the Oedipus complex and the super-ego are well in evidence at a much earlier age than had been assumed by Freud.

On the basis of her observations, Klein (1957) began to accept that a rudimentary ego exists at birth, **imputing and deriving meaning of some kind to and from every sensation or experience.** Having a rudimentary or diffuse awareness of the nature of his or her experiences, the infant begins to distinguish between **good** (comforting, easing, relieving, pleasant) and **bad** (stressful, discomfoting, depriving, unpleasant) experiences. Having no clear or developed object concept and experiencing itself as undifferentiated from the outside world, the impressions of experienced events or sensations are manifested in **fantasies**. These fantasies are on the unconscious level of awareness since consciousness, in the sense of ideational and conceptual thinking or the capacity to verbalize feelings and thoughts, has not yet been attained.

Tracing the development of the ego, Klein (1957, 1963) found that **infants were not simply auto-erotic, but rather object-related from birth.** There is a definite outreach towards the source (object) of good experiences and a defensive withdrawal from the source (object) of bad experiences. Bad or depriving experiences provoke the infant's aggressive impulses. The fact that the infant employs internal mechanisms of defense against its own destructive impulses in an effort to preserve the introjected good objects from harm, is a clear indication that **the ego is in the service of the life-instinct** (Klein, 1957).

A preponderance of good experiences, through what another psychoanalyst, D.W. Winnicott (1957, 1958, 1969), has termed: "good enough mothering", assists the ego in its efforts to overcome (defensively deal with) hostile feelings and impulses which **disrupt and destroy** the relationship with a loving and caring object (mother) and promotes the growth of the infant's capacity to love and to care (to feel guilt and depression over bad impulses towards good objects, and to make efforts at restitution for imagined harm) (Klein, 1957, 1963).

The ego, as the integrative agency of the personality, **functioning to bring a sense of cohesion and unity in the mental life of the person,** is thus postulated by Kleinian theorists as operating from birth. This is in clear opposition to orthodox psychoanalytic views in this regard.

"We do not understand the view that at any period of life there could be no synthetic function in operation", states the Kleinian, Joan Riviere (1957, p. 14).

A fascinating question to consider is whether the functionings of the ego cannot be translated as the operations of the human spirit freely interpreting the meaning and sense of its experiences and striving to find and preserve what is meaningful in the relationships with significant others. Do Kleinian findings lend support to Frankl's view that the core motivation of human behavior is man's inherent will to meaning, imbedded as it is in the unconscious depths of man's being?

The Ego Psychologists

Although Freud (1974) regarded the ego as the executive of the total personality, at least in the case of the healthy person, he never granted it an **autonomous** position. Believing as he did that "the power of the id expresses the true purpose of the individual organism's life" (p. 27) and that the satisfactions of its innate needs determine all activity, he viewed the ego as always subservient to the wishes of the id. Freud (1974) postulated that the ego, as a subsystem of the personality, developed "out of the cortical layer of the id" (p. 9), that the id, therefore, was the primary force of the personality. The ego, according to Freud, was thus in a sense forced into existence to find realistic ways and means to satisfy mindless instincts or needs.

In sharp contrast to Freud's position, are the views of some psychoanalytic theorists who became known as **ego-psychologists**. The ego is seen by these theorists as the most important part of the personality and as functioning independently of the id. They ascribe much greater rationality and logic to the ego in the making of decisions and the solving of problems. Heinz Hartmann (1894-1970) is known as the father of ego psychology. Other leading figures in this field are Henry Murray, Anna Freud and Robert White. Erik Erikson (1974, 1977, 1981) can be regarded as the ego psychologist who most clearly developed the idea of the autonomous ego in terms of a growing **identity** in an ever widening social context. Erikson's emphasis is on **the continuity in the ego's synthesizing methods, no longer only in childhood, but throughout the lifespan.**

Social Psychological Theories

A well-known point of criticism against Freud is that he placed too much emphasis on the instinctual determinants of personality and that he neglected the important role of social or environmental factors in the development of the personality. The tendency among current psychoanalytic theorists is to put the stress on how personality traits are acquired through experience and as a result of social interaction.

The accent is shifted from conflict within the personality (between the id and the superego) to the ego's efforts to successfully integrate into society. The individual is more clearly seen as seeking to become a creative part of the community and culture he belongs to.

The emergent sciences of sociology and anthropology advanced the view that man is chiefly influenced by the society in which he lives and that his personality is social rather than biological. The influences of these new social sciences are particularly evident in the work of Alfred Adler, Karen Horney, Erich Fromm and Harry Stack Sullivan. Originally followers of Freud, they began to refashion psychoanalytic theory so as to emphasize what they believed was **the fundamental social nature of man**. Their theories depict the social dimensions of personality as having equal, if not superior importance to the biological dimensions of human nature.

Each of these theorists have undoubtedly contributed a great deal to our understanding of man as a social being, reaching beyond himself to a more meaningful encounter with others. However, these further vistas in personality growth were made possible exactly because a rich foundation of

insight into the inner needs and workings of the psyche was laid by Freud.

Evaluating the work of the social psychologists, Hall and Lindzey (1970), comment: "They have all stood on Freud's shoulders, and have added their own cubits to his towering height" (p. 154).

We will pursue the themes enlightened by neo-Freudian thinkers in the writings of the **humanistic psychologists**, in whose theories not only the ego and the social features of human behavior receive due attention, but also more clearly defined **spiritual strivings and aspirations** are recognized as characteristic features of human motivation.

CHAPTER 7

MAN ON THE PSYCHOSOCIAL DIMENSION OF BEING

IntroductionA Recap of the Behavioristic and Psychoanalytic Views of ManThe Stand of Radical Behaviorism

Radical behaviorists like Watson and Skinner portrayed man's person as inherently part of (submerged in) the mechanics of largely conditioned functionings on a **predominantly physical dimension of being**.

What a person is, how he behaves, is the result of a history of learnt responses to environmental cues. Soul, psyche and spirit are hypothetical and mythical concepts. Man, like the animal, is totally subject to the laws (the input or conditionings and manipulations) of the outer world. Human behavior can be most effectively studied when the confounding factor of subjectivity (the inner or emotional life of man) is removed both from man as an **object** of study and from the scientist who studies him. Moreover, experimental studies with animals under controlled conditions can determine behavioral laws which can explain human learning. Human psychology is animal psychology. Freedom of will is an illusion. Metaphysics and religion are fruitless gropings of the unscientific and undisciplined (improperly conditioned) mind. Uncontrolled behavior is arbitrary (unruly) behavior. Anti-social behavior is the result of negative (badly engineered, arbitrary) input, of wrong learning, and can and must be extinguished. Science has the task of exercising control; of establishing better systems of input from the social environment in order to secure a better output of behavior.

The Freudian Perspective

Not accepting things at face value, Freud, with his orthodox psychoanalytic approach, stole behind the scenes to plumb the hidden depths of human emotion. From within the dark recesses of the psyche, Freud unnervingly unmasked man as a being driven by self-gratifying passions who, when his survival needs are threatened, his basic needs denied, can be savagely ruthless in his efforts to procure his own safety and satisfactions.

Exposing human nature in its unrefined, primitive and crude depths, Freud provided a brilliant exposition of man on a purely **psychobiological dimension of being**.

According to Freud, man's socialization labors along a bumpy road of resistance against restriction or control from without and is in tense conflict with the internalized or super-ego control from within. In a myriad of hidden ways, lustful and selfish urges connive at finding their way around social censure. Most appropriate to describe Freudian theory is the Biblical dictum: "the heart is deceitful above all things.. who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) Behind a thin veneer of civil behavior,

man stands perplexed, unable to give a proper account of himself. His behavior is propelled by an unconscious interplay of life and death instincts, forces which he little understands, let alone has much effective control over. The Freudian view states unequivocally: the person is his psychodynamics - the hapless product of inner turmoil. Freedom, man's deliverance from captivity to his lower nature, is a far cry, just as religion or life on a so-called higher plane of living is a groundless dream.

To Freud's mind, the behavioristic utopia of total control over human behavior is another of man's futile ideas. Freud believed that through greater social tolerance and permissiveness, man can be helped to help himself. Man can become more open to reason and learn to channel instinctual energy, to sublimate his passions in creative and constructive ways.

Humanistic Theory: A More Humane Picture of Man

In reaction against both the pale lifelessness of the **non-human** behavioristic view of man and the threateningly **inhuman** image of man presented by Freudian theory, ego-psychologists valiantly assigned to the ego an autonomy of its own. Mind is brought into mindless passion as the ego is ascribed greater power in its role as rational executor of the total personality. In contrast to the a- and anti-social elements of human nature, social psychologists strove to highlight the sanely social sensitivities or positive strivings of man. From the writings of these theorists relievingly emerged an altogether more **humane** picture of man.

Humanistic psychology developed towards the mid-20th century as a further extension of the reactionary movements to radical behaviorism and orthodox Freudianism and became a clearly defined "third force" in the history of psychology.

The humanistic view of man is in sharp contrast to the mechanomorphic view of man presented by radical behaviorists and the view of man as a slave to instinct presented by orthodox psychoanalysts. Humanistic theories place the accent on the healthily evolved and ever creatively evolving **self** on a more fully-fledged **psychosocial dimension of being**.

Through an exploration of the higher levels of psychological growth in the works of Gordon Allport (1897-1967), Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) and Carl Rogers (1902-1987), the chief exponents of humanistic theory, we are brought to the very brink of an understanding of man on the **psychospiritual dimension of being** - the dimension highlighted by the existential theory of Viktor Frankl.

The Humanistic View of Man

The Social Core of Human Nature

By far the most courageous statement on human nature made by the humanists is that **man has a basic propensity towards goodness or socially constructive behavior**. Man is a social creature. He seeks social contact and is most truly himself within a harmonious social context. Given the right circumstances, a growth facilitating environment, man's reactions can be trusted to be positive,

forward-moving, creatively purposeful, rational and trust-worthy. "We do not need to ask who will socialize him", Rogers (1989) contended, "for one of his own deepest needs is for affiliation and communication with others" (p. 418). As he becomes more aware of or open to all of his impulses, **his need to be liked by others and his tendency to give affection** will be as strong and stronger than his impulses to aggressively strike out or seize anything for himself. "Behavior which is appropriate to the survival and enhancement of a **highly social animal**", according to Rogers (1989), therefore, is the behavior which earmarks man (p. 418).

The basically social nature of man is also highlighted by Allport (1966) in what he has called "**the affiliative groundwork of life**" (p. 33). Allport embraced the findings of neo-Freudians like Anna Freud (1951) and, especially, John Bowlby (1967a, 1967b, 1969). Studying the early development of **attachment** and maternal deprivation in cases of mother-child separation, these theorists could effectively show that a child's mental character and mental health depend to a considerable degree upon the nature of his relationship with the mother and other significant caregivers during infancy and early childhood. Early affiliative (dependency, succoring, and attachment) needs can, therefore, be seen as the ground of becoming (Allport, 1966).

Maslow (1974) also pointed out that there is a mounting mass of evidence to prove a correlation between an **affectionate** childhood and a healthy adulthood. **Love is the most social of all emotions**. Such data add up to the generalization that **love is a basic need** for healthy development of the human being.

If the growing individual is provided with relationships which are characterized by safety, absence of threat, and the freedom and right to be, therefore, his development will proceed naturally towards **socialization** in the broad, constructive sense of the word (Rogers, 1951).

Evil or Anti-social Behavior as a Deviation from the Norm

The humanists took issue with the psychoanalytic view that the characters of healthy people, as well as the unhealthy, are fundamentally established during early childhood and that all adult behavior is still motivated by crude and unrefined childish wishes and impulses. Where this is the case, the humanists maintained, there has been an **arrest** of development. Healthy development is earmarked by an undeniable **growth-thrust** beyond the lower or childish levels of being.

The Views of Allport on Social Deviance

While the infant is a socially dependent being, he is not even to the slightest degree a socialized being, Allport (1966) pointed out. Even at the age of two the child is, when measured by standards applied to adults, "an unsocialized horror" (p. 28).

Picture, if you can, an adult who is extremely destructive of property, insistent and demanding that every desire be instantly gratified, helpless and almost totally dependent on others, unable to share his possessions, impatient, prone to tantrums, violent and uninhibited in the display of all his feelings. Such behavior, **normal** to a

two-year-old, would be **monstrous** in a man. (Allport, 1966, p. 28)

Unless these qualities are markedly altered in the process of becoming we have on our hands, Allport (1966) remarked, an infantile and potentially evil personality. **Is a wicked man but a child grown strong?**

Freud contended that man is never truly socialized, that behind a social veneer, he remains a savage at heart. Allport (1966), as a humanist, contended that because the infant has a **disposition for eventual socialization**, he will with time, experience a diminution in the preponderance and intensity of self-centered inclinations. A growth and extension of other-regarding sentiments will, therefore, occur. When the mediating structures of conscience, imagination, and extension of the ego develop, then **genuine transformations of motivation** can be expected to take place. **Self-interest remains active in our natures, only it need not remain dominant.** A truly socialized person will find it intolerable to seek happiness at the expense of others.

Allport (1966) reasoned that the child who has received adequate gratification of his infant needs will be more prepared to give up his habits of demanding and will learn tolerance. Having successfully completed one stage of development, he will be **free** to abandon the habits appropriate to this stage and to enter the more mature reaches of becoming. Having known acceptance in an affectionate environment, he learns to handle the conflicts of later life in a socially more acceptable and mature manner. A child who has, however, forfeited the love and sensitive care needed for normal development, can develop a basic distrust and hostile orientation to the world and become an extremely selfish, deviant and destructive person in later life.

Aggression and hatred, therefore, should be seen as **reactive protests**, aroused when affiliative tendencies have been **thwarted**. Anti-social acts are signs of normal development gone wrong. We are dealing here with mental ill-health, with pathology, not with a normal expression of a fundamentally hostile, antisocial, destructive and evil nature (Allport, 1966).

The Views of Maslow on Social Deviance

One of the editions of the book on abnormal psychology written by Maslow and Mittelmann (1941) has a frontispiece of two panel pictures: one shows a group of happy-looking gurgling babies in the maternity room of a children's hospital and just beneath that is another panel showing a group of people - haggard, drawn, and sallow - crowded into a New York subway train hanging on to the straps above their heads. The caption beneath these two panels reads: "What happened?"

To Maslow (1968) the human infant was a source of wonder and sheer delight. Looking at the baby with the eyes of a proud and adoring father, Maslow's observations provided a contrast to the sober views of the more academic-minded Allport.

Maslow was, at first, a behaviorist and did his doctoral studies with Harry Harlow (1958, 1967), a radical behaviorist. With the birth of his first child he was delightedly shocked into a new way of thinking. "I looked at this tiny mysterious thing and.. felt small and weak and feeble before all this. I'd say that anyone who had a baby couldn't be a behaviorist" (Maslow 1968, p. 55). Sighting the child with the free abandon of a rebirth experience, Maslow broke forth in admiration:

I must apologize and point to the obvious: that every baby is an individual, a self, idiosyncratic, different from every other baby in the most obvious ways; that I can see no evil in a baby, no malice, no sadism, no joy in cruelty, no guile, no phoniness or hypocrisy. I can see no persona, no role playing, no trying to be anything other than a baby. I can see most clearly and unmistakably something that must be called wisdom of the body - that is, tastes, preferences, choices, likes, and dislikes, which, if acceded to, seem to keep the baby healthy and happy. **Will is obvious**; any baby absolutely insists on some things and absolutely refuses other things, and even the most doctrinaire parent must yield and accept defeat. As for activating or stimulating or motivating a baby, to set it into motion from some Newtonian state of rest, such a notion can rest only on complete blindness or else living in a monastery. **How is it possible not to see that a normal baby is experiencing itself as worthwhile and self-starting, and that the world is interesting, even fascinating - that it is a wonderful place to live in?** (pp. 90-91)

In a word, Maslow (1968) believed, **the baby is a person**, "even a wonderful, admirable, lovable one bearing many of the hard-won characteristics of self-actualizing persons, whose great achievement is to become childlike again, in a kind of second innocence" (p. 91).

Maslow found his own lost childhood in his delighted discovery of the person of his own child. From that exhilarating point onwards, Maslow simply could not understand how it was possible to live with a healthy and well-loved baby and to be a literal behaviorist or a textbook Freudian. "Of course", Maslow (1968) wryly remarked, "I understand that these philosophies are shed like masquerade costumes as one enters his home and greets his wife and children" (p. 91).

Maslow (1987) insisted that we should not look at the baby with adult eyes. When viewed from the perspective of the child, so-called destructive behavior (e.g. like taking an expensive clock apart) may be no more than curiosity, a clumsy trial-and-error way of exploring its world. The child's boundless egocentrism, its explosive reactions to being thwarted, the verocity of his infant jealousies expressed in sibling rivalry, for example, can be explained within the framework of **cognitive immaturity**, its inability to yet perceive the independent existence (and rights) of others.

Maslow's views are interestingly supported by the work of cognitive psychologists like Jean Piaget (1968). Studying the development of object concept during infancy, that is, the child's ability to comprehend that an object has permanent existence outside his immediate experience of it, Piaget contended that a child is cognitively **unable** to conceive of its own separate existence before about two years of age.

Researchers who do not approach the child from the point of view of the child, can miss to see how a child is perceiving its world, Maslow (1987) pointed out. Studies on children mostly resemble a kind of projective method, a Rorschach ink blot upon which adult hostility is projected. For this reason one hears a great deal of talk about the innate selfishness and innate destructiveness of children. It is the disillusioned and bitter adult mind that pictures the infant as "a little devil, born with original sin and with hatred in its heart" (Maslow, 1987, p. 85). It is adult theory that proposes that children are primarily destructive, aggressive and hostile little animals that need to have "some modicum of

goodness knocked into them by discipline and punishment" (Maslow, 1987, p. 85). In fact, it is this very attitude that **masks** the basic trustworthiness of the person of the child. If exercised by a parent, it provokes **pathology**. It brings out not the best, but the worst in human nature!

The Views of Rogers on Social Deviance

Rogers formed his views of man through his experiences in psychotherapy. The psychotherapist, in trying to relieve the suffering of those who seek help, will have to answer the following questions. What does the person really need in order to be healthy and happy? What is the human being really like at his or her deepest level of being? In short, remarked Rogers (1989) "one cannot engage in psychotherapy without giving operational evidence of an underlying value orientation and view of human nature" (p. 400).

Rogers started off by simply **listening** to those who came for psychotherapy. He followed a **non-directive** approach.

Over time, the observations of Rogers (1989) led him to formulate, first of all, what he believed man is **not**: "I do not discover man to be well characterized in his basic nature by such terms as fundamentally hostile, antisocial, destructive, evil" (p. 403).

In a psychotherapeutic relationship that was characterized by all that he could give of safety, absence of threat, and complete freedom to be and to choose, Rogers (1989) found that all kinds of bitter and murderous feelings, abnormal impulses, bizarre and antisocial desires did, in fact, emerge. As the person got these things off his or her chest, however, more social feelings and impulses began to come to the fore. Feeling less frustrated and thwarted, more freed from oppressive outside control, feelings of hostility, distrust and suspicion tended to decrease and even disappear. The person's growth was released and moved towards co-operative, trusting and creative relationships.

These observations led Rogers (1989) to formulate his views on what man essentially **is**: Man is fundamentally a **social** being who, when given the positive regard and respect which is due to him as **a person**, can be trusted to be a normally self-controlled, socialized individual.

The revelation of the person of the client during the process of psychotherapy, led to a major reorientation in Rogers' approach. What began as a non-directive approach became a more actively **person-centered** approach.

Rogers (1980) realized that his explorative orientation, where he simply listened with confirmative interest and **without passing any judgements** on what he was hearing, proved to be a most potent factor in bringing about change and new learning.

Rogers (1980) made reference to a most interesting study by Fiedler. Fiedler conclusively proved that good therapists of any school will create an essentially similar relationship with their clients and that their relationships with their clients will differ less among each other than with the less expert within their own school. This relationship has all the features of what Rogers has described as a **person-centered** approach. It is the respectful and sensitive companionship offered by the empathic therapist, **of whatever school**, that provides self-understanding and healing.

The findings in psychotherapy, Rogers (1980) believed, justified an even broader hypothesis regarding all human relationships. The therapeutic relationship is an interpersonal relationship. There is every reason to suppose that the same lawfulness governs all other interpersonal relationships.

"Adam, Where are you?" The Emerging Self on the Psychosocial Level of Being

Propriate functioning. The motivational theory of Gordon Allport

Freud contended that the structure of the Id, the instinctive motives underlying behavior, never changes. Allport maintained, however, that as the individual matures, the initial or childish motives undergo a **radical transformation**.

Allport (1966) placed the accent on the emerging and ever more autonomous **propriate functions** of the personality. The child, as it matures, increasingly exhibits **self-initiated** and **self-directed** behavior.

The word: "propriate" is derived from the Latin word: **proprium**, meaning **selfhood**. Allport's definition of the term refers to that which is intimately, personally and warmly connected to and most characteristic of the self. Proprium is the term Allport (1966) used in preference to the terms: ego or self, since it has a broader connotation.

The proprium is not a thing; it is not separable from the person as a whole. Above all it is not a homunculus. Proprium is a term intended to cover those functions that make for **the peculiar unity and distinctiveness of personality**, and at the same time seem to the knowing function to be subjectively intimate and important. (p. 61)

The "knowing function" is what Immanuel Kant (1959) described as a transcendental ego. Allport felt this type of self to be beyond psychological investigation. You can't know **the knower**, except as he most intimately **reveals himself to be**. The proprium can therefore be described as **that which can be known of man in his very essence**, and he feels to be vital and central to him expressed as: "this is **me** (versus: this is **not me**.)" (Allport, 1966, p. 40).

Propriate functioning emerges round about the second year of life when the child experiences his first rudimentary awareness of himself as a separate person and the sense of self begins to develop.

Before that time, during early infancy, the child is totally **unaware** of himself as a **self**. He does not separate the "me" from the rest of the world. Self-awareness is a uniquely **human quality**, a quality which distinguishes human from animal life, mature from immature human behavior.

During adolescence, the future becomes operative in the child's motivational system. **Propriate striving** is the final aspect of the proprium (of selfhood), that emerges. The future, the adolescent begins to realize, must follow a **plan**. The gaze of the adolescent gets lifted, as it were, as he begins to look beyond the immediate present and into the future. Long-range purposes and distant goals add a new dimension to the sense of selfhood and is **the hallmark of fully evolved selfhood**.

According to Allport (1974), therefore, there is a clear shift in focus from the infantile and impulsive need-gratification to increasingly evaluative, critical and considered **choice**. This radical

shift in focus fundamentally **alters** the motivation underlying behavior.

A child who took music lessons only to please his parents (for the sake of reward and for the avoidance of punishment), may come to appreciate the beauty of music and develop a love for it. He continues his musical studies with zeal, no longer to please his parents (which is an extra or peripheral spin-off), but because he has become **intrinsically motivated** to do so. Is his behavior on a par with those of other children who are **extrinsically motivated**, that is, who are taking music lessons only because they have to but not because they truly want to?

In the first instance we have to do with **opportunistic functioning** (doing something for reward, for what you can get out of it). Opportunistic functioning refers to immature or need-gratifying and environmentally determined functioning, the motivational systems the psychoanalytic and behavioristic theories have accentuated. The tension at work here is based on a **homeostasis principle**: the restoration of a state of equilibrium.

In the second instance we have to do with **proprie functioning** (doing something out of self-motivated choice and acquired interest). Tension in this case is **heterostatic**, that is, **sustained** as the person continues to strive towards goals that have become important in their own right. No longer means towards an end, higher level activities have become ends in themselves.

Allport (1961) spoke of **proprie functional autonomy** which he defined as "any acquired system of motivation in which the tensions involved are not of the same kind as the antecedent tensions from which the acquired system developed" (p. 229). Whatever the original drives or conditioned responses of earlier modes of functioning were, they become completely transformed in the course of becoming into contemporaneous, infinitely more varied, self-sustaining, functionally autonomous systems of motives.

The shift from infantile to more mature systems of motivation is the result of a transformation within the structural dispositions of the self. Within the opportunistic framework an immature self-system is propelled and taken up by need or molded and manipulated through conditioning forces impinging upon such need. As the person matures, he becomes more **self-active** and **self-directive**.

The person comes into his actions, he expresses **himself** through his actions. **Psychological maturity is earmarked by the fully emerged selfhood of a person on a higher level of being**, incorporating earlier systems yet, at the same time, **transcending** them. "We know that there are layers in each person that are archaic and composed of relatively isolated earlier systems. Yet there are also layers in which man is fully adult, his psychological maturity corresponding to his age" (Allport, 1966, p. 28).

The person **outgrows** earlier modes of functioning. A Biblical portion graphically describes the nature of mature motivation: "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways" (1 Corinthians 13:11). Allport (1966) expressed this thought by saying: "Childhood is no longer in the saddle; maturity is" (p. 229).

The Metacodes of Man. The Motivational Theory of Abraham Maslow

Maslow's theory of self, proposed in 1954, stressed the striving to live on a higher, more

humane plane of being as a deep-lying and fundamental need and necessity in man. "What humans **can** be, they **must** be. They must be true to their own nature" (Maslow, 1987, p. 22). He called the need for a full expression and development of our humanness, **self-actualization**. Self-actualization refers to people's desire for self-fulfillment, namely, the tendency for them to become actualized in what they are potentially. "This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one idiosyncratically is, to **become everything that one is capable of becoming**" (Maslow, 1987, p. xxxv).

Self-actualization therefore implies the full use and exploitation of talents, capacities and potentialities.

To correct the impression that self-actualization might be referring to something selfish and egocentric, Maslow (1968) broadened the term by defining it as

an **ongoing** actualization of potentials, capacities and talents, as fulfillment of mission (or call, fate, destiny, or vocation), as a fuller knowledge of, and acceptance of, the person's own intrinsic nature, as an **unceasing trend toward unity, integration or synergy within the person**. (p. 25)

In an effort to understand the higher levels of growth, Maslow set out to study and understand people that he considered to be psychologically healthy and the best specimens of mankind he could find from among his personal acquaintances, friends, public and historical figures (Maslow, 1987). Contrasting the best examples of humanity (like his famous teachers Ruth Benedict, the anthropologist, and Max Wertheimer, the founder of Gestalt psychology) with the worst (like Hitler), he remarked: "Indeed, self-actualizing people, who have come to a high level of maturation, health and self-fulfillment, have so much to teach us that sometimes they seem almost like a different breed of human beings" (Maslow, 1968, p. 71).

Like Allport, Maslow discovered a most profound difference between mature or self-actualizing people and others. The motivational lives of self-actualizing people, he found, were not only quantitatively different but also qualitatively different from those of ordinary people. "**It seems probable that we must construct a profoundly different psychology of motivation for self-actualizing people**" (Maslow, 1987, p. 133).

Because self-actualizers operate in a state of positive health rather than a state of deficiency, Maslow (1987) called the mature motivational systems of self-actualizers **metamotivation** or **growth motivation**. Self-actualizers are motivated by **Being- or B-values**. Most people are motivated by **need**. We are dealing in their case, with **deficiency motivation**, a low level behavior Allport called **opportunistic functioning**.

Allport (1966) pointed out that a psychology of opportunistic adjustment seems basic and adequate to psychologists accustomed to working with animals. **Because the unique selfhood of the individual never enters the research picture of these naturalistic scientists, it cannot come under their research attention that conduct that is ego involved (propriate) differs markedly from**

behavior that is not. Maslow (1987), reasoning along the same lines, asked the following profound question: "Could self-actualizing people be **more human, more revealing of the original nature of the species, closer to the species type in the taxonomical sense**" (p. 133)?

Maslow (1987) ruthlessly challenged traditional schools of thought by asking this riveting question:

Ought a biological species be judged by its crippled, warped, only partially developed specimens, or by examples that have been overdomesticated, caged, and trained? Surely the healthy or optimally developed person should be the target of psychological study since only these people provide us with a picture of fully developed humanity!

The prime or basic features of being human are masked when we study the person in his developing state for example as an infant, child or adolescent or if we study him in an unhealthy state for example as a neurotic or a delinquent. Even to look at the average man, is to miss the essentials of being optimally human. Allport (1966) spoke about the need to "reclaim the individual from the sea of statistical averages" (p. 20). Maslow (1969) voiced the same conviction when the following profound truth dawned on him: What we call "normal" in psychology is really a psychopathology of the average. The study of the authentic person and of authentic living helps to throw this "general phoniness, this living by illusions and by fear into a harsh, clear light which reveals it clearly as sickness, even though widely shared" (p. 16).

Behaviorists restricted themselves to an explanation of human behavior along physiological lines. Freud plumbed the depths of lust and primitive emotion, occupying himself with what he himself acknowledged is "the basement" of human nature. Both schools of thought limited themselves to the instinctive level of human behavior, assuming that all higher needs and strivings are derived or learned and therefore not central or primary, but secondary and peripheral to what human nature essentially is. Along with Allport, Maslow sought to enlarge our conception of the human personality by trying to understand the higher levels of human functioning. He had, in fact, planned to give his work: Motivation and personality, the title of: The higher ceilings for human nature. Wilson (1972) in his book on Maslow and modern psychology, called Maslow "the first person to create a truly comprehensive psychology stretching, so to speak from the basement to the attic" (p. 184).

The ground-level needs of a human being. Maslow (1987) postulated a **hierarchy of needs**. At the lowest or most basic level are, of course, **the physiological needs** (for air, water, food and rest etc.) These are needs connected to **physical survival** and include all functionings aimed at securing survival by adaptively dealing with the environment from which gratification of these needs must be procured. The sexual needs could also be sorted under the physiological needs since they are connected to procreation.

This is the level to which earlier theories had confined themselves. Radical behaviorists based their theories on the behavior of animals under controlled laboratory situations. The experimental

animals, such as the rat, have few motivations other than physiological ones. Since so much of the behavioristic research on motivation is based on a study of these animals, it is easy to carry the rat picture over to the human being, Maslow (1987) pointed out.

Freud based his theory on his analytic work with neurotically disturbed individuals. An exclusive focus on the pathological behavior of individuals driven by unresolved conflict over repressed sexual needs, makes it easy, stated Maslow (1987), to believe that such deficiency motivation is basic to human nature in general.

If we study healthy human beings, we find these lower needs predominant as motivators of behavior **only** during periods of extreme physiological deprivation. During such times pressing bodily needs will totally **obscure** the higher motivations. In extreme cases of hunger, for example, all other needs and interests are pushed into the background and become of secondary importance. It is quite true that humans live by bread alone - when there is no bread (Maslow, 1987). At such a time, **and at such a time only**, can we speak of a pure hunger drive and behavior with the one unqualified aim of relief.

There is much more to the human being than the satisfaction of animal needs. Most fascinating in this regard are Maslow's (1974) observations of the baby as a **person**. Behind the infant's total physical dependency on caregivers who will feed, clothe and see to all his needs, is the person of the infant "reading" (forming impressions of) the way he is cared for. What does it "say" to him? The infant can sense whether he is loved or not, there is a **body language** between him and his caregivers.

The psychoanalytic theory of Melanie Klein (1957, 1963, 1965, 1969) contends that there is an ego operative from birth forming rudimentary impressions of **good** (gratifying) versus **bad** (depriving) experiences. Good experiences allow the ego to strengthen and grow, to emerge with a sense of basic trust. Bad or depriving experiences force the ego to withdraw behind a complex variety of psychological defenses. These explanations are right in line with Maslow's reasoning on the matter. However, Maslow (1974) believed that psychoanalytic observations of infantile and childhood functioning should have been **illuminatingly supplemented** by observations of the fully emerged selfhood of the person on higher levels of functioning.

Most instinct theorists made the serious mistake of overstressing man's continuity with the animal world, without at the same time stressing the profound differences between the human species and all others. In most cases, all higher forms of behavior are **reduced** by instinct theorists to infantile levels of functioning and **explained** as derivatives of so-called basic instincts. However, instincts steadily **drop out** as we go higher in the phyletic scale, to be **replaced by** an adaptability based on a vastly improved ability to learn, to think, and to communicate, Maslow (1974) believed. "The human being has no instincts, only instinct remnant and instinct anlagen" (p. 331).

During the course of development, and as the person grows beyond the infantile and early stages, there is a gradual and ever clearer appearance of higher urges. **It becomes increasingly evident that there is an "intervening variable" - the person, the self, or the ego, an internal patterning agent - that stands between stimulus and response** (Maslow, 1974).

The human needs of the person. In Maslowian thought, the physiological needs, even though most urgent for survival, are not the most characteristically **human**. Physiological needs do not **primarily** express our humanness. The deepest need of the human being, Maslow (1987) contended, is a need for **self-actualization**. The self-actualizing tendency as the most essential striving of man, is more evidently at work in the needs higher up in the hierarchy.

If the **the safety needs**, next up in the hierarchy, are met, then the more social needs - **the belongingness, love and esteem needs** - become prominent.

The most compelling evidence that the self-actualizing tendency is, in fact, the strongest urge or most basic need in the motivational life of man, is that the moment needs lower in the hierarchy are satisfied, other (and higher) needs at once emerge.

Once the level of self-actualization has been reached, proper growth, in terms of **doing what the person is uniquely fitted for**, can start. "Musicians must make music, artists must paint, poets must write if they are to be ultimately at peace with themselves. What humans **can** be, they **must** be. They must be true to their own nature" (Maslow, 1987, p. 22).

Maslow (1987) therefore believed that in the course of childhood development it is important that basic needs (deficit motives) be gratified so that the child may **be freed** to adopt less self-centered (growth) motives. Thus a child who has had a sufficient degree of care, safety, love and respect is not forever obsessed by these basic needs. He will feel secure and confident enough to be able to reach out to higher goals. Later on in life, he will be able to tolerate frustration of these needs more readily than a person whose whole personality is permanently fixated on needs that were never adequately gratified.

Like Allport, Maslow (1987) reasoned that the neurotic person is the one who has failed to develop **functionally autonomous systems of motives**. He is trapped in his growth as he acts out infantile and childish needs and conflicts his whole life long.

With the healthily evolving person, **need motives turn to Being-values**, that is, become functionally autonomous. No longer means to an end, they become ends in themselves. They become valued for what they are. For example, need-love (loving others for what you need to get out of them), turns to gift-love (loving others for their own sakes irrespective of what you get out of them in terms of your own need-satisfactions). What was at first an immature form of love and what Maslow (1968) called D-love (deficiency love, selfish love) can mature and change to B-love (love for the being of another person, unselfish love).

It follows, therefore, that a study of psychologically mature and healthy people will more fully reveal to us what human nature is truly like. What man is at the peak of his development, is what he is, potentially.

Congruent Selfhood. The Motivational Theory of Carl Rogers

Rogers (1974) proposed that the person's actualization tendency, the emerging and growing sense of selfhood, ever expanding towards a full expression on the mature reaches of growth - the central theme of humanistic theory - must be understood within what he called, the person's

phenomenal field, that is, the person's private world of experience. "His experience is his reality" Rogers (1974, p. 223) contended.

The development of the self-concept. Rogers used the word: "self" to refer to the individual's evaluation of himself in relation to his world and spoke of the person's **self-concept**. Rogers (1979) defined the self-concept as the organized, consistent **conceptual gestalt** (i.e. overall picture) composed of perceptions of the characteristics of the I or me and the perceptions of the relationship of the I or me to others and to various aspects of life, together with the values attached to these perceptions.

The developing child relates all his experiences to himself. What his world does to him is what it says of him. Unpleasant and hurtful experiences are damaging to his self-concept. He sees the world as uncaring, unloving towards and disinterested in him. He thus perceives himself as being unworthy of care, affection or interest. **A negative self-image and orientation to the world** develops.

If on the other hand he experiences a secure and safe environment with loving parents, sensitively responding to his needs, he perceives himself as lovable, worthy of love, and his relationship with his parents as affectionate. **A positive self-image and orientation to the world** is the result.

It is his **internal frame of reference** that determines how the child will approach and handle each new situation he encounters. A confident and secure child anticipates his world as filled with adventurous opportunity whereas an insecure child perceives his world as a threat, as something closed to him. The secure and confident child, because he feels **open** towards his world, can benefit maximally from new experiences. His phenomenal field broadens as his learning increases. His increased mastery over a greater complexity of situations, his experience of his own competence, serve to compliment his positive self-image. In the case of the insecure child, who feels **closed** to his world, there is more resistance to change. His negative self-image is difficult to alter. New evidence which contradicts (in a positive way) the old self-concept or threatens what self-esteem he seeks to preserve, is denied or distorted. The child grows up as a person who is out of touch with reality and who is non-receptive to new learning experiences which can correct his distorted self-image. Such a person's range of experience thus remains limited, confined within the narrow confines of a negative self-image. No enlargement of the personality, no real growth, can take place.

The introjected other. A person's self-regard develops as a result of his experiences of the regard on the part of significant others. The individual becomes his own significant other. In Freudian terms one could speak of **introjected evaluations**. What was at first the individual's experience at the hand of others, has now taken a controlling hand in his own inner life. The views of others towards him, have become his own views towards himself.

A typical **super-ego** type of restrictive conscience (locus of evaluation) operates in the person who has experienced **conditional positive regard**, that is, the giving of affection or approval only under prescribed conditions. "I will love and approve of you **if** you do what I say or behave as I expect you to." Rogers (1974) termed such behavioral directives as **conditions of worth**. The person has to **earn** the right to be accepted. Love is conditional upon the successful performance of set behavioral

rules.

A person who grows up under these conditions, develops a legalistic or moralistic conscience. He lives under the threat of criticism or judgement. He exercises this same punitive control over himself. He accepts himself only conditionally and is always on his guard against other suppressed aspects of himself which, if revealed and given expression to, he fears will indict him. He distrusts his own nature, is afraid of his impulses, and keeps a close guard over himself. The person has a **negative self-evaluation**, no matter how "good" his outward behavior may be or how well he succeeds in being a "good" person. He is, at heart, at war with himself and is his own worst enemy! What is more, he lives behind a front and cannot escape the feeling of **pretense and fraudulence**, a state which Rogers has termed **incongruence**. The typical conflict model of the person presented by Freudian theory, where the id, ego and superego function as factions, is applicable to such a person. He is seriously at **odds** with his world.

A most crucial point of difference between Freudian theory and the humanistic view of Rogers is that, whereas Freud saw this conflict-state as the fate of man, Rogers viewed such conflict as **foreign** to man, as something **unlike** him. Rogers called this conflict state, common to most if not all of us at some stage or another, as **the basic estrangement in man**. Describing such a person, Rogers (1974) stated: "**He has not been true to himself**, to his own **natural** organismic valuing of experience" (p. 288).

For the sake of preserving the positive regard of others, the individual **falsifies** his own experience. His own authentic judgement, his ability to see things as they truly are, is restrained, held in check or denied. As a passive victim of forces beyond his control, he becomes conditioned to believe the prescribed views of others. He believes **blindly**, fearfully, without personal conviction (without logic and often contrary to his better judgement). Such a person, Rogers (1974) believed, is in need of therapeutic intervention. He is a person in need of deliverance from a captive state **not** of his own choosing.

The achievement of congruence. The positive thrust of humanistic theory is evident in the firm belief of Rogers (1974) that restoration of the disintegrated and disorganized, in effect, deeply distressed person (the person as depicted by Freudian theory), is possible. The person can be **reconciled** to his world and, basically, to himself. "A process of **reintegration** is possible, a process which moves in the direction of increasing **congruence** between **self** and **experience**" (p. 231).

A destructive course of becoming can be **reversed**, the person can be returned to a situation he has **lost**. Rogers (1974) believed that man is **naturally, inherently geared** towards positive growth, towards self-actualization in the context of vital, creative relationships. This is man's natural estate, the state he was **created to be** in. That is why the experience of conditions of warmth, deep understanding, acceptance, a respect for the person's free right to **be**, **releases** growth (**redeems** the person from a **captive** situation).

A situation of **unconditional positive regard** is one where conditions of worth are **refuted**. The person is accepted **fully** with no holds barred. He can begin to drop his defenses and reveal even his most destructive thoughts and feelings without fear of being rejected. Those illicit and repressed

parts of his being can be fully exposed **because** the therapist (or loving other) sees and understands **the person behind his conflicts** and has an express faith in **the basic worth of the person**.

The healing element in any successful psychotherapy or caring relationship is that unconditional faith is expressed in the inherent goodness of human nature (Rogers, 1974).

In man's deepest being, most inherent to himself, there is a desire for goodness, for constructive and loving relationships, for truly social living. This desire is the **dominant** thrust in his personality. His tendency towards goodness is **more truly expressive** of his basic nature. If he can begin to see himself as some-one who desires good and **who suffers** the lack of it in his life, he can begin to have a **compassionate and caring** attitude towards himself. He can forgive himself for those things which, since he **suffers** from them, are less true about himself than the good things he **really** desires.

Being able to understand himself and others in this non-judgemental and accepting way, the sufferer can begin to believe that he is **love-worthy**. This is the attitude which **frees** him, releases his growth and his zest for living **the good life**. He has, in fact, **regained his courage to be himself**. He has a congruent sense of self, a congruent concept of himself in relation to others.

With the elimination of conditions of worth, there is thus an increase in **unconditional positive self-regard**. The person, in becoming open to himself, begins to open up to his world. With a restoration of **a basic trust in his own nature**, the person's orientation towards others becomes more trusting. The fulfillment of the command to "love your neighbor as you love yourself", becomes possible. A process of **reconciliation** has taken place. The person has regained a stature, a dignity, that was lost to him.

Man on the Spiritual Brink: Humanistic Theories on Psychological Maturity

An exploration of the humanistic views on the mature person is an exciting gateway to a fuller understanding of **man in the totality of his being**, a view more fully expounded in the writings of Viktor Frankl. In fact, the views of optimal being presented by the humanists, are important compliments to and give us a more flesh-and-blood understanding of the views of Frankl.

Frankl places the accent on man's **spiritual** aspects of being. Humanistic views on psychological maturity give us an understanding of how Frankl's views of man can be translated into the actions and orientations of man as he goes about the ordinary business of living.

The Healthy Person. The Views of Gordon Allport

According to Allport (1961), the mature person is one who, having gone through earlier stages of self-evolvement, has reached the level of **full becoming**. This means that the person, with a **fully evolved sense of selfhood**, is now able to be more actively and keenly involved in life. **He** initiates his

behavior, he is behind everything he says and does. He gives full expression to **himself**.

For Allport (1961) **the healthy person is the one who has assumed full responsibility for his own life and who, therefore, develops in a unique and personal way**. Positive mental health will include the following important components:

A widely extended sense of self: The mature person has developed beyond the narrow confines of only his own needs and desires (opportunistic strivings). No longer taken up by his needs and fancies, he feels drawn to, and becomes involved in and develops interests **outside** of himself. This outer- and other-directedness, Allport (1961) called **proprieate striving**. The mature person wants to have a cause to serve, he wants to give of himself. In **giving**, he is now receiving! His endeavors have become **authentic**, that is, earmarked by **personal commitment**. Launching **outwards**, his life takes on purpose and direction. "True participation gives direction to life. Maturity advances in proportion as lives are **decentered** from the clamorous immediacy of the body of egocenteredness" (Allport, 1961, p. 285).

A warm relating of self to others: Having become a person in his own right, he is now **available** for others to whom he can fully and responsibly commit himself. He can recognize others as individuals in their own right, worthy of respect and love. This is in sharp contrast to the immature person's concern only with himself and his own kind. The immature person often has fanatical views. Those who are different from himself and his own kind or group are regarded as alien and dangerous and, he believes, are to be withdrawn from and defended against. The mature person, by contrast, is not prejudiced but has a **democratic character structure**, a sense of kinship with **all mankind** (Allport, 1961).

Emotional security (self-acceptance): The mature person is someone who "has his own soul in possession". Because he knows himself and has a deep understanding of human nature, he is freely able to exercise control over himself and to take control in a situation which requires it. "Such a sense of proportion is not an isolated attribute in personality. It comes about because one's outlook is generally of a realistic order, and because one possesses **integrative values** that control and gate the flow of emotional impulse" (Allport, 1961, p. 287).

Realistic perception, skills, and assignments: Because the mature person can see beyond himself and the pressing demands of an immediate situation; because he can evaluate something in a broader context, he is neither at the beck and call of whim or fancy nor swayed by every wind of circumstance. The mature person **thinks**, assesses things intelligently. He is in close touch with the real world, not needing to bend reality or distort the facts to fit his needs or to abate his fears. He can face up to things courageously. He can **apply** himself, use his skills to solve even formidable problems (Allport, 1961).

Self-objectification: insight and humor: The reason why insight and humor go hand in hand, Allport (1961) pointed out, is because both are aspects of a single phenomenon - the phenomenon of self-objectification. The person who fully knows himself and who can take an objective view of his own qualities and characteristics, is also the person who can laugh at himself. Humor, as Allport saw it, is the ability to laugh at the things one cherishes (including oneself) and still cherish them. This type of humor is thus totally different from mere jesting or the cruder sense of the comic, which often

has a lustful or cruel streak to it.

A unifying philosophy of life: To be free from oneself and from emotional entanglements, is not enough. **Freedom must have a direction.** In addition to humor, maturity requires a clear comprehension of life's purpose in terms of an intelligible theory. This Allport (1961) called a unifying philosophy of life. Deeply held values serve as a unifying framework, which give meaning and significance to everything one does. Allport (1961) maintained that we all need a point of reference beyond ourselves to give a sense of **destiny** to our lives. The final and full expression of maturity and mental health is to be able to see ourselves and all of life in **full and meaningful perspective.**

The Self-actualizing Person. The Views of Abraham Maslow

According to Maslow (1987), the attainment of self-actualization epitomizes the ideal life-style. This stage is reached when lower level needs are no longer predominant. The person no longer acts out of a sense of **deficiency**, but is motivated by values or **metaneeds** which transcend and eclipse the lower level of need or deficiency motivation. Instincts and lower level needs become obscured as the importance of higher goals, a quality of life which far surpasses a level of mere survival, takes precedence.

Studying people whom Maslow (1987) felt personified such an ideal, the following features seem to signify their state of optimal growth and psychological well-being:

Efficient perception of reality and comfortable relations with it: Like Allport, Maslow (1987) perceived the mature person to be sufficiently freed from the domination of need to become more keenly aware of the nature of things outside of himself. Such a person's vision is unclouded by prejudice, belief and opinion. He has no need to box things in and to judge people according to stereotype. Maslow (1987) labeled this non-judgmental type of perception "being or B-cognition". It involves an altogether **freer** relation to the world which is not restricted by timidity and conventionality.

Acceptance of self, others, and nature: What Allport (1961) called: "self-objectification", Maslow (1987) described as the ability to be **unashamedly oneself**. "Our healthy individuals find it possible to accept themselves and their own nature without chagrin or complaint or, for that matter, even without thinking about the matter very much" (p. 130). Mature people are **natural**, embracing all about themselves or others without defensiveness, protective coloration, or pose. Cant, guile, hypocrisy, front, face, playing a game, trying to impress in conventional ways - all such artificialities are absent in themselves to an unusual degree. **They are what they are**, without apology. That is why they can **enjoy** themselves at all levels without regret or shame.

Spontaneity: Mature people are **inwardly free**. Their thoughts, feelings and actions are rich expressions of the core of their being. There is flexibility and flow, a wealth of movement in any direction they choose. They do not need to strain and strive to be what they feel they should be in order to be acceptable to those they seek to impress (Maslow, 1987).

Problem-centering: On the basis of his studies, Maslow (1968) concluded that "self-actualizing people are, **without one single exception**, involved in a cause outside their own skin, in

something outside of themselves" (p. 66). Self-actualizers are problem centered rather than ego-centered. Making reference to Viktor Frankl, Maslow (1987) stated: "these individuals customarily have some mission in life, some task to fulfill, some problem outside themselves which enlists much of their energies" (p. 134). They live to work rather than work to live.

Mature people live and work within the widest possible frame of reference. They are concerned with basic issues and eternal questions, with philosophic and ethical issues. "They give the impression of being above small things, of having a **larger horizon, a wider breadth of vision**" (Maslow, 1987, p. 174).

Solitude: Being able to distance themselves from problems and to view things objectively, they are less caught in the turmoils others fall prey to. Their ability to focus on what is important and to be unperturbed by side issues or irrelevances, enable mature people to "cut off" from their surroundings. They like and need times of solitude. They are able to retain their serenity even through the most trying times **because they can rely completely upon their own inner resources. "They seem to be able to retain their dignity even in undignified surroundings and situations"** (Maslow, 1987, p. 134).

Autonomy, independence of culture and environment: Mature people are **self-contained**. They are not dependent for their main satisfactions on the physical and social environment. They draw inspiration and strength from their **inner lives and find their directives for their own development and continued growth from there** (Maslow, 1987).

Continued freshness of appreciation: Maslow (1987) found that the self-actualizing people he studied had the wonderful capacity to appreciate again and again, freshly and naively, the good things of life, with awe, pleasure, wonder, and even ecstasy. For such people, **every new moment offers something unique, unlike any other moment, since every moment offers a new opportunity for fresh involvement.**

Peak experiences: Actively reaching out towards vital involvement with what exists outside their own skins, self-actualizers are known to have, what Maslow (1987) called, **peak experiences**. These highly special and profound moments encompass "feelings of **limitless horizons opening up to the vision**, the feeling of being simultaneously more powerful and also more helpless than one ever was before, the feeling of ecstasy and wonder and awe, the loss of placing in time and space with, finally, **the conviction that something extremely important and valuable had happened, so that the subject is to some extent transformed and strengthened even in daily life by such experiences**" (p. 137). Peak experiences are, essentially, moments of **complete openness to the uniqueness of that to which the person is fully giving himself, and at the same time, revealing himself to**. There is a loss of boundaries (or walls) between the self and what is being experienced, a sense of fusion, union, a climax of total connectedness!

Human kinship: Self-actualizing people feel kinship and connection, as if all people were members of a single family. Even though self-actualizers are sometimes troubled, saddened, and even enraged by the shortcomings of the human race, they have a genuine desire to improve the lot of their fellows. They experience their greater insight - that they can see and understand things which to most others are veiled and hidden - as a **responsibility towards others** (Maslow, 1987).

Democratic character structure: Self-actualizing people are democratic in the deepest possible sense (Maslow, 1987).

Interpersonal relations: Self-actualizing people are able to totally commit themselves and to enter into deeply sincere relationships with others. "They are capable of more fusion, greater love, more perfect identification, more obliteration of the ego boundaries than other people would consider possible" (Maslow, 1987, p. 140).

Ethics: Maslow found self-actualizers to be strongly ethical. They have definite moral standards, they do right and do not do wrong. A few centuries ago they would all have been described as men who walk in the path of God or as godly men. However, Maslow pointed out, institutionalized religion can have much about it that is strictly prescribed, dogmatic, confined and as a result, also condemnatory, morally oppressive, feigned, hypocritical and growth-restrictive. The freedom of being, of choice, of unconventionality and spontaneity of self-actualizing people would, therefore, look irreligious and disrespectful or profane to many people. It is clear that self-actualizers value, above all else, free-flowing, vital, deeply personal and authentic lifestyles (Maslow, 1987).

Means and ends: Perhaps one of the reasons why self-actualizers are not definitive or absolutely clear (and most definitely not dogmatic) about final or religious issues, is that life is valued as it is and as they experience it moment by moment. They take things as they come and meet opportunities as these open up to them. What to others are only means towards an end, are to self-actualizers ends in themselves (Maslow, 1987).

Humor: Like Allport, Maslow (1987) defined mature humor along the lines of philosophical perspective. It is the result of keen insight and astute observation and is, for these reasons, always instructive and enlightening - it does something meaningful and is, therefore, constructive.

Creativity: Without exception, every self-actualizing person shows in one way or another, a special kind of creativeness, originality or inventiveness. It is not a creativity of being gifted with some extraordinary talent or genius, but is the result of a **creative way of life** (Maslow, 1987).

Resistance to enculturation: Since the majority determine the social culture, the self-actualizers, whom Maslow (1987) called: "the saving remnant" (p. 145), find themselves in an **imperfect culture**. To be and remain healthy, they have to **resist** enculturation as a process which will "flatten them out", mold them according to mundane pattern. To retain the uniqueness of their persons, they have to be **autonomous**, that is, ruled by the laws of their own character rather than by the rules of society. Prizing their freedom, they resist yielding to type.

The Fully Functioning Person. The Views of Carl Rogers

Rogers (1972) was very impressed with the writings of the Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard who spoke about "a sickness unto death", the sickness of **despair**. The most common despair, Kierkegaard wrote, is to be in despair at "not choosing, or willing, to be oneself"; the deepest form of despair, however, is to choose "to be another than himself" (in Rogers, 1972, p. 110). This tragic denial of self, of one's own personhood, is what Rogers termed: **incongruent selfhood**. The person lives by the definition given to himself by others and which he has yielded to (accepted) out of

a fear of really being himself.

The mature person is a **fully functioning person**. He lives what Rogers (1972) called, the **good life**.

The good life involves a wider range, a greater richness, than the constricted living in which most of us find ourselves. To be part of this process means that one is involved in the frequently frightening and frequently satisfying experience of a more sensitive living, with greater range, greater variety, greater richness. .. This process of the good life is not, I am convinced, a life for the faint-hearted. It involves the stretching and growing of becoming more and more of one's potentialities. It involves **the courage to be**. It means launching oneself into the stream of life. (pp. 195-196)

Rogers (1972) specifies the following major personality characteristics common to people who are fully functioning, that is, who are living the good life. These are, in fact, characteristics of optimal mental health.

An increasing openness to experience: Living the good life means a distinct movement away from being self-defensive. The first aspect of this openness to experience, is an openness towards oneself. It involves being able to listen to oneself, to experience what is going on within oneself without threat (and a consequent distortion, denial or suppression of impulses or feelings). Only the person who fully **knows himself**, has the freedom to **be himself**. His actions can be based upon a considered choice of **all** the options (impulses and feelings) that are available to awareness e.g. feelings of fear, discouragement, pain but **also** feelings of hope, love, faith (Rogers, 1972).

Increasingly existential living: A second aspect of an openness to experience is to be open to the reality as it exists outside oneself without perceiving it in preconceived categories. Rogers (1974) called the full and unfettered involvement with life, **existential living**. It is an openness to each unique moment which is **fully lived** (experienced). The fully experiencing person will **blend** with the moment, be able to be taken up by it. "His self-structure will be congruent with his experience, will be a **fluid gestalt**, changing flexibly in the process of assimilation of new experience" (p. 235).

Organismic trusting: In choosing what course of action to take in any situation, many people rely upon guiding principles, upon a code of action laid down by some group or institution, upon the judgment of others, or upon the way they have behaved in some similar past situation. Rogers found that as his clients progressed in therapy, they were increasingly able to trust their total organismic reaction to a new situation. They discovered, to an ever-increasing degree, that if they are open to their experiencing, then doing what "feels right" proves to be a competent and trustworthy guide to the kind of behavior which is truly satisfying (Rogers, 1972).

An internal locus of evaluation: Organismic trusting is based on the fact that the fully functioning person realizes that the locus of evaluation lies within himself. He does not look to others for approval or disapproval; for standards to live by; for decisions and choices. **He recognizes that it rests within himself to choose**. Rogers (1972) contended that the more a person is living the good life, the more he will experience a freedom of choice, the wider his range of experience and the greater his openness to ever **richer** experiences.

Creativity: It is evident that the person who is involved in the directional process which Rogers has termed "the good life," is a creative person. "With his sensitive **openness** to his world, his trust of his own ability to form new relationships with his environment, he would be the type of person from whom creative products and creative living emerge" (Rogers, 1972, p. 193).

Humanistic Theories from a Meaning Perspective

The Birth of a New Psychology

Humanistic psychologists followed human development to its heights of full psychological maturity on the psychosocial level of being. Here man emerges as **open** towards himself in relation to his world. Here he is presented with a myriad of choices. Having gained the maturity to no longer be driven by need or molded by circumstance, man on a higher level of being reflects upon himself, considers the courses of action open to him, and directs his own life in terms of self-chosen aims and ideals.

The study of man in his maturity and at his optimal psychological best, brings **the psychospiritual** aspects of human nature into the picture. On a higher dimension of being, man is involved with social concerns and ethical issues, with art and religion. On this level man proves to have what Maslow called, **metaneeds**. Risen to his full stature, man requires **as a necessity**, a rich and personal experience of those values in life that add meaning and purpose to his existence; greater worth and dignity to his person.

The revelation of the higher strivings of human nature, **the spiritual needs of man**, cast a whole new light into the dim regions of Skinnerian and Freudian speculations on human nature. It exposes its shortcomings, its glaring faults in the light of what man **can** be like and what he **proves to be** when he has reached his full stature. In an exclusive focus on only the lower levels of human functioning, man's spirituality, his higher nature, is out of sight. Out of sight, it was out of mind in Skinnerian and Freudian speculations on human nature. Skinner and Freud declared that freedom is an illusion, religion a fantasy since, from their perspective, life on a spiritual or higher plane of living seemed unreal, out of reach, that is, outside the boundaries of science.

Beginning to move within the parameters of an **extended** science, humanistic research uncovered factual aspects of human nature which earlier theories in their narrowly conceived and prejudicial (theoretically biased) approaches to the study of human nature had, in fact, **failed to see**. The result was a revolution in our understanding of human behavior.

I have come to think of this humanist trend in psychology as a revolution in the truest, oldest sense of the word, the sense in which Galileo, Darwin, Einstein, Freud and Marx made revolutions, i.e., **new ways of perceiving and thinking, new images of man and of society, new conceptions of ethics and of values, new directions in which to move**. The Third Psychology is now one facet of **a new philosophy of life, a new conception of man, the beginning of a new century of work**. (Maslow, 1968, p. iii-iv)

What presented as perplexing problems in the earlier theories of Skinner and Freud, namely, the issue of human freedom and the dualism of mind and body, were successfully resolved when the humanists studied man at a mature stage of his evolution. Humanists proved the point Frankl (1970) made with his dimensional ontology: that only on the higher dimensions of being and development, do we get the full picture of what man is really like. Surprisingly, a third contentious issue which both Skinner and Freud wrestled with, namely, man's annoying occupation with spiritual matters, with religion, took on a whole new face from a humanistic perspective.

Each of these issues will be addressed in the discussions that follow.

We will be taking a closer look at those features of humanistic theory which cast brilliant light on Frankl's concepts of man's freedom of will, his will to meaning and his inherent striving to find meaning in life. The humanistic contribution to a new appreciation of the role of religion in the life of the mature person, will be considered within the context of a discussion of the personal lives of Allport, Maslow and Rogers.

Man's Inherent Right to be Free

Frankl (1967) maintains that it is a core constituent of being human to have freedom of will. The humanists proclaimed freedom to be a basic human right. Without it, no true human society can exist. **No man can develop optimal humanness without the freedom to do so.**

To the humanists, unlike the behaviorists and psychoanalysts, not freedom but the **lack** of freedom is a problem!

Humanists maintain that the more mature and fully developed a man is, the richer will be his range of choices and the greater his personal freedom. The essence of mental health is the experience of **free will**.

Rogers (1989) found that in the therapeutic relationship some of the most compelling subjective experiences are those in which the client senses within himself the power of naked choice. During the optimal moments of therapy the person experiences the most complete and absolute freedom. To be or not to be (to live authentically or to withdraw defensively) is then an **open** question. For Rogers "the good life", the fulfilling and wholesome life, is to be wholeheartedly, that is, **unrestrainedly** involved in the process of living. "The more the person is living the good life, the more he will experience a freedom of choice, and the more his choices will be effectively implemented in his behavior" (Rogers, 1989, p. 418).

Allport (1966) stressed that richness in the process of becoming, the exposure to a variety of experiences, the broadening of knowledge through education, the expanding of awareness in a greater breadth of vision, are crucial elements of freedom.

Allport (1966) thus believed that man must **develop his freedom**. Freedom as inherent to human nature, is a **potential** which like all other potentials can be suppressed, underdeveloped, or remain unused. It can even be abused!

Maslow (1987) maintained that transcendent urges, whether aesthetic, creative or religious, are different explorations of freedom and are as basic and permanent a part of human nature as dominance

or sexuality. **If they are less obviously universal, this is only because fewer human beings reach the point at which they take over.**

According to the humanists, therefore, **optimal humanness is a state of optimal freedom.**

It is because Skinner and Freud failed to see man as free and self-determining, that both theorists were confronted with an insoluble **dualism** of mind and body. Maddi (1980) in his book on personality theories, calls these deterministic theories, **the conflict model** of personality. In contrast, the humanistic theories, because they postulate a **self-actualizing** force at the core of human nature, can be seen as a **fulfillment model** of personality. A central harmonizing force binds otherwise disparate aspects of being together. Humanists maintain that man, when he is fully man, is an **indivisible unity**.

The holistic conception of man in humanistic theory is an outflow of the recognition that, as the self evolves, it exercises its freedom in an ever more **self-directive and constructive way**.

The Inherent Outreach towards Higher Levels of Being as a Will to Meaning

There is a most exciting parallel between the humanistic views of the core motivations of man and Frankl's theory of **the will to meaning**.

Frankl (1969) only made general reference to what he referred to as the ontogenetic development of the individual from childhood to maturity and the emergence of what he regarded to be a core motivation of man, namely, his will to meaning.

Frankl never clearly addressed the issue of the development of the fundamental self or spirit of man, plus the essentially **spiritual** aspirations of the self from its **unconscious beginnings** to its full manifestation on the mature levels of becoming. **It stands to the credit of the humanists to have highlighted the developmental aspects of the self and its strivings towards ever higher reaches of self-realization.**

Man's Core Motivation according to Allport

Allport (1966) spoke about the emergence of **proprie motives** over and above the more immature opportunistic motives which predominated during the earlier stages of growth.

At a certain level of growth the person no longer uses his social environment as a mere means of satisfying his needs. As he moves beyond the **infantile** level of functioning, his developing social sensitivities become **functionally autonomous**. A more mature person freely **chooses** to be social, his behavior is directed towards **ends**.

Social norms, at first functioning as mere restrictions outside the person, can become **values**, that is, prized for their own sake and hence **freely** obeyed and practiced, having **greater** priority in a person's life than lower level needs. In the psychologically mature person, Allport (1966) pointed out, "higher-level systems determine the **go** of the lower, and it is for this reason that man is able to keep as closely as he does to his own major systems of value" (p. 87).

Man becomes what he **values**, this is his uniqueness. This is what makes him **wholly** man.

Allport (1966) used the word **self-extension** to describe the ever more encompassing nature of the evolving self. The young child has only the rudiments of such self-extension. At adult level we can sometimes say, "**A man is what he loves**" (p. 112). At this level, man becomes distinctively **himself**. Here he exhibits his own freely chosen likes, values, aims and ideals, those characteristics which truly define his person.

Juxtaposing the humanistic to the deterministic, basically **animalistic** theories of man, Allport (1966) stated: "The process of becoming is governed by a disposition to realize its possibilities, i.e., to become **characteristically human** at all stages of development" (p. 28).

To be characteristically **human**, according to Allport (1966), is to have **self-awareness**. This awareness or essential freedom of thought and choice of action, presupposes the self as the thinker, the potential agent of choice, at the very core of man's being. At first only a passive recipient of impressions, the self emerges as an ever more active **initiator** of behavior.

What Frankl terms man's **spirit** is what Allport referred to as the **knower** or transcendental self. The knower is clearly the **pivotal point** of the personality. The way the knower makes himself known, how the very spirit of a person manifests his or her fundamental being, Allport termed the **proprium** or **selfhood** of the person. This is the self "as object" of knowledge and feeling, the way the person's fundamental being is expressed and experienced by the person and others. **Personality** is the radius of expression, the typical manifestation or characteristics of the **person**.

At birth the person is still unaware of himself or herself but further development is clearly earmarked by **proprie functioning**, by a process of **self-realization** along a continuum of **individuation**. Mature functioning is characterized by an **uniquely individual** style of life, a life that is highly self-aware, self-critical and self-directing.

Fundamentally, the person is motivated to realize his or her full humanness. What this full humanness entails only becomes obvious during adolescence, a period during which the selfhood of the person is fully evolved. Then the forward-moving tendency of growth, its "directedness" or "intentionality" can be clearly observed as a **future directedness**. "In order to be normal, an adolescent, and especially an adult, needs a **defining objective, a line of promise**. It is not necessary that the goals be rigidly focused, but only that a **central striving** be present" (Allport, 1961, p. 126).

According to Allport (1966), **proprie striving**, man's emerged ability to direct himself and plan his life towards long-term goals and ideals, to prioritize his choices according to values which constantly beckon and address him, is **the** most important or most outstanding feature of the mature or optimally developed person. (It is) the integrity that comes **only** from maintaining major directions of striving. The existence of long-range goals, regarded as **central to one's personal existence**, distinguishes the human being from the animal, the adult from the child, and in many cases the healthy personality from the sick.

Since what the person essentially is (**can be**), is only revealed after the self has fully matured and is functioning optimally, this self-transcendent outreach towards, dare we say it: **meaning**, is, **the most essential and characteristic** feature of human nature. It is the **one** striving which makes man distinctively **human** (Allport, 1961).

We can therefore, unequivocally conclude that what Allport had singled out as appropriate striving, the distinctive way in which a person functions when fully mature, is a fully emerged **will to meaning**. Not anywhere in his works is the will to meaning more graphically described than in the following passage:

... The essential nature of man is such that **it presses toward a relative unification of life** (never fully achieved). In this **trend toward unification** we can identify many central psychological characteristics. Among them are man's search for answers to the "tragic trio" of problems: suffering, guilt, death. We identify also his effort to relate himself to his fellow men and to the universe at large. We see that he is trying to discover his peculiar place in the world, to establish his "identity". As a consequence of this quest - **which is the very essence of human nature** - we note that man's conduct is to a large degree proactive, intentional, and unique to himself. (Allport, 1961, p. 252)

Man's Core Motivation according to Maslow

Like Allport, Maslow also recognized the radical difference between lower level deficiency needs and higher level **growth** needs.

In his study of highly self-actualized persons, Maslow observed that at this level of maturity, man values his beliefs, his aesthetic, creative and religious experiences **more** than the crude pleasures of satisfying the mindless and selfish need demands of his lower nature. The mature person is sufficiently released from want to be able to pursue and enjoy, find self-fulfillment in what Maslow (1968) termed: the **Being-values**, like beauty, art and music, ethical issues and selfless causes.

Maslow (1968) defined self-actualization as "an unceasing trend toward **unity, integration or synergy** within the person" (p. 25), a trend which, Maslow believed, operates from birth.

According to Allport (1966), the proprium starts operating (the self starts revealing itself in unique ways and becomes more fully known or experienced) at about two years of age. Maslow (1968) contended that **the self or person of the infant is there for anyone who is open-minded enough to see**. Every baby is an individual, a self, idiosyncratic, different from every other baby in the most obvious ways. "How is it possible not to see that a normal baby is experiencing itself as worthwhile and self-starting, and that the world is interesting, even fascinating - that it is a wonderful place to live in?" (Maslow, 1968, p. 91)

In a word, Maslow believed, **the baby is a person**, a person with a mind and a will of its own.

As a self-starter, the baby will immediately and continually reach out to its world for the kind of active involvement and interplay, especially with significant others, which will allow it to develop and grow, and **actualize** its own unique self. If the growing child's basic physiological, safety, belongingness, love and esteem needs are met, there will be a **spontaneous emergence** of higher level self-actualization needs. The need for active involvement with its world, so evident in the baby and young child's life, will be evident throughout the growing years and takes on a mature expression in adult life.

On the brink of adulthood, the healthy adolescent will express the need to fully and independently step out into life to put his or her own peculiar talents and capacities to authentic and full use.

Agreeing with Allport, Maslow (1968) believed that "self-actualization is meaningless without reference to a currently active future" (p. 14).

In his work: The further reaches of human nature, Maslow (1972) graphically poses the question: **Beyond self-actualization, what?** Having become free, fully evolved, mature; having achieved the ability to lead an authentic and independent life, what for and what now? **To which end** are these secured energies and abilities to be used and directed? **What will secure continued development, mental health and real fulfillment?**

Maslow (1972) pursued the question in his study of self-actualizing individuals and observed that self-actualizing people are involved in a cause outside their own skin, in something outside of themselves. All, in one way or another, devote their lives to the search for the "Being" or ultimate values. "In fact, I would go so far as to claim that these B-Values are the meaning of life for most people, but many people don't even recognize that they have these metaneeds." (p. 44)

Maslow (1987) recognized a will to meaning in what he described as the the inherent cognitive/conative need to know and to understand.

This process has been phrased by some as the search for meaning. We shall then postulate a desire to understand, to systematize, to organize, to analyze, to look for relations and meanings, to construct a system of values (as a truly basic need). (p. 25)

Basic to human nature, it therefore can be expected to manifest itself fully on the adult reaches of becoming. And here, indeed, the need to know and to understand, to find and fulfill meaning, emerges as the one characteristic shared by all self-actualizing people. In fact, it proves to be the core or very essence of their lives! "Self-actualizing people seem to do what they do for the sake of ultimate, final values, which is for the sake of principles which seem intrinsically worthwhile (meaningful)" (Maslow, 1972, pp. 192-193).

What emerges at the peak of healthy personality development as the core motivation of man in Maslow's study of self-actualizing people, is nothing other than, the will to meaning!

Man's Core Motivation according to Rogers

Describing the self-actualizing tendency as a "forward-moving directional or growth tendency", Rogers (1972) agreed with Allport and Maslow that "it is the mainspring of life", existing "in every individual", awaiting only "the proper conditions to be released and expressed" (p. 35).

What Rogers (1972) unearthed in psychotherapy, is the intentional nature of man. Rogers postulated that, at the moment of birth, human consciousness is intentional. It seeks an object. The first and predominant need is to make meaningful contact with its world. Meaningful contact means to relate and to feel related to, in an affirming, positive way. **Every newborn child seeks meaning.**

Every neonate, therefore, needs an immediate and ongoing experience of the positive affirmation of his person, an affirmation that boosts the neonate's inherent outreach towards

meaningful, fully participative, interaction with its world. Rogers (1974) called this growth-enhancing atmosphere, an atmosphere of **unconditional positive regard** for the person of the child, a welcoming acknowledgement of its existence. It is **this atmosphere** that allows the child to **evaluate** its world **positively**. A positive experience of its world, positive sensations or first impressions of the kind of world the child has been born into, give a boost to the child's inherent growth-tendency. As this happens, a more clearly discernible need for **positive regard** from significant others, from its caregivers or attachment figures, becomes evident. When this need continues to be met, the child feels that it has **impact** on its world, that its existence is of **significance or worth** (has meaning).

It is a process that goes **beyond** only constructive relationships with others since **imbedded** in this process, is an outreach towards **the good life** which we can translate as a sense of **meaningful relatedness** to life itself.

Humanistic Thoughts on the Meaning of Life

It is the dimension of meaning that we now need to make more explicit in our exploration of the parallel in thought between the humanists and Frankl. In considering those aspects in humanistic theory which point to the existence of a dimension of meaning, a recap and a more explicit discussion of Frankl's thinking on the subject, will serve as a background which will more sharply illuminate humanistic thinking on the matter.

The Meaning of Human Freedom according to Frankl: A Confrontation with the Meaning of Life

The freedom of will is the first tenet of logotherapy. The freedom of will is the absolute prerequisite for **the will to meaning** which is the second tenet of logotherapy. No one can strive for meaning unless he is free to do so! But, contends Frankl, just as meaning cannot be conceived without freedom, freedom should not be conceived without meaning. Freedom is revealed for what it is only within its context of meaning. **Freedom has a purpose.** It is there for a reason.

Man's will is free **to seek meaning**. Without this aim and objective, freedom is meaningless. Freedom for what? Equally, just as a will to meaning is inconceivable without freedom, and freedom senseless outside a context of a search for meaning, such a search or will to meaning is ludicrous and, as Sartre (1957) believed, man's freedom is absurd and tragic, if there is no inherent meaning to life. Why have freedom to search for meaning, why have a will to meaning if there is no meaning to be found? **The meaning of life** is, therefore, the third tenet of logotherapy.

Man does not live by bread alone. Just like the fact that man's hunger will lead him to a search for food, the fact of human freedom will lead man to the discovery of meaning. The essential nature of the phenomenon of human freedom, Frankl (1969) contends, is to evoke in man a search for and to confront him with the question of the meaning of his own life.

Frankl (1969) is in full accord with the humanists in stating that the crisis of meaning usually happens during adolescence. "The problem of meaning takes on overwhelming urgency at puberty, when the essential uncertainty of human life is suddenly revealed to young people maturing and

struggling spiritually" (p. 22).

The adolescent is confronted with the fact of his own freedom. Freedom for what and where to now? Life's course is not neatly laid out and patterned. Life waits for the adolescent, about to step out into independence, to see what he or she will be doing with it. Freedom becomes **responsibleness**.

It is in the nature of freedom to address us, Frankl (1969) asserts. Freedom holds us to account. "Human freedom is not a freedom from but a freedom to - a freedom to accept responsibility" (p. 42).

Life stretches before us and presents itself to us as **an assignment** waiting at any and every moment of time for us to accept and fulfill it. The task-quality of life is found in its command that it **must** be lived, its problems faced up to, its opportunities grasped, its duties performed, its moments appreciated. Frankl (1969) insists that it is life itself that asks questions of man. It is not up to man to question; rather, he should recognize that **he** is being questioned, questioned by life. "**He has to respond by being responsible**; he can answer to life only by answering for his life" (p. 49).

In fact, Frankl (1969) argues, our existence as humans falters unless we are addressed or called to task by life. The meaning of life is transmitted to us in terms of **obligation**. Without a call to responsibility, man's life lacks direction. A man who feels he has nothing to be responsible for, is a man who feels he has nothing to live for. A man with responsibility is a man with dignity and a sense of worth. It is when man starts acting responsibly, especially in tragic circumstances, that he gains control over himself and over his circumstances, and that he begins to experience meaning.

Without a sense of responsibility for something or someone, therefore, without a sense of self-responsibility: the call to be the best you can be under all, even the most difficult circumstances, life is experienced as meaningless.

The meaning of a man's life is thus to be found in the responsibilities he finds himself faced with.

It is in responsibility that man will find meaning.

Man is guided by conscience. "It is the task of conscience to disclose to man the unum nesesse, the one thing that is required" (Frankl, 1977, p. 34). Conscience has its "still small voice" and "speaks" to us - that is an undeniable phenomenological fact. From the psychological point of view, the religious person is one who experiences not only what is spoken, but the speaker as well; that is, his hearing is sharper than the non-religious person's. "In the dialogue with his conscience - **in this most intimate of possible monologues** - his God is his interlocutor" (Frankl, 1969, p. 50).

No one can prove that the spiritual realm exists. But, through man's irrepressible yearning for this higher, spiritual dimension of life; his invigorating and inspiring, timeless and universal experience of it; the existence of a spiritual dimension of meaning must be **assumed**.

An exploration of this dimension of meaning in humanistic theory is the most exciting venture yet, since this is the one dimension of human nature which, for most psychological theorists and practitioners of our day, still remains in shadow.

Pointers to the Dimension of Meaning in the Theory of Allport

Allport (1961) had a sound grasp of Frankl's thinking on the dimension of meaning. In a discussion of existential theory, he commented that it is not enough for man to question life concerning its meaning and purpose. **More important are the questions life puts to each man.** This aspect of existentialist thinking goes beyond the goal of "self-actualization". For it asks in effect which of our many potentialities we will choose to actualize. To actualize all of them would be trivial self-indulgence, Allport (1961) stated and concluded: **"One must transcend himself, take an outside look at his abilities and desires within a context of meaning that is objective, even cosmic.** From this point of view the capacity for self-transcendence and responsibility becomes the truly significant core of human nature" (p. 560).

Allport's conception of **the mature conscience** revealed his grasp of the existence of an objective dimension of meanings and values. As growth moves beyond the lower levels of being, there is an important phenomenological shift from opportunistic functioning to what he called **oriented becoming**. "The feel of conscience in adulthood is seldom tied to the fear of punishment. It is rather **an experience of value-related obligation.** .. ought is not the same as must. (Mature) consciences have more to do with love than with fear" (Allport, 1966, p. 72).

As the selfhood or proprium of the person evolves, the reality of a dimension of meaning begins to make itself felt in the life of the maturing individual.

There is a shift from ego-functions that are self-oriented (which seek self-gratification) to an **extension** of the ego and the inclusion of things that are appreciated for their **own sake** and which begin to be of **vital and central importance** to the developing person.

In maturity, a **widely extended sense of self** will include interests and loyalties based on moral and religious values. "Indeed, a mark of maturity seems to be the range and extent of one's feeling of self-involvement in abstract ideals" (Allport, 1966, p. 45). Propriate striving is **heterostatic**, since its goals are, strictly speaking, unattainable. Personality is less a finished product than a transitive process since man is forever reaching into the future, to that which is always **ahead of him** (Allport, 1966).

The most characteristic aspect of being human when we reach the mature levels of becoming, therefore, is that man reaches out towards and involves himself with the dimension of meaning which lies **above and beyond him**. The life-giving energies (meanings as blessings) emanating from this dimension, he can never deplete. "In your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand there are pleasures for evermore", exclaimed the Psalmist (Psalm 16:11).

Allport (1961), more than any other humanist, recognized the width- and height-dimension of human freedom. So convinced was he of the self-transcendent nature of human freedom that he contended that even if shaping experiences were negative (if basic needs were not met), it was still possible for a person to develop towards maturity. **It is the characteristic of human freedom to burst all bounds.**

Pointers to the Dimension of Meaning in the Theory of Maslow

The emergence of a Fourth Psychology. Maslow (1968) attempted to **enlarge** our conception of personality by exploring the higher levels of human growth. He did this by a first-hand study of the lives of highly self-actualizing people. Their most evolved levels of being brought the experience of **meaning** on the higher reaches of human nature vividly into focus. Awed by what he was observing, Maslow (1968) commented that a different picture emerges. **"You find yourself in another realm. This realm is what I have to call transhumanistic"** (p. 4).

The focal point, or the point of departure into this transhumanistic realm comes when you ask self-actualizing people to answer the following kind of questions: "What are the moments which give you the greatest kick, the greatest satisfaction? What are the great moments? What are the moments of reward which make your work and your life **worthwhile**?" The answers to these questions were in terms of ultimate verities, Maslow (1968) pointed out. These are **intrinsic values** - truth, goodness, beauty, perfection, excellence, simplicity, elegance, and so on. "What this amounts to is that this third psychology is giving rise to a fourth, 'transhumanistic psychology' dealing with **transcendent experiences and with transcendent values**."(p. 4).

In discovering these experiences of meanings as **facts**, Maslow (1972) made the following startling comment:

I am denying the whole modern history of science which has from its very beginning claimed the need to be value-free, value-neutral, value-rejecting. The world of objects and the world of things is, in a sense, value-free. However, **human beings are not value-free; they live by values, they live for values.** (p. 4)

He became convinced that value-free science is a desacralizer; it makes things neutral and positivistic. With transhumanism, a resacralizing, a **respiritualizing** of human existence takes place. **"When you open the door to value and to value experiences and peak or transcendent experiences, a whole new level of possibilities is open to investigation"** (Maslow, 1972, p. 5). Psychologists should go and learn from the existentialists and adopt an orientation that stresses **the dimension of seriousness and profundity of living**, which is in sharp contrast to the shallow and superficial life which is, in fact, a kind of **diminished living**, a defense against the ultimate meanings of life. "Not only have we as psychologists been ducking the problem of responsibility and of free will, but also their corollaries of strength and courage" (Maslow, 1968, p. 13).

Maslow (1968) became impressed with the fact that man needs to find and experience a **fourth, supra-human dimension**, "a dimension that is transpersonal, transhuman, centered in the cosmos rather than in human needs and interest, even going **beyond** human boundaries, identity, self-actualization and the like" (p. iv).

The fourth dimension, in Frankl's terminology, is the dimension of meaning. This is the dimension in which man, in the ultimate sense, "lives and moves and has his being" (Acts 17:28).

On this level of **full** responsibility, man has evolved a selfhood that is **sovereign**, that is, **totally unique**. Maslow (1968) asserted that if the study of the uniqueness of the individual on this

most evolved level of being does not fit into what we know of science, "then so much the worse for that conception of science. It, too, will have to endure re-creation" (p. iv). Maslow (1968) confessed that the stimulus that affected him most powerfully in existentialist literature, was the problem of **future time** in psychology. This type of outreach to what is ever ahead and beyond man, points to **man's dynamic interaction with a dimension of meaning. "I think it is fair to say that no theory of psychology will ever be complete which does not centrally incorporate the concept that man has his future within him, dynamically active at this present moment"** (p. 15).

The dimension of man's vital interaction with meaning will have to be included in what Maslow (1968) called: a **suitably enlarged science**. "What we are witnessing is an expansion of psychology, not a new "ism" that could turn into an antipsychology or into an antiscience. Existentialism is a push towards **the psychology of the fully evolved and authentic self and its ways of being**" (Maslow, 1968, p. 16). Not only needs and drives, but the importance of values and meanings, should be included in our psychological investigations of human development and behavior. These higher conceptions of being "are also generating a different notion of reality and a different notion of objectivity. **It is becoming clearer that there is a higher conception of objectivity than the one we know**" (Maslow, 1968, p. 7).

Far from being illusory, mere subjectivism and projections of the mind, as Skinner and Freud viewed experiences of a higher order, Maslow (1968) discovered these experiences to be **real**. To be real, these experiences must point to **the objective existence of that which is being experienced**. In other words, a Supra-human dimension of values and meanings must exist, otherwise the person is merely hallucinating, imagining to be experiencing something that only exists in his own mind!

Psychology has **a new mission: the discovering and uncovering of values**. What Frankl calls: the dimension of meaning, Maslow termed: **the realm of Being**. Maslow (1972) described the Being-realm as **"a transcending syntheses that goes beyond what exists now"** (p. 79).

Without meaning, Frankl (1969) contends, life becomes absurd. Existence becomes vacuous and lapses into futility, meaninglessness and despair. This is the realization that struck Maslow (1972) as he himself contemplated whether life held intrinsic meaning, whether, in fact, there is a Supra-human dimension of meaning. **"It is terribly important that it exists, because (it) is the antidote against hopelessness and against the hopeless pessimism of the kind that exists in so very many people of the intellectual class"** (p. 79).

Peak experiences as a breakthrough into the dimension of meaning. Maslow (1972) made a most dramatic contribution to our understanding of the dimension of meaning in his study of the peak experiences of highly self-actualized people. Peakers are **witnesses of the highest that there is in life**. "For these people there is simply no question about the validation of living and its worthwhileness and its richness and its beauty. **Such people can be unshakable in their will to life and in their trust that life is beautiful and worthwhile**" (Maslow, 1972, p. 96).

To Maslow's mind, self-actualizers represent that which each one of us, in our deepest beings, longs and seeks to be. Self-actualizers are those highly select group of people who have attained those heights, that experience of freedom, that dimension of life, without which no man can experience

complete fulfilment.

The dimension of meaning is the ultimate destination of the human search. As such, man's experience of this dimension **must** fall within the domain of scientific inquiry. A study of peak-experiences will grant us an understanding of this highest, and in terms of human fulfillment, **most needed** dimension of being.

Maslow (1972) believed that too many people of limited vision define the essence of science as cautious checking, validating of hypotheses and finding out if other people's ideas are correct or not. But, contended Maslow (1972), science is also a technique of discovery. Scientific truths have often come to the great scientists as ecstatic insights, sudden illuminations, to only afterwards be slowly, carefully and cautiously validated by more pedestrian workers in the field.

Peak experiences, Maslow (1972) asserted, are scientific breakthroughs into new dimensions of understanding. "We are the ones who specialize in dealing with dangerous truths which come in a rush, in an emotional illumination, in a kind of eruption, through broken walls, through resistances, through the overcoming of fears (sceptic caution)" (p. 107).

Whenever man bursts the bounds of the ordinary, he experiences the dimension of the extraordinary. "The term peak experiences is a generalization for the best moments of life, for experiences of ecstasy, rapture, bliss, of the greatest joy" (Maslow, 1972, p. 105).

There is a dramatic extension of boundaries as the person experiencing such a breakthrough, feels more profoundly, thinks more lucidly, gains in perspective, and becomes more complete in himself. Maslow (1972) asked the group of self-actualizing people he had studied how the world looked to them after their peak experiences. From the many descriptions given to him, these words captured the spirit of their experiences: truth, beauty, wholeness, dichotomy-transcendence, aliveness-process, uniqueness, perfection, necessity, completion, justice, order, simplicity, richness, effortlessness, playfulness, and self-sufficiency. These are words describing an experience of a dimension of **meaning**.

What is of great significance is that these breakthroughs into a **higher** dimension which makes a **deeper**, more profound and sensitive way of living possible, is usually followed after a **search**, a grappling with a problem, an effort to find a solution, to understand something; or it is an **outcome** of intense involvement, of a **concentration of effort** in terms of more **acute awareness**. The result is that the veil of the ordinary is torn away, that there is **a penetration into a dimension ordinarily hidden from man, yet supremely existent!** It is a **more than**, an **above** and **beyond** or **hidden** dimension, a dimension man searches for and needs for an experience of **total being**. As much as it **complements life**, it is in fact, **the essence, the source and destination of life!**

What Maslow (1972) extracted from self-actualizers about their peak experiences, and which he believed to be scientific statements "of reality, of the cosmos, of the world out there.." (p. 109), are lucid descriptions of **the dimension of meaning!**

Pointers to the Dimension of Meaning in the Theory of Rogers

Leading the good life. Rogers' (1972) description of the fully functioning person, living what he called, the good life, presents us with a graphic description of **meaningful (in his words: existential) living**. What Rogers described as existential living, has all the moments described by Frankl as characteristic of living a life of meaning-fulfillment. There is the openness to each unique moment which is fully **lived** (experienced) in terms of its meaning content.

The mature person is fully **in** his experience, and is responding from within the context of **union** with what he is busy experiencing. There are no boundaries of fear, of defensive preconception or prejudice. Such living, said Rogers (1972) is a living in the moment. "It means an absence of rigidity, of tight organization, of the imposition of structure on experience. It means instead a maximum of adaptability, **a discovery of structure in the experience**, a flowing, changing organization of self and personality" (p. 189). Their existential way of life allows fully functioning persons to discover and realize **meaning**. "**To open one's spirit to what is going on now**, and to discover in that present process whatever structure it appears to have - this to me is one of the qualities of the good life, the mature life" (Rogers, 1972, p. 189).

What Rogers (1972) described as an **intuitive in-touchness** with (access to) the full range of data, both internal and situational, upon which to base behavior, is none other than an in-touchness with the true **meaning** of the particular situation. Frankl (1970) contends that there is only **one** answer to each situation, the **right** one!

Rogers (1972) reported that his clients expressed surprise at their own intuitive skill in finding behavioral solutions to complex and troubling human relationships - it is only afterward that they realized how surprisingly trustworthy their inner reactions had been in bringing about satisfactory behavior. The trustworthiness of human nature, in other words, is the fact that it is **inherently geared towards meaning**. Left to unfold in conditions which do not restrict, but which encourage its fullest expression, human nature will find its true connection, its ultimate goal: **meaning**. Quoting a client of his, Rogers (1972) illustrated this fluidity of surrender to or basic trust in **ultimate meaning**:

This whole train of experiencing, and the meanings that I have thus far discovered in it, seem to have launched me on a process which is both fascinating and at times a little frightening. It seems to mean letting my experiences carry me on, in a direction which appears to be forward, towards goals that I can but dimly define, as I try to understand at least the current meaning of that experience. (p. 123)

A Breakthrough into the Dimension of Meaning in the Lives of Allport, Maslow and Rogers

A Reconsideration of the Role of Religion on the Psychospiritual Level of Being

The spiritual dimension of being had been banished from psychology as a science over the greater part of its history.

To both Skinner and Freud, there was no hope of psychology ever becoming a vital and

growing science if it remained an ill-defined area of study within the "insubstantial" (non-factual) domains of religion and philosophy. Both schools of thought, therefore, confined themselves to the physical and psychobiological dimensions of being.

It was the third force psychology of the humanists which, in their exploration of the further reaches of personality development, made the more spiritual aspects of being come more clearly into view.

A reconsideration of the role of religion in the life of the individual, but this time on the higher and mature reaches of personality development, is one of the most exciting contributions of humanistic research.

It is most interesting to see how the humanistic views on religion have been influenced by the personal experiences of the humanists themselves. The personal lives of Allport, Maslow and Rogers, especially in the area of religion, and their own strong searches for meaning, profoundly influenced their views on the role of religion in the psychology of the person.

The Mature Religious Sentiment: The Personal Views and Experiences of Gordon Allport

A Contemplation of the Value of Religion

Reflecting on the history of psychology which, like modern society, emerged from a state of complete theological domination, Allport (1971) pointed out that the positivism of our times is still highly critical of any abstraction outside the realm of the tangible. It still urges us to relegate to the category of superstition all views of reality that do not square up with verifiable sensory impression.

However, Allport (1971) pointed out, a radical shift has taken place which makes the conflict between science and religion less acute today than in former decades.

During the nineteenth century the stranglehold of religion was broken and the human mind was freed to pursue knowledge of the natural world. Progress during those days inevitably meant that scientific discoveries contradicted earlier religious lore. However, as the sciences steadily gained prominence, youth began to learn science first.

Instead of perceiving evolution, nuclear physics, and psychoanalysis against the backgrounds of the older theology, the youth of today is first of all confronted with the facts that man is part of the organic universe; that within the biological realm, he is a member of the animal species; that the environment impacts upon him and that he is socialized through learning processes.

After the accumulation of knowledge of such factualities, the student of today is paradoxically freed to ask questions beyond the present boundaries of science. Has science embraced all there is to know? Is the scientific portrayal of man wholly adequate? What about man's imagination, purpose, idealism, values? Is there a first cause, a final destination? As a result of this evolution of thought, Allport (1971) observed, religion today has a more favored position than formerly. "Instead of serving as the stale ground from which scientific insights dazzlingly emerge, religion may be perceived as the fresh and sparkling insight needed to supplement and correct the lifeless and de-valued ground of science" (p. 133).

In fact, Allport (1971) found his own personal life and philosophical orientation at serious odds with the prevailing (behavioristic) psychology of his day. His upbringing had urged him to search beyond the obvious. "Our home life was marked by plain Protestant piety and hard work. My mother had been a school teacher and brought to her sons an eager sense of philosophical questing and the importance of searching for ultimate religious answers" (p. 4).

Allport's father was a philanthropic medical practitioner who trained his four sons in the practical urgencies of life and who gave them a broad humanitarian outlook. Their family life was earmarked by the practice of humane principles, and by trust and affection. Solidly geared towards a life of openness and honesty, humanitarian concern and religious integrity, the young Allport, as he launched into his own academic career, felt ill at ease with the dark delvings into the unconscious mind as advocated by Freud and too confined within the strict naturalistic boundaries of the positivistic sciences.

Allport (1967) described the one meeting he had with Freud. He experienced the meeting as totally unnerving, even frightening. He felt that his conscious motivation, which he described as a sort of rude curiosity and youthful ambition, in daring to arrange a meeting with the great master of the unconscious mind, had totally escaped Freud. Instead of responding to him as a colleague and equal, Freud immediately plunged into the depths of unconscious motivation as he interpreted the young Allport's (1967) eager conversation, leaving the youth feeling flabbergasted and uncomfortably guilty. "This experience taught me that depth psychology, for all its merits, may plunge too deep, and that psychologists would do well to give full recognition to manifest motives before probing the unconscious" (p. 8). Allport (1967) remained critical of what he called "psychoanalytic excesses" ever since and felt much more comfortable with what he described as "the better balanced view of motivation" of later neo-Freudian, ego psychologists (p. 8).

This solid turn against and development away from the in-depth probings and introversions of orthodox psychoanalysis, no doubt lent momentum to Allport's more academic leanings. Allport (1967) regarded his own approach as being in the tradition of academic psychology, and felt that his emphasis should be on normality rather than on pathology.

In seeking to develop a more "lifelike psychology of personality", Allport (1966) also felt alienated from the behavioristic approach. Behaviorism, in his opinion, was dealing only with the rudimentary levels of becoming. Impulses and drives, its immediate satisfaction and consequent tension reduction as the only determinants of conduct, may seem basic and adequate to psychologists accustomed to working with animals. "But as soon as the personality enters the stage of ego-extension, and develops a self-image with visions of self-perfection, we are, I think, forced to postulate motives of a different order" (Allport, 1966, p. 48).

Experiencing within himself the prominence of such motives, Allport (1966) postulated a much broader system of motives than those formulated by the earlier schools of thought. He felt that psychology should expand its boundaries to include the higher levels of human functioning. "Indeed, a mark of maturity seems to be the range and extent of one's feeling of **self-involvement in abstract ideals**" (p. 45).

Religion is one such and the highest abstract ideal. In view of the reactionary history of

psychology, the role of religion in the life of the individual was, of course, the most neglected (discarded) of all the areas of study.

If we ask what psychology has contributed to our understanding of the religious nature of man, the answer is "Less than we might wish". We can explain and to some extent justify this backwardness by pleading the inherent difficulties in working out a scientific psychology of the more complex stages of growth. (Allport, 1966, p. 93)

Excluding from its domain the spiritual aspects of higher level functioning which are only fully manifest during the adult years and only among psychologically mature individuals, what we have been offered in traditional psychology, especially in the works of Freud, is the religion of childhood (Allport, 1966). Factors such as familism, dependence, fear of authority, wishful thinking and magical practice (superstitions), presented as the religious expressions of man, are in fact only the **immature** expressions of the religious sentiment. "Since, however, the process of becoming continues throughout life, we rightly expect to find the fully developed sentiment only in the adult reaches of personality" (Allport, 1966, p. 95).

It stands to the credit of Allport to have cast light on the phenomenon of authentic or mature faith (in comparison to immature expressions of religious feelings).

Faith Versus Fear

Dealing with life's final answers, religion presents a person with choices on the highest level of personal **freedom**. According to Allport (1971), true faith is based on critical questioning, on profound answers (insight) and on mature discernment (ability to discriminate right from wrong, good from evil, the **meaningful** from the **senseless**). It is based on the courage to believe in something, to stand up for or act on the basis of inner conviction **even** in the face of opposition and threat. The stance of true faith is a deeply **informed** one, hence its determination and courage, its perseverance and strength.

Mature faith has **substance**, the substance of **spiritual** conviction (knowledge and insight).
 Scripture claims that: "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"
 (Hebrews 11:1).

Allport (1971) believed that as psychologists we have not been dealing with the psychology, but with the **psychopathology**, of religion. We have been looking at religion as an outflow, not of mature faith and spiritual **courage**, but of **fear**. The religion of the neurotic and immature person is based on feelings of insecurity, helplessness, doubt and conflict. It is the outflow of need and is based on lack, on feelings of emptiness and meaninglessness. It is erected as a protection against threat, clung to out of feelings of desperation. It can therefore easily be assailed or derailed. It is often erratic.

Allport (1971) pointed out that immature or neurotic religion is based on ignorance and fear of the **unknown**. That is why, paradoxically, the history of religion has most often shown us not the best, but the worst side of human nature. A lust for power, greed, envy, intolerance, prejudice - the unhappy

distortions of the lower level or crude survival needs and motives of man - became interwoven into the religious mind-sets of the fanatical followers of the one or the other religious movement over the centuries. Cast into set ritual and belief systems and used (manipulated) in much the same way as politics (which will use whatever means necessary to gain a position of triumph over its opponents and enemies), religion, since it claimed the very seal of approval of God as the highest and incontestable authority, was made into the most powerful tool of division and oppression known to man. Wars, pogroms, genocide, jihads, the most inhumane acts of man against man, spearheaded by senseless and fanatical religious teachings and beliefs, have been perpetrated (sanctified and blessed) in the name of religion. In his own America, Allport (1971) noted: "we see how bigotry and escapism accompany certain forms of piety. One travels through America and notes its Jim Crow churches, its store-front tabernacles, its anti-Semitic 'Christian' crusaders, and marks how often the darkness of the human mind is sanctified with a religion of superstition" (p. xii).

Authentic Versus Inauthentic Religion

Allport (1971) contended that religion in the hands of the masses can blind us to its essential nature which is only revealed in the lives of people of mature faith. Maslow (1968) spoke about the psychopathology of the average (the norm of the greatest number). Most people, Allport (1971) pointed out, are poorly equipped to deal with the issues of life and are afraid to venture beyond the narrow confines of the ready-made answers of tradition and dogma.

It is the **non-spiritual** person who uses religion as an **escape from the freedom of personal choice and accountability (responsibility)** and who hides behind the set rulings and dictates of institutionalized religion. His religion is **second-hand**, Allport (1971) contended. Those who have not developed what Allport (1971) called a differentiated sentiment, often show a kind of uncritical abandon. Dogma is accepted blindly and taken over without reflection or unbiased reasoning from those in leadership positions who are seen to be "in the know". As unquestioning and docile (loyal) followers, people with immature religious sentiments believe what they have been taught. Not having sound and reasoned arguments for their points of view, they are emotionally defensive about the religious grouping they happen to belong to. Allport (1971) pointed out that those who accept religion unreflectively and uncritically, tend to react in an equally unreflective way to their parents, to political issues and to social institutions. "The religious sentiment in these cases is blindly institutional, exclusionist, and related to self-centered values" (p. 67).

Religious sentiments based on uncritical emotion and egocentric thinking, are the breeding ground of fanaticism (Allport, 1971). "God is on our side", "we are the chosen people", represents the type of thinking that is a hot-bed of racial prejudice and hatred. In contrast, among people with reflective and highly differentiated sentiments, race prejudice is rarely found. Allport (1971) pointed out that a differentiated sentiment is the outgrowth of many successive discriminations and continuous reorganization. "Commencing in later childhood or adolescence the individual who is on the way to maturity probably will repudiate both the oversimplified product of his earlier egocentric thinking, and blind conformity to institutional or parental views. The authoritarianism and conceit of entrenched

ecclesiasticism may revolt him. Religion, he now has to admit, is not necessarily a good thing" (pp. 67-68).

Authentic faith is based on **freedom of choice** and is the outflow of developed, considered and personal conviction. It is highly individualistic in that it presents the core thinking, the fundamental belief, the most intimate stance or the true feelings of the person. It is, what Allport (1966) termed: **propriate** - the most valid expression of the person himself. It says something of who the person is. That is why an authentic belief system is the achievement of a personality that has matured. "Is it not true that at the highest levels of integration the structure of a personality clarifies" (Allport, 1966, p. 91)? Only then does the person fully emerge in terms of who they really are, and what they really believe in and stand for. **Propriate striving** is the hallmark of psychological maturity. On this level, a person's goals in life have become clarified. Such people have confronted and **meaningfully dealt** with the major issues of life and have reached their own authentic conclusions, their own set of commitments, their own peculiar life orientations. "Adherence to almost any church (or type of religion), **or to none at all**, may mark those who in their maturing personalities have fought through the issues of religion" (Allport, 1971, p. 91).

Allport (1971) made the important point that it is even possible for a person to abstain from the activities of institutional religion, as did Abraham Lincoln, who found its bickerings boresome and irrelevant. Like so many of Maslow's self-actualizers, **people who are spiritual in the most mature sense of the word, find that "the mature mood of aspiration and wonder" of authentic faith seldom fits into any precise ecclesiastical position** (Allport, 1971, p. 91).

It is the **comprehensiveness** of the mature religious sentiment that makes for tolerance (versus the fanaticism and intolerance of immature religious views), Allport (1971) believed.

One knows that one's life alone does not contain all possible values or all facets of meaning. Other people too have their stake in truth. The religion of maturity makes the affirmation 'God is', but only the religion of immaturity will insist, 'God is precisely what I say He is'. (Allport, 1971, p. 78)

According to Allport (1966), true religion or authentic faith may need a broader definition than the one commonly assigned to the word: religious, since the developed religious sentiment is a synthesis of many complex factors, all of which form a **comprehensive attitude whose function it is to relate the individual meaningfully to the whole of Being**.

Allport (1966) contended that every man has his own ultimate presuppositions, whether he is religiously inclined or not. He finds he cannot live his life without them, and for him they are true. Such presuppositions, whether they be called ideologies, philosophies, notions, or merely hunches about life, exert pressure upon all conduct that is subsidiary to them (which is to say, upon nearly all of man's conduct).

No man on the highest and most mature level of being is free-floating or disconnected, or unrelated to life in terms of its meaning. It is the very characteristic of the mature person to have what Allport (1966) called, a **unifying philosophy of life**.

The lives of mature people have a sense of harmony, direction and purpose. The mature individual is **bound to the world in terms of major meanings**. "The most comprehensive units in

personality are **broad intentional dispositions, future-pointed**" (Allport, 1966, p. 92). Only a resolution of the final questions of life in terms of a meaningful philosophy of life, gives a person a sense of **fulfillment** (a sense of homecoming, peace, integrity and a joy in living).

True Religion as the Outflow of the Core Motivation of Man

What Frankl (1977) calls man's will to ultimate Meaning, was seen by Allport (1966) as the core and central motivation of man. Man seems to remain **restless and unfulfilled (incomplete)** outside of finding such a sense of ultimate meaning in life. "**All our cognitive operations press toward coherence and unity**" (Allport, 1966, p. 25).

Any cause or sincere belief of any sort, ardently embraced, performs an integrative function, that is, gives a person a sense of meaning. However satisfying such causes and ideals are, a further need remains. "A cause may be absorbing, but it seldom includes the whole of a mature individual's horizon. **Residues are left over which only religion can absorb**" (Allport, 1971, p. 78). This phenomenological fact has been clouded over by earlier psychological theories in their efforts to liberate the human mind from the dark bondages of religious dogmatism.

The error of the psychoanalytic theory of religion lies in locating religious belief exclusively in the defensive functions of the ego rather than in the core and center and substance of the developing ego itself. While religion certainly fortifies the individual against the inroads of anxiety, doubt, and despair, Allport (1966) believed, it also provides "**the forward intention that enables him at each stage of his becoming to relate himself meaningfully to the totality of Being**" (p. 96). According to Allport (1966), authentic religion would therefore represent "**the final meanings** achieved by unique personalities in diverse lands and times" (p. 98).

Conscience Versus the Superego

Allport (1966) pointed out that lower-level opportunistic functioning differs markedly from higher-level propiety functioning. Religion on the more immature levels of being seems no more than a moralistic legalism. Fear of punishment, a punitive sense of guilt and defensive efforts at appeasement - a super-ego type of conscience - characterize the nature of this type of religiosity. However, on the mature levels of becoming, the person does not feel imposed upon and restricted by the rules of society. Values are experienced as belonging to a Supra-human dimension **to which society is also held to account**. On this level, the person feels **addressed**. He feels confronted not by a "must", but by an "ought", by that which is "ideal", which, in fact, represents what he himself longs to be. These "oughts", therefore, have **inspirational** value. They **appeal** to the person. To say that a person performs certain acts and abstains from others because he fears God's punishment would be to travesty the experience of most religious people. Allport (1966) stated that the conscience of the religiously mature person has more to do with love than with fear. "An inclusive path of life is adopted that requires discipline, charity, reverence, all experienced as **lively obligations** by a religious person" (p. 73).

Conscience on the mature reaches of becoming acts as a "knife-edge that all our values press upon us whenever we are acting, or have acted, contrary to these values" (Allport, 1971, p. 101). It is experienced as a deep disappointment in ourselves, a feeling of having let down someone or neglected something of prime importance to us. When inappropriate decisions are made, we feel guilt. Guilt is a poignant suffering, seldom reducible in an adult to a fear of, or experience of punishment. **"It is rather a sense of violated value, a disgust at falling short of the ideal self-image"** (Allport, 1966, p. 73).

A mature conscience allows the person to experience the kind of guilt that is **constructive**. This kind of guilt leads to repentance and change and is, therefore, **growth-inducing** (Allport, 1966).

The Individualistic Nature of the Mature Conscience

Another aspect of the mature conscience which Allport (1966) highlighted, is its highly individualistic nature. The mature conscience presupposes "a reflective ability which refers conflicts to the matrix of values that are felt to be one's own" (Allport, 1966, p. 73).

Allport (1966) pointed out **that mature conscience is by no means always religiously toned. Incontestably, high moral character is also found among the so-called non-religious.**

On the mature reaches of growth, man's philosophy of life is his stamp of authenticity, his spiritual fingerprint, a statement of who he is. This is no more true than in the case of a man's personal search for the **ultimate** meaning of his own life. Allport (1971) stated that, from its early beginnings to the end of the road, the religious quest of the individual is solitary. Though he is socially interdependent with others in a thousand ways, **"yet no one is able to provide him with the faith he evolves, nor prescribe for him his pact with the cosmos. .. A man's religion is the audacious bid he makes to bind himself to creation and to the Creator. It is his ultimate attempt to enlarge and to complete his own personality by finding the supreme context in which he rightly belongs"** (p. 161).

The Science of Religion

Moving beyond a study of infantile expressions of the religious sentiment, and following the course of becoming to its ultimate frontiers of growth, psychology can also illuminate the field of religion, Allport (1971) believed. It can study man as a representative of his species, as a creature of many opportunistic adjustments, and as a product of tribal molding. But it can also study him as well as "a self-assertive, self-critical, and self-improving individual **whose passion for integrity and for a meaningful relation to the whole of Being is his most distinctive capacity"** (p. 98). Allport (1971) contended that the final truths of religion may remain unknown but "a psychology that impedes understanding of the religious potentialities of man scarcely deserves to be called a logos of the human psyche at all" (p. 98).

The old notion of religion as "an opium of the masses", as the crutch and the tool of the unscientific and irrational (poorly evolved and ill-equipped) mind, however true on one level, prove false on another level when the authentic belief systems of mature, highly rational and psychologically

evolved people are brought under psychological investigation.

Religion as a Peak Experience: The Personal Views and Experiences of Abraham Maslow

A Search for Meaning

Overcome by the horrific manifestation of man's inhumanity to man during World War II, Maslow gave up his career in experimental research in order "to prove that human beings are capable of something grander than war and prejudice and hatred" (Maslow, 1972a, p. xxxviii). The strict boundaries of behaviorism within which he had worked, were too confining, its theory too limiting. The positivists exclude the spiritual aspects of human nature from the realm of science and from the realm of exact, rational, positivistic knowledge. Behavioristic theory, therefore, "does not generate an image of man, a philosophy of life, a conception of human nature. It's not a guide to living, to values, to choices" (Maslow, 1972a, p. xxxvii). Nor does Freudianism equip man for meaningful living. Freudian theory also denies that it has anything much to do with spiritual or ethical values. Practically all the activities that man prides himself on, and that give meaning, richness, and value to his life, are either omitted or pathologized by Freud. Psychoanalytic theory thus presents us with an image of man that places undue emphasis on the baser side of human nature. "It does not supply us with a psychology of the higher life or of the spiritual life, of what the human being should grow toward, of what he can become" (Maslow, 1964, p. 7).

Unlike Freud, who at the end of his life lived under the dark cloud of the impending disasters which befell his fellow-Jews during the Holocaust, Maslow stood on the other side of a war that had spent itself and had come to an end. The world was faced with the grim aftermath of the war. Millions of lives were lost and families torn apart; whole communities had been wiped out. The world was in desperate need of a "humanistic ethos, .. of the possibility of the good society" (Maslow, 1972b, p. 39). Not only was a rebuilding of the ruins in a material sense necessary, but also a spiritual restoration, a new image of man, was sorely needed. Maslow (1972b) felt a strong desire to promote the cause of man's **humanness**, to concentrate on and to bring to light the higher, good and constructive motives in human behavior, motives that make for brotherhood, for a peaceful and harmonious society, a world worth living in.

Once we've solved the lower problems, the material problems, empirically I insist on the tremendous role of the **metamotivations** - the search for truth and excellence and perfection and beauty and justice and ultimate order and ultimate simplicity and harmony and specieshood and brotherhood and the like. (Maslow, 1972b, p. 37)

In the advancement of this type of knowledge, lies the salvation of man (Maslow, 1972b).

Humanism as a Personal Mission

The embrace of humanism as a mission was the result not only of Maslow's (1970) recognition of the dire need of "a psychology of the peace table" (p. xxxviii) in the face of the devastation of war,

but also of a profound search for true meaning in his own life.

Maslow suffered an unhappy childhood, and missed a close, loving relationship with his own mother. The son of a poor Jewish family who had fled Russia to seek a haven in Brooklyn, New York, Maslow knew what it was to be lonely, isolated and without the close companionships of friends in a foreign, often hostile environment.

His marriage to his niece, Bertha, who mothered and deeply understood him, brought healing to him. The birth of their daughter, Jeannie, filled him with what he called "esthetic surprise, even better, transcendent surprise" (Maslow, 1972b, p. 93). He experienced "gratitude, the sense of the beauty of the world, how precious life is, plus, then, the sense of mortality, I must die soon, and with this the need to savor fully the whole experience and to clutch it, to be greedy about it, cling to it, find it hard to let go" (Maslow, 1972b, p. 93).

Inspired by an experience of what life can be like, Maslow (1972b) felt a strong need to discover and, most importantly, **to experience** in a vital, real-life way, those values and worthwhile things in life that were so discarded and spurned during the war, so neglected in psychological theory and research, and so little appreciated, experienced or understood by most people.

The lack of meditateness and inwardness, of real conscience and real values, is a standard personality defect, Maslow (1958) observed. Most people are other-directed and live, or rather are directed by public campaigns, by testimonials, by majority vote, by public opinion, by what other people think. They do not really know what they want, what they feel, what they, themselves, think.

The world is too full of people who live rootlessly, without zest and without purpose. This is dangerous, believed Maslow (1958), "since these are the ones who can be caught up by an offer of absolute truth, by the lunatic groups, by the fanatics who know what's right" (p. 240).

What is accepted as "normal" by most of us is really "a psychopathology of the average, so undramatic and so widely spread that we don't even notice it ordinarily" (Maslow, 1968, p. 16). Once alerted to this general phoniness, this living by illusions and fear, Maslow sought to break free from his own egocentrism and stereotypical way of thinking. When something began to fascinate and appeal to him, like William Graham Sumner's book: Folkways, he would wrestle with it until it broke through to his own understanding.

I nibbled away at Sumner, not quite understanding it. I kept coming back to it again and again, and one night there was a big breakthrough of awe, admiration. It was a kind of cold chill and hair-standing-on-end experience - not just happy but also mixed in with vows, with a certain sense of the uncanny, with a feeling of littleness and incapability and the like. ..I swore to myself that I would try to, or that I would, make this kind of contribution to philosophy, to psychology, and to anthropology. (Maslow, 1968, p. 81)

He experienced within himself what he began to advocate as truth: **Man has a higher nature and this is part of his essence.**

Maslow (1968) became convinced that human beings can be wonderful out of their own human and biological nature, if inspired and encouraged towards higher levels of being. Improving the human being, means "exposing to him the ideal world that is possible for him to attain" (p. 78).

Opening such vistas to the human eye, we evoke man's desire for a better world and inspire his commitment towards bringing this about.

Science needs to unearth man's hidden and unexplored potential for good. Supplying us with the factualities of a higher nature in man, science can provide us with the tools for meaningful living.

We must take into account that the world may be blown up and we with it. This is clearly possible. On the other hand, there is this other possibility of the march of truth, of facts, of science in the new humanistic sense. I would feel the chances are very, very much on the side of this new humanistic synthesis winning out. (Maslow, 1968, p. 39)

Time is of the essence. There is so much in man to uncover, so much in life to discover, the largely unexplored "reality out there.. is so beautiful" (Maslow, 1968, p. 87), that total commitment to a new humanistic science is called for. "For any man of good will, any pro-life man, there is work to be done here, effective, virtuous, satisfying work which can give rich meaning to one's own life and to others" (Maslow, 1968, p. iii).

Time should not be wasted on the unessential, trivial, feigned or false. Maslow's own life was earmarked by unquenchable curiosity, wonderment and awe, a delight at the novel and new. Old truths came to him in a fresh and new way. So many of the characteristics he ascribed to the truly mature person, he had himself: a zestful experience of life, a freshness of appreciation, a love of life.

Maslow was, above all, a visionary. He lived, as one of his colleagues described it, "in the constant presence of the future" (Maslow, 1968, p. 4). The vision of the potential grandeur and vitality of man in a society based on humanistic values, became the driving force of his life.

A Rediscovery of our own Lost Natures

The best man can be, is what he has been created to be, was Maslow's (1964) strong conviction. However, we only seem to realize or become aware of what we have been created to be when we experience first-hand the deeply satisfying nature of life's meanings and values, when we in fact, satisfy the "value-hungers" that lie deeply embedded within human nature itself.

It became clear to Maslow (1964) that good as well as bad impulses can be repressed and that man's inherent desire after goodness, beauty, truth etc. can be thwarted (remain unconscious).

To declare that man is "basically evil" after observing him under only the worst conditions of political history, is a distortion of the truth about human nature. There are social, political, economic, biological and ecological conditions which do not allow man's **humanness** to develop. "Man becomes more fully human when given better and better conditions (conditions equaling more and more psychological medicines: basic need and metaneed gratifications)" (Maslow, 1964, p. 88). We experience a sense of fulfillment, a sense of destiny, a "this is it!..." feeling when we lead good and meaningful and not bad and devious lives. This clearly implies that man has been created for a good purpose and that evil, therefore, is a **deviation** from what human nature is intended to be. If at the optimal level of being, values such as justice, love, peace, brotherhood etc. are of **overriding** importance to us, it means that essentially, this is the kind of life we as humans **desire**. This is the life

that we are by nature, **geared towards**. There is in human nature, in other words, an intuitive leaning towards and longing for what is right and good and **necessary** to fulfill our humanness in an optimal sense.

Maslow (1972) used the term: **instinctoid** (rather than instinctive), to describe these deeper-lying, less obvious or demanding, but core inclinations of human nature. To know that we really want and need love, respect, knowledge, a philosophy, self-actualization, is a difficult psychological achievement. He described this instinctoid or spiritual nature of man, as weak or underdeveloped. Unexposed and unexplored, man's spiritual assets remain **unexercised**. For this reason man's essentially **spiritual** nature is not fully manifest or strongly evident. **Most of us are but faint reflections of what we can be.**

It became Maslow's self-imposed task as a psychologist, to uncover man's true but somehow lost nature and to show us how to nourish and develop the human potential for moral greatness.

The Still Small Voice of Conscience

Man's essentially spiritual nature is linked to what Maslow (1968) described as an **intrinsic conscience**, a conscience which is of a different order than Freud's concept of a super-ego. It pertains to man's intuitive knowledge of what he is **meant to be**, his existential guilt and feeling of emptiness and despair if he fails to be what he senses he **should be** (has been created to be). This conscience, which we **all** have (either weakly or strongly, based upon the unconscious or preconscious perception of our own nature, our own destiny, or our own capacities, of our own "call" in life. It insists that we be true to our own nature and we do not deny it out of weakness or for advantage or for any other reason.

Conscience is not something restrictively imposed from without. It speaks to man from "within himself", is existent like a "Supreme Court" inside himself (Maslow, 1972a, p. 46). It operates on a completely different basis than the Freudian type of super-ego.

Maslow (1958) asked: Is guilt over dishonesty, duplicity, sneaking, lying, and concealing, a product of the Freudian superego or of the intrinsic conscience? If it comes from the former, then psychotherapy should make it die out, then guilt should disappear, and the person then should be able to do these undesirable things for the sake of a larger desirability. If, however, these are intrinsically guilt-producing because our intrinsic human nature suffers under them, then psychagogy or growth or fuller development should make the guilt stronger rather than weaker.

There are in all of us, therefore, deep promptings to rise to our full stature as human beings. We feel incomplete, restless, existentially **guilty**, if we do not fulfill the commission to actualize our potential for moral excellence.

The Resacralizing of Science

Enthused with a humanistic view of man and of society, Maslow (1972b) undertook what he saw as an urgent task: the humanization of psychology.

A theory of science which permits and encourages the exclusion of so much that is true and

real and existent cannot be considered a comprehensive science, Maslow (1964) believed. The mere accumulation of facts and the fragmentation of science into a thousand discrete elements outraged him, as did the tendency of quantification techniques to give status to that knowledge, however trivial. "If something is not worth doing, it is not worth doing well" (Maslow, 1972b, p. 7), was one of his well-known sayings.

Maslow (1972b) began voicing strong opposition to those who, he believed, "were committed to the false idol of the neutrality and indifference of positivistic science, those glorifying their mechanical and mathematical tools as if they were gods" (p. 5).

This type of science was nothing more than technology, amoral and non-ethical. "Such a science can be no more than a collection of instrumentalities, methods, techniques, nothing but a tool to be used by any man, good or evil, and for any ends, good or evil" (Maslow, 1964, p. 12).

A new psychology was called for: This psychology is **not** purely descriptive or academic; it **suggests action and implies consequences**. "It helps to generate a way of life, not only for the person himself with his own private psyche, but also for the same person as a social being, a member of society" (Maslow, 1968, p. iii).

A new image of man, which includes the higher reaches of human nature, broadens the old scientific parameters and revitalizes its contents. No longer confined to a mere accumulation of dead facts that do little in terms of contributing towards the upliftment of man and the creation of a healthy, humanitarian society, science can begin to **serve** humanity.

The new image of man, the new image of society, generates a new image of science, which carries along with it all these new definitions of the old words, a new epistemology, a new metaphysics, a new ethic, a new axiology, a new definition of what the word **fact** means, a new definition of truth, which carries along with it by implication, then, a whole new methodology. (Maslow, 1968, p. 39)

A Resacralizing of all of Life

The strict neutrality of a science which has from its very beginning claimed the need to be value-free, has contributed to the widespread valuelessness of modern society. "People have nothing to admire, to sacrifice themselves for, to surrender to, to die for" (Maslow, 1964, p. 42).

Mere technological advance, stripped of any higher purpose, any humanitarian goal - a value-free science - is a desacralizer; "it makes things neutral and positivistic" (Maslow, 1968, p. 5). Man himself is regarded as a mechanism, a tool to be used in the great societal machine. His worth is judged by his usefulness, the measure of his productivity. Contrary to such mechanistic views of man, Maslow (1968) contended that "human beings are **not** value-free; they live by values, they live for values" (p. 4).

However, such values cannot be compartmentalized and kept as the jealous possession of formal and organized religion, that is, as something that can only be experienced within the confines of a specific religious structure, along a prescribed route and in certain ways only. "**Religionizing**" **only one part of life, secularizes the rest of it**. However, believed Maslow (1964), "when we are well and

healthy and adequately fulfilling the concept human being, then experiences of transcendence should in principle be commonplace" (p. 32). This is what his study of the peak experiences of psychologically healthy, mature and self-actualizing people has taught him. **"I can report that these experiences can take place at any time, at any place, to practically anyone"** (Maslow, 1964, p. 8).

An abolishment of the false dichotomy between science and religion also results in the abolishment of the false rift between the spiritual and the physical. "To live the spiritual life, you don't have to sit on top of a pillar for ten years. Being able to live in the B-values somehow makes the body and all its appetites holy" (Maslow, 1964, p. 8). The unnatural rift between science and religion, between the so-called secular and spiritual, is abolished once we realize that, as human beings, we are essentially spiritual.

A humanistic reorientation was necessary in all fields, not only in science, but in religion as well. If we were to accept as a major educational goal **the awakening and fulfillment** of the B-Values, we would have a great flowering of a new kind of civilization. People would be stronger, healthier, and would take their own lives into their hands to a greater extent. **"With increased personal responsibility for one's personal life, and with a rational set of values to guide one's choosing, people would begin to actively change the society in which they lived"** (Maslow, 1972a, p. 195).

A Humanitarian Way of Life

The key to the establishment of a truly humanitarian society, is to discover and foster the good in man, Maslow (1972a) believed. "The movement toward psychological health is also the movement toward spiritual peace and social harmony" (p. 195).

The humanistic utopia or Eupsychia, as Maslow (1972a) called it, is no pipe-dream. It is well within ordinary reach. We simply have to become what we are. This ideal is not an unattainable goal set out far ahead of us; rather it is actually within us, existent but hidden, as potentiality rather than as actuality.

The challenge is set before us. "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil", is a Scriptural injunction which, too, implies that man is in control of his own destiny. In fact, Scripture states: "The word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, **that you may do it**" (Deuteronomy 30).

Becoming what we are supposed to be, we put our full **humanness** into effect. By being **humane**, we help bring a humane society into being. In contemplating the nature of such a humane society, Maslow (1968) came to the conclusion that people would have much more free choice than we are used to. Basic needs and metaneeds would be respected much more than they are in our society. The key concepts in the psychology of this new approach to man are spontaneity, release, naturalness, self-choice, self-acceptance, impulse awareness, gratification of basic needs. They used to be control, inhibition, discipline, training, and shaping, since in its depths, human nature was suspected to be dangerous, evil, predatory, and ravenous. These two different approaches to human nature lead to two opposing conceptions of human society. A fear of and a rejection of human nature, establish the kind

of society where restraining and controlling forces are at work. The situation is vastly different where a deep respect for the worth and dignity of human nature prevails and where evil is seen as the result of depriving and humiliating circumstances. In a humanitarian society the accent will be on the the upliftment of man, on the restoration of human dignity in addressing problems of abject poverty, illiteracy and crime. Efforts will be geared towards providing opportunities for self-enrichment and growth for everyone, without exception. The overall aim will be to foster in society, that which what is good and right and just, of true value and meaning. In a situation that would be far less controlling, violent, contemptuous, or overbearing than our present societies, **the deepest layers of human nature could manifest with greater ease.**

We need, once again, to see man "under the aspect of eternity", that is, as "being able to see the sacred, the eternal, the symbolic" stated Maslow (1967, p. 284).

The Need for Authentic Being: The Personal Views and Experiences of Carl Rogers

The Emerging Person as a Source of Evolutionary-revolutionary Change

Amidst all the problems in his own country, America, and throughout the world, Rogers (in Kirschenbaum, 1979) saw what he called: "the emerging person" as the true hope of societal change for the better. He found such persons among corporation executives who have given up the gray-flannel rat race, the lure of high salaries and stock options, to live a simpler life in a new way; among priests and nuns and ministers who have left behind the dogmas of their institutions to live in a way that has more meaning; among women who are vigorously rising above the limitations which society has placed on their personhood; among blacks and other minority members who are pushing out from generations of passivity into an assertive, positive life. He also realized that he saw something of this person in his years as a psychotherapist, when clients were choosing a freer, richer, more self-directed kind of life for themselves.

Rogers (in Kirschenbaum, 1979) observed this emerging person to be earmarked, **first of all**, by "a desire for authenticity". Such a person thus has "a freedom from facades", and has an aversion to "hypocrisy, deceit, mixed messages.. doublethink and doubletalk". **Secondly**, the emerging person was observed to be holding the belief that "institutions exist for people". As a result, such a person feels opposition to "all highly structured, inflexible, bureaucratic institutions" (p. 403).

Beyond these two major qualities, Rogers (in Kirschenbaum, 1979) noted the following about the authentic person: "the unimportance of material things"; "a nonmoralistic caring"; "the wish for intimacy"; "a skepticism about science"; a fascination with "the universe within" the person which also encompasses the "esoteric and transcendental religious" experiences the person may have; a desire to live "in balance with nature"; a person "in process" - always changing; and finally, one who lives by "the authority within" - having "a trust in his own experience and a profound distrust of all external authority" (pp. 403-404). The numbers of people possessing all these characteristics are small, Rogers admitted, but he passionately believed that the emerging person can have a revolutionary impact upon society.

The Emerging Person of Carl Rogers

Without a doubt, Rogers (in Kirschenbaum, 1979) was the kind of person he described as the emerging person. One of his students described him as "human through and through" and testified of him that he represents the finest of human beings at a time when the need for "real" people is so desperate. ". He has the kind of overflowing warmth and compassion that makes you feel like going over to him, telling him all of your problems, and then lying on his lap. .. He is the father that every child wishes he had. For me, he is the supreme hope for humanity.." (p. 403).

The person Rogers became to others, grew out of a deep desire and a constant and ever more successful effort to emerge and become disentangled from the bondages of his past, to rid himself of its oppressive effects which had so damaged his own sense of worthy personhood.

Rogers grew up under the influence of parents who were deeply devoted to a largely fundamentalist brand of evangelical Christianity. The doctrinal teachings of this brand of Christianity portray human nature as essentially corrupt. Man is seen as fallen from grace, as trapped in guilt (sin-consciousness). The emphasis is on the judgement of God and the eternal punishment for sinners. Describing his parents, Rogers (1967) noted that his mother was a person with strong religious convictions, whose views became increasingly fundamentalist as she matured. Two of her biblical phrases, often used in family prayers, stuck in his mind and give the feeling of her religion: "Come out from among them and be ye separate"; "All our righteousness is as filthy rags in thy sight, oh Lord." (The first expressed her conviction of superiority, that they were of the "elect" and should not mingle with those who were not so favored; the second her conviction of inferiority, that at their best they were all unspeakably sinful) (p. 344).

His upbringing subjected him to what Rogers (1974) later described as **conditions of worth**. "The individual cannot regard himself positively, as having worth, unless he lives in terms of (certain) conditions" (p. 226).

During his adult life, Rogers sought to move out from under the heavy yoke of religious self-condemnation and its painful consequences: a deeply ingrained distrust of his own nature (a painful doubting of his acceptability and capabilities as a person). Turning away from a possible career as a Christian minister, Rogers chose to pursue a career in psychology. The move can be seen as a search for inner healing. Over the years Rogers helped hundreds of clients to emerge from a position of self-rejection to a level of self-acceptance..

The **client- and person-centered** approach which he developed, is the approach which he must have sensed he deeply needed himself. Rogers (1974) confessed: "This ability to facilitate change, to free people for change, is something I greatly prize in myself" (p. 380).

In fact, when Rogers (1974) found himself incapable of dealing with the insatiable needs and intense hostility of a deeply disturbed client (she was regarded as schizophrenic) and felt on the verge of a nervous breakdown, he was offered and accepted the help of a member of his own therapeutic staff. The results were highly gratifying. "I gradually worked through to a point where I could value myself, even like myself, and was much less fearful of receiving or giving love. My own therapy with my clients has become consistently and increasingly free and spontaneous ever since that time" (p.

351).

The Accent on Man's Intrinsic Worth

Rogers has been criticized for building his theory on his work at the university clinics with only mildly neurotic people, **seeking** and, therefore, **willing** to receive help. His critics contended that his naively optimistic views of human nature had not been subjected to the test of working with those whose profound conflicts show the deeper, darker, demonic, side of human nature. These critics were, of course, referring to the contrast in the basic evaluation of human nature between Rogers and Freud.

Freud presented the human being, at his core, as wild, unsocialized, selfish, and destructive. If a person's "id" (similar to the Christian view of man's basic and fallen nature) was to govern his behavior, the results would be disastrous. Restrictions are therefore imposed (threateningly enforced) on behavior by an internalized system of parental and societal control: the superego. In the Freudian view of human nature, the ego is trapped and must negotiate some sort of acceptable position between the "bad" inclinations of its own nature and the strict demands of acceptable ("good") behavior imposed from without. Many devious and hidden ways of trying to relieve its painful tensions and many facades and face-saving defenses, earmark the desperate efforts of the imprisoned ego.

Rogers (in Kirschenbaum, 1979), like the other humanists, firmly believed that Freudian theory presents us with a distorted picture, a picture not of what man inherently **is**, but of what he, through unhappy circumstances **has become**. "Professional experience has forced upon me the realization that man, when you know him deeply, in his worst and most troubled states, is not evil or demonic" (p. 248).

This is a point of view Rogers needed to believe about himself. To find a metaphor by which to explain his view of human nature as fundamentally trustworthy, he dug deep into his childhood memories. What Rogers (in Kirschenbaum, 1979) described can be regarded as an analogy of his own struggle to emerge into the full light of healthy and vital personhood.

I remember that in my boyhood the potato bin in which we stored our winter supply of potatoes was in the basement, several feet below a small basement window. The conditions were unfavorable, but the potatoes would begin to sprout - pale white sprouts, so unlike the healthy green shoots they sent up when planted in the soil in the spring. But these sad, spindly sprouts would grow two or three feet in length as they reached toward the distant light of the window. They were, in their bizarre, futile growth, a sort of desperate expression of the directional tendency I have been describing. They would never become a plant, never mature, never fulfill their real potentiality. But under the most adverse circumstances they were striving to become.

Life would not give up, even if it could not flourish. (p. 248)

This was Rogers' view of severely disturbed people in the back wards of state hospitals. So unfavorable have been the conditions (whether genetic or environmental) in which these people have developed that their lives often seem abnormal, twisted, scarcely human. **Yet the directional tendency in them is to be trusted.** The clue to understanding their behavior is that they are striving,

in the only way available to them, to move toward growth, toward becoming. "To us the results may seem bizarre and futile, but they are life's desperate attempt to become itself" stated Rogers (in Kirschenbaum, 1979, p. 248).

So deeply convinced was he of this forward and upward moving tendency of the human being, even if it has to move through struggle and pain toward self-enhancement and growth, that he ventured into the domain of psychiatry in an effort to help and gain a deeper understanding of psychotic individuals.

The task Rogers set himself was a formidable one. He had lost his personal footing in his previous effort to try and lead a schizophrenic client out of her spiritual darkness. The attempt once again, but this time involving a whole client-centered team, failed. His staff could not hold together, he himself felt too thinly spread. What he had hoped would be a personal breakthrough into even higher reaches of growth and understanding proved, Rogers (1967) stated, "without a doubt the most painful and anguished period in my whole professional life" (p. 371).

In turning his attention, once again, to "normal" individuals at the other end of the spectrum, Rogers concentrated for the rest of his life on the self-enhancement of the well-functioning person. It became his devoted aim to strengthen the more evolved and healthier self of mentally less disturbed persons who function on a higher, more socially aware level of being.

Underlying this switch to **the preservation and enhancement of the creative and constructive aspects of the personality**, rather than trying to understand the dark and twisted world of the psychotic, is the belief that an exploration of man's potential for good can prove a solid defense against evil. Eventually, when we know enough about how to elicit and nurture the good in human nature, it can prove to be a formidable force in overcoming evil and the terrible suffering it causes.

Encouraging the good is the best way to overcome the bad.

A Consolidation of his Person-centered Position: Debates with Skinner

Reflecting on the meanings of his career, Rogers (1967) observed that he had most effectively freed himself from the oppressive and sterile thought systems with which he grew up with and was exposed to, by not actively rebelling or fighting against it, but by **changing in a direction away from it**. He felt that he broke from his family and early religious beliefs, clearly and cleanly, "with very little bitterness and only a moderate amount of rebellion" (p. 376).

Rogers (1967) also did not consciously set out to disprove the psychological thought systems of his day. As his approach developed a coherence of its own, contrasts to the psychoanalytic approach and dogmatic religious views which stress the dark and often sordid side of human nature, became starkly evident. Seeing the human organism as **essentially positive in nature**, is profoundly radical, stated Rogers (in Thorne, 1990). It flies in the face of traditional psychoanalysis, runs counter to the Christian tradition, and is opposed to the philosophy of most institutions, including our educational institutions.

Rogers let his discoveries rest as facts, however much those facts disputed the accepted theories of the day. He never actively opposed those he came to disagree with. For example, he felt

embarrassed by the fact that he found learning theory, probably the major concern of psychology during his lifetime, totally uninteresting. It seemed to him, as he (1967) described, to be "mostly a pompous investigation of the trivial" (p. 377). His need to get on with the business at hand and not to enter into needless controversy, are reflected in his reactions to the three highly interesting public debates that were arranged between him and Skinner in the fifties. During one, Maslow fell asleep in his comfortable chair!

Coming away from these meetings with an increased respect for each other, both Rogers and Skinner nevertheless, remained unconvinced of the fundamentals of each other's viewpoints.

To Skinner, Rogers was the type of "protagonist-antagonist" that he loved to challenge. He was the type of critic that Skinner had portrayed in Walden Two who, even though unconvinced by the validity and value of the behavioristic utopia, nonetheless offered the utopians the challenge to present a case strong enough to **impress**, if not persuade, the critic. Skinner skillfully held to his deterministic position and conviction that it was possible to **create a healthy society** without recourse to any mystical or ethereal "values".

But, if Skinner had the intention to strengthen his own case in a debate with such a renowned and highly respected critic like Rogers, and to use the occasion to persuade the audience of the merits of his behavioristic dream, something unforeseen happened.

In his person-centered approach, Rogers never assailed or fought with those who disagreed with him. He always deeply respected their **freedom** and right to hold to their own opinions, no matter how contrary to his own these were. It was this approach which had an unexpected effect on Skinner, despite his otherwise intractable stance.

What appealed to Skinner, was Rogers' idea of **becoming**, which as Rogers pointed out, corresponded to what Skinner had described in an article as **the processes** of science as he had discovered and experienced them in his own career.

Skinner, Rogers (in Kirschenbaum, 1979) pointed out, was not simply taught his science but, in fact, had built his theories on the sound facts of **personal** experience. "This may be an historic moment", Skinner (in Kirschenbaum, 1979) reflected, "I think I have been changed by that argument. I'm beginning to understand what you mean by **becoming**" (p. 270).

A Convergence towards Meaning

Rogers had entered the debates with Skinner reluctantly. Instead of engaging in controversy, which to him felt like calling a halt in order to argue a case, Rogers (1967) preferred to use the time to forge ahead. "I have felt it wasteful and foolish to battle directly to achieve my goals. I much prefer to establish a beach-head in the future, a beach-head which will make the current controversy meaningless" (p. 379).

Rogers (1967) seemed to have had what he called "a penchant or gift for being in the forefront of developments which were on the verge of occurring" (p. 377).

It is most interesting to consider that the central themes of Rogers' (1972) theory, namely of becoming, of being willing to be a person in process, vividly describe what was a phenomenological

fact in his own life. "If there is such a thing as truth **this free individual process of search** should, I believe, converge toward it" (p. 27).

Just as he chose not to enter into argument with his past, Rogers did not care to question his future. To be a meaningful part of the process of becoming, was all that mattered to him. He was resting in the trust that it would lead him to where he was **meant** to go.

Rogers' accent was **on becoming a person** in his own full and free right. What lay beyond that, he did not actively pursue, but intuitively sensed and spontaneously experienced. As he reflected on the meaning of his own life, Rogers (1967) could say with real assurance: "I do believe in what I am doing; I do trust my own experience more deeply than any authority; I am inwardly sure that the directions in which I am moving are, and will prove to be, significant directions" (p. 383).

As he looked back over his life, Rogers (In Kirschenbaum, 1979) felt that he had fulfilled his destiny. "It seems that **without knowing it** I had expressed an idea whose time had come" (p. 260).

Emerging from the pain of the negative and growth-thwarting influences of his childhood, Rogers chose to be carried along in the arms of an inner sense and intuitive experience of the good life, the life of meaning.

What he did make crystal clear and which he stated as absolute fact, is the truth, as Frankl (1970) voiced it, that "the salvation of man is through love and in love" (p. 36). Psychotherapy is **therapeutic**, Rogers (1974) believed, to the extent that it is earmarked by a love and a respect for the basic **worth** and **dignity** of a person, **regardless** of the negative (or sinful) behaviors such a person may display.

If I know little or nothing of you, and experience an unconditional positive regard for you, this means little because further knowledge of you may reveal aspects which I cannot so regard. But if I know you thoroughly, knowing and empathically understanding a wide variety of your feelings and behaviors, and still experience an unconditional positive regard, this is very meaningful. It comes close to **being fully known and fully accepted**. (Rogers, 1974, p. 232)

Paradise Restored

After the two world wars of this century, we have seen the crumbling of institutions and of governments. Out of the chaos and confusion, we are witnessing the emergence of a new world, the dawn of a new era. What we are experiencing, Rogers (1980) pointed out, is a number of significant paradigm shifts.

As throughout the ages there has been a generally accepted world view, a pattern by which society tried to make sense of its world and of man in relation to that world, so also in our century. Like the great thinkers of the past, the scientists of our age have their own desires to supply a neat and ordered package of knowledge, a sure guide on how to understand ourselves and the world around us. In an effort to have verifiable facts to offer as sound proof for their theories of the world and human nature, the positivistic scientists of our century explained away or simply disregarded those phenomena which refused to yield to their way of seeing things and which would not fit their particular mind-sets.

However, Rogers (1980) pointed out, the unquestioned axiom, that cause and effect are a linear chain and that all events are eventually explainable by discovering the cause of each effect, is being replaced by the recognition that there are **reciprocal cause-effect interactions** which amplify deviations, and which permit **new information and new forms** to develop. There is a **creative, formative tendency** at work in the universe, a tendency which has been little studied or understood. The solidity of old thought patterns no longer fits. "The universe no longer seems like a great machine. It resembles much more a **great idea**" (Rogers, 1980, p. 2).

The neat and ordered simplicity of science as it was introduced to us, has vanished into a science of complexity resembling the views of Eastern mystics, rather than Newtonian mechanics. It is no longer science as we came to know it, but again approaches the mystical, the indescribable, the creative (Rogers, 1980). Man himself can no longer be seen as a large computer, a mechanical bundle of stimuli (inputs) and responses (outputs). Nor does the animal model of behavior succeed in containing him. Man has capabilities, spiritual depth and grasp, a complexity of thought, totally beyond the limited capacities of animal life. The unconscious intelligence of the human being, it is now being discovered, is vastly capable.

Facing a new world, is a new person, much more aware of his or her own strength and power and also much more under the impression that **the only constant thing in life is the process of change** (Rogers, 1980). Scientists of today are seeing the individual primarily as a person with a freedom of thought and action, constantly in a process of transformation as he or she continually **transcends** the boundaries of the set or given. The new person lives life as a process, an energy flow, a changingness. The static rigid life has no appeal. Rogers (1980) called such mature and fully functioning people, the citizens of tomorrow. Not satisfied to live in a compartmentalized world, these people search for the experience of **the wholeness of life**. "They are seekers, and their quest is essentially spiritual in nature. **They wish to find a meaning and purpose in life which transcends the individual**" (Rogers, 1980, p. 5).

Having **an openness** both towards their inner and outer worlds, these individuals refuse to be made to fit the pattern, to have a ceiling placed on their thoughts and beliefs. They have a trust in their own experience and a profound distrust of external authority and its prescribed ways of seeing and doing things.

Prizing **authenticity** above all else, these individuals make their **own** moral judgements, even openly disobeying laws which they consider unjust or inapplicable. "Their life is built on a consistent philosophy - a basic trust in the constructive nature of the human organism, a respect for the integrity of each person, a belief that freedom of choice is essential to a fulfilled life" (Rogers 1980, p. 5). Breaking out of the constraint of authoritarian systems, freedom-loving individuals are in the process of establishing a truly humanitarian life-style. No longer an utopian dream, a more humanitarian way of life is becoming evident in many societies all over the world. **We are beginning to have an idea of what the world can look like if we but take up the challenge to change it.**

Rogers (in Kirschenbaum, 1979), like Maslow, believed that a truly humane society is no longer an impossible dream. The realization that is beginning to break through to our understanding is that **we are the carriers of culture, we bring our society into being. The power for change lies within**

us. The key to a better future, for societal change, is in our hands. We can witness this freedom to effect a change for the better in the highly creative lives of the psychologically mature, fully functioning and healthy persons, those among us, who have attained full human stature. Rogers (in Kirschenbaum, 1979) believed that "in spite of the darkness of the present, our culture may be on the verge of a great evolutionary-revolutionary leap. I simply say with all my heart - **Power to the emerging person and the revolution he carries within**" (pp. 404-405).

Evaluation

Humanistic Psychology as a Revolutionary Movement

Humanistic psychology came into being as a **protest movement**. It called into question not only the deterministic views of man in psychology, but also the view of man which has held sway over centuries, namely, of human nature as basically evil, the view propagated by the traditional Christian Church. The centuries of ingrained societal suspicion of human nature, according to the humanists, have had a most restrictive, thwarting and damaging effect on the full and free emergence of the better side of human nature.

After the havoc and destruction of two world wars, there is a dire need to **rediscover** the human potential for good. Humanists believe that an upbringing and a societal structure which express **faith** in human nature and an unconditional positive regard for man's person, will **release** growth in the direction of socially constructive and personally enhancing ways of being.

The deepest urge in human nature, namely, to fulfill his humanness as humaneness can, as Rogers (1972) expressed it, "become deeply buried under layer after layer of encrusted psychological defenses and hidden behind elaborate facades which **deny** its existence" (p. 35).

Growth towards an expression of what man **at heart is**, only **awaits** the proper conditions to be released and expressed.

As a **growth-psychology**, humanistic interest is centered on the personality in its prime and on the peaks of psychological development. What is man like at his optimal best, when he has been given or has enjoyed every opportunity to become what he **can** be?

We are so used to seeing man in his misery, in his mediocrity, in a state of depravity, that we have accepted this as norm. "Man is no more than..", "man is nothing else but..", are reasonings we have become used to. We are familiar with man as **a failure, as fallen, in his lesser than best state**. We have accepted failure and falleness as fact. "This is what human nature is like."

Man has been conditioned into giving up on himself. Without realizing it, he seals his own fate. He is his own worst judge. He bows the knee to condemnation, **allowing himself** to be falsely accused and poorly defined. Relinquishing the say over himself and his own life, he becomes what he **is not**.

Man, according to humanistic evaluation, is in a bad state of mental health!

Misconceptions About and Clouded Issues Surrounding Humanistic Theory

Humanists, in their study of human nature, sought to uncover human capacities and potentials long hidden from view or scientific consideration. In revealing a positive side to human nature, humanists stressed the need for the creation of societal structures that would promote and not hamper the full emergence of the human potential for good.

In their zealous effort to free our thinking on human nature from the bondages of old thought systems which portrayed man as a victim, both of his own evil inclinations and of the brute force of circumstances over which man was seen to have no power, humanistic psychologists placed the accent on **man's freedom and right to become himself**. The concept which is central to humanistic thinking, is that of **self-actualization**. "The organism has one basic tendency and striving", Rogers (1974) contended, and that is "to actualize, maintain and enhance the experiencing organism" (p. 208). It is the humanists' strong emphasis on **self**, which has provoked a critical questioning of humanistic theory. The question is whether, in their focus on the social needs of man, the humanists have obscured in any way, the higher psychospiritual aspects of human nature.

A View of Human Nature too Exclusively Focussed on the Psychosocial Level of Being?

Humanists shifted the focus away from the behavioristic preoccupation with the mechanisms of man's physical being and adaptations to his environment, and from the Freudian preoccupation with the impact of emotional forces centered around survival needs and urges (life and death instincts), to a view of man as a **social being**.

Humanistic theory illuminated aspects of self which are hidden when man is studied on only the physical and psychobiological levels of being. Man in a **psychosocial context** has a self- and other-awareness, a sense of responsibility of self in relation to others. On a level of being where the social aspects of his nature are more fully emerged, the need to secure a significant place in a societal setting in which he wants to be an approved and appreciated part of, is clearly evident.

Man's freedom to evaluate his own situation, to give critical thought to the society in which he finds himself, also becomes manifest. On this level of being, the higher needs of human nature come to the fore.

The **psychospiritual** aspects of human nature gain in prominence when we begin to study man in his more evolved or psychologically **mature** states of being.

Along the further reaches of psychological growth, man proves to be a being who needs to find and experience his life and setting as something **meaningful**, as something that has value beyond the here and now and the immediately existent. The human quest to make more eternal sense of who we as human beings are, of what human society on planet earth is all about, is expressed in philosophies, arts, literatures and religions. It follows that these spiritual human endeavors are as commonly part of human life and nature as the acts of eating and drinking, having sex, or of fighting with and killing one another!

The humanistic focus is on man's emerged selfhood on a level where he is open to the highest life can offer. However, not man on the heights of spiritual capacity, but his self-enhancing experiences were brought under the humanistic spotlight. That is why humanists have even been unexpectedly **surprised** at the vistas of human nature that, in their study of the more evolved stages of psychological growth, were being opened up to them.

What Maslow (1968) called a **transhumanistic level of being**, only begins to operate at a level **beyond** self-actualization where the focus shifts from the self "to issues and eternal questions of the type we have learned to call philosophical or ethical" (p. 134). On this level, a person lives within "the widest possible frame of reference", the framework of **self-transcendent values and meanings** (Maslow, 1968, p. 134).

On the psychosocial level of being, however, **the emerged self** (on the brink of an authentic, that is, first-hand and responsible, fully committed involvement with life's issues and eternal questions) **is the prime phenomenon of focus**. In his psychosociality, the main need of man is that of **self-actualization**. The focus of humanistic theory is on being able to lead a self-enhancing life-style and which, at the same time, will prove enhancing to others and to the society of which the person is an active and creative part. As a growth-psychology, the humanists place the accent on the creation of those **psychosocial conditions** which can free the person to actualize himself to a maximal degree.

Self-actualization as Self-indulgence?

An existentialist such as Frankl (1967) believes that although correctly critical of the deterministic theorists such as Skinner and Freud with their homeostatic, merely tension-reducing views of human nature, humanists **have not gone far enough** in the move away from the models of man as a mere creature of need. Humanists still remain dangerously close to perceiving man as **merely using his world** as a means of achieving the aim of self-enhancement or need-satisfaction. Even the higher urges in human nature are described by Maslow in terms of **need** (metaneeds), which seek satisfaction. **The accent still remains on restoring certain conditions in the subject's psychic system**. The values and meanings of life are portrayed in much of humanistic theory as merely providing opportunities for the **experience of psychological well-being**. Humanistic theory still misses fulling seeing man in his psychospirituality, on a plane of **selfless** living where he is joyfully willing to give all for the sake of that which **transcends** himself, even if it is **at cost to himself**.

Frankl (1967) contends that an adequate view of man can only be properly formulated when it goes **beyond** homeostasis, **beyond** self-actualization to that transcendent sphere of human existence in which man chooses what he will do and what he will be in the midst of an objective world of meanings and values.

Frankl (1967) sees the highest form of authentic being, of final becoming, as moving **beyond self-actualization and self-expression** towards the actualization of values, the realization of the unique meanings of one's life. According to logotherapeutic concepts, man is not primarily interested in any psychic conditions of his own, but rather is oriented toward the world, toward the world of potential meanings and values which, so to speak, are waiting to be fulfilled or actualized by him. **To**

Frankl's mind, human destiny is to transcend the level of need and self-actualization, to forget oneself in the pursuit of meaning. Each man is presented with the task, not to actualize himself and to subjectively experience the bliss of peak experiences, but to find the concrete meaning of his existence, to realize the life-tasks uniquely assigned to him. In the humanistic concept of self-realization, of an ecstatic fusion of self and the world, there is a danger of losing sight of the confrontational character of values and meanings which are not there, in the first place, to be experienced and enjoyed, but rather in their task-character, there to be realized or obeyed, irrespective of the self-satisfaction or sense of gratification that may be brought in their wake. In choosing how he will be and what he will do in the different situations in which he finds himself, in the choices he is continually called upon to make, the person realizes himself and gives shape to his own character, without having set himself the goal to do so.

Frankl (1967) is in accord with the Biblical principle which states that whoever loses himself for the sake of something bigger than himself, will gain himself and his own life in the process (Matthew 16:25). "Only as man withdraws from himself in the sense of releasing self-centered interest and attention will he gain an authentic mode of existence" (Frankl, 1967, p. 46). The lifetask of an individual can therefore never be perceived as the actualization of potentialities which will fulfill his personality to the greatest possible degree, since this devaluates the world as a mere means to the end of self-realization.

We must ask the question, Frankl (1967) insists, whether or not man's primary intention, or even his ultimate destination, can ever be properly described by the term self-actualization. "I would venture a strictly negative response to this question. It appears to me to be quite obvious that self-actualization is an effect and cannot be the object of intention (p. 45).

Self-actualization Within the Context of Meaning

It stands to the great credit of the humanists to have themselves corrected what could have remained the short-falls of humanistic theory, namely, to view man too exclusively from only the psychosocial dimension of his being.

The position of Rogers in terms of a higher dimension of meaning. Unnerved by his experiences within the dark domains of human pathology, Rogers (1972) chose to place the accent on the exhilarating effects of mental health, congruence, and the full and free functioning of the optimally developed personality.

Rogers (1972) chose to remain in vital touch with the present moment, in the delights of immediate experience. Choosing to let the existence of meaning impress itself on him as he experienced it in what he described as a free-flowing process of an organismic valuing of the existential moment, Rogers did not care to pursue the matter further.

Rogers (1972) was satisfied to be carried along with his meaning experiences without probing too deeply as to where it was leading him, or as to what the final destinations of life might be. That these destinations were good, was all that mattered to Rogers as he chose to liberate the suffering

individual into a freer experience of the good life and to release his growth towards, what remained for Rogers, the dimly defined and unexplored goals of the future.

The position of Maslow in terms of a higher dimension of meaning. Maslow (1968) was more openly enthralled with the possibility of what he described as a **fourth** or **transhumanistic psychology**, as he actively sought to broaden the scope of psychology as a **transhumanistic science**. Psychologists, he stated, should go and learn from the existentialists an orientation that stresses the dimension of seriousness and profundity of living. This type of living is in sharp contrast to the shallow and superficial life, which is a kind of **diminished living**, a defense against the ultimate meanings of life. "Not only have we as psychologists been ducking the problem of responsibility and of free will, but also their corollaries of strength and courage" (Maslow, 1968, p. 13).

Existentialism, Maslow (1968) believed, is "a push towards the psychology of the fully evolved and authentic self and its ways of being" (p. 16), which brings us into a spiritual realm which has an objectivity, a **reality of existence**, not acknowledged within the previous parameters of science. "It is becoming clearer that there is a higher conception of objectivity than the one we know" (Maslow, 1968, p. 7).

Fully realizing the overly subjective nature of his earlier views on the self-actualizing tendency of human nature, Maslow (1968) himself broadened the concept to include more spiritual elements of human striving. He acknowledged that the term: self-actualization has proven to have the unforeseen shortcomings of appearing to imply selfishness rather than altruism; to slur the aspect of duty and dedication to life's tasks; to neglect the ties to other people and to society; **to neglect the demand-character of non-human reality**; to neglect egolessness and self-transcendence; to stress, by implication, activity rather than passivity or receptivity. In fact, personal correspondence and dialogue with Frankl convinced Maslow (1966) that what he himself understood by the term: self-actualization, was not all that different from what Frankl understood by the concept of man's will to meaning. "I agree entirely with Frankl that man's primary concern (I would rather say highest concern) is his will to meaning. .. As things stand now, different theorists use (different) words in an overlapping or synonymous way" (p. 108).

Study of the peak-experiences (the experience of the highest there is in life) of self-actualizing individuals made a profound impression on Maslow (1968): "A different picture emerges. **You find yourself in another realm**" (p. 4).

It is the discovery of this higher, psychospiritual realm, which Frankl (1967) described as the dimension of meaning, that prompted Maslow (1968) to unequivocally state: "I consider Humanistic, Third Force Psychology to be transitional, a preparation for a still "higher" Fourth Psychology, transpersonal, transhuman, centered in the cosmos rather than in human needs and interest, going beyond humanness, identity, self-actualization and the like" (p. iv).

In fact, he began to uncover the properties of this transhumanistic realm in his brilliant analysis of the peak-experiences of self-actualizing individuals which, as we have noted, brought Maslow (1968) to the following startling conclusion: "I am denying the whole modern history of science which has from its very beginning claimed the need to be value-free- value-neutral, value-rejecting. .. Human

beings are not value-free; they live by values, they live for values" (p. 4).

The position of Allport in terms of a higher dimension of meaning. Perhaps Allport (1966), of all the humanists, most clearly placed humanistic theory within the context of a higher dimension of meaning, especially in his conception of psychological maturity. Allport's conception of the nature of conscience on the adult reaches of becoming as an experience of **value-related obligation**, his accent on the future-directedness of the mature person who characteristically embraces ethical and religious values which exert a dynamic influence upon specific choices, clearly reveal Allport's grasp of man's functioning on the higher, psychospiritual dimensions of being.

Allport's (1961) grasp of spiritual matters was, of the humanists, the most sound or at least, the most unambiguous when it came to stressing that the self-transcendent aspects of human nature go beyond the goal of self-actualization. He was the first to embrace the existentialist view that one must transcend himself, take an outside look at his abilities within a context of meaning that is objective, even cosmic. **From this point of view the capacity for self-transcendence and responsibility becomes the truly significant core of human nature.**

Unlike Maslow, Allport (1961) had no difficulty in conceiving that it is quite possible for man to develop to the highest peaks of maturity, **even** if he suffers serious deprivation of his basic human needs and even if he finds himself in the worst of circumstances.

More than any humanist, Allport (1966) understood that human nature is free, free to transcend any circumstance at any time, always able to astound us with dramatic change and surprising breakthroughs into higher levels of growth, no matter how opposing are the forces both inside and outside the human personality.

Allport's objective and clear thinking, along with the corrections which Maslow made to his earlier views of self-actualization as the main thrust in human motivation, took humanistic theory beyond only the psychosocial level where it threatened to remain if its perspective was not broadened to include the higher and psychospiritual aspects of being.

In its main thrust and impression, however, humanistic theory still leaves somewhat to be desired. It unquestionably leaves room for a psychology more markedly focused on a **transhumanistic** plane of being.

CHAPTER 8

MAN ON THE PSYCHOSPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF BEING

Existential Psychology

Existential psychology has its roots in the existentialist movement in philosophy. The most well-known existential psychologists are the Europeans, Ludwig Binswanger, Medard Boss and Viktor Frankl and the Americans, Rollo May and Paul Tillich. Existentialism can be defined as a movement in psychology that focuses on the problems and themes of existence, of life itself (Von Eckartsberg, 1986).

After the shock and horror of the Second World War, the interest in the teachings of the existentialists increased sharply. As a movement that took on momentum after that war, humanistic psychology absorbed a great deal of existentialist thought.

Rogers is known as a phenomenologist. Phenomenology is a philosophical movement that is closely aligned to the existential movement in philosophy. The phenomenological movement in psychology focuses on the explication of the intentional structures of consciousness in general (Von Eckartsberg, 1986). Allport, especially, was greatly influenced by and based a lot of his thinking on the writings of the European existentialists. Maslow (in May, 1969) wrote that reading the existentialists has been for him a very interesting, gratifying, and instructive experience. It has enriched, enlarged, corrected, and strengthened his thinking about the human personality.

Regarding existentialism as a movement in psychology, Allport (1966) noted that just how far the existentialist movement, already well developed in philosophy, literature, and theology, will affect the psychology of personality cannot yet be predict. **"Already it seems to be a needed blood transfusion"**, Allport (1966) stated. Existentialism calls for a doctrine of an active intellect, for more emphasis upon propriate functions, including self-objectification and oriented becoming, Allport (1966) believed. **It calls in particular for a wider and fresher view of anxiety, of courage, and of freedom.**

The Existential View of Man

The word "existence" comes from the Latin root *existere*, meaning literally "to stand out, emerge". Existential psychology focuses on **the emerged person on the psychospiritual dimension of being**. The accent is on the nature of human existence in the full face of reality as it confronts man who has at his disposal, the full measure of his freedom. On this evolved level, man's awareness can best be described as **a consciousness of responsibility, the awareness of life as a given task**.

On the highest or psychospiritual dimension of being, man has emerged from the blind dictates of his struggling immaturities and stands in the questioning light of mature reason.

On this level he can no longer plead ignorance of the disclosed facts of life. He cannot shut his eyes to the myriad of responsibilities that face him every day. He is aware of himself as a **spiritual**

being, faced with profundities of thought, thought which transcends a simple awareness of mere physicalities, and emotions centered solely on psychological need and well-being (self-gratification).

Developed to his full spiritual stature, man is confronted with issues that call for **commitment**.

His world is not a place of bliss and perfection, something he can simply sit back and enjoy. **Man is on a level of awareness where the tragic factualities of life must be fully faced.** He sees need all around him. He is confronted with want, pain and suffering, with disease and death, with violence and war, with failure and guilt.

Life questions him. What to make of it, what to do with it? It will neither fit into his plans nor unfold according to his dreams. Life cannot be made to bend the knee to man's ideas of it. It refuses to be fully explained, controlled and manipulated. Its questioning and confrontational nature will not be dissipated, not even by the rigorously exact and meticulous efforts of science. "For no matter how interesting or theoretically true is the fact that I am composed of such and such chemicals or act by such and such mechanisms or patterns" states May (1969), "the crucial question always is that **I happen to exist at this given moment in time and space, and my problem is how I am to be aware of that fact and what I shall do about it**" (p. 12).

"Man is doomed to choice", runs the famous saying of Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), a famous European exponent of existential philosophy. What man does with his life in the light of his conscience, his awareness of his freedom as **accountability**, defines who he is. There is no getting away from this fundamental fact of human existence.

The Philosophical Roots of the Existential Movement in Psychology

The effort to escape responsibility is as old as man himself. Starting with Adam, man has always sought to escape his conscience, to hide himself from scrutiny. He has always defended himself against an open dialogue, a full confrontation with the issues of life, by clever (and evasive) argument. If he can supply the answers, he can escape being questioned, he can find a way out of having to give an account of himself or of becoming responsibly involved. "Am I my brother's keeper?" Man's effort to avoid commitment, is as real as ever.

Both the theological and philosophical thrusts in history have been towards prescriptive and explanatory systems of thought. Truth was removed from the experience (the practice) thereof. Doctrines were made out of it in theology, and in philosophy truth became a tool for speculation.

The height of philosophical efforts to turn reality into a matter of abstract conjecture, was reached in the panrationalism of Hegel (1770-1831), a "totalitarianism of reason" against which modern day existentialists such as Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and later Nietzsche (1844-1900) revolted.

Reality is lived, existentialists proclaim. "Truth exists only as the individual produces it in action," wrote Kierkegaard (in May, 1969, p. 14). May (1969), explains this famous dictum as follows: "There is no such thing as truth or reality for a living human being except as he **participates** in it, is **conscious** of it, has some **relationship** to it" (p. 14).

Truth only becomes truth to a person, once he personally grasps, that is, **experiences** it. Kierkegaard (in May, 1969) spoke about **truth-as-relationship**, pointing out that we must be open or

receptive to the truth for it to reveal itself to us. We cannot even see a particular truth unless we already have some commitment to it. It is, therefore, possible to close our minds to the truth, in which case we will **not** experience it. We then foolishly proclaim that it does not exist!

The thought of truth-as-relationship was also elaborated upon by the phenomenological school of thought. Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), the father of phenomenology, emphasized the fact that human awareness and behavior undeniably have an **intentional referent**, that is, are always absorbed with or directed towards something or someone (Husserl, 1970). We have been designed, as it were, to be able to discover truth and to become personally involved with and to meaningfully relate to it. Even on the simplest level of our perception, subject is always related to object, in inextricable interaction.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) distinguished between noumena (objects as they are, irrespective of our perceptions of them) and phenomena (our perceptions or subjective experience of objects or the reality outside of us) (Kant, 1787/1959). We can only know the outside or objective world through our subjective experiences of it.

Husserl (1970), in the light of the Kantian finding, revolted against the idea that human perception is the mere result of outer stimulation, in other words, that we can turn ourselves into obtuse objects, knowing nothing more than what has been "fed" into us, or, that we all receive "the truth" (a "pure" knowledge of things as they are, irrespective of our subjective experience or understanding of them) in the same way.

Man is not a passive recipient of deterministic influences, phenomenologists maintain, since he actively **interprets** or **evaluates** his experiences, what happens to him. Being **aware** of the influences he is being subjected to, and by evaluating them, man is doing something to the influences and changing them. Man has an influence upon the influences. **There is an active and dynamic interchange taking place.** Man can therefore never be studied as an object among other objects, that is, in a disconnected or mechanistic cause-and-effect way.

Another point which phenomenologists stress, is that the nature of our experiences influences what we believe reality to be. It is another indisputable fact that perceptions of reality differ from person to person. What a person holds out as the truth, however objective he proclaims himself to be, is still **his** impression, **his** understanding of things.

It can also be observed that the keener and broader, the deeper and more comprehensive our experience of reality becomes, the closer we move to the real nature, the truth of it. It follows that only those who have experienced a particular truth in a profound, deeply experiential, that is first-hand way, know what they are talking about and can be listened to as an authority on the subject. Even painstaking conjecture cannot arrive at the truth in the same way.

We are thus not to close our minds to anything. A **continued openness** to new revelations and impressions of the truth of a matter is imperative. According to phenomenologists, science is therefore a discipline of **understanding**. Any closed or dogmatic belief system, especially in the human sciences, is bound to miss out on the truth, in which case it is no longer science.

A Move Away from the Dogmatism of Final Answers

The Transcendent Nature of Truth

It is in the very nature of reality, phenomenologists and existentialists contend, that it cannot be encompassed. Truth is never arrived at, only known in ever deeper (higher) dimensions. It is a phenomenological fact that we are continually reaching out to, experiencing and comprehending a reality beyond the parameters of our own skins and circumstance.

Since we are continually in a process of becoming, we are never at a point of final arriving.

From a phenomenological and existential point of view, positivistic psychologists, in their conception of science as providing an answer that would mean the same thing for all people for all time, have turned their backs on reality.

To abstract from reality, in an effort to construct a theory by which reality can be explained in some final sense, is to lose touch with it. Instead of reality we have theory, and with theory we are trapped into thought systems that are several abstractions removed from the real thing. In a search for the nature, "the true essence" of things, the essence itself gets lost.

Truth escapes the theorist.

The Self-transcendent Essence of Human Nature

The search after essences, and efforts to penetrate, dissect, gain control over and predict - manipulate at will - the subject matter of science, has been the path taken by traditional psychology. Full explanatory arguments were put forward by theorists as final answers. In the effort to "explain" man, man as a vital, living human being got lost. There seems to be the following "law" at work: the more accurately and comprehensively we can describe a given mechanism, the more we lose the existing person (May, 1969). The more absolutely and completely we formulate the forces or drives, the more we are talking about abstractions and not the living human being. The living person always

transcends the given mechanism and always experiences the "drive" or "force" in his own unique way. The distinction is whether the "person has meaning in terms of the mechanism" or the "mechanism has meaning in terms of the person". The emphasis in existentialist thinking is firmly on the latter. "Science was made for man rather than man for science" (May, 1969, p. 8).

Existentialism and phenomenology are endeavors to understand man in his indivisible **unity and wholeness**, his inextricable involvement and interaction with being (that which impresses itself on man's awareness). It is an effort to abolish the cleavage between subject and object which has "bedeviled" Western thought since shortly after the Renaissance, a cleavage whichBinswanger (in May, 1969) called: "the cancer of all psychology up to now.." (p. 11).

Man is behind all his actions. He is continually transcending himself, that is, directing his bodily functions, his drives and emotions towards that which lays hold of his attention, calls forth his involvement and draws him out of himself. Man thus functions **holistically**, as a unity that is more than the sumtotal of different and separate parts.

In his wholeness, man is not complete in the sense of having arrived at some final point, a point at which he can be exactly and finally "defined". He forever moves on and beyond himself and things as they are at that moment. He is forever involved in interchange and encounter, always in the process of changing and growing, of becoming. Man is forever on the move!

To force existence into a theoretical system is to destroy it, existentialists maintain. Reminiscent of the idea of Rogers (1972) that life is a process, and the most fundamental aspect of human nature is one of **becoming**, the following analogy is used by existentialists in explaining their belief that life, and the human person involved in the process of living, is never static: If one wishes to study a rushing stream of water, one cannot dip down with a scoop and take out a sample, at least not without losing the restless rush - which is life (Wahl, 1949).

Commenting on Sartre's statement that existence precedes essence. Tillich (1965a) wrote:

The meaning of this sentence is that man is a being of whom no essence can be affirmed, for such an essence would introduce a permanent element, contradictory to **man's power of transforming himself indefinitely**. But if we ask whether this statement has not, against its intention, given an assertion about man's essential nature, we must say, certainly, it has. **Man's particular nature is his power to create himself.** (p. 137)

In existential thought, man is not an interchangeable item, a thing among things that can be manipulated (shaped and conditioned) at will. Human behavior, in the strict sense, cannot be predicted. The more **abnormal** the behavior, the more predictable it is. The behavior of the **neurotic** personality can be predicted fairly rigidly, because his behavior is the product of compulsive patterns and drives. A psychotic is transfixed in the symptoms of his mental affliction. No meaningful and life-changing interaction with his world is taking place.

Although, as May (1969) points out, the healthy person is "predictable" in the sense that his behavior is integrated and he can be depended upon to act according to his own character, he always at the same time shows a **new** element in his behavior. His actions are fresh, spontaneous, interesting, and in this sense he is just the opposite of the neurotic and his predictability.

The Unpredictability of Interchange

A phenomenological analysis will show that a healthy person is in a **dialogue** with his world. Every moment is vital and new: a **fresh interchange** (a vital **change**) is taking place. Who can predict what the next moment in the life of such a person will be like, what interchange will be taking place?

The newness and freshness of behavior on the part of the healthy person is because he is **open to reality**. He does not approach reality with a closed or prejudiced mind. He does not, therefore, **distort** reality to fit into his particular (prejudiced or stayed) mind-set. He does not respond according to predictable pattern, in a predetermined or conditioned way. He is **available**, fully responsive to the call of every new moment. There is a **uniqueness** (freshness and vitality) about everything he does and is. Such a person is living fully; he has achieved optimal being. This is the definition of **authentic being** which Rogers (1972) had in mind when he stated that the only constant in life is the process of **change**.

Non-being as a Challenge to Being

Placing the accent on man's commission to **exercise** his freedom, the existentialists state that man's fundamental problem is to achieve true existence instead of letting his life be no more than a thoughtless accident.

Nowhere is man more confronted with the fact that he is called to do something with his life, than in the face of his own death. Being is essentially always threatened by non-being. Every opportunity missed to realize something of value and so to turn a potentiality into a reality and to give it eternal existence, is something lost forever. "If only.. ", is the lament of a man who failed to respond to a challenge at the time it was offered to him. The opportunity is gone forever. There is no turning back. The new opportunity offered, is one of repentance and change.

It is the threat of non-being, therefore, that calls forth **authentic being**. "What are you doing with **your** life", is the question with which suffering (the threat of non-being) corners us. Man tries to escape this heightened and often painful awareness of the task-quality of his life, and of his failures in the face of it, by hiding behind ready-made answers.

Not only the dogmatist, but also his blind followers seek to avoid personal confrontation. May (1969) points out that perhaps the most ubiquitous and ever-present form of the failure to confront non-being in our day is in **conformism**, "the tendency of the individual to let himself be absorbed in the sea of collective responses and attitudes, to become swallowed up in **das Man**, with the corresponding loss of his own awareness, potentialities, and whatever characterizes him as a unique and original being" (p. 49).

An Existential Revolt against the Loss of Man's Personhood

With a blossoming of the positivistic sciences, coupled to the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century, a process was set in motion which Tillich (1965a) graphically described as one "in which people were transformed into things, into pieces of reality which pure science can calculate and technical science can control" (p. 136). Hand in hand with the process which, in essence, was man's

effort to gain control over his world and to get it to bend the knee to his ever increasing know-how, went a compartmentalization of life, and with it, a fragmentation of the human personality.

Endemic anxiety, loneliness, estrangement of one man from another, man's alienation from himself, became the mental affliction of the modern era. Preceding what later became the humanists' perception of the human condition, Nietzsche (in Kaufman, 1965) declared: "Together with the fear of man we have lost the love of man, confidence in man, indeed, **the will to man**" (p. 140).

Losing a sense of his own personhood, a sense of in-touchness with himself and others, a sense of wholeness and unity, modern man sunk into a sense of morbid meaninglessness. He became an easy prey for the autocrat, the despot and the manipulator. Nietzsche (in Kaufman, 1965) predicted the rise of the collectivist movements of the twentieth century, and foresaw "the terrible apparition.. the Nation State.." (p. 140). Power in the hands of the fanatical few over the passive many, reached a climax in the Government of National Socialism in Nazi Germany during the Second World War. The shock and horror of the wholesale slaughter of millions of innocent victims in the name of ideology, has made a consideration of existential theory imperative.

Tillich (1965a), who was an outspoken critic of Nazism and who, as a result, had to flee Germany to find a haven in America, noted that existentialism has become the style of our period in all realms of life. Starting with Pascal's revolt against the mathematical rationalism of the 17th century, existentialism went underground in the 18th century, became a revolutionary movement in the 19th century, and gained an astonishing victory in the 20th century.

Echoing in the contemporary study of human nature and behavior in every branch of the human sciences, and in the awakened conscience of the world in its vigilant watch over the rights, worth and dignity of the individual, is the cry of the Holocaust survivor:

"Never again!"

Man's Quest for Meaning

In a world that after the slaughter of the First and Second World Wars has been shocked into an awareness of man's responsibility, his accountability in the face of unmitigated and unrestrained evil, Frankl's existential psychology has a unique place.

Frankl's brand of existentialism was subjected to the fiery trial of personal affliction. Already a famous psychiatrist, neurologist and philosopher, Frankl, a Viennese Jew, and victim of Nazi anti-semitism, was captured and transported in a cattle train to Auschwitz. There he was reduced to number 119,104.

The Nazi concentration and death camps cornered man in his last stand for freedom: his attitude towards the blow fate had dealt him.

What meaning has life in the face of the most abject and senseless of sufferings to which man can possibly be subjected?

Trapped in the unspeakably horrific confines of a Nazi death camp, was man finally compelled to accept a definition of himself as a mere pawn in the game of fate?

In the final analysis, is or is man not **free**?

Man's final, most challenging choice is how he will suffer.

PART IV: RESEARCH FOCUS: THE MEANING OF SUFFERING

We have discussed the evolving theories of man over the history of psychology in Part III. We have noted how the views of mainstream psychologists have opposed and complemented the views of Frankl. We have, in fact, been presented with an ever sharper focus on man; more and more of the fundamental features of his nature and person have been illuminated to us. In the final analysis, we have seen man in his full maturity, faced with the tragic factualities of his own life. How is he going to deal with it?

We have stolen behind the scenes of mainstream theories. We have sought to gain some understanding of the man behind the theory. In Part IV, we will focus on the issue of suffering and its meaning in the manner in which each of the mainstream theorists have dealt with it. Each has offered utopian solutions to the problem of human suffering. Which one are we to choose? Specifically, what has a victim of Nazi persecution such as Frankl to say on the subject of the meaning of suffering? In the final analysis, how are we to approach our field of study: the sufferings of the Holocaust survivor? Our minds must be clear of misconception and confusion. We must be wide open to what the Holocaust survivor as research participant will have to say to us. Our minds must be receptive. Ignorance and misconception close our minds. Only a great deal of intelligent thought on the phenomenon of research will open our minds; make us ready to hear what we will be asked to consider, without prejudice or bias.

The question of suffering in mainstream psychology and the utopian solutions offered, will be discussed in Chapter 9. In Chapter 10, some preliminary impressions of the meaning of suffering are formed on the basis of the understanding we have gained up to this point in our deliberations. It needs to be stressed that these preliminary impressions about suffering and its meaning in no way imply any conclusive stand or hypotheses on the subject of suffering. Rather, through a careful consideration of what we have learnt about suffering and its meaning up to this point of the research, a maximum clarity of mind on the matter was sought.

CHAPTER 9

THE QUESTION OF SUFFERING IN MAINSTREAM PSYCHOLOGY

An Evolving Theory of Man

A fascinating theme which emerged in tracing the changing theories of man over the course of the history of psychology, from the behavioristic thought systems to the psychoanalytic views of human nature, on to the humanistic orientations, and finally up to the existential schools of thought, is **an ever clearer portrayal of the self as a central and directing core of the human personality; a portrayal of the person as becoming aware of and facing up to the demands of life to an ever greater or more responsible extent.**

The greatest demand made upon man, is how he will face up to suffering.

It is most fascinating, therefore, to trace how the different theories evolved around the question of suffering: what causes it; whether its source is inside or outside the person; how to deal with it; in short: how the problem of suffering may be solved.

Whether or not suffering is seen as having any meaning, depends on how the above questions are answered.

The Oblivion of Peripheral Being: The Behavioristic Option in Dealing with Human Suffering

A peripheral approach to human nature, a focus on the external, the pleasure/pain, reward/punishment properties of learning and behavior, earmark the behavioristic school of thought as expressed by its orthodox representatives: Watson and Skinner.

According to the dimensional ontology of Frankl (1970), the behavioristic approach to man focusses primarily on the **physical dimension of being**. Skinner (1971) maintained that we must not think of a person directing his behavior. "The picture which emerges from a scientific analysis is not of a body with a person inside, but of a body which is a person in the sense that it displays a complex repertoire of behavior" (p. 195). Man's **physiology** will eventually explain every type of behavior, however complex or abstract it may seem to be. "The appeal to mind explains nothing at all" (Skinner, 1971, p. 190). In fact, the behavioristic model of man bears striking resemblance to the simpler mode of a primarily physical way of being during the first and earliest stages of human development.

A most interesting question to consider in a brief recap of behavioristic theory, is how an accentuation of a simpler mode of human existence in the physical or non-metaphysical world is an effort on the part of radical behaviorists to deal not only with the physical and emotional suffering caused by the destructive and anti-social side of human behavior, but more particularly, also to deal with and eliminate the painful incomprehensibilities and spiritual agonies of human suffering.

The Physical Mode of Being

What is life like on a primarily physical dimension of being? An illuminating picture is presented to us by developmental psychologists in their study of the personality during the earliest stages of growth. We find features there which strikingly correspond to the model of man presented to us by behaviorists such as Watson and Skinner.

Works of developmental psychologists such as Jean Piaget (1968), John Bowlby (1967a, 1967b, 1969), Erik Erikson (1974, 1977, 1981), complimented by the works of psychoanalysts such as Melanie Klein (1957, 1963, 1965, 1969) and others (Anna Freud, 1951; D.W. Winnicott, 1957, 1958, 1969) highlight the fact that during his infant years the person develops in an undifferentiated, symbiotic union with his caregivers, of whom the mother is primary. Within this nurturing context, self is scarcely distinguished from the separate person of another as the infant, via his physical senses and motor actions, begins to learn about the environment into which he has been born.

Focusing on cognitive development, Piaget (1968) called this first stage the sensori-motor stage, pointing out that only at about two years of age is the child mentally able to distinguish between himself and others. Only then does the child have rudimentary concept of self (self-awareness). Behavior becomes intentional (self-willed) only as the concept of self (an awareness of the independent existence from the nurturing environment) matures.

During infancy and early childhood the basic needs for physical and emotional well-being, needs for nurturing, warmth, inclusion and safety - man's survival needs - predominate. Man, on this level, learns not to bite the hand that feeds him. He lives in almost total dependency upon an environment which shapes him and to which he, in his bid for survival, seeks only to adapt.

The parallel between this early stage of growth and the type of existence behaviorists like Watson and Skinner envisaged as ideal, is striking.

In behavioristic theory, man is portrayed as having no freedom, no awareness of self in a self-transcending and meaning-orientated way. Man is portrayed as totally absorbed in his efforts to learn to respond appropriately to and to become an adapted part of his environment. The environment is primary since man is forever seeking to harmonize himself with it. To "go along with" the dictates of the environment, is to be "carried" by it, to continue to survive (find a place) in it. It is for this reason that Skinner (1971) could maintain: "It is always the environment which builds the behavior with which problems are solved, even when the problems are to be found in the private world inside the skin" (p. 190).

The Cause of Human Suffering: The Confounding Factor of Human Freedom

The environment that man has to adapt himself to does not have the clear and unequivocal guidelines for survival that nature offers its animal kingdom. Human agents of control, Watson and Skinner observed as they reviewed the history of human society, are ill equipped for the task of producing a society of order, peace and harmony.

The problem is **human freedom**, the fact that man strays from the clear guidelines of nature and institutes his own willful and arbitrary rules for living (Skinner, 1971). Since such freedom of choice and action leads only to lawless and self-destructive behavior, it must be curbed. The erratic, inconsistent, mostly overly punitive and negative input from the social environment with its disastrous effects on the behavior of its developing members, must be changed (Skinner, 1971). A system of control based on the tested and flawless rules of science, should be instituted (Skinner, 1976).

To solve the world's tragic social problems, we need to become **behavioral engineers** (Skinner, 1976b). Scientifically trained and schooled behaviorists can create an environment that can produce a perfect input, an input which will secure a totally adapted (and perfect) output of behavior (Watson, 1931). Through the establishment of a scientifically designed environment and an intensive reconditioning (re-learning) program, the threat of lawless, deviant and destructive behavior and its painful consequences, can be eradicated.

What we need, Skinner believed, is not less control as Freud contended, but **more control**. The controlling forces in human society, since they are exercising weak, improper, inconsistent and badly defined or negative control, must themselves be controlled (re-conditioned)!

The Necessity of Abolishing Old Societal Systems

How to put such a grand plan into operation? Each of us can begin at our own doorstep, with ourselves and our own families. Skinner (1976a) provided the example to emulate. He disentangled himself from the painful effects of his own poor upbringing and unhappy childhood, and sought to remold himself according to the behavioral dictates laid down in the works of earlier behaviorists, such as Watson.

When he had his own children, they were brought up in an environment which Skinner, with the help of his wife, designed and operated like a laboratory experiment and according to the strict principles of sound behavioral control. These experiments of Skinner with his own children, known as the baby-box experiments, attracted wide attention (Nye, 1979).

There is a riveting pathos in the autobiography of Skinner (1976a). The reader is invited to consider the devastating effects of a poor upbringing on the developing person. The unhappy story is meant to persuade the reader to consider the behavioristic appeal to place the reigns of environmental conditioning in the more expert hands of the behavioral scientist.

As we have seen in the discussion of Skinner's (1976a) autobiography, he had a conflict-laden relationship with an overly strict, prudish, emotionally cold and dominant mother and a rather passive and socially inept father. Skinner's struggle to establish his own sense of secure selfhood and emergent masculinity within such a context, his urge to return to his beginnings **in a better way**, may in fact have lent impetus to a theory that gives such prominence to an environment that will be stripped of human complexities and reshaped into giving a more earthy type of good and sound (healthy, conflict-free) nurturing (input).

However, it is clear that Skinner attached less blame to his mother and father, as the agents of control over his own life, than to the system which molded them to be what they were. The real enemy

was the religious and societal systems which had produced the kind of behavior, especially in the case of his mother and maternal grandmother, which had such an incapacitating and emasculating effect on his father and which caused such suffering in his own life.

His Protestant upbringing represented to Skinner a punitive and legalistic system which, at the same time, was riddled with inconsistencies. For one thing, it confusingly clashed with its Catholic counterpart. With its dogmatism and prescribed rituals, it placed a ceiling on a congregant's effort to break through into anything personally meaningful in life. It left those it so oppressed, with abject despair as their efforts to establish their own identities came to nothing and their conflicts left them utterly depleted and devoid of any sense of meaning.

This background could have lent impetus to Skinner's growing anti-religiosity. It also explained his antagonism towards and distaste for anything "spiritual". It may well be the reason behind his enthusiasm for and embrace of the non-religious (conflict-free and straightforward) behaviorism of Watson.

Both men believed that the type of religious authority which human society had been conditioned to accept over the Christian ages, needed to be replaced. In their view, the only ethics which mankind needs to know is **behavioral ethics: what will serve the smooth workings of the social machinery best?**

Advocating a level of human awareness which is strictly contained within the natural world, both Watson and Skinner were profoundly suspicious of the leanings of the human personality towards the supernatural. A search for answers to vexing human problems in the realm of the supernatural leaves the confines of the real (the natural) and, to Watson's and Skinner's minds, enters the realm of the unreal (the unscientific).

The most confounding factor in the uninterrupted flow of social harmony and its evolution towards greater effectiveness, Watson and Skinner maintained, is **conscience**. Conscience, to their mind, was an enforced consciousness of some divine authority outside the natural or human domain (Skinner, 1971). Leaving the safe pathways of instinct to fearfully and superstitiously subject himself to some or other spiritual authority, man places himself under the threat of condemnation. This provokes in oppressed man all manner of irrational beliefs and appeasement-type behaviors. Different interpretations (fantasies or illusions) about the spiritual authority man has placed over himself, lead to different religious persuasions. This in turn, leads to antagonistic and warring behavior between the differing factions (Watson, 1929).

Guilt, fear, feelings of unworthiness and self-condemnation, feelings of self-defensiveness, envy of the favored and fierce rivalry are, therefore, the unhappy results of the enforcement of religious rules and so-called ethical principles. **This unhappy world is a world which man himself created** (Skinner, 1976b).

Animal instinct is stripped of such complexities, Watson and Skinner pointed out. The animal does not pray, nor does he murder. **The animal's existence has the harmony of being patterned for survival**. His aggression makes sense: he kills only to survive. Animal aggression has none of the deviousness, conniving, plotting and incomprehensibility of human animosity. **The animal has no willful intent to harm**. His environment, if it threatens his survival, only evokes more adaptive and

stronger, more durable modes of behavior.

Man is to emulate the animal in seeking a perfect fit with a corrected environment. This will ensure his own continued survival over the endless ages of evolution. An ever more perfect fit between an ever more perfectly shaped man and his ever more cleverly designed environment, will move human evolution on towards the end of **indestructibility** (Watson, 1931).

A Behavioristic Answer to Human Suffering: A Spiritless Utopia

Watson and Skinner believed they had an answer to human suffering: to eradicate it by submitting mankind to a perfect (scientifically based) program of re-conditioning. Let us rewrite human history, they urge us, this time along the lines of a perfect adaptation to the physical or purely survival laws of nature. Our human or social environments, therefore, need to be stripped of their emotional conflicts and complexities. We need to simplify our existence and establish it on the pure basis of harmonious (conflict-free) togetherness.

We can interpret behavioristic thinking as meaning that the salvation of man, his untroubled existence through the evolutionary ages to come, is dependent on a **regression** in human history to prehistoric times when man, in what we know of his **pre-paradise state**, lived a **totally physical or spiritless existence**. The behavioristic utopia is, after all, one in which man is "once again" perfectly adapted to the environment which ensures the survival of his specific species. In this utopia, man is oblivious of the agonies of choice, the "curse" of freedom in which human dignity (or worth) must be attained or lost.

Freedom demands that man does something with himself and his life. He can never just contentedly be. He is forever removed from the down-to-earth essentials of mere uncomplicated living. Behaviorists like Watson and Skinner, who opposed the concept of human freedom, proposed that man needs to establish and mold himself according to a new mode of existence "beyond" the phenomena of freedom and dignity. Only then, can mankind erase from memory the history of a discordant interaction with the environment, and with it, eliminate forever the experience of pain and suffering (Skinner, 1987).

Banished forever, will be the restless, and in Skinner's experience, futile search for any ultimate meaning to one's life. Mere existence will reign supreme.

The Sanity of Reason: The Freudian Solution to the Savagery of Human Emotion

The behavioristic fascination with securing a perfect harmony between man and his environment, an environment which is programmed to ensure a conflict-free mode of existence, failed to enthuse Freud. The Freudian focus was on the brute force of human emotion as the battle for survival is taken up and waged within man's own breast.

In Freudian theory a more **active self** enters the scene of human personality. Out of the obscure and unconscious layers of the id, the ego emerges in Freudian theory with an **impassioned knowledge** (awareness) of what it wants and which, under the relentless drive of the id-forces, it sets

out to get.

No longer satisfied with the hand-outs of its environment, the ego, instigated and pushed by id-demands, can insist on what it wants, and if refused, can connive to get what it needs. If not successful, its innate aggression can be unleashed to even violently overturn and destroy the controlling environment!

According to the dimensional ontology of Frankl (1970), the Freudian focus is on **the psychobiological dimension of being**, a dimension on which, developmentally speaking, there is a much clearer emergence of the self (or ego) of the person, a self however, which is still enslaved by the force of its own emotions.

The Child of Passion

In describing Freudian theory, Maddi (1980) wrote:

Wishes and emotions expressive of the person's basic, unadulterated, biological nature have no social refinements in them. People want what they need when they need it and without regard to what other people may need, prefer, or insist upon.

Looked at as an individual, man is basically selfish and uncivilized. (p. 32)

This is a striking description of the young child as his own will starts to emerge. Erikson (1977), called the crisis of behavior involved at this stage, one of autonomy versus shame and doubt, with its resolution, that of **will-power**. Needs at this level of development are highly egocentric (blindly selfish). This often leads to conflict, to a clashing of wills, as the child insists on having its own way. Still devoid of the maturity of real empathy and altruism, the child often perceives siblings and peers as **rivals** and enters into ruthless competition with them. The young child's own pressing needs have the first, and most often, final say!

In Freudian thinking, man remains a child. Freud contended that man is never truly socialized, that behind a social veneer, he remains savagely selfish. His **own** pleasures (the satisfaction of the life-instincts; his sexual needs) are uppermost. A thwarting of his **will to pleasure** evokes aggression (the death wishes). The death-instinct is usually in the service of the life-instincts (in providing the impassioned and determined impetus to get its own way and to aggressively procure the satisfaction of its needs). However, should the deprivation of need (centered around the life-instincts) be too catastrophic; should the threat to itself, the erosion of its own securities and the denial of its own pleasures be too great, the death-instincts can prevail. Destructive and murderous acts can be the result.

The Dormant Potential For evil

Freud addressed the problem of violence and lawlessness in his analysis of the causes of human suffering in one of his last works: Civilization and its discontents (1930). Freud pointed out that we are to combat suffering caused by the forces of nature, by the feebleness of our own bodies which are doomed to decay and dissolution, and by the inadequacy of the regulations which adjust the

mutual relationships of human beings in the family, the state and society. The suffering which comes from this last source, from our relations with one another, is perhaps more painful to us than any other. "When we consider how unsuccessful we have been in precisely this field of prevention of suffering, a suspicion dawns on us that here, too, a piece of unconquerable nature may lie behind - this time a piece of our own physical constitution" (Freud, 1930, p. 86).

Freud (1930) went on to state unequivocally that "there are present in all men destructive, and therefore, anti-social and anti-cultural trends and in a great number of people these are strong enough to determine their behavior in human society" (p. 7).

The problem, Freud (1930) believed, lies at the very core of human nature. Man has an inherent or inborn inclination to aggressiveness and destructiveness, and so to cruelty as well. "Sin lieth at the door; its desire is for thee.." relates the Genesis story (4:7). Is man easily tempted to do evil? Is there an evil bent to human nature?

This was certainly Freud's (1930) contention. "The inclination to aggression is an original, self-subsisting instinctual disposition in man", he wrote (p. 122). He contended that "in circumstances that are favorable to it, when the mental counter-forces which ordinarily inhibit it are out of action, it manifests itself spontaneously and reveals man as a savage beast to whom consideration towards his own kind is something alien" (p. 112). This "hostility of each against all and of all against each", in his view, constitutes the greatest impediment to civilization. "Aggressiveness reigned almost without limit in primitive times, it already shows itself in the nursery..", wrote Freud (1930, p. 113). A dormant part of human nature, it is provoked all too easily and sometimes without any good cause. Man is a "rebel without a cause" or "a victim without reason".

As a Jew, Freud (1930) could vividly demonstrate the principle of the deflection of the aggressive or death instinct onto a conveniently available scapegoat. "The Jewish people, scattered everywhere, have rendered most useful services to the civilizations of the countries that have been their hosts" (p. 114).

Witnessing the rise of Nazism, unleashing yet another wave of virulent anti-semitism, Freud (1930) wrote:

Men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved, and who at the most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbor is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him.
(p. 111)

Who asked Freud, in the face of all his experience of life and of history, will have the courage to dispute this assertion?

The Appeasement of Reason

To Freud's mind, suffering has no meaning. It is a senseless result of irrational rage which, in turn, is a cruel manifestation of the dark and spiritless side of human nature. It is a depressing proof of man's bondage to his own vindictive nature. There is no getting away from it. Man can never declare himself innocent. Man has a undeniable part to play in the suffering lot of humanity. The only reasonable thing to do in the light of this unalterable fact, is to face up to it.

On a level of awareness more refined than the consciousness only of brute need and dissatisfaction, guilt emerges. Man can grasp the disastrous consequences of his evil deeds as this is brought home to him by societal agents which seek to curb and punish his destructive behavior. This awareness, incorporated within the personality, acts as a super-ego whose main function is to place limitations on blind (unthinking) need-satisfactions (Freud, 1940).

The person, according to the Freudian depiction of man, has sufficient awareness to not only realize what hurtful effects his unmindful behavior has on others but can also realize his own self-destructiveness. He most often damages what he needs, much like the sons of the primal family recognized that the elimination of the rival figure of the father in their incestuous love of their mother also removed a source of protection and care. Love (the life-instincts) can become a stronger factor than hate (the death-instincts). Man can settle for **ambivalence** (that he feels envious and resentful towards the one he also admires and respects). A compromise can be reached. Hurtful desires can be deflected, its energies channeled in socially constructive ways.

The Reasonable (permissive) Society

To Freud's mind, the best a society can be, is to provide safe, that is, socially acceptable channels by which, even though in a sublimating way, maximal gratification of the needs of its members can be procured. Marriage, for example, is a social institution which secures sexual satisfaction for the person without having to resort to rape. The legitimization of sex through marriage also eliminates the threat of attack from other admirers or sexual competitors. Sport and the competitive ventures of the capitalist system offer opportunities for the vent of aggressive self-assertiveness. In a match of power and wits rivals can let off steam without having to resort to fights to the death.

Society, in the way it is structured, can prevent its members from having to resort to rape and violence in order to secure what each one needs.

Like Watson and Skinner, Freud (1933a) was highly critical of "the dictatorial suppressions of religion and its dangerous curbing of human needs" (p. 624). Excessive control, through the person's introjection of a society's overly severe ethical rulings, results in a super-ego which rules the ego with despotic force. Pathology and grossly deviant behavior are the results. To Freud's (1933a) mind, therefore, "religion is to be taken as an enemy" (p. 624).

A reasonable society will soften restrictions, be more willing to accept the legitimacy of human needs. In such an atmosphere the individual will also be less tempted to take recourse to violent action

in order to satisfy his needs. Less restricted and oppressed, he will be more open to the appeal of reason and more willing to renounce a totally self-centered way of living (Freud, 1939).

Facing up to the facts of human nature and dealing with it as best we can, is the only reasonable way to deal with the **inevitability** of conflict and suffering (Freud, 1933a).

The Release of Man's Potential for Goodness: The Humanistic Blueprint for a Healthy Society

Seeking an understanding of human behavior on a growth level beyond those highlighted by the behavioristic and psychoanalytic schools of thought, humanists present a picture of man as **released** from the dictates of environment and the snares of thoughtless passion and as more **sensitively aware of himself in relation to others**.

According to the dimensional ontology of Frankl, humanists view man from a predominantly **psychosocial perspective**.

The Psychosocial Mode of Being

Humanists neither contend with the fact that there is a physical pleasure/pain (reward/punishment) basis to learning, nor with the fact that the drive to satisfy its own needs is the driving force behind the yet immature and self-centered will of the child. However, humanists maintain, development proceeds **beyond** these early or more primitive and immature levels of human functioning.

As the self evolves, it is progressively **freed** from the domination of an instinctive (need-determined) mode of functioning (Allport, 1966). The higher up on the scale of human needs and development we go, the more we find the instinctive or purely physical basis of behavior "drop out" (Maslow, 1974, p. 331).

In Maslow's terminology, **deficiency needs** are progressively being replaced by higher-level or **metaneeds**. In Allport's terminology, **opportunistic needs** undergo **radical transformation** as **propriate (ego-involved and self-directed) striving** becomes an uppermost factor in personality.

The evolving person becomes increasingly more **self-choosing or self-directive** and, at the same time, socially more sensitive and refined, stated Rogers (in Kirschenbaum, 1979).

The **unfolding of the full potential of the self in a healthy social context** is the primary focus of humanistic psychology. Rogers (1972) called for a release of the **growth-needs** of the human personality. The freedom to explore his full potential in a vibrant and congruent interaction with his social environment is **the good life** (Rogers, 1972).

The Cause of Human Suffering: The Crushing of Man's True Inner Nature

Horrified at the hatred, blind racial prejudice, the senseless and cruel oppression, persecution and wholesale slaughter of millions of his fellow-Jews in Nazi Europe, Maslow (1972) was overcome with the depressing realization that man was sold out to everything that was evil and wrong in this

world.

As scientists of human nature we have failed to provide man with any answer to evil and to suffering, Maslow (1972) believed. Behavioristic and psychoanalytic theory did not generate an image of man, a philosophy of life which could act as "a guide to living, to values, to choices" (p. xxvii).

In their zeal to come up with a "humanistic ethos... of the possibility of the good society" (Maslow, 1972, p. 39), humanists developed their own solution to the problem of evil and suffering in critical contrast to the behavioristic and psychoanalytic viewpoints.

The Pitfalls of the Behavioristic Answer to Human Suffering according to the Humanists

Watson and Skinner placed the blame for destructive and hurtful behavior on the part of a society that is ill-designed, arbitrarily run, and open to the disruptive influence and terrorization of irrational and superstitious (scientifically unfounded) beliefs. Human freedom, according to Watson and Skinner, led to nothing but lawlessness. If the problem of lawless, evil and destructive behavior is to be solved, human freedom will have to be brought under the strict but benevolent control of science. Through systematic re-conditioning, evil will, in time, be eradicated. With the disappearance of the freedom of choice will come lawful or ingrained behavior, behavior automatically geared towards safeguarding and protecting a smooth-running and conflict-free society. Such a grand and massive control over the behavior and lives of every member of society, the call to surrender the reigns of personal life to an expert manipulation of it by the scientific designers of human destiny, horrified the humanistic protagonists for human freedom.

According to the humanists, personal freedom is the very essence of personhood. The utopian dream of Skinner to control and recondition human behavior by means so carefully selected that the subjects would not even be aware of their loss of freedom, was to Rogers (in Kirschenbaum, 1979) nothing but a nightmare reminiscent of the robot-type men of science fiction. People would be depersonalized without even knowing it! Obliterated would be their freedom (their power) to have any say in the matter.

Humanists contend that man is given less than his due by depicting him as a bundle of unrelated reaction tendencies. "I do not discover man to be, in his basic nature, completely without a nature, a tabula rasa on which anything may be written, nor malleable putty which can be shaped into any form", Rogers (1989, p. 403) protested.

In opposing the view of Skinner, Rogers (in Kirschenbaum, 1979) commented:

At the other end of the spectrum of choice we can choose to use the behavioral sciences in ways which will free, not control; which will develop creativity, not contentment; which will facilitate each person in his self-directed process of becoming. (p. 264)

The horrors of the monstrous oppression of the Nazi regime with its massive enslavement of millions of people who were robbed of their freedom, their very right to be, lent impetus to the humanistic zeal to find an answer to human suffering, not in the direction of societal control, but through the avenues of personal freedom.

The Shortcomings of the Psychoanalytic View of Human Nature according to the Humanists

As the reports of the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime started pouring in, the world went into shock. Nobody wanted to believe that human nature could be so vicious, that human behavior could be so vile. Freud's sober and depressing comment made during the rise of Nazism hung like a sword of condemnation over the human head. "In reality our fellow-citizens have not sunk so low as we feared, because they have never risen so high as we believed" (Freud, 1939, p. 7).

Maslow (1987), in his study of the best specimens of human beings he could find, passionately set out to prove that "human beings are capable of something grander than war and prejudice and hatred" (p. xxxviii).

Allport (1967) wanted "an image of man that would allow us to test in full whatever democratic and humane potentialities that he might possess" (p. 15).

Exploring human nature within the warm and accepting, **trusting** atmosphere of psychotherapy, and within a relationship which was characterized by all that he could give of safety, absence of threat, and **complete freedom to be and to choose**, Rogers (1989) believed he discovered characteristics which contradicted the Freudian notion that man is fundamentally hostile, antisocial, destructive and evil. In fact, the basic nature of the human being, **when functioning freely**, proves to be "**positive, forward-moving, constructive, realistic, trustworthy**" (p. 403).

This view was enthusiastically endorsed by Maslow (1972). "History has practically always sold human nature short" (p. 116). To declare that man is "basically evil" after observing him under only the worst conditions is a distortion of the truth about human nature. "Man becomes more fully human when given better and better conditions (conditions equaling more and more psychological medicines: basic need and metaneed gratifications)" (p. 88).

Maslow (1972) stressed the importance of recognizing the fact that basic human needs are good or neutral rather than evil. There is nothing necessarily bad in wanting succoring, safety, belongingness and love, approval and self-approval, and in wanting to actualize one's full potential. No-one, Maslow (1987) contended, would call these human needs evil or sinful.

A religious and societal system which views human nature with suspicion, suspecting (and treating) it as "bad", paradoxically serves the evil end of crippling those in its care with neurotic guilt: the belief that they are "bad" (unacceptable and un-loveworthy, that they have nothing of value to give to the world). Such **conditions of worth** Rogers (1974) believed, have a most oppressive and growth-stunting effect on the human personality. "Instincts have more to fear from civilization than civilization from instincts", Maslow (1974, p. 335) contended.

Humanists attach great value to the contributions of Freud in the illumination of psychopathology. To their mind, Freud discovered and aptly described what happens to the normal and natural human needs if they are repressed.

It is because of the pathology which a repression of normal and natural needs cause, that Freud himself opposed societal restriction and condemnation of the human impulses. Repressed, it is neither removed nor refined, but only made more urgent and real by the added tension of not being gratified and, if the deprivation is serious, **ominous** (of exaggerated or pathological importance) by the

frustration and hostility with which it becomes infused.

But, reason the humanists, can we conclude, as Freud did, that devious and aggressive behavior is expressive of basic human nature? Is it not rather a **deviation** from the norm, a type of pathological **protest** against (a reaction to) the fact that man's true nature is being **denied** legitimate expression, that it is not given **the right to be** in giving it the conditions it needs in order to develop normally?

Rogers (1972), like Maslow, firmly believed that what was accepted by Freud as the normal state of affairs, was, in fact, **an abnormal state of affairs**. In his deepest being man does not **want** to be anti-social, unruly, or evil. Such behavior is as destructive to himself as it is to others. No man feels happy and fulfilled when caught in the web of evil-doing. People in such states are in need of **help**.

In psychotherapy the therapist aims at **undoing** the harm done to those who find themselves in such misery. The object is to **free** the person, to release what made him seek help in the first place: his need to **move out of his misery**. "The most refreshing and invigorating parts of my experience is to work with such individuals and to discover the strongly positive directional tendencies which exist in them, as in all of us, at the deepest levels" (Rogers, 1972, p. 27).

Humanists contend that there is a forward or growth thrust in human nature, a desire to actualize one's full humanness in becoming a vibrantly healthy, creative and **worthy** (fully accepted and participating) member of the human race. We all want a place in the sun.

The commission, therefore, is to rediscover this neglected, unseen and spurned motivation, the **good** side of human nature, and to nurture it under conditions that will no longer suppress, but rather release growth to full and optimal humanness. Freud supplied us with the sick half of psychology and we must now fill it out with the healthy half. Perhaps this healthy psychology will give us more possibility for controlling and improving our lives and for making ourselves better people, stated Maslow (1958b, p. 235).

The Humanistic Utopia: A Return to Paradise

We have considered the behavioristic utopia as one reminiscent of the pre-paradise, spiritless state of prehistoric man. The humanistic utopia as an answer to human suffering, bears striking resemblance to **the paradise state of Adamic man**.

The Paradise State of Man

Adam was a creature infused with a higher nature or **spirit**, with mental abilities that gave him a place of supremacy in creation (Gen. 1:27; 2:7).

Enjoying his existence within a situation that was altogether good (Gen. 1:31), and never having been exposed to any hurtful or evil event, Adamic man had the limitless and unencumbered ability and complete fearlessness to **discover, choose, exercise and experience** all that was positive, healthy, life-enhancing and beautiful (Gen. 2:16). He was also in perfect harmony with the natural

world that yielded only good and which presented no threat to him and also had no reason to fear him. Man's only knowledge of evil was that it was something he had to avoid (Gen. 2:17). As long as he did so, he would remain oblivious of the deadly nature of evil and would, to all intents and purposes, remain unaffected by it. He would not experience the suffering it causes (Gen. 3:17).

Man was in paradise. There was nothing to mar his sense of supreme psychological well-being; nothing to cloud his mind and to cause him conflict; nothing to make him doubt himself or the goodness of his own life (Gen. 3:1).

His sublime innocence was based on a state of blissful ignorance of evil. In not having committed any wrong, he had no guilt-consciousness, neither fear of punishment nor of death (Gen. 2:25/3:10). He could be **fully and fearlessly himself**, without hindrance or shame.

Adamic man was leading **the good life**; a life earmarked by the supreme abundance of a freedom that was blessed (unaffected by evil) (Gen. 1:31).

The Post-paradise State of Man

This paradise state of natural and spontaneous goodness, the Biblical story relates, is a life man once knew but now only yearns for and dreams about.

Having become a partaker of evil, man was stripped of his innocence (Gen. 3:8).

Exposed and vulnerable, man became afflicted with the painful self-consciousness of shame (Gen. 3:9,10). Filled with a sense of guilt at having succumbed to evil, in having been drawn to and tempted by it, man then had to **protest** his innocence.

Having lost his purity (total goodness), paradise shut its gates on man and its memory faded.

In his post-paradise state, Adamic man found himself at odds with his world. Distrust, envy, hostility and bitter rivalry most often spoilt whatever feelings of love and compassion man felt towards his fellow-man (Gen. 4:14). Nature proved to be his antagonist, and he had to do battle with it (Gen. 3:17-19). Man no longer clearly knew who he was, what he wanted and for what purpose he was created. Banished from his former position, and cursed with negative feelings and experiences, he had to struggle to achieve what he had forfeited (Gen. 3:17-19; 4:5-12).

Man's life became a desperate struggle and search for something he had difficulty in defining. That which he in his deepest being needed, seemed hidden, beyond his grasp or clear comprehension. What his life was all about became a **matter of argument**; what one theorist proposed as an answer inevitably clashed with what another one believed. Feeling the curse of a sense of **unbearable lostness** man, in a myriad of ways, restlessly searched for some answer which would lay his fears to rest and relieve him of his misery (Gen. 4:13-16).

Man's post-paradise conflicts and struggles, his insatiable needs and lusts, his frustrations, anger, murderous envy, fierce rivalry and total self-concern: "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen 4:5-14) is the psychology of human nature presented to us by Freud.

Man, the Sufferer: The Humanistic View of the Post-paradise State of Man

Whereas Freud placed the accent on the cruel intents of the human heart and on man as **the instigator of evil and as the author of suffering**, humanists focussed on man as **the sufferer and victim** of evil circumstances; on one who laments the kind of world into which he has been born. The humanistic accent is on the cry of Cain: "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, you have driven me out of paradise; and from your face shall I be hidden; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth; and whoever finds me will kill me" (Gen. 4:13,14).

The human lament at the loss of the paradise state of supreme mental well-being forms the basis of the humanistic portrayal of man. It is most interesting to explore the striking correspondence between the Biblical paradise-lost story of man and the humanistic theory of man.

Maslow (1970) saw man's inherent or basic nature as "hidden, covert, dimly seen, growing from within rather than being shaped from without" (p. 115) and contended:

We do have a nature, a structure, a shadowy bone structure of instinctlike tendencies and capacities, but it is a great and difficult achievement to know it in ourselves. To be natural and spontaneous, to know what one is and what one really wants, is a rare and high culmination that comes infrequently, and that usually takes long years of courage and hard work. (Maslow, 1972, p. 117)

Man has a **higher nature** than the animal and it is as natural to himself as the animal's nature is to itself. Unlike the lower animals, however, whose instinctive natures are strong and overpowering, never leaving them in any "doubt" as to what they are, what they want, and what they do not want, man has **lost touch** with his own **instinctoid** or inherent, uniquely **human nature**. "The human needs for love, for knowledge, or for a philosophy are weak and feeble rather than unequivocal and unmistakable, they whisper rather than shout. And **the whisper is easily drowned out**" (Maslow, 1974, p. 120).

Man is under the **curse** of a social environment that is **hostile** to him and which profoundly **distrusts** him. Laboring under a cloud of oppressive feelings and beset by a sense of **threat and self-condemnation**, man's true nature cannot be expressed. The potential for human goodness, for human worth, beauty and dignity, is therefore seldom realized.

Humanists believe that we only have a dim picture of what man can be like.

The average man is but **half a man**. For Rogers (1972), "to be that self which one truly is" (p. 163), to realize one's **true human nature**, is to become a **fully functioning person**. For Maslow (1974) normality is, in fact, "the highest excellence of which we are capable" (p. 122).

To release and realize this growth towards full **self-actualization**, we must let our own natures tell us what it needs and therefore what it values. Maslow (1972) advocated a set of values shaped and determined by the needs of man's own inner nature. "By this concept what is good? Anything that conduces to this desirable development in the direction of actualization of inner human nature. What is bad or abnormal? Anything that frustrates or blocks or denies essential human nature" (p. 115).

Values of good and bad are strictly **naturalistic**, that is, down-to-earth answers to the age-old questions: "How can I be a good person?" "How can I live a good life?" "How can I be fruitful? "Happy?" "At peace with myself?" (Maslow, 1972, p. 122).

Given the full freedom to search for the answers which his own inner nature can supply, and not being cramped with ready-made or enforced ways of believing, man will come up with the **correct** (healthy) answers.

Man is prevented from finding the answers to his own problems through **fear** (fear of disapproval, fear of his own nature which he has come to regard as "bad").

The psychosocial mission is to **re-instate** man in his original position of natural goodness and supreme psychological health and well-being. This, Rogers (1972) believed, is to place man in a social climate of **unconditional positive regard**, a climate in which there is a profound respect for the **basic trustworthiness of human nature** and where, as a result, each man is allowed to **freely be**.

In such a climate, man can **lose** his painful sense of shame and guilt (the dark forebodings and suspicions of being unworthy). Experiencing himself as **trust- and loveworthy**, man can develop feelings of **positive self-regard**. A positive self-concept will **remove** painful feelings of self-doubt, envy, rivalry, hatred and murderous rage. Man will be **healed** of the pathology of evil. His truly **social** (co-operative, sharing, friendly) nature will emerge.

Man will be re-instated in his **original** choice position, a position he had before he became captive to the fear of disapproval. No longer a victim of fear, he will have the courage to **exercise free** choice. Rogers (1989) stated that man will be free - to become himself or to hide behind a facade; to move forward or to regress; to behave in ways which are enhancing; "quite literally free to live or die, in both the physiological and psychological meaning of those terms" (p. 417).

Humanists believed that in a situation where human nature is trusted to make the right decision (to be good), his choices will not disappoint us since no man is inherently evil. Given circumstances where man can **prove** this to be the case, evil will simply not feature as a viable option. There will be no **need** to be overly aggressive or excessive about anything since man will not be deprived of (feel desperate about) anything. Man will understand (be tolerant towards) himself, his own needs, feelings and impulses.

Maslow (1968) took the paradise story a step further. Man was **brave** to eat from the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was a kind of daring that is expressive of man's **self-assertiveness**. In fact, Rogers (1989) believed, man's aggressiveness, when existing freely in balance with his other impulses, is something **constructive**, that it is a **necessary** part of human nature.

Humanists like Maslow and Rogers maintained that when aggression is seen in proper perspective and as part and parcel of the normal repertoire of human emotions and impulses, it will lose its undue and exaggerated importance (ominous character). Man will simply be aggressive in situations in which aggression is realistically called for. "His total behavior, in these and other areas, as he moves toward being open to all his experience, will be behavior which is appropriate to the survival and enhancement of a highly social animal" stated Rogers (1989, p. 419).

A philosophical acceptance of his own nature, and an attitude of "all is fundamentally well with the world", Maslow (1958a) believed, will make "conflict and struggle, ambivalence and uncertainty over choices lessen or disappear in many areas of life" (p. 189). Morality is largely an epiphenomenon of nonacceptance or dissatisfaction. "Many so-called problems are seen to be gratuitous and fade out of existence in the atmosphere of **pagan acceptance**" (p. 190).

The controversy and heated debates over evil are basically unnecessary, Maslow (1958a) believed.

A re-affirmation of human nature as acceptable and good, will once again allow man to love himself and to freely direct all his energies towards leading the good life. As he does so, evil will cease to occupy a place in man's life and, as a result, his sufferings will diminish.

Man will, once again, be in the position illustrated by the dictum: "see no evil, hear no evil, do no evil". In a world where everything can be accepted as good and necessary and can be understood and tolerated, the need to fight against injustice and evil dissipates (Maslow, 1972). Not having to struggle with complex spiritual issues such as the meaning of suffering, man will not have to turn to some outside force for help and deliverance. Man will enjoy full **self-sufficiency**.

The forces of "goodness" within man have never been allowed to develop fully enough to be seen as the hope of the world, Maslow (1972) contended. "(Man) doesn't have to fly to a God. He can look within himself for all sorts of potentialities, strength, and goodness" (p. 113).

Man's journey back to paradise is one of **self-discovery**. Man must become (return to) who he really and fundamentally is: "a trustworthy instrument for encountering life" stated Rogers (1989, p. 421).

Man is his own answer. As he learns to become more and more **himself**, the painful conflicts of life, the perplexing issues of good and evil, the agonies of choice, and suffering itself, will no longer be so stark. Maslow (1958a) believed that with the achievement of full self-actualization, most, if not all value dichotomies or polarities, will disappear or be resolved.

Our own intrinsic natures are, therefore, "what we should cultivate and dig for and reach and get to know, and be controlled by", stated Maslow (1958a, p. 241).

The answer to the problems of evil and suffering lies in **self-actualization**.

A Post-Paradise Commission to Confront the Question of Evil and Suffering: The Existential Position

Existentialists challenge us to confront the issues of evil and suffering. Frankl (1968), an existentialist, believes that suffering is an ineradicable part of life, and like the reality of evil, presents itself to man as something he has to face up to and deal with.

Frankl (1969) paradoxically states: "Suffering and trouble belong to life as much as fate and death. None of these can be subtracted from life without destroying its meaning" (p. 89).

We can neither eradicate suffering from our lives nor make it dissipate into non-existence. Nor can we turn our backs on it; pretend that we need not have anything to do with it and that for us, it does not exist. Suffering will overtake us, as it were, and at some point or another, enter our lives as a stark

and inescapable fact of life.

Not dealing with it, or shifting it out of focus by some or other theory which we have about human existence, will neither solve it nor make it go away and leave us alone.

Existentialists stress a level of being which transcends a mere physical or exclusively psychosocial mode of existence: the type of living propagated by behaviorists and humanists in their utopian searches for the answer to human suffering.

Man has **self-awareness** and **self-transcendence**, the ability to place himself at a critical and evaluative distance from himself and the circumstances of his life precisely because he has to come to some **intelligent and considered conclusions about life**. This he can only do if he has **all** the facts available to him.

Man's freedom as responsibility, which according to existentialists is the very **essence** of being human, demands that we take **full account** of ourselves and the situations in which we find ourselves.

Man's growth, therefore, is towards an awareness of **responsibility** in the full face of life. In his full stature, man functions on a **psychospiritual dimension of being**. This is a point in his life where he is virtually **compelled** to look at and consider the why and the wherefores of, and his own responses and attitudes to the tragic factualities of life.

The Psychospiritual Mode of Being

A person who has achieved a secure sense of selfhood and an independence of mind and action and who is able to make his own decisions and lead his own life in a responsible, accountable way, is regarded by developmental psychologists as **adult**. Erikson (1981) described the successful conclusion of the childhood years and adolescent period as the achievement of a secure **identity**.

An evolved sense of selfhood (a durable sense of who and what I am, stand for and believe) is coupled to the type of cognitive maturity that Piaget (1968) described as the formal operational level or hypothetical/deductive stage of thought.

On this final level of cognitive development, the person can think in highly abstract and critical terms and is able to formulate his own ideas and arrive at his own conclusions about matters. It is this heightened level of awareness of the psychologically mature person which existentialists have highlighted. "The more consciousness, the more self", runs a famous saying of Kierkegaard (in May, 1958a, p. 29).

Existentialists explore human existence on the highest level of man's self-evolvement. Having come to his full senses and having his full wits about him, man cannot hide himself from the facts: he is a **fallible and vulnerable** creature, easily given to failure, foolishness and wrong-doing. He both causes and is exposed to much suffering. Man is mortal. He cannot escape his own death, and in life he suffers pain. His many efforts to come up with answers, with ways of living that will obliterate or at least diminish, or somehow push these distressing events out of his mind, cannot succeed. Man's confidence and his sense of security and well-being are too often rudely shaken by the unpredictable, the unavoidable and, therefore, uncontrollable distresses and tragedies of life.

Alas, man has no power over fate. He also seems to have very little mastery over himself. "For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice" (Romans 7:19). The Biblical cry is a real one: "Oh, wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24)

It is this struggle of man to make some sense of his suffering - his will to meaning - that Frankl (1967) stresses: "What man needs is not a tensionless state but the striving and struggling for something worth longing and groping for" (p. 68).

The test is not how well man succeeds in avoiding the painful issues of life, but how well he manages to struggle and deal with them.

Confronting the Issues of Evil and Suffering

The struggle with senseless, irrational behavior and events, with meaninglessness, is a spiritual distress, not a mental disease, Frankl (1967) maintains. It is, in fact, the surest sign of being truly human.

It is the spiritual man who effectively deals with the more carnal aspects of his own nature and existence and who comes to real grips with the issues of evil and suffering.

The Carnal Man

Frankl regarded himself, in his contemplations of the further reaches of human existence, as a dwarf standing on the shoulders of a giant: Sigmund Freud. Freud unearthed aspects of human nature and intent that shattered every fond belief in man as a basically innocent victim of unfortunate circumstances. Freud placed evil action, and the suffering it causes, firmly within the very bosom of man.

Freud's picture of man strikingly corresponds to what is described as the carnal man in the Bible, one who is "sold under sin" and who distressingly confesses: "I see a law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Romans 7:23).

The Freudian view of man as basically unsociable and stubbornly headstrong (selfish, resistant to change and easily inclined to wrong-doing) was unpalatable to both the behaviorists and the humanists.

The theories of Watson and Skinner on the one hand, and those of Maslow and Rogers on the other, can in fact be seen, at least in some measure, as reaction formations against Freud's exposure of the deviousness and destructiveness of human nature.

Frankl, unlike the behaviorists and humanists, wholeheartedly accepts the Freudian notion of an unmistakable and pronounced evil (brutally selfish) inclination in the very nature of man.

Frankl, however, adds another dimension, namely, that of man's freedom, no, his responsibility, to face up to destructive and harmful behavior, to resist such evil in himself and by his own choices for what is good, just and fair in this world, to overcome it!

The Spiritual Man

To overcome evil with good, is a demand put before man in Scripture: "Do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God" (Romans 6:12,13). Man is told that he will take on the image of what he chooses to obey: good or bad.

The Bible commands man to be godly (in the image of God). The accent is on **daily choice**: "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil.. blessing and cursing; therefore **choose life**" (Deut. 30:15,19).

This Biblical view of man is the one propounded by Frankl. In the situations of his everyday life, man has to exercise choice according to the demands of his own conscience. "Conscience is the true interpreter of life," states Frankl (1977, p. 117).

As a refined **awareness of meanings and values that emanate from a Suprahuman dimension**, conscience on the spiritual level of being has none of the legalisms of a super-ego type of conscience on a lower or, as Frankl calls it, **subhuman level of human existence**.

The do's and don'ts of rigidly prescribed ways of living demanded by social ethics or religion, which a person simply internalizes and blindly accepts, saddle the person with an overconcentration on what is prohibited. Frankl calls this: **hyper-reflection**, similar to what Allport (1961) called: "the law of reversed effect" (p. 564). Centering attention upon a forbidden impulse often brings with it an irresistible desire to perform the act. Humanists have brilliantly pointed out that a person who functions on this restrictive dimension of being, becomes heavily burdened by neurotic guilt, self-condemnation and fear of disapproval.

Existential guilt is of a different order. It calls a person onto a higher plane of being, namely, that of exercising **personal responsibility**. Here the door to an **authentic**, that is personal and first-hand experience of the drawing power of meanings and values from a dimension **outside and beyond man, is open**.

The accent on this highly evolved plane of being is on **freedom of choice**.

In opposition to the views of both Freud and humanists such as Rogers and Maslow, Frankl (1977) contends that it is not a question of whether man is basically evil or good. The fact is that man has **both** these potentialities within himself. The one which he actualizes depends on **decision** in the light of meanings and values which address his conscience, not on conditions inside or outside the person (Frankl 1967).

Potentialities are not indifferent possibilities; they must be seen in the light of meanings and values (Frankl, 1967).

It is Frankl's contention that man not only behaves according to what he is, good or bad, but that he also becomes what he is, according to how he behaves. **Man is shaped by the kind of choices he makes**. Decisions are final. When a potentiality is actualized, it is actualized forever. Man, therefore, must face the responsibility for these immortal **footprints in the sands of time**. He must decide, for weal or for woe, what will be the monument of his existence (Frankl, 1967).

The Auschwitz Experiment

Our generation has come to know man as he **really is** (Frankl, 1968). He is the being who invented the gas chambers of Auschwitz. He is **also** the being who entered those gas chambers upright, with a prayer on his lips. Man can prove himself to be evil. He can also prove himself to be saintly. What accounts for the difference?

Man as Evil

Frankl was an eye witness and victim of one of the most brutal and uncensored expression of man's inhumanity to man the world has ever known.

Under the Nazi regime murder became a mission; the eradication of human life, if it happened to belong to a certain race or group, an injunction. Every last Jew in the world was earmarked for extinction. Millions of men, women and children, babies, were shot or gassed, or else starved and beaten to death, their bodies thrown into mass graves, or fed into ovens and burnt to ashes in the pursuit of this goal.

Fervently dedicated to Nazi ideology, its perpetrators felt justified in what they were doing. However merciless its execution, because an ideological goal was being realized, every action towards this end was deemed **beyond** moral reproof.

Lawlessness became law as the breaking of every one of the Ten Commandments, at least as far as the attitude and behavior towards the so-called "enemies of the Reich" were concerned, was instituted as the Nazi code of conduct. "The wicked freely strut about when what is vile is honored among men", the Psalmist stated (Psalm 12:8).

The conditions to which the victims in the Nazi concentration and death camps were subjected were so bestial that, in the bitter struggle for survival, most victims capitulated and sunk to the level of animal existence or simply gave up the will to live and soon died of sheer despair (Frankl, 1968).

Frankl often refers to the Nazi concentration and death camps as a massive human laboratory carefully set up as part of a monstrous scientific experiment (Frankl, 1967).

Inmates were systematically deprived of everything that human beings need in order to experience a sense of physical, psychological and spiritual well-being. All the props were removed. What will man prove to be like when he is stripped of everything he has - money, power, fame, luck - and when he is left with nothing but himself and his own naked existence (Frankl, 1967)?

Freud (in Frankl, 1969) had envisaged the following experiment:

Try and subject a number of very strongly differentiated human beings to the same amount of starvation. With the increase of the imperative need for food, all individual differences will be blotted out, and, in their place, we shall see the uniform expression of the one unsatisfied instinct. (p. xvii)

Was this hypothesis of Freud proved true in the Nazi concentration and death camps where, in fact, a systematic program of starvation was put into action as part of a huge and monstrous scheme, first to degrade and abuse, and finally, to annihilate its targeted victims?

Man as Good

A most unprecedented phenomenon emerged in the Nazi concentration and death camps that, even though it was rarely evident, nonetheless invalidated the Freudian hypothesis. Frankl (1968) termed this phenomenon: **the defiant power of the human spirit**, a force in human nature which gave expression to a variety of human responses in the face of the same pressing needs and the same terrible circumstances.

In the spiritual darkness of oppression and despair that blanketed human existence under such subhuman conditions, this phenomenon broke through and shone like a brilliant shaft of light. Frankl (1968) saw in others, and experienced in himself, how a force from deep within his being, rose as a powerful protest against the indignities and humiliations they were made to suffer. It was not a seeking for revenge in a physical or violent way, nor a strong emotion of hatred and need for retaliation. It had the calm strength of a **spiritual resolution**. It was primarily a **spiritual stand or attitude**, rather than an action. From it, however, many and varied actions flowed. It found expression in many unique ways.

Most remarkable were the actions of those men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. Remarkable too, were the actions of those who, in a corner of a hut or locked cattle train bringing them back to the camp after an exhausting day at a distant work site, tired, frozen and starving, huddled together to say the evening prayers. A remarkable intensification of inner life in a heightened awareness of beauty in a sunset, for example, in the feelings of love in the memory and contemplation of loved-ones, in the expression of the most sincere friendship, right there in the camps, helped many a prisoner find a refuge from the emptiness, desolation and spiritual poverty of his existence (Frankl, 1968).

There were the tender beginnings of psychotherapy in the camp, sometimes individual, at other times collective, in which Frankl himself was involved whenever such a rare opportunity presented itself. There was great power in personal example. A senior block warden who did not side with the authorities had, by his just and encouraging behavior, a thousand opportunities to exert a far-reaching moral influence on those under his jurisdiction. Even the smallest act of kindness from a guard who allowed himself to feel moved by compassion, made the prisoners feel human again and lifted their spirits, inspiring them to show similar acts of kindness to others (Frankl, 1968).

Man as a Free Agent

To what can the different ways in which man presented himself in the concentration and death camps be ascribed?

Frankl (1968) places the onus on the type of **choices** men made. These choices could be placed along a continuum ranging from the most vile to the most saintly. Not the physical and psychological needs, not the influences of the environment could predict or explain where along that continuum of moral behavior a man would be placed. Each man determined that outcome himself.

The Nazi concentration and death camps revealed the following indisputable facts:

Men chose to commit evil. The perpetrators were enacting considered and informed choices. Nazism was an ideology. It was a stated belief-system which its formulators and followers freely chose to materialize or bring into being. There was an indisputable commitment to a goal, which implies, not a hapless perpetration of evil out of some blind pathology or beastly instinct, but a carefully **planned** and executed program of murder. The perpetrators chose evil means to achieve an ideological end and excused their own actions along a line of ideological **reasoning**.

Men chose to be and to do good. The fact of man's freedom of choice was nowhere made clearer than in the case of those whose freedom of action was most restricted: the victims themselves.

It was an indisputable and undeniable fact that there were men and women, even children, in the concentration and death camps who were able to rise above the terrible deprivations and the bestial influences of camp life.

Such people may have been few in number, but "they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way" (Frankl, 1968, p. 65).

Being such a victim himself, Frankl (1968) testifies: "There were always choices to make. Every day, every hour, offered the opportunity to make a decision" (p. 66). It was this decision that determined what kind of person the camp inmate became, not his needs or the conditions in which he found himself.

Men chose not to choose, either right or wrong. Neutrality is an impossibility, Frankl (1967) contends. Great were the numbers of people, both from within the ranks of the perpetrators and from among the victims who, out of fear, simply submitted themselves to the monstrous course of events orchestrated by the leaders of a fanatical system. Even the ordinary citizen who did "nothing wrong", but who failed to do "something right" out of apprehension for himself or anxiety for his family, **chose** to do nothing, to simply let things be. He too, cannot excuse his inaction but has to carry the guilt of personal responsibility.

The camp inmates who became molded into the form of the typical camp inmate, **chose** to renounce their freedom and dignity and as a result of this **choice**, fell victim to the camp influences. Even though conditions such as lack of sleep, insufficient food, exposure, physical abuse and the terrible mental stresses they were made to suffer, "the sort of person the prisoner became was the result of an **inner decision**, and not the result of camp influences alone" (Frankl, 1968, p. 66).

Who then is Man, Who is Free to do both Good and Evil?

The fact that man is **meant** to live by the highest moral dictates can be deduced from the simple observation that if he does so, he gains in human stature; if he does not, he loses his human face.

The Auschwitz experiment lent proof to the above premise in the following ways:

- * The perpetrators were men who had become **mentally hardened**. "Hitler would never have become what he did unless he had **suppressed** within himself the voice of conscience", Frankl (1970, p. 66) contends. Men who can inflict suffering on others without a flinching of conscience, have **lost** their human face. They have become inhuman and monstrous (Frankl, 1968).
- * Concentration camp inmates whose sense of humanness remained **intact**, and who even **grew** in human stature, were those who, even at great cost and with intense **struggles**, continued to behave in ways which were morally upright. They **retained** their sense of integrity, their human stature and dignity, their mental health, by continuing to be what they felt they **should** be. As a result, their lives continued to hold meaning even under such inhuman conditions (Frankl, 1968).
- * Concentration camp inmates who fell victim to a steady and relentless process of **depersonalization** were those who gave up the struggle to retain a **sense of self-respect**. A hapless victim and **plaything** of circumstance, they lost their sense of being an individual, a being with a mind, with inner freedom and personal value. Losing their sense of humanness, their existence descended to the level of **animal** existence or even lower, to that of a mere **automatum** (Frankl, 1968). In the case of the former who still actively engaged in a brute fight for survival, some sense of self remained. In the case of the latter, called musselmen, their spirits had died. Known as living corpses, only their bodies continued the mechanical actions of trying to stay alive. In the case of both, life had become totally **meaningless**. Those of this group who survived, presented with severe **psychopathology**. Their personalities were broken, their lives shattered.

The words of Maslow (1968) strikingly describe the conclusion we reach in pondering these phenomena revealed to us by the Nazi concentration and death camps. "Without the transcendent and the transpersonal, we get sick, violent, nihilistic, or else hopeless and apathetic. We need something **bigger** than we are to be awed by and to commit ourselves to" (p. iv).

The Call of Suffering

The Nazi concentration and death camps proved that man, to be fully human, that is, to be all that he is **meant** to be, is in dire need of something **more** than himself.

Man cannot actualize himself, Frankl (1967) believes. **It is only as he finds and fulfills meaning in his life, that he becomes fully man.** "Existence falters unless it is lived in terms of transcendence toward something **beyond** itself" (p. 12).

The tension and interaction between being and meaning is ineradicable in man. It is **inherent** in being human, and therefore indispensable to mental well-being (Frankl, 1967). Man will in no way

find any final sense of satisfaction or fulfillment outside a framework of meaning: that his life has a purpose, that he has something or someone to responsibly live for.

To neglect or refuse to wrestle with the meaning of one's life; to avoid the questioning quality of life which is no more riveting than in the face of suffering, are, therefore, counter-productive. Man will be thrown back on himself and into a state of existential **emptiness and despair** (Frankl, 1967).

If self-transcendence is denied and the door to meanings and values closed, the confrontational or questioning quality of life is obliterated. Man loses touch with what inspires him, with the very reason for his existence. He falls victim to pattern: to forces which push and mold him (Frankl, 1977). He ends up only in himself.

His life becomes **meaningless**.

Frankl (1967) uses the analogy of a boomerang that has **missed** the target and returns to the empty hands of the hunter. "Man only returns to himself, to being concerned with his self, after he has missed his mission, has failed to find a meaning in his life" (p. 9).

In contrast, a man who lives his life responsibly, is a man whose life has direction. He is living **accountably** before something, be it society, or humanity, or his own conscience. Living before his Creator in all of these ways, he has a sense of worth and dignity. There is a significant number of people, Frankl (1967) points out, who realize and fully acknowledge this fact and interpret their own existence "not just in terms of being responsible to something but rather to someone, namely, to God" (p. 13).

Man is thus in a very real sense **a dependant**.

Man only feels fully himself, and only has the full courage to be, when he is **meaningfully connected with** that which **inspires** him to become all that he can be; when he, in other words, "lives, moves and has his being" within the much needed and essential framework of a **meaningful relationship** (Acts 17:28). Only then does man feel **restored to his true status**. "Like iron filings in a magnetic field, man's life is put in order through his orientation toward meaning" (Frankl, 1967, p. 21).

The Meaning of Suffering

In the white heat of suffering and pain in the concentration and death camps, man was melted down to the essentials, to the human in himself. What remained was not what man "has", but what man is called upon to "be" (Frankl, 1967, p. 110).

Stripped of everything but naked existence, man was faced with the question which, in the final analysis, is put to **every man**: "Adam, **who** are you"?

This one question contains many facets of the meaning of suffering.

Suffering is Intended to Challenge Us

Suffering corners and questions us. This, Frankl (1969) believes, is the very function of human suffering: "Suffering is intended to guard man from apathy, from psychic rigor mortis. As long as we suffer, we remain psychically alive. In fact, we mature in suffering, grow because of it - it

makes us richer and stronger" (p. 88).

Maslow (1968) spoke about the psychopathology of the average man, of his fear of human greatness. Choosing to **remain in hiding**, he is like an Adam that has come to **like** a self-complacent lifestyle.

Suffering rudely shakes us out of this less than human state by forcing us to look at ourselves and the quality of our own lives. "Suffering establishes a fruitful, one might say a revolutionary, tension in that **it makes for emotional awareness of what ought not to be**" (Frankl, 1969, p. 86).

Suffering is Meant to Change Us

Suffering destroys every sense of false security. It makes us aware of our vulnerability and helplessness, of how fragile life is, how easily it can be damaged or lost.

We are faced with our own mortality. If life proves to be something we can lose, something we have to give up at one time or another, what have we achieved with it?

We have not given birth to ourselves, nor are we able to stop ourselves from dying. Life has been given to us and will be required of us. How are we going to hand it over or give it back?

Will our lives testify for or against us?

Suffering painfully calls us to account but it also challenges us to **change** and **grow**, to gain a stature that will enable us to stand the test or the verdict of our own conscience.

In Grief, Suffering is meant to Commission Us

A powerful function of suffering is to break and soften us through grief. "For the inner biography of a man, grief and repentance do have meaning" (Frankl, 1969, p. 87).

Frankl asks us to consider the case of having lost a loved-one. Grief is felt not only at having lost a loved-one, but at having lost the opportunity to make up for the wrong, the hurt we have caused, the many times we have missed to show the deceased our love and appreciation.

Nothing can bring the loved-one back, however. None of our acts of commission or omission can be wiped off the slate as if they had never been. Nevertheless, contends Frankl (1969), "in repenting man may inwardly break with an act, and in living out this repentance - which is an inner event - he can undo the outer event on a spiritual, moral plane" (p. 87). Frankl (1969) quotes Scheler, who said: "Repentance has the power to wipe out a wrong, though the wrong cannot be undone, the culprit himself undergoes a **moral rebirth**" (p. 87).

Repentance cannot change the past, but it can certainly change the present and herald a new future. Our changed, more sensitive and caring lives can become a monument in loving memory of those whom we have lost. **The past, by having served the purpose of changing us for the better, now has meaning!**

A very painful factor in mourning is the lament we feel that the lives of our loved-ones had been cut short. If they could but have escaped their deaths, they could have enjoyed or achieved so much more with their lives. Such unfinished lives may, however, sometimes be of the most beautiful.

"Not only are the unfinished symphonies among the finest, so also are the "pathetiques" (Frankl, 1969). The pathetiques refer to lives that seemed to have been wasted or a failure. The grief over such a lost life is often the most difficult to bear. But who are we to judge, asks Frankl (1967)?

We live in a dimension lower than that of the Ultimate, for that reason that we can only **trust** that there is an ultimate meaning or **answer** for human suffering since on the human level, we cannot explain what that meaning is. Frankl (1970) gives the example of an animal who lives on a lower than the human dimension. If one points to something with one's finger, the dog does not look in the direction at which one points; it looks at one's finger and sometimes snaps at it. It cannot understand the semantic function of pointing to something.

And what about man? Is not he, too, sometimes unable to understand the meaning of something, say, the meaning of suffering, and does not he, too, quarrel with his fate and snap at its finger? Frankl (1970) asks: "Is it not conceivable that there is still another dimension possible, a world beyond man's world, a world in which the question of an ultimate meaning of human suffering will find an answer" (p. 145)?

Jews say a prayer of remembrance for the dead, called: Kaddish. Each surviving family member has the obligation to recite these prayers for the rest of their lives. It is a prayer, paradoxically, which celebrates life and praises the Creator. It is a prayer which acknowledges God's great wisdom. In His hands are the lives of all men. Mere mortal man cannot explain God's doings, but he can trust that God's doings are supremely purposeful even though he, mere mortal man, cannot understand it.

Grief is a **commission** to the living. Rather than falling victim to **survivor guilt**, Frankl (1970) **urges us, we have to rise to a level of survivor responsibility.**

We can emulate the example of those who could rise from the ashes of the gaschambers to a new life. "Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow" (Lamentations 1:12), is the lament of the Nazi death camp survivors. Those among them who could pick up the pieces and build a new life, are those who turned their grief into a **mission**. They felt imbued with a strong sense of responsibility towards the dead. Living full, rich and sensitive lives, the survivors could erect spiritual monuments in memory of those who perished. **Their deaths were not in vain: it served to instill a sense of heightened responsibility in those who survived.**

Jews yearly celebrate The Day of Remembrance (Yom Hashoa) for the six million Jews who perished during the Holocaust. A section of one of the services read: "If there is a lesson to be learnt, it is the cultivation of a profound sensitivity to that which the Nazis tried to destroy - the sanctity of life. **Alleviating the many kinds of suffering we see around us is both a meaningful and challenging way to remember the millions whom we and all following generations dare never forget."**

Suffering is Meant to Inspire Us

A most unique value of suffering is that it can finally make us aware of the fact that we are living, not in some enclosed space, but before something or someone.

It is this thought with which Frankl (1968) encouraged his fellow-inmates. They were to think of themselves as being watched. He urged them to think of themselves as being surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. It was possible to think that, in the immediate moment, there was someone that looked down on them in their difficult hours - a friend, a spouse, somebody alive or dead, or God - and they would be expected not to disappoint such highly concerned and interested parties. They would be expected to suffer proudly, and not miserably.

They were, in fact, to observe themselves and how they were bearing their sufferings. They were to take note of themselves almost as if, at some future date, they would have to relate to someone how they bore their sufferings.

Frankl (1968) encouraged and lifted himself above his immediate sufferings as he began to take note of the psychology of the concentration camp and as he imagined himself giving a lecture about it to some future audience.

How he would relate his story to his beloved wife had the most inspiring effect upon Frankl. How he would hate to shame her whom he loved so much! How proud she would feel if she heard how bravely and courageously he suffered! Frankl (1968) started communing with her in his own mind. He could hear her answering him, he saw her smile, her frank and encouraging look. "Real or not, her look was then more luminous than the sun which was beginning to rise" (p. 36).

It was in contemplating his beloved, and communing with her in his thoughts, that a truth dawned on him. Love is as strong as death (Song of Solomon 8:6). Love is the ultimate and the highest goal to which man can aspire. "The salvation of man is through love and in love" (Frankl, 1968, p. 36).

Frankl came to the incontestable conclusion that by enduring his sufferings in the right way - an honorable way - in such a position man can achieve a sense of deep and abiding fulfillment.

He can be raised to a level beyond the transitory. Enraptured with the thoughts of his beloved, Frankl (1968) realized that love goes very far beyond the physical person of the beloved. It finds its deepest meaning in the beloved's spiritual being, his or her inner self. Whether or not the beloved is actually present, whether or not he or she is still alive at all, ceases somehow to be of importance.

Man's sufferings can bring him to a level of awareness where he lives his life within the infinite dimensions of meaning, a dimension expressed in the words: "The angels are lost in perpetual contemplation of an infinite glory" (Frankl, 1968, p. 37).

Suffering is Meant to Lead Us to Spiritual Victory

Suffering is like the final stretch towards the finishing line of life, its last challenge or hurdle to overcome. The last thrust in any race is often the hardest, the most strenuous.

But it is exactly this last stretch, or final opportunity, which is the chance to realize the highest value in life and to fulfill its deepest meaning - and that is the meaning of suffering (Frankl, 1967).

There is no real difficulty in experiencing life as meaningful and exciting when we are young and care-free, when there is so much to be done and experienced, so many good things to be enjoyed. Only suffering presents as a problem. But we are meant to mature, to become shepherds or wise

leaders of the young.

If we embrace only part of life, can we in any way live it fully? Pushing through to the end, taking life to its final conclusions, is to discover that life never ceases to hold and retain a meaning even up to its very last moment. Even suffering has meaning (Frankl, 1967).

To discover the meaning of suffering, is to overcome the hurdle of **fear**. A basic affliction inherent to the human condition, fear eats at the heart of every man that has not yet come to terms with suffering and death and that has not yet discovered its meaning. Plagued with a fear of the unknown, all of life must then be built in **defense against** the tragic facts of life. Man is pushed into the consolations of pleasure or intoxicates himself with the dazzle of success. Youthfulness and pleasure become cults; and personal fame, material riches and comfort all-consuming ambitions.

Since however, such ways of living are built on illusions, namely, that we somehow will be lucky enough to escape pain, sorrow and death; that there is no God or that we will not have to account for ourselves in any final sense; we are pretty devastated when suffering hits us. We are ill-prepared and not able to stand up to problems and troubles which suddenly confront us (Frankl, 1970).

Suffering, therefore, can even prove to be a kindness, a blessing in disguise!

Suffering exposes the **true foundations** of life and invites man to stand on the **sure rock** of meaning. As man realizes that the storms of life are there to test him, that it rids him of every false security he, like a Job of old, can brave the storm with the victorious cry of faith:

"I **know** that my Redeemer lives, and though worms may destroy this body, yet (resurrected from the grave) I shall see God! Yes, I shall behold Him, not as a stranger, but as a **friend**" (Job 19:25-27).

Man with a Mission: A Post-paradise State of Being

Frankl's views may inspire us to believe that man was sent out of paradise with a **mission**. **Clothed by God** (see Gen. 3:21), that is, not in shame or disgrace, man was sent out of paradise with the dignity of a purpose!

In the paradise story God engaged the guilty Adam in **conversation** (Gen. 9-19). Adam was called out of hiding and **confronted** with the issue of evil and its suffering consequences and his own part in it.

Man may forever have lost his state of sublime innocence and with it, his **unperturbed** sense of meaningfulness. This banishment from his paradise state of being can be seen, however, not as a curse but as a **charge**.

Bounds were set on the activities of evil and the suffering it causes (Gen. 3: 14). The curse of suffering and death was not to last forever. Man was given a life of three score years and ten. Placed within the confines of a certain lifetime, man was sent out of paradise with a **commission**: to **wrestle** with the meaning of his own life.

He was to face suffering and combat the causes of it. Man was to fully comprehend his human condition and embrace it as a task.

Frankl (1967) describes this mission-quality of the human condition as follows:

Man is confronted with the human condition in terms of fallibility and mortality. Properly understood, it is, however, precisely the acceptance of this twofold human finiteness which adds to life's worthwhileness, since **only in the face of guilt does it make sense to improve, and only in the face of death is it meaningful to act.** (p. 30)

It is the very transitoriness of human existence which constitutes man's responsibility. Only under the urge and pressure of life's transitoriness does it make sense to use the passing time and to use it well; to store into the past not opportunities irrevocably lost, but irrevocably stored. "Once an actuality, it is one forever" (Frankl, 1967, p. 30).

Man has a case to conclude and he is to conclude it well. The evidence gained and brought in as a final testimony and statement, is to be irrefutable.

Man's story is to be a story of **triumph**. He has the charge to overcome evil with good. He has to exercise his power of choice in doing what he **knows** is right and in resisting, refusing to do, what he **knows** is wrong. **The confusion of doubt and distrust is to be overcome.** He is to gain ground and **grow** in stature.

No longer ignorant of evil, man is to attain a **heightened understanding of good** (in the face of evil and in bitter contrast to it). He is to grow perfect through his sufferings (Hebrews 2:10)!

Man has to **achieve** or rise to his full human stature. His freedom is to become **informed**. His loss of innocence is to become a loss of ignorance. By considered and often painful and costly but, above all, highly **personal choice**, man is to clarify the options until he is able to say: "What have I any more to do with these idols (with evil)" (Isaiah 31:7)?

His sense of goodness (meaning) is not to be something simply given to him, but something which he **redeems** (actively embraces). As he does so, he is **restored**, and gains again, a basic trust (unshakable faith) in Being.

Frankl (1967) maintains that this Urvertauen zum Dasein, or re-orientation to meaning, "is essentially more than a change of behavior patterns; rather, it is an existential reorientation (existentielle Umstellung)" (p. 157).

What is really needed, Frankl believes, is a **fundamental change in our attitude toward life**. Instead of asking: what can I expect from life, the question should be reversed: What is life expecting of me? We have to start thinking of ourselves as those who are being questioned by life - daily and hourly. "Our answer must consist, not in talk and meditation, but in right action and in right conduct" (Frankl, 1968, p. 77).

"I will question you, and you shall answer me" is the task God assigned to Job as his life of tranquility and prosperity was thrown into the confusion of senseless suffering (Job 42:4).

Man was sent out of paradise to achieve the triumph of a Job: "I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see you" (Job 42:5). "Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know", Job commented, finally broke through to his **heightened** understanding.

Job learnt that suffering was not something he was to run away from, but something he had to take on as a task. He was to emerge from his sufferings, a **victor**.

"Human life can be fulfilled not only in creating and enjoying, but also in suffering!" This is the triumphant conclusion of Frankl (1969, p. 85) as he himself could, at last, confirm the **unconditional meaningfulness of all of life**. As he emerged from his own great suffering on the day of his liberation from Auschwitz, he could testify: "The crowning experience of all, for the homecoming man, is the wonderful feeling that, after all he has suffered, there is nothing he need fear any more - except his God" (Frankl, 1968, p. 93).

CHAPTER 10

PRELIMINARY IMPRESSIONS OF THE MEANING OF SUFFERING

Aspects which have Emerged in the Contemplation of the Meaning of Suffering

We have formed several impressions of the meaning of suffering as we have been studying and contemplating it in our review of the theories of mainstream psychologists and in our exploration of the works of Viktor Frankl. We will comment, first of all, on the overall impression of the nature of suffering and then focus on what seems to be more or less discernible steps in the struggle to come to grips with suffering in terms of its meaning. **A deeper exploration of the subject of suffering in the lives of Holocaust survivors will either sharpen or change our impressions; cast them in a new, clearer light.**

The Nature of Suffering: A Struggle to Overcome Distress

To find the meaning of our sufferings, involves **a struggle**. We have to find the meaning of our sufferings **in the face of fear and threat, the deep anxiety and shock** which our sufferings evoke. We have to **exercise courage**. This courage **grows** to the extent that we are brave enough to do battle with the negative aspects of our sufferings. Indeed, the triumph we experience when we have broken through to a dimension of meaning, includes the sense of achievement at having **persevered**, however strong the temptation at times, to give in. We have struggled through to a sense of meaning **despite** our fears, feeling deeply threatened, anxious and in shock. **We have made it!**

It is clear from the above, that we experience our suffering as a **process**. There are several **facets** or aspects to our suffering, aspects which are interrelated. We never experience anything in neat steps: one aspect has dimensions of another. However, the nature of suffering in experiencing its pain and distress (its negative side), and in discovering its meaning (its positive side), is clarified by singling out what may seem like steps or discernable aspects in the experience of suffering.

The Negative or Painful and Shock-elements of Suffering

- * Our ordinary ways of being are disrupted by distressful events. Suffering seems to corner and **confront** us with questions which we ordinarily do not consider and may even be **reluctant** to ask.
- * Suffering brings us into the **immediate moment**, starkly confronts us with the **here and now**. Our past way of living or the ordinary routine of our lives is disrupted. Our plans are shaken, we are no longer sure what the future will hold for us. Our patterned lives are brought into disarray by the distress that has befallen us. The only thing left, is to take things one step at a time.

- * Suffering causes the collapse of our secure defenses or self-structures and strips us of all former securities. We feel as if we are standing naked and vulnerable before an event beyond our manipulation or control, something that is **bigger** than we are, something we cannot encompass, which is beyond our grasp. We may become aware that there is a dimension in life that is **beyond us**, a dimension we now find ourselves confronted with or unnervingly (or awesomely) **aware** of.
- * Suffering, in fact, seems to force us into a transcendental or self-reflective position. We are presented with the reality of **choice**; we have to act or make up our minds one way or another, come to some conclusion, take a stand or adopt a certain attitude in terms of what is happening to us.

The experience of suffering can act as a **watershed**. We can, in our panic, defend ourselves against a state of such extreme vulnerability and self-defensively **close** our minds to what seems to be required of us. Several negative reactions are possible. We can fall into states of deep depression and despair; of apathy and indifference, cynicism and nihilism; or become bitter, spiteful, angry and vengeful. Such reactions, however, will not be our point of focus. Because we are concerned with discovering the **meaning** of suffering, we are interested in the fact that we can progress beyond the initial, very painful, aspects of suffering. This very point of extreme vulnerability or exposure, the uncanny awareness of being in the presence of something bigger than ourselves, can also, if we persevere in our struggle to find the meaning of our sufferings, cause us to move beyond our sufferings to a discovery of its meaning.

What decision we make at this watershed point, therefore, seems to determine the outcome of our sufferings: either as something that breaks and destroys us; that hardens and embitters us (in which case our suffering has been meaningless); or as something that causes us to exercise courage and to persevere (in which case our suffering can begin to take on meaning).

The Positive or Meaningful Aspects of Suffering

Suffering isolates us - we suffer **alone**. Yet it is this very isolation that removes from us the clamor of unessential things and allows us, perhaps for the first time, to seriously consider the meaning of our own lives. It allows us to take stock of ourselves. This willingness to take account of our lives, signifies a real breakthrough which moves us from the negative into the positive side of suffering.

- * Suffering makes us painfully aware of time. Time seems to have been snatched away from us. It no longer stretches endlessly before us. We are aware of the fact that we have limited time left. What we have taken for granted, through suffering becomes **precious**. We want to preserve and protect these valuable things in the time we have left, even if it is as short as the last sigh of realization and commitment to life that a pardoned criminal had on the cross. There is still the promise: "**Today** you will be with me in paradise!" (Luke 23:43). The

awareness of limited time, therefore, seems to **commission** us.

- * As we, with a **heightened sense of responsibility**, seize the day and live the moment, making the choices immediately presented to us in the light of an awakened and sharpened **conscience**, we are brought into greater contact with reality; we feel more grounded and sure; in fact, right choices seem to **sustain** us. We seem to have hit the rock-bottom of real meaning in our lives. Instead of sinking, we seem to be gaining ground, and making progress in some inner sort of way.
- * The **spiritual** sides of our nature seem to emerge during our sufferings; we seem to grow in appreciation and understanding of things; we feel deeper, more real; we think more profound things. In fact, our old way of life seems so superficial, so thoughtless and immature in comparison. We have a much stronger or more authentic sense of self; we feel that we have **grown** through our sufferings. We realize that our sufferings have **changed** us; that our way of looking at life has changed. **We are living a changed life!**
- * We begin to realize that our **sufferings have meaning**; we experience moments of deep intensity, even joy. We have a sense of achievement, even victory. We feel raised to a **higher** level of being; we feel more mature; we have a greater openness and sensitivity towards life, towards others; we have **gained** in spiritual wisdom.

Extracting from these broadly defined issues a more essential and, at the same time, an explicated description of the meaning of suffering, we can say:

Suffering has a confrontational and questioning character. It brings us into the stark reality of the immediate moment. Standing naked and exposed, our ordinary defenses and securities stripped from us, we can become aware of being **addressed** by our own consciences. By cornering us, suffering challenges us with choice. If we do not give in to panic at this point and do not look for a way out of having what we sense is a deeply personal confrontation, a call to take stock of ourselves, we can begin to discern what course it is we are called upon to take. Suffering, therefore, commissions us, that is, calls us to personal account (responsibility). What we have previously taken for granted in our lives, is now presented to us as valuable, as tasks (something to appreciate, preserve and realize). As we heed the call and do so, we find ourselves **sustained** by these values. We become aware of these values as existing independently **outside** of ourselves. Beyond human manipulation and destruction, those things in life which really matter to us, exist as values in an eternal sense, on a dimension beyond the transitory. In exercising these values in our daily lives, we become more real, more authentically ourselves. Our lives gain in meaning and content, become unique, irreplaceably valuable. We experience, in the final analysis, a sense of fulfillment, triumph and joy which we have not known in quite such depth before. Our lives have risen above blind fate. We are living on the **dimension of meaning**;

What we have become sensitive to (more acutely aware of) in our above contemplation of the meaning of suffering and which we will be on the lookout for as pointers that can lead us into an even deeper understanding and grasp of the meaning of suffering are, more specifically, the following:

- * suffering has a **confrontational** character;
- * it brings us into the reality of **the immediate moment**;
- * we feel called to **responsibility**;
- * we are presented with the reality of **choice**;
- * things that are precious to us are presented to us as **tasks**, as things we ought to preserve and appreciate;
- * our realization of such values in our lives **sustains** us;
- * our lives take on more **spiritual** content and meaning;
- * living on a dimension of meaning, we experience a sense of true destiny with peak-moments of **triumph and joy**.

The Meaning of Suffering in the Context of the Holocaust

Our research participants are Jewish Holocaust survivors.

How do people who have gone through the worst, most senseless sufferings imaginable, come to grips with its meaning? **If their suffering has meaning, then all suffering has meaning!**

The Holocaust is an event which historians, sociologists and political scientists and world

leaders alike, have called one of the blackest days in human history. Seldom have a people been plunged deeper into the darkness of unbearable anguish than were the Jews during the Holocaust.

The Holocaust is a time in Jewish history which their prophets have described as "the day of Jacob's trouble": "Alas! **in all history when has there ever been a time of terror such as in that day.** It is a time of trouble for My people - for Jacob - such as they have never known before" (Jeremiah 30:7).

Never, on such a vast scale, has such terrible atrocities been committed against the Jewish people. Seldom before or since, and on such a scale, has such senseless and vile suffering been inflicted by man on his fellow-man.

Exposing the baseness of human nature as man becomes the perpetrator of such unspeakable evil, the Holocaust presents both a **crisis** of meaning and, at the same time, also a challenge to meaning for all humankind.

PART V: THE RESEARCH CONTEXT: THE HOLOCAUST

In the present study, the meaning of suffering will specifically be explored in the lives of Holocaust survivors. It is therefore essential to have a clear understanding of exactly what the Holocaust entailed.

The Holocaust presents as the most stringent test of meaning imaginable. Those subjected to it did not only suffer as individuals, but as members of a suffering people.

The Holocaust epitomizes the climax of the long history of suffering of the Jewish people. Our research participants had not only to bear their own terrible sufferings, but had to come to grips with the near extinction of the Jewish race. They had to deal with the sense of abandonment as a people; the incomprehensibility of being the scapegoat of racial prejudice and hatred throughout their history as wanderers among the nations of the world. The Holocaust took its toll in the near annihilation of the Jews as a people. Although Jew-hatred had been vented during the Nazi era as never before, the Holocaust did not put an end to anti-Jewish sentiment. Anti-semitism has many new faces. This tragic fact exacerbates the effort of the survivor to come to grips with their sufferings.

In fact, the survivors' struggle to find meaning in their senseless sufferings, implicates everyone who has any dealings with them. What is our attitude towards the Jew? How do we stand in relation to what happened to the Jewish people during the Holocaust? Anyone hoping to do valid research among Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, must be prepared to be scrutinized by these questions. To allow the mind of the researcher to be exposed to the full horror and full implications of the Holocaust is, therefore, imperative.

In Chapter 11, the Holocaust will be considered as a personal crisis; as a Jewish crisis; and as a crisis of Western civilization. The Holocaust will be particularly considered as a **crisis of conscience** and finally, as a challenge to meaning not only in a personal, but also in a historical sense.

CHAPTER 11

THE HOLOCAUST AS A CRISIS OF MEANING

The Holocaust as a Personal Crisis

The word holocaust means **total destruction by fire** and refers to a sacrificial offering which is completely burnt (The World Book Dictionary). In usage it has come to be applied to the extermination of two-thirds of European Jewry by the German Nazis and their collaborators during World War II. It also refers to the total destruction of the Jewish communities of Poland which, over the course of a millennium, had developed into the vibrant center of Jewish learning, culture, education and politics. But the Holocaust has taken on a meaning far beyond that.

No-one engaged in a serious study of the Holocaust can escape experiencing a deep personal crisis. There are two faces of man that humane human beings cannot bear to look at: the **dehumanized** face of a man who has been victimized beyond endurance; and the **inhuman** face of a man who can inflict such pain on his victims without a flinch of conscience. Such cruelty and agony, witnessed on such a vast scale as during the Holocaust, cause a breakdown of any form of scholarly detachment.

Scholars of the Holocaust such as Kren and Rappoport (1980) mention intense feelings of disgust, rage, and frustration, particularly during the early exploratory phase of study, feelings that are melted away from minds that are held in the fires of the Holocaust for long enough. What remains is a central, deadening sense of despair over the human species. **"Where can one find an affirmative meaning in life if human beings can do such things"** (p. 126)?

The Holocaust presents a **crisis of human behavior**.

The Holocaust is the dark core of the twentieth century. It has permanently shaped our perception of man, another scholar of the Holocaust, Hillel Klein (1984) believes. **"As time passes, the need to interpret its relationship to the whole fabric of human experience becomes more pressing.** We need to recognize the aggressor/victim within us" (p. 543).

What the Nazis did in the camps and torture chambers is a brand on the image of man that will last, is George Steiner's (1984) anguished conclusion. "Each of us has been diminished by the enactment of a potential sub-humanity latent in all of us" (p. 253).

Until the Nazi Holocaust there was an innocent assumption that no man, however depraved, can stand unmoved before the innocence and fragility of childhood. The human race can no longer allow itself even this consolation, the historian and famous political figure, Abba Eban (1990) concludes. It was in the rounding up, transport and killing of a million and a half Jewish children, the emptying of truckloads of living Jewish babies into burning massgraves, that the ultimate in inhumanity was reached. "The anti-Jewish prejudice, burning fitfully throughout history, sometimes as a tiny spark, sometimes as a vast flame, had now left its scorched path across the territory of the human spirit" (p. 29).

In our history we have toyed and experimented with the idea of how far along the path of evil a man can dare to go. How long can we play around with the options? Is there a point of no return?

On the other side of a life sustained by meaning (the ability to change, to correct wrong and bad choices), there is an abyss. The Holocaust scholar, making his or her painful way through the facts, is brought to the very edge of it. It exposes a horror that every one of our defenses serve to protect us against: **we have the power to destroy ourselves.**

During the Second World War, a combination of circumstances connived to make it possible for man to throw his options to the wind and to set himself on a deliberate course of evil which made him slowly and finally lose his human face.

This face, the face of a man who had lost the last shred of his humanity, whose conscience could no longer be appealed to, was the face that was presented to the Jew, the subject and victim of man's experimentation with evil.

The Holocaust as a Jewish Crisis

The impassioned intent of the power-obsessed leader and dictator of the Nazi movement, Adolf Hitler (1889-1945), was the complete annihilation of the Jewish race as part of a massive program for world conquest.

An Ideology of Race-hatred

Pinning every frustration and discontent of a defeated and impoverished Germany after World War I on the ever available Jew as ideological scapegoat, Hitler began his rise to power in 1919 by becoming the leader of a small anti-semitic organization called the National Socialist German Workers' party whose members were called Nazis.

This was the small beginning of what, in only a few years, became the National Socialist Government, one of the most powerful dictatorships the world has ever known.

Through Nazi propaganda and action, the Jew was denigrated as being "subhuman", an Untermensch, as not belonging to the Germanic - German, Dutch, Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon people - or Aryan race. An Aryan, according to Nazi ideology, referred to a theoretically superior Caucasian race; a non-Jew; one who has never had, even remotely, a Jewish ancestor. Hitler believed that non-Caucasians, like the Black and Asian nations and the Slavs, were inferior to the Caucasian race, and that they were created to be slaves of the whites. Within the white or Caucasian races, the Nordic people: a race of tall, blond people who once inhabited Scandinavia, Scotland and Northern England, was a biologically superior branch. It was to this strain, Hitler proclaimed, that the elite among the German people belonged.

The "master" race possessed the "God-given" right to conquer the world and to enslave other nations. It also had the duty to protect itself against opposing world and value systems embodied primarily and above all, in the Jew. Hitler (1992) therefore proposed that "the Nationalist Socialist movement must call eternal wrath upon the head of the foul enemy of mankind, the inexorable Jew" (p. 60).

The Jew, in Nazi ideology, was the symbol of the communistic, liberal and democratic forces which, to the Nazi mind, threatened to destroy the fabric of German national life and which undermined the German State. Seeking to build an empire based on race, coercion, repression and power, the Nazis

sought to destroy all opposition to it.

The sinister and ancient charge that the Jews are the conspirators, plotting a take-over of the world, was leveled by Hitler against the Jews of his day.

Hitler (1992) contended that the Jews were organized into an international communist network plotting to overthrow the free nations of the world. This was his version of the famous forgery "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion", a forgery that has been used extensively by every major anti-semitic movement up to the present day.

The specter of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy aiming at reducing the gentiles to slavery or exterminating them, loomed up in the medieval Christian imagination and grew out of legends about well-poisoning and plague-spreading. From the time of the Renaissance, these legends turned into a political plot rather than a religious one. An old French political pamphlet by Maurice Joly, attributing ambitions of world domination to Napoleon III, were transformed by an unknown anti-semitic in the late 19th century, into the "protocols" of an alleged conference of the leaders of world Jewry who, under the cloak of modern democracy, planned to take over the world. But, as the near annihilation of European Jewry proved, there was no "international Jewish conspiracy", no "Bolshevik threat" to destroy Germany, no "Jewish plot to take over the world". In fact, the swift success of Hitler's plan to exterminate the Jews was exactly because they were caught unawares and without a system of organization that they could call upon, as the SS General von dem Bach-Zelewski himself testified after the war:

Contrary to the opinion of the National Socialists that the Jews were a highly organized group, the appalling fact was that they had no organization whatsoever. .. If they had some sort of organization these people could have been saved by the millions; but instead they were taken completely by surprise. (Kren & Rappoport, 1980, p. 87)

The pre-Holocaust era found the Jews, especially in Germany, in total disarray. Divided among different religious traditions - Orthodox, Conservative, Liberal, and Reform - and since the turn of the century also into Assimilationists and Zionists (to name but the most obvious divisions), they had never succeeded in creating an all-encompassing organization that could represent and speak for the Jewish community as a whole (Angress, 1989). Polish Jewry, in the interwar period, had a rich diversity of political parties, all with different ideologies. There were the General Zionists, the Zionist Labor Movement, the Revisionists, the Mizrahi (the religious Zionists), the Haredim (ultraorthodox), the Bund and the Assimilationists (Kaye, 1995). The Jews were in fact, as those who desperately sought to organize them found to their dismay, a people of stubborn individualists!

Yet Hitler fanatically clung to the crazed anti-semitic notion that the Jews were the enemies of mankind. The mass murder of the Jews was the consummation of this unswerving belief and ideological conviction (Dawidowicz, 1975).

The underlying and sinister intent was to eradicate the influence of those who espoused moral standards which negated the distorted norms of what Hitler believed, in opposition to Jewish messianism, would be his own Thousand Year Reich.

Power Versus Faith History

The Jews are the people through whom the world was given the Ten Commandments. Living as a minority group in many parts of the world to which they, since their second and world-wide dispersion in 63 A.D., either fled or were driven, Jews suffered the antithesis of the lifestyle which they sought to impart to the world - a lifestyle based on love of God and man. Outside their ancient homeland, Israel, Jews found themselves, in most cases, the unwelcome guests of their host-nations.

Within the context of the mainly **power-history** of the nations among whom they found themselves, Jews kept faith with their own history. Jewish history has a **spiritual thrust**, is the contention of Berkovits (1973). It is inspired by the Messianic vision of **the brotherhood of man**, a vision of ultimate universal reconciliation when all people shall become one true community, "when nation shall not lift up sword against nation" and when justice shall rule the earth (Isaiah 2:2-4). Jewish history is essentially faith-history.

Jews generally perceive themselves as having been entrusted with the charge to inject the world with the God-given concepts of ethics, justice, and the brotherhood of man.

History, from the Jewish perspective, is man's responsibility (Dimont, 1973). Jews perceive history as a scenario of gradual **humanization**, an immensely difficult attempt by man to become man (Steiner, 1984). In the history of humanity, Jews believe they have a **humanizing** role to play: "We supplied other peoples with scientists and men of letters, and we always fought for minority rights. This was one of the great roles which we performed in the history of humanity" (Talmon, 1974, p. 101).

Pioneers of almost every progressive, socialist and communist movement in the modern era, Jews have also been the pioneers of Christianity which had a pure inception, a purity that has been maintained by true Christians throughout the ages.

In the fourth century of the modern era in Rome, Christianity became the State religion. Only then did the age of Christian militancy and the Christian era of active anti-semitism begin. No longer faith history, as Christianity was at its inception, the history of the institutionalized Church became power history. Europe was Christianized by the might of the imperial sword. With a history of "holy wars", crusades and Jew-hatred, Christianity since the Roman era, developed and preached a **theology of intolerance** (Berkovits, 1973). Severed from its Jewish roots, Christianity became a religion in service of the political powers of the day. As a State religion, the Church swore and preached allegiance to the State (Kren & Rappoport, 1980).

Along a Continuum of Destruction

Staub (1989), in his work: The roots of evil - the origins of genocide and other group violence, reasons that harming and killing members of a group become possible only after there has been a progression along a continuum of destruction. What starts with a prejudiced attitude (e.g. the Christian view that the Jews are "Christ-killers" and "rejected" by God) can lead to the complicity of silence or even tacit approval and co-operation when wrongs are committed against such a singled-out and despised group of people. What starts small, can gain momentum and end with an outbreak of violence of unforeseen

proportions.

A progression, rather **regression**, along such a continuum of destruction is hardly possible unless the victims of violence have not been **dehumanized** by ideological definitions and indoctrinations.

Nazism itself can be seen as the outcome of many steps along the continuum of destruction dating from the rise of Christian anti-semitism among the early Greek and Roman Church fathers. Christian triumphalism has been defined in terms of the Church's victory over the synagogue. The Church began to view itself as **the new elect**, a position it could only appropriate in the face of Jewish defeat and spiritual humiliation.

Many of the steps against Jews were taken by the Church, but acted upon in Germany with special zeal.

When the Nazis ordered every Jew above the age of six to wear the distinguishing mark of being non-Aryan or non-European in Germany and every occupied European country, they were taking their cue from a 700 years old edict of the Fourth Lateral Council, which forced this same "Badge of Shame" upon Jews (Blumenkranz & Ansbacher, 1974, p. 84).

The Nazis also resurrected almost verbatim another ecclesiastical edict issued by Pope Eugenius IV in 1442: "We decree and order that from now on, and for all time, Christians shall not eat or drink with Jews, nor admit them to feasts, nor cohabit with them, nor bathe with them" (Carlson, 1974, p. 136).

It is also the Fourth Lateral Council which decreed the establishment of prescribed "Jewish quarters" in every major city (a forerunner of the establishment of ghettos by the Nazi regime) (Roth & Corcos, 1974).

The Protestant Reformation also turned sour on the Jew. When all efforts failed to convert Jews to Christianity, Martin Luther turned against what he called "this damned, rejected race" with savage fury. In his book, The Jews and Their Lies, Luther (1971) urged his followers to burn Jewish synagogues, homes and books, to forbid rabbis to teach, to strip them of their money and possessions and to compel Jews to earn their bread "by the sweat of their noses" (p. 292). The infamous Reichskristallnacht, when the Nazis set fire to synagogues and looted Jewish businesses in Berlin on the night of 9-10 of November 1938, was on Luther's birthday. "There is a diabolical progression from an anti-Semitism cloaked in Christian teaching and blessed with holy water to its ultimate expression in the Holocaust", remarks a Christian clergyman, Carlson (1974, p. 137). "A straight line leads from the first act of oppression against the Jews and Judaism in the fourth century (since Constantine made Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire), to the holocaust in the twentieth", observes the Jewish theologian and rabbi, Berkovits (1973, p. 41).

Raul Hilberg (in Carlson, 1974) puts the matter in its tragic perspective: "The missionaries of Christianity had said in effect: You have no right to live among us as Jews. The secular rulers who followed had complained: You have no right to live among us. The German Nazis at last decreed: You have no right to live" (p. 137).

Using the old Christian rhetoric, that the Jews were "Christ-killers" and therefore the enemies of the Church, that God has rejected the Jews and has chosen a new elect, Hitler (1992) stated: "Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord" (p. 60).

Hitler (in Berkovits, 1973), in a meeting with two high dignitaries of the Church in April 1933, declared that "he merely wanted to do more effectively what the Church had attempted to accomplish for so long" (p. 19).

He could not be contradicted.

The Enlightenment

The all-powerful rule of the Roman Church especially over the dark period known as the Middle Ages, was weakened with the Renaissance in 1300-1500 and the Protestant Reformation in 1517. It was the Age of Enlightenment (1600-1700), followed by the French Revolution (1789-1799), that heralded a process of democratization, of granting individual liberty and equal rights to all. The anti-monarchist cry of the French revolutionaries: "liberty, equality and fraternity", in European countries like France and the Netherlands, also allowed the Jews the rights of full citizenship.

Wherever they were granted the opportunity, many Jews rose to top positions, becoming successful businessmen, philosophers, scientists and scholars of renown. The success they attained was astoundingly disproportionate to their numbers. Jews have always placed great accent on Biblical and Talmudic studies. Forced segregation from the non-Jews among whom they lived, often led to Golden Ages of learning and creativity (Fast, 1970). Excluded from the professions and forced into the trade of money-lending (an occupation despised by Christians), Jews mastered skills that explain their phenomenal success in trade and later as bankers (Johnson, 1988).

Having been made an available scapegoat for society's ills by a long history of anti-semitism in Germany and other Christian European nations, Jewish success in fields that the Enlightenment had opened to them, made the Jews a special target of Nazi hatred and envy.

The Showdown

The Jew came to embody every threat, be it in liberalism, communism or capitalism, that Nazis believed would deter them from turning the Third Reich into the mighty autocracy Germany had been in the past and which they hoped, would eclipse the power and glory of the First Reich, the Holy Roman Empire (962-1806), and the Second Reich, the German Empire (1871-1918).

Nazism's Blut und Boden (Blood and Soil) concept was a glorification of **the natural man**, a **this-worldly Weltanschauung** (world view); an effort to root Germans in the soil of a strong sense of German nationalism. Hitler (in Talmon, 1974) declared:

We are confronted with a (Jewish) question, without the solution of which all the efforts to awaken Germany and bring it back to life shall be in vain. This is a vital question for entire mankind since the fate of all non-Jewish peoples depends on its solution. (p. 54)

It is because the Jew represents a system of universal values - the primacy of abstract reason, of a pure, universal morality and of the unity of mankind - that he, by his very existence, flies in the face of every world system that has sought to assert its dominance through the accumulation of power, the

demonstration of power and the deployment of power, Talmon (1974) contends. "The Jews are a people whom totalitarian barbarism must choose for its hatred", states Steiner (1984, p. 228).

In Hitler's obsessed mind, as in the delusive imaginings of the medieval millenarian sectarians, he had been given a "divine" mission (on behalf of the Aryan race) not only to usurp the place of the Jews as the so-called chosen people, but also, finally, to **destroy** them.

There can be no two chosen people, only one, Hitler stated.

The War Against the Jews

In his meteoric rise to power, Hitler used a two-way approach: He aroused the nationalistic zeal of a defeated German people with his messianic vision of restoring Germany to its past glory and, drawing from the deep well of anti-semitism, a resentment that was particularly rife after Germany's humiliation in World War I, Hitler united disparate factions within the German nation by singling out the Jew as the cause of all their misfortunes. In fact, Hitler (in Dimsdale, 1980) was recorded as saying: "If the Jew did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him" (p. 67).

"Die Juden sind unser Unglück" (the Jews are our misfortune, a phrase which Hitler borrowed from Heinrich Treitschke, an anti-semitic German historian) became a much used slogan.

A more sinister intent was, however, not only to prepare Germany for another world war, but to desensitize and condition the German mind to what would become increasingly more drastic measures in dealing with the so-called "Jewish problem".

Hitler was a genius of political maneuver and cunning and had an uncanny gift to stir audiences with his impassioned speeches. He also had astute ability to hand-pick men who would become the total instruments of his powerful will.

The first private army he organized around himself was known as the SA (Sturmabteilung - storm troopers), used in street fighting with leftists or whoever tried to break up Nazi rallies, and later used for any hooligan action against Jews as part of Hitler's terror campaign. He armed them and gave them a sense of unity by having them wear brown-shirted uniforms with the Nazi emblem: the swastika (a crooked cross).

As he gained significant recognition as a political figure, he decided to form an elite personal bodyguard who could be implicitly trusted to carry out his every command. This saw the birth of the infamous SS (the Schutzstaffel - the elite guards), which was led by Heinrich Himmler from 1929 till he committed suicide in 1945.

Himmler developed the SS into an organization guided solely by the will of the Fuehrer, the title Hitler (in Hausner, 1968) had given himself. There is **one** who commands, all others must follow. Sharpened into a core of fanatically loyal, obedient and highly disciplined men, the SS was wielded with deadly skill in the mass extermination of the Jews.

To become part of the SS was to become part of an elite, an aristocracy, a type of religious order, a secret society, a gang, an army and a family all at the same time. "We were Germany's best and hardest. What held us together was an alliance of comradeship. Not even the bonds of marriage can be stronger. It gave us the mental and physical strength to do what others were too weak to do", reported a former

concentration camp commander (Kren & Rappoport, 1980, p. 43).

When Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany in 1933, the persecution of the Jews became State policy. The Jew had already been harassed and attacked by the stormtroopers in the build-up prior to gaining control of the government, events that were released by the press in countries abroad. As a "counter-measure against Jewish atrocity propaganda abroad", Hitler called for a boycott of all Jewish doctors, lawyers and businessmen.

A reign of terror was initiated as the suppression of all opposition to the Nazi regime began in earnest. Communists and Social Democrats, who opposed Hitler's Fascism, were the first victims. Every violent measure, from the banning of democratic parties and free trade unions to the campaign against the League of Nations, was carried out under the guise of anti-Semitism.

Hitler maintained that the Jews had many conspiratorial techniques and vehicles for eroding the fabric of Gentile (non-Jewish) societies. In a modern society these were Freemasonry, the press, democracy, parliamentarianism, the trade-union movement, Marxism, and Social Democracy (Dawidowicz, 1975). Anyone who opposed him was, to Hitler's mind, either a Jew, and if he was not a Jew, then he was a "stooge of the Jews" (Schoenberner, 1978, p. 9).

The anti-semitic Nuremberg Laws and the Reich Citizenship Law of 1935, reduced the Jews to the status of second-class citizens. The medieval Law for the Protection of German Blood, forbade marriage between Jews and non-Jews. They laid the basis for a whole flood of decrees and new laws which robbed the Jews of their last remaining rights. In 1938 the persecution mounted to an open pogrom.

In an event known as Kristallnacht (the Night of Broken Glass), synagogues were set on fire, Jewish homes and shops were destroyed and plundered. These actions, organized by stormtroopers, were put out by Party officials as "spontaneous outbursts of the outraged public against Jewish impudence and arrogance" (Angress, 1989, p. 485).

Throughout these dark days, Jews tried desperately to emigrate. However, emigrants had to pay a heavy "Reich fugitive" tax and their properties were seized ("Aryanized").

In 1936, Hitler sent troops into Germany's Rhineland in violation of the Versailles Treaty which brought World War I to its close. In 1938, he absorbed Austria into Germany. Fearing to oppose him and enter into another world war, France and Britain allowed him to take over the German areas of Czechoslovakia. He occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939. Only when, in the same year, his tanks rolled into Poland, did France and Britain declare war on Germany and did Second World War begin.

With his invasion of Poland, Hitler gained control over that country's approximately 3 million Jews. In the large towns, the Jews were forced to live in special walled-off residential districts, known as ghettos.

Ghettos proved to be mere transit stations when, at a later stage of the war, they were liquidated and their inhabitants taken to concentration and death camps. "Resettlement" was the name given to the mass process of throwing Jews out of their homes, turning them out into the street and leading them off into the ghettos.

In 1940, the Nazis conquered Belgium, Denmark, France, Norway, and the Netherlands, and hundreds of thousands more Jews fell into their hands.

When the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, Hitler was master of Europe and his power seemed boundless. The campaign of mass murder against all European Jews began.

Murder squads, known as Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units), consisting of SS men, the Security Police and those recruited from among the local population, were formed. When a Russian village was captured by the German troops, the Jewish inhabitants were told that they were to be "resettled", only to be taken to places of execution.

The eventual aim was: death to every Jew. A transcript of the Wannsee conference of Nazi leaders of the 20th of January 1942, on the so-called "Final Solution of the Jewish question" in Europe, reads: "In the course of this final solution of the European Jewish question about 11 million Jews come under consideration" (Arad, Gutman & Margalit, 1981, p. 249).

The concentration camps already spread like a giant net over the whole of Germany and more and more camps were built throughout the occupied territories. Because of brutal ill-treatment, starvation, disease and hard labor, the average life span of camp inmates did not exceed three months. Total extermination called for more efficient and swifter means of killing. In Germany during the so-called "euthanasia program", which was a program to "purge" the German nation of "undesirable elements", an estimated 100,000 mentally ill or disabled patients had been suffocated by gas in air-tight chambers (Meyer-Lindenberg, 1991). Death by gassing, was now seized upon as a method of mass murder.

The extermination camps, with their gas chambers and ovens, came into being. In the extermination camps: Chelmo, Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka in Poland, prisoners were killed immediately upon their arrival. There were also combined extermination and concentration camps, such as Maidanek and, above all, Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest forced-labor combine in Hitler's Reich, and at the same time, the largest human slaughterhouse. Its four crematoria attained a "daily capacity" of more than 9,000 people gassed and burnt (Feig, 1981).

With the advent of the gas chamber, mass murder became an industry (Schoenberner, 1978). Mass deportations of Jews to the death camps began.

During this period, an army field newspaper, "Die Front" (in Schoenberner, 1978) reported: "The Jewish question has passed from the theoretical to the purely practical stage and, indeed, not just in Germany, but on an increasing scale in the other European countries. . . The fate of the Jews is now unfolding in accordance with the laws of a justice that cares nothing for petty sensibilities and that incorruptibly serves the good of humanity. **The verdict on the Jews in Europe has been spoken**" (No. 414, 18th July 1942).

Sealed cattle wagon trains packed to capacity with Jewish men, women and children, never stopped running from all the stations of Europe to transport the victims to their deaths. Under Adolf Eichman's direction, these transports of victims received top priority, even above the need to transport equipment essential to the war effort (Hausner, 1968).

As defeat at the hand of the Allies became imminent, the trains kept rolling. A process was set in motion that had gained an evil momentum of its own. The killings did not stop but were, in fact, stepped up.

Concentration camps were evacuated as the Allies advanced. In mid-January, 1945, the **death marches** began. Inmates were marched ahead of the approaching Allied armies. A great number could

not keep up and were either shot or left to die.

When the Allies were closing in on the heart of Germany, Hitler issued his last military order from his Berlin bunker on April 15, 1945. Six million Jews were already murdered and only a pitiful third of Europe's Jews had escaped the carnage.

Yet Hitler still exhorted his soldiers to perform their utmost against their mortal enemies, the Jews (Dawidowicz, 1975).

Hitler left a last will and testimony of hatred. Dictating his political testament at 4:00 a.m. on April 29, 1945, the last day of his life, his last words to the German people were: "Above all, I charge the leaders of the nation and those under them to scrupulous observance of the laws of race and to merciless opposition to the universal poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry" (Arad et al, 1981, p. 162).

Soon after, along with his mistress, Eva Braun, whom he had married only the day before, he committed suicide, shooting himself in the mouth. Aides, it is believed, burnt their bodies. Seven days later, Germany surrendered.

A Murderer's Wreath of Victory

During World War II over 55 million people were killed, more than half of them civilians. But within this war was another war, the war of Hitler's passion. "True wars", said Himmler (in Dawidowicz, 1975) "wars between races, are merciless and fought to the last man, until one side or the other is eliminated without trace" (p. 166).

This was the war waged against the Jews.

Jewry came out of the war orphaned (Eban, 1990). Utterly extinguished were the hundreds of East-European Jewish communities which had formed the heart, the great center of learning, the spiritual core, of Jewry worldwide. Poland had become a Jewish graveyard (Eban, 1990).

Rescued by American troops, a survivor from Dachau, Zalman Grinberg, told a liberation celebration audience: "Hitler won the war against the Jews of Europe. .. We unlearned to laugh, we cannot cry any more; we do not understand our freedom: this probably because we are still among our dead comrades" (Penkower, 1983, p. 288).

Chilling are Hitler's words in a speech delivered on the 8th November, 1942, when he referred to his earlier stated intents to exterminate the Jewish people.

You will recall the session of the Reichstag when I stated: If Jewry imagines for a moment that it can engineer an international world war to annihilate the European races, the result will be not the annihilation of the European races but the annihilation of Jewry in Europe. They always laughed at me for being a prophet. Countless numbers of those who used to laugh then are laughing no longer. Those who are still laughing now, will perhaps not be laughing much longer either. **This wave will spread out across Europe and across the whole world** (Arad et al, 1981, pp. 134-135).

Hitler's prophesied wave of evil did indeed engulf the whole world. The civilized world is still trying to understand exactly what hit it, and it is imperative that it does. This is the thought voiced by one of its survivors, Sivano Arieti:

The epidemic of evil that seized Europe in the 1930s and 1940s was the most ferocious of its kind ever to appear on earth. Since **this illness swept over the Western world in our lifetime**, it is incumbent upon us to expose it in the most minute detail. Each of us who survived has the obligation to reveal what he came to know. Sometimes one moment, fully understood, can shed light on the whole. (Rothchild, 1981, p. 1)

The process of bringing the facts to light, reluctantly slow to start, is gaining momentum. "We hope gradually to learn and understand what happened", is a remark made by a German psychiatrist and professor, Meyer-Lindenberg, during an International Scholars Lecture Series of the American Psychiatric Association in New York, in 1990.

The Holocaust as a Crisis of Western Civilization

The Holocaust and modernity

In his work: Modernity and the Holocaust, Bauman (1989) contends that the Holocaust was born and executed in our modern rational society, at the high stage of our civilization and at the peak of human cultural achievement, and that for this reason it is a problem of that society, civilization and culture.

Only the full machinery, the entire bureaucracy of a modern, most technologically advanced State could effect the success of a political program of the Final Solution of the Jewish problem, namely the annihilation of the entire Jewish race. The question could be asked whether each of the little cogs in the great societal machine fully realized the implications of what they were doing. What about the German public? Did the German in the street fully understand what his or her tacit co-operation by non-resistance would lead to?

What about world apathy in the face of what became known of such atrocities even before the outbreak and during the early stages of the war? The delay of effective action meant that two-thirds of European Jewry could be systematically wiped out by deliberate programs of starvation, torture, mass shootings and gassing in a complex of concentration and death camps especially designed for the purpose, before the Allied forces at last liberated a pitiful remnant of the inmates.

The ability of the Nazi regime to slaughter two-thirds of European Jewry has created the word: **genocide**, that is, the annihilation of an entire race. What has been indelibly imprinted on the human mind since the Holocaust, is a gruesome blueprint for **terrorism**, the pattern of modern-day warfare. The indiscriminate murder of innocent men, women and children simply because of their religious affiliation or national origin, smacks of the type of perverted morality espoused by the Nazis (Zuroff, 1994). To the lawless and violent ideologies of terrorist and jihad groups in the post-Holocaust era, there is no special sacredness, purpose, or minimal dignity to human life (Kren & Rappoport, 1980).

We have to admit to the evidence that twentieth century civilization has become, as Bauman (1989) puts it, "a process of divesting the use and deployment of violence from moral calculus, and of emancipating the desiderata of rationality from interference of ethical norms or moral inhibitions" (p. 28).

How are we to understand this phenomenon of moral apathy? What has contributed to this **erosion of personal conscience?**

The Production of Moral Indifference

The modern Western mind is one that has cast off the centuries long yoke of religious bondage. Moving out from under the heavy yoke of religious suppression, man was free to use his critical faculties and to pursue every avenue of knowledge. Known as the Enlightenment, this new-found freedom resulted in an explosion of knowledge, especially within the natural sciences.

The phenomenal growth of science was matched only by the great strides of technological advancement which came with the Industrial Revolution.

In reaction to the constraint of religion and the societal restrictions and moral censure that resulted from it, science inevitably moved in a direction away from what it regarded as the domain of religion. Relegating religious beliefs and ethics to the domain of the superstitious and the irrational, science substituted in its place, the verifiable, dispassionate principles of reason, rationality, and empirical inquiry. Subjective states, the domain of faith, ethics and morality became, to the scientific way of thinking, suspect (questionable).

The scientific mode of thought was propounded as being one of strict **neutrality**. All speculative, ambiguous, and evaluative elements were to be **eliminated** both from its method of inquiry as well as from the statement of its findings. Scientific language, therefore, does not allow the scientist to speak of matters of religion, morality and values (Kren & Rappoport, 1980).

The modern technological and scientific age became the age of **technical reason**, a detached type of objectivity. Ethical issues and moral persuasions became relegated to the domain of the private. Religion became a private affair confined to Sundays and holy days. Man became compartmentalized (May, 1958a). Ethics became divorced from business, from the mechanisms of the State and from politics. In the impersonal environment of huge factories and institutions, people simply went through the motion of prescribed functioning, not really questioning the aim or purpose of their labors. Man was **dehumanized, turned into a machine**, into the image of the industrial system for which he labored (May, 1958a).

Man as an automatum, an exact functioning, highly rational tool of science, impervious to the disruptive effects of personal involvement, became the respected ideal.

Ominously, the ideal man of science became the prototype of the Nordic man of Nazism, emulated by the SS. The correlation between the two, emerges from the following description of the model of the true scientist, given by May (1965):

The ideal of the rational man who stands aside, views all facts, impartially weighs the data, does not contaminate the data with his own involvement - in short, is completely objective - is an illusion. And fortunately so: any man who pretended to that god-like status would be dangerous indeed. (p. 206)

The scientific mind was suppose to represent the learned, civilized mind as opposed to the irrational and ignorant mind of the misinformed and the unlearned. The Holocaust proved, however, that "scientific thought, antithetical to the wild passions of barbarism, is not at all antithetical to efficient, dispassionate destruction, slaughter, and torture" (Kren & Rappoport, 1980, p. 140).

The Holocaust proved that, **uprooted from a moral base, and divorced from a framework of ethics, science cannot be safeguarded against being put to diabolical use.**

The Nordic Man of Nazism

The terrible fascination exerted by the Holocaust resides in its **bloodless rationality**. It is the highly **disciplined** behavior of men who were performing an unquestionable **duty** with maximum efficiency, unencumbered by the disruptive influences of emotion or the restrictive dictates of conscience, that have so puzzled and confounded those who have felt that the atrocities committed by these men, could only have been perpetrated by a crazed savage, an illiterate brute, or a mentally deranged sadist.

The SS modeled themselves after the ideal of the superior Nordic man and actually **opposed** sadism and what they called "needless" brutality. The slogan was Eiskalt, cold-blooded murder with no investment of emotive factors (Bauer, 1987). The command was to kill idealistically, "ideologically". A "political" murder was in order, a murder out of lust not (Dimsdale, 1980).

Hausner (1968) who studied the life of Adolf Eichman and other top Nazis, pointed out that, on the whole, these men led perfectly normal family lives, many of them even went to Church on Sundays and celebrated Christmas dinners while in the camps and, at their orders, men, women and children were being starved, tortured, shot, gassed and burnt. Adolf Eichman could quote Plato by heart and was enthralled with Wagner's music in his spare time. During office hours he was unflinchingly engaged in murder, torture and deceit.

Kren and Rappoport (1980) believe that, quite apart from technology, the **mentality of modern science** has directly contributed to making the Holocaust possible. "The splitting process involved is roughly analogous to the way some animal research scientists come to view their rats or monkeys without any trace of empathy" (p. 135).

The use of euphemistic language also helped to remove the planners and executioners of the program of mass murder from the impact of what they were doing. "Euphemisms such as final solution, relocation, and shower bath seemed to work nicely for the SS as a means of imposing a rationalized, business-as-usual framework upon activities too atrocious to be contemplated in the raw" (Kren & Rappoport, 1980, p. 138).

There is little evidence to show the SS derived sadistic pleasure from what they were doing, although most took a certain pride in their ability to handle such a difficult assignment. Some felt sickened and depressed at the sight of piles of bodies and having to wade through rivers of blood.

A report of Oberleutnant Walther on an execution near Belgrade on the 1st November, 1941, read: At first my men were not affected. On the second day, however, it was already apparent that one or two did not have the nerves to carry out executions over a period. My personal impression is that during the execution one does not have any scruples. These make themselves felt, however, days later when one is quietly thinking about it in the evening. (Schoenberner, 1978, p. 85)

SS leaders realized that emotional reactions might interfere with efficient operation of the death camps. Camp officials were therefore taught to maintain a proper and disciplined detachment in a

dispassionate performance of their duties. They were encouraged to regard their victims as not really human beings, but as inferior organisms, vermin that needed to be exterminated.

In an affidavit of Alfred Metzner, in Augsburg, 18th September, 1947, he reported:

The only pauses that I made was when my carbine was empty and I had to re-load. It is therefore not possible for me to say how many Jews I myself killed in these 3-4 hours as during this time someone else shot in my place. During this time we drank quite a lot of Schnaps to stimulate our zeal for work. The Jews in the lower batches who were alive or only wounded were suffocated by the upper batches or drowned in the blood of the upper batches. This time no wounded people came out alive. The graves were then filled in by local inhabitants. After the mass extermination another meeting with the District Kommissar was held. The District Kommissar took the opportunity to praise my diligence and was satisfied with the whole action. (in Schoenberner, 1978, p. 84)

Nazis brought to trial at Nuremberg after the war, were offended at and protested against being called criminals and murderers, savagely venting their aggressions on innocent and defenseless victims. They were just following orders, they contended. Sir Hartley Shawcross, British Chief Prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials of Nazi criminals, in delivering his verdict, and in referring in particular the mass annihilation of the Jews, said:

In any war, in this war no doubt there have been - and no doubt on both sides - numbers of brutalities and atrocities. They must have seemed terrible enough to those against whom they were committed. I do not excuse or belittle them. But they were casual, unorganized, individual acts. **We are dealing here with something entirely different, with systematic, wholesale, consistent action, taken as a matter of deliberate calculation - calculation at the highest level. History holds no parallel to these horrors.** (in Schoenberner, 1978, p. 208)

A Charge to Overcome the Restraint of Conscience

Inspired by inhuman ideological ideals, thousands of men stepped over their own consciences to heed Hitler's cry of defiance: "Close your eyes to pity! Act brutally!" "We are having a proper clear-out..", the Nazi Fritz Jacob wrote, "once gypsies and another time Jews, partisans and other riff-raff. **We are pressing on without pangs of conscience**" (in Schoenberner, 1978, p. 92). "It is not justice that I have to carry out but annihilation and extermination", said Herman Goering (in Schoenberner, 1978, p. 14).

Addressing a gathering of SS-lieutenant-generals, Himmler, on October 4, 1943, spoke about the achievement of being able to overcome any feelings of pity and guilt in the ruthless execution of the task of the annihilation of the Jews.

Most of you must know what it means to see a hundred corpses lie side by side, or five hundred, or a thousand. To have stuck this out and - except cases of human weakness - to have kept our integrity, this is what has made us hard. In our history, this is an unwritten and never-to-be-written page of glory. (in Arad et al, 1981, pp. 344, 345)

A wreath of victory at having overcome the restraints of conscience, was laid on the mass graves of millions of Jews with these words by the Chief of the S.S. in Lublin, Globocnik:

Gentlemen, if a generation should ever follow us that is so spineless and weak-kneed as not to understand our great task, then National Socialism shall indeed have been in vain. I am, on the contrary, of the opinion that bronze tablets should be laid recording that we had the courage to carry out this great and so necessary a work. (in Schoenberger, 1978, p. 145)

The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler

The Victory of the Cain- over the Abel-nature of Man

Hitler was the leader and spokesman for Nazism from the day it was created until the day it died. "Without Hitler there would have been no Holocaust," Yaacov Lozovick (1994, personal communication), a student of Hitler's life and personality, contends. A non-person, he could absorb the emptiness of the age in which he lived, and exploit it.

In his book: The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler, Waite (1977) writes that "more will be written about Hitler than about anyone else in history with the exception of Jesus Christ" (p. xi).

Hitler defiantly pitted himself against the dictates of human conscience. Conscience, Hitler stated, was a Jewish invention: "The Jews have inflicted two wounds on mankind - circumcision of its body and conscience on its soul" (Wolpin, 1986, p. 88). Hitler detested Jewish ethics and the Christian teachings derived from it, regarding it as a protection of those elements in society (the weak, disabled and the mentally defective) that would destroy the fabric of a strong and healthy society. "Taken to its logical extreme, it would mean the systematic cultivation of the human failure" (Bullock, 1968, p. 389).

The basis of Hitler's political beliefs was a crude Darwinism. "The whole work of Nature is a mighty struggle between strength and weakness - an eternal victory of the strong over the weak" (Bullock, 1968, p. 399).

Bullock (1968) remarks: "Hitler's originality lay not in his ideas, but in the terrifying literal way in which he set to work to translate these ideas into reality, and his unequalled grasp of the means by which to do this" (p. 408).

Hitler succeeded, as no man did before him, to disqualify the claims of his own conscience (Wolpin, 1986). "Indifferent towards the sufferings of others, he lacked any feeling of sympathy, was intolerant and callous, and filled with contempt for the common run of humanity. Pity and mercy he regarded as humanitarian clap-trap and signs of weakness" (Bullock, 1968, p. 397). Believing that the only virtue was to be hard, and that ruthlessness was the distinctive mark of superiority, Hitler became completely closed, impervious to the dictates of conscience. "Everything that spoke of the human spirit and of the thousand forms in which it has flowered, was alien to him", (Bullock, 1968, p. 398).

The dimension of meaning was closed to him. He shut himself up against it: "He had no feeling or understanding for either the spiritual side of human life or its emotional, affective side" (Bullock, 1968, p. 390).

Hitler's personality is strikingly typical of the Freudian picture of man, a man whose growth has been arrested on **the psychobiological level**. Brute emotion, devoid of the sensitivities of compassion, earmarks the man who lives, not by an awareness of meaning and its moral injunctions, but by raw instinct. Freud believed that the force of brute emotion can only be tempered by **reason**, the capacity of man to control himself that evolves at a higher level of psychological growth. Hitler, however, was well-known for his hatred of the intellectual. "Instinct", he declared, "is supreme and from instinct comes faith" (Bullock, 1968, p. 373).

In fact, his life became earmarked by a **decisive turn against** anything that smacked of spirituality. Far from being a passive victim of unhappy circumstances or from being haplessly driven by the force of instincts over which he had no control, **he deliberately cultivated the carnal features of his own nature** (Dawidowicz, 1975). He became a **master manipulator**, not only of his own, but of mass emotion. He deliberately and shrewdly exploited the irrational side of human nature (Waite, 1977). Far from discarding human nature, Hitler carefully studied it (Des Pres, 1976). "No regime in history has ever paid such careful attention to psychological factors in politics" (Bullock, 1968, p. 379).

Nowhere is this deliberate exploitation of brute emotion reflected more clearly than in Hitler's use of speech. Divesting it from its function of communicating **meaning**, Hitler used speech as a tool to release the hidden spring of his own and others' emotion, whipping himself and his audience into anger or exaltation by the mere sound of his voice. "Words", he said, "build bridges into unexplored regions" (Bullock, 1968, p. 372). In fact, Hitler **surrendered himself** as a servant and instrument of the dark forces of the human unconscious.

With a certainty with which no conscious gift could endow him, (he could) act as a loudspeaker proclaiming the most secret desires, the least admissible instincts, the sufferings, and personal revolts of a whole nation. .. Like an arrow to their target, he touches each private wound on the raw, liberating the mass unconscious, expressing its innermost aspirations, telling it what it most wants to hear. (Bullock, 1968, pp. 373-374)

What Hitler believed and proclaimed flew in the face of the command to love your neighbor as yourself. Shamelessly proclaiming its opposite: to rise to supreme heights of power **at the expense of those you have defined as the enemy**, in its very defiance and daring, intoxicated the masses with visions of self-glory.

The will to power ruthlessly supplanted the much more agonizing and soul-searching will to meaning.

Angrily rejecting the effort and pain of a struggle towards meaning, Hitler idolized power for its own sake. A will to power came to dominate his whole personality (Hausner, 1974). "To say that Hitler was ambitious scarcely describes the intensity of the lust for power and the craving to dominate which consumed him. It was the will to power in its crudest and purest form" (Bullock, 1968, p. 382).

The will to power presented as such a tempting alternative to the will to meaning because, at the end of it, there was not the humility of uncertainty, a dependency in the face of not having all or any ultimate answer to the mystery of human existence, but **omnipotence**: "You shall be as God.." (Genesis 3:5).

Hitler's vanity was unappeasable. "The atmosphere of adulation in which he lived seems to have deadened the critical faculties of all who came into it" (Bullock, 1968, p. 383).

Self-intoxication was the rich reward of power, a reward Hitler passed onto his followers (Kren & Rappoport, 1980) The massive rallies, the hypnotic effect of thousands of men marching in perfect order, the music of the massed bands, the forest of flags, the smoking torches, the huge stadiums, the vast spectrum of masses of hero-worshipping people, was a massive build-up to the climax of the appearance of the Fuehrer.

The acclamation of thousands who, like one man, saluted him with: "Heil Hitler!" is the absolute antithesis of the cry: "Behold the Man!" that we give in deep admiration of a man who, despite suffering and even in the face of rejection and shame, unflinchingly heeded the dictates of his own conscience.

An Archetype of the Biblical Antichrist or Man of Lawlessness

At the height of his power, when half of Europe lay at his feet and all need of restraint was removed, Hitler abandoned himself entirely to megalomania (Bullock, 1968). He had the power over life and death, and could decide who was to live and who was to die (Dawidowicz, 1975). The plan for the Final Solution of the Jewish problem: the annihilation of the Jews, could be put into full effect (Kren & Rappoport, 1980).

The censure of conscience was removed and for a period of three and a half years (from 1941 to early 1945), the years of the Final Solution, evil could hold unmitigated sway.

Scripture holds a striking parallel to these events. In both the Hebrew Scriptures as in the Greek New Testament, the following is written: "And the beast was given the power of speech, uttering boastful and blasphemous words, and he was given freedom to exert his authority and to exercise his will during forty-two months. He was further permitted to wage war on God's people and to overcome them. And power was given him to extend his authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation" (Revelation 13:5,7; Daniel 7:8,21,25).

Scholars of the Holocaust see in Hitler the embodiment of the evil in human nature during a time in history which allowed its full manifestation.

"This is the victory of evil over good", contends Hausner (1968), "a final rejection of the dictates of conscience revealed in the extreme **indifference** towards the suffering of the victims" (p. 75). Bauman (1989), notes: "The moral maxims which determine social behavior and the religious commandments - "Thou shalt not kill!" - which guide conscience had virtually vanished" (p. 177). Howard Fast (1970), a modern Jewish historian, writes: "Somewhere in the dark soul of Germany, God had died, and this sense of the death of God spread across the face of the earth" (p. 323). "The Holocaust has been the most extensive, premeditated and well-conducted massacre of all; an organized and scientific killing, conscientiously put into effect", concludes Poliakov (1956, p. ix).

Once the evil intent of the mass annihilation of the Jews was given ideological sanction, the rebellious and anti-God instincts of men who had paid feigned obedience to what to them was an enforced rule of "decency and conscience", could be fully released. Even SS officials who had enlisted locals in their killing squads, commented: "We were downright frightened by their bloodthirstiness" (Hausner,

1968, p. 76).

Reflecting on what had happened over this most traumatic period of history, Poliakov (1956) in his book Harvest of Hate remarks: "Man is capable of this; these are the depths to which his bestiality can take him. The shadow of this immense cross will lie for ever across all our human hopes and dreams" (p. x).

Hitler was not an aberration of history, but a man who succeeded to captivate almost an entire nation by his charismatic persuasiveness, his promises of great glory. At the height of his success, he had succeeded in persuading a great part of the German nation that in him they had found a ruler of more than human qualities, a man of genius raised up by Providence to lead them into the Promised Land (Bullock, 1968). To this end, thousands upon thousands of people were willing to either close their eyes to what it will take to get them there, or from a lesser to a greater extent, took part in the evil means to achieve the coveted goal. In their turn, the SS found it all too easy to lift the thin veneer of civilization from off the Ukrainian, Latvian, Byelorussian and Lithuanian helpers in the occupied Soviet regions. Bauer (1987) remarks:

The abandonment of personal responsibility, personal conscience, and their transfer to another superego - the fascist regime, or the Fuehrer, or the Hungarian ruler, Horthy, and so on - enabled individuals who normally would not dream of acting in this way to cease all repression of their destructive instincts and instead to act out what apparently all of us possess in our subconscious. (p. 218)

The Holocaust provided men with the scope to kill their own consciences. Without the sense of wrongdoing (guilt), without the fear of being brought to account (respect for the Law), all restraint was removed. Men became beastly, without spirit, without respect for the dictates of right and wrong.

Drawing his inspiration not from the moral dictates of God, but from a fountain of pride, Hitler was walking the road of a Lucifer: "I will make myself like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:12-15). In 1937 Hitler told an audience at Wurzburg:

However weak the individual may be when compared with the omnipotence and will of Providence, yet at the moment when he acts as Providence would have him act he becomes immeasurably strong. Then there streams down upon him that force which has marked all greatness in the world's history. And when I look back only on the five years which lie behind us, then I feel that I am justified in saying: This has not been the work of man alone. (in Bullock, 1968, pp. 384-385)

Hitler became, in his own eyes, above the Law. He was consumed by "the mission of a Siegfried, come to reawaken Germany to greatness, for whom morality, suffering and the litany of private virtues are irrelevant" (Bullock, 1968, p. 385).

Believing himself to be infallible and unable to listen to reason, Hitler ignored the advice of his generals, misread the course of events and through miscalculation, led his armies to their defeat at the hand of the Allies.

The sin which Hitler committed, Bullock (1968) concluded, was that which the ancient Greeks called hybris, the sin of overweening pride, of believing himself to be more than a man. "No man was ever more surely destroyed by the image he had created than Adolf Hitler" (p. 385).

The Holocaust as a Crisis of Conscience

The Crime and its Incriminations

At the end of the war, in May 1945, Europe was in chaos - politically, economically, morally, and spiritually. Anti-Semitism, far from being stamped out, even became intensified. The roots of anti-semitism went too deep, and its adherents were denied its rewards. Jewry was all but destroyed, but where were the promised Nazi glories that were going to follow? New pogroms broke out against those who had the impudence to survive.

Opportunities to leave the blood-soaked soil of Europe, remained limited. No country, not even America, was prepared to accept large numbers of penniless Jewish refugees. Britain, the Mandatory power over Palestine, kept the doors closed to the country which had become a pre-eminent goal for most Jewish survivors (Penkower, 1983). Displaced Persons camps sprung up everywhere.

Finding little comfort in a world they had come to profoundly distrust, Jewish awareness of their vulnerability to the whims of human depravity in the misery that faced them after the war, had never been so intense (Ebban, 1990). The realization of just how great their losses were now that they had time to take stock and reflect, made the horror of what they had experienced, even more intense.

Shock-waves at the extent of the human carnage also rippled through the world. During the summer of 1942 the Polish underground had frantically cabled London: "Believe the unbelievable!" In reporting this, Penkower (1983) wryly remarks:

The same liberals who reassuringly thought that Adolf Hitler could be placated in the 1930s, now had to grapple with the existence of **evil incarnate**, as well as their own **fundamental inaction** at a time when men, women, and children pleaded for the sacred breath of life. (p. 301)

A methodical Nazi fervor to destroy, not matched by an Allied will to save, made the inconceivable possible.

Unable to face up to what happened and in the effort to wipe out the ugly truth, the world allowed other pressing world events to take precedence as the Holocaust got pushed into the background. It became a taboo subject.

A silence on the subject of the Holocaust prevailed for almost twenty years since the end of World War II (Braham, 1988). Society at large did not want to be reminded of it and its survivors chose not to speak about it (Rosenbloom, 1985). But for an article or a report here and there, the literature on a subject of profound historical significance, was astoundingly sparse.

A World on Trial

The Cold War, the struggle between the Communist nations and the democratic nations that began after World War II, developed into an arms and later space race between Russia and America. In the mid-1960's America and Russia each had enough nuclear weapons to wipe out the entire world. As the world began to realize its precarious position in the balance of power between East and West, the lid of

suppression began to lift from off the subject of the Holocaust. A more active stance in having to deal with such matters was taken now that self-survival was at stake.

An all-out nuclear war would leave no victor. Modern technology had advanced to a point that, at the push of a button, the whole world could be turned into a nuclear crematorium. Not only one people, but humankind, now faced extinction.

The Holocaust, the extreme point on a continuum of mass murders and genocides that disfigure the twentieth century (Bauer, 1987), suddenly became a topic of urgent interest. Many a scholar of the Holocaust emerged, some with the strong conviction that the subject must be understood and its lessons learnt, if the human species is to survive. "We live under the shadow of nuclear holocaust. The only visions of the world that can be taken seriously are those that come through the irrevocably ash-darkened prisms of post-Holocaust sense and sensibility" (Kren & Rappoport, 1980, p. 143).

The questions evoked by the Holocaust and that, at last, have been allowed to surface, have led to documentation and soul-searching in what is now a seemingly endless stream of literature as a confounded and perplexed world tries to fathom the reason why and how it happened, what the Holocaust can possibly mean.

It is no exaggeration to suggest that by the end of the century, the accumulation of items concerning the Holocaust - books, films, poetry, articles, stories - will equal or exceed the total number that have been produced about any other subject in human history. (Kren & Rappoport, 1980, p. 1)

The explosion of literature on the subject of Holocaust itself must be understood as a phenomenon.

Are we in the throes of a **historical struggle for meaning**?

Have we run out of the many ways of coming up with answers that somehow avoid or bypass a more fundamental consideration of the why and wherefores of mankind's existence? A tragic upset in life corners the individual with some soul-searching questions and throws him into a struggle for meaning.

Brought to the brink of omnicide, is an entire world now cornered with the questions presented by the Holocaust?

In Search of the Old Scapegoat

Faced with the Charges

The Nazis, deluded by the grandiose vision that they were performing a most necessary task on behalf of all of mankind, performed their duties with meticulous zeal. They documented, recorded and filmed what they were doing. Even though, when defeat was in sight, desperate efforts were made to destroy the evidence, the mass of information collected and filed, made a quick destruction of it impossible.

The world has been left with a mound of incriminating evidence of what happened during the Holocaust. To face the charges, is one of the most difficult assignments our history has yet given to us.

The main thrust in much of the literature on the Holocaust is to try and categorize it somehow, to place it within the context of the historically explicable, and then, to let it settle down in some kind of ordered space in the archives of human memory. Evil is not something new, such literature contends. Every age has had its dictator, its persecutor of innocent victims like the Jews. In the long line of history's endless wars, massacres and persecutions, the Holocaust too, can be outlived.

Within what Kren and Rappoport (1980) call the intellectually comfortable perspective of other historic events: the religious crusades, the slaughter of the Albigensian heretics, the Turkish decimation of the Armenians, the British invention of concentration camps during the Boer War, and the Nazi-like genocides in Tibet, Bangladesh, Biafra, Paraguay, Burundi, parts of southeast Asia and, in our day, the slaughter by the Bosnian Serbs, life (history) can go on.

The fact that the Holocaust will not ease itself into the forgetfulness of some past event, is the dynamic behind a spate of literature that has appeared on the subject of a **Holocaust denial** (Suzman & Diamond, 1978). Vical-Naquet (1994) calls such Holocaust deniers or negators, the assassins of memory.

The effort to somehow put the Jews, who were its victims, in the wrong, be it that they somehow "got what they deserved", or that they are grossly exaggerating their anguish, the numbers killed or, in other cases, that they could have revolted instead of being led like sheep to the slaughter, is to try to shift the focus of blame away from those who feel accused or threatened by Jewish suffering.

An Uneasy Christian Truce

Pope John XXIII, before his death, composed the following prayer, to be read in all Catholic churches. He called it, Act of Reparation.

We are conscious today that many centuries of blindness have cloaked our eyes so that we can no longer see the beauty of Thy chosen people, nor recognize in their faces the features of our privileged brethren. We realize that the mark of Cain stands on our foreheads. Across the centuries our Brother Abel has lain in blood which we drew or shed tears we caused forgetting Thy love. Forgive us for the curse we falsely attached to their name as Jews. Forgive us for crucifying Thee a second time in their flesh. For we knew not what we did. (in Berkovits, 1973, p. 26)

Pope John died before he could introduce his prayer into the liturgy. The prayer lies buried in the archives of the Vatican. There is little of such a spirit present in the Vatican Scheme on the Jews.

In an effort to appease its own conscience, the Vatican, after centuries of persecuting the Jews as "the enemies of the Church", at last officially exonerated them from the collective crime of deicide, the crucifixion of Christ.

It is up to the Jew to forgive and forget!

"Those who kept silent when it was time to speak out, talk loudly of forgiving and forgetting", is the comment of Schoenberger (1978, p. 9), a German journalist, who with his shocking but profoundly moving documentary: "The Yellow Star", makes an admirable and courageous effort to face up to the

crimes perpetrated by the Nazis in the name of the German people. In it, he highlights the unsolved guilt reactions of the Christian nations towards the Jew.

The effort to try and shift the blame by putting it only on the shoulders of the German nation and to seek an explanation for Hitler's Third Reich in the German national character, is merely to preach an inverted racialism, to replace one collective prejudice by another, he points out. Up to the outbreak of the war, a million Germans passed through the concentration camps or were imprisoned for standing up against the injustice perpetrated by the Nazis. 300,000 political prisoners were counted in April 1939. "But they were too few. The voice of conscience was drowned in the Heil Hitler! roar of the masses - or was forcibly silenced" (Schoenberger, 1978, p. 28).

Not just one nation is implicated. There is "a controversy with all nations" (Jeremiah 25:31). The Holocaust affected not only occupied Europe but neutral states and the Free World as well. The Holocaust constituted a test of the response to evil, a test which every government, organization and individual living during that time had to undergo (Zuroff, 1994).

What happened in the Holocaust is, in the deepest sense, a matter of conscience that concerns every one of us. After all, the Holocaust was perpetrated by human beings, people ostensibly like all of us. It is for this reason alone, that the Holocaust creates such controversy, that, if possible, we would like to repress it into a collective unconscious, a region of forgetting in order to, without encumbrance, continue our personal and national lives, despite its incriminations.

The Defense of Denial

To face the injustice of what had happened to the Jews of Europe (or of any such-like atrocity in our own day) shatters our sense of safety and disrupts the complacency of a patterned and rather mindless way of living.

Who wants to realize the fact that Western civilization is defunct; that its moral foundations are eroded; its moral frameworks, shaky?

Who wants to feel that we are living on borrowed time; that violence, lawlessness, and moral corruption is on the increase, that in the post-modern and post-Christian era we are even less able to resist the decay of conscience and that, if put to the test, our structures of resistance will tumble, that the type of evil that was unleashed by the Nazi regime can, once again, easily overtake us?

But whether we want to know it or not, we are living in the shadow of the Holocaust, in what Berkovits (1973) calls: "the ignoble twilight hour of a disintegrating civilization" (p. 133). Violent conflict between factions, groups and nations; genocides and wars; have increased, not decreased.

Never conceived of as being possible before it actually happened, an action like the Holocaust now falls within the range of human possibility and, "like it or not, Auschwitz expands the universe of consciousness no less than landings on the moon" (Kren & Rappoport, 1980, p. 126).

Fear that something of such horrific magnitude can happen again, and that we, like the unarmed and defenseless victims of the Holocaust, can be rendered its helpless prey, is the one unnerving consequences of a full consideration of the gruesome facts of the Holocaust. It opens our eyes to the world we are living in, to realities we would otherwise continue to be blind to.

The Holocaust has rendered us vulnerable to other such "total possibilities", Steiner (1984) points out:

(We are) now instructed as never quite before - and it is here that history is different - of the fact that "everything is possible", that starting next Monday morning at, say, 11.20 a.m. time can change for oneself and one's children and drop out of humanity. (p. 248)

We are living in the epilogue of human history. We have technologically advanced to the stage of being able to turn the whole world into a nuclear wasteland. "Beyond the Holocaust stands the threat or **orbicide**, the threat of self-destruction of the human species, the ultimate victory of Thanatos" (Bauer, 1987, p. 219).

The Holocaust as a Challenge to Meaning

A Call to Communal Action and Responsibility

The hidden challenge of the Holocaust, Penkower (1983) believes, is to be found in its radicalism. The post-Auschwitz recognition of what Emil Fackenheim (in Penkower, 1983) has denominated "radical evil" must, in turn, be a guide to **radical humanist action**. The world has been trapped into a complicity in the crime of mass murder through its moral apathy and ineptitude, its lukewarm response in the face of the victim's desperate cry for help (Abzug, 1985; Haelyona & Hatzair, 1963; Hilberg, 1978; Wyman, 1984).

Once and for all, the calamitous fallacy that what happens in one part of the globe (or to another group or person) is not another's affair must be shed, lest one day a brother's keeper be again found wanting in the face of extremity, stresses Penkower (1983).

The shadow of omnicide mandates that **active compassion which flows from mutual need** replace the crime of indifference.

The world must act in unison: each man must accept his neighbor as his brother and be done with the issues that serve to divide man from his fellow-man. There must be a communal or universal stand against the deceits and triumphs of evil.

Civil society must have as its foundation **the awareness of and commitment to the unity of humanity**, is the contention of Frankl (1977). "There is hope for survival only if mankind is united by a **common will to common meaning** - in other words, by an awareness of **common tasks**" (p. 143).

The supreme significance of the Holocaust is that it addresses **the universal conscience of man**. The Holocaust is not a private property of its perpetrators, nor of its direct victims, nor of its witnesses, stresses Bauman (1989). **Its present-day significance is the lesson it contains for the whole of humanity**. Its first lesson is that we cannot argue ourselves away from the issue of moral duty (or fail to argue ourselves towards it). The second lesson tells us that **evil is not all powerful. It can be resisted**. The testimony of the few who chose moral duty over the rationality of self-preservation and who had the moral courage to resist evil, shatters the authority of the logic of self-preservation. One wonders, concludes Bauman (1989), how many people must defy that logic for evil to be incapacitated. **Is there a magic threshold of defiance beyond which the technology of evil grinds to a halt?**

The Power of Good over Evil

A most challenging avenue of thought, little pursued and wide open for experimentation, is the one posed by rabbinical scholars and echoed in the works of Frankl: **The power of good, if mustered, eclipses the power of evil**. Human conscience derives its authority from a dimension of values that goes beyond the whims and fancies, the ignorance and deceptions of the individual, his society or time. This thought is expressed by the famous Biblical and Talmudic scholar, Rabbi Hirsch: "Even if the entire world will have lost its moral fiber - the moral absolutes which God has established will remain applicable and relevant. And they will ultimately prevail" (Commentary to Psalm 76:4).

These eternal values are open to discovery at anytime, by anybody.

The power of good is released through right action. If one individual is empowered through right action into a stronger stand for what is just and good, that power multiplies among a group of individuals united around a communal sense of what is just and good.

Our world is in desperate need of a demonstration of the fact that the power of unity of people rallying around a just cause, outstrips the power of unity around goals which are set in rebellion against the dictates of conscience.

Staub (1989) sees the Holocaust as the final end along what he describes as a progression along a continuum of destruction. To take the lesson of the Holocaust to heart is to **reverse** the process that gave rise to it.

Along a Continuum of Benevolence

Staub (1989) speculates what the effect might have been if more than, in the end, an insignificant number of people had **resisted** to go along with the Nazi measures.

Goodness has a power that increases along what Staub (1989) calls: **a continuum of benevolence**.

London (in Staub, 1989) studied Christians who saved Jews from the Nazis and found that many of them had parents with strong moral concerns that they transmitted to their children. Oliner (in Staub, 1989) found that rescuers came from what he called: **normocentric** communities. These rescuers felt connected to other human beings, whether family, a group, or people in general. In contrast, the passive, nonhelping bystanders, members of a comparison group interviewed, tended to be disconnected.

A most important finding in connection with the rescuers is that there was an evolution of commitment to help by steps along a continuum of benevolence.

What began as a small initial response in the direction of help, released further helping actions, also in others. It led, in the end, to a commitment to help in which many rescuers risked and sacrificed their own lives on behalf of suffering victims.

A very powerful example of how resistance may develop in persons who are not themselves direct targets of oppression, occurred in Munich in 1943.

A small group of students acting entirely on their own, produced and circulated leaflets attacking the Nazis. Known as the White Rose, the group was led by a twenty-four-year-old medical student named Hans Scholl, once an admirer of Hitler and member of a local Hitler Youth group. Along with a small circle of student friends, he became profoundly disturbed by a growing realization of what was happening in Germany, having witnessed first-hand what was being done to the Jews of Germany. Coming from a family that shared his feelings - his father saw Hitler as an antichrist - Scholl moved from confused doubt to the conviction that the Nazi government was criminal. Scholl and his group agreed that **resistance was a duty they could not ignore**. "**We must do it for the sake of life itself - no one can absolve us of this responsibility**" (in Kren & Rappoport, 1980, p. 110).

In distributing their leaflets they hoped that, by speaking out against Nazi crimes, they would energize resistance by demonstrating that it was possible to protest, and in this way **awaken people to their responsibilities**. Failing all else, even if they were killed, they would at least have shown to future generations that the German people were not entirely without honor. The group was eventually caught by the Gestapo and beheaded for high treason.

Kren and Rappoport (1980) believe that the Scholl group exemplified resistance in its purest form. **Their resistance originated as a matter of conscience and increasingly came to dominate their ego until action became imperative, a duty that could not be ignored.**

The Responses of Righteous Gentiles

The excuse that the Nazi terror machine paralyzed voluntary charitable acts, is belied by the deeds of thousands of righteous persons who helped many Jews survive the terrors of the Final Solution, states

Paldiel (1988), the Director for the Department of the Righteous at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum in Jerusalem.

The Knesset (Israeli Parliament) law of 1953, which established the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial for perpetuating the memory of the millions of Jewish victims of Nazi bestiality, included a provision for the honoring of the Righteous Among the Nations who risked their lives to save Jews (Paldiel, 1988).

Over 7,000 men and women from all the previously occupied countries in Europe have already been awarded the Righteous title. A tree bearing their name has been planted for perpetuity in the Garden of the Righteous, at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

No exact figures are available of the statistics of Jews saved through the help of individual non-Jews, though their numbers run to tens of thousands. In spite of a centuries-old anti-Jewish theology of contempt of the Church, many clergymen were in the forefront of the rescue of Jews. Some, such as the celebrated Capuchin monk Marie-Benoit, saw themselves compelled to resist Nazism as a threat to Christianity. To help Jews survive the Nazi "Final Solution" was perceived as a religious obligation.

Humanitarian ideals also motivated many Righteous Gentiles, coming from all walks of life: from farmers with little formal education, to government officials and public servants. In Budapest, Hungary, Swiss Ambassador Carl Lutz, put himself at risk to protect thousands of Jews. To an even greater degree, the noble Swede, Raoul Wallenberg - the epitome of altruism - protected thousands of Jews from the Nazis. Arrested by the liberating Russians in 1945, for reasons still unknown, he was never to be seen again.

Some Germans in uniform, or German civilians employed in the occupied territories, are also listed among the Righteous Among the Nations. Oscar Schindler, a German appointed trustee over a confiscated firm in the Cracow region, Poland, single-handedly saved some 1,200 Jews in a rescue feat unparalleled in its daring.

The deeds of these Righteous Gentiles serve as a parameter for moral behavior, even under circumstances of great physical and psychological stress, Paldiel (1988) states.

The Righteous Among the Nations have, through their selfless deeds, consecrated the pre-eminent principle of the sanctity of life: that life as such has a right unto itself and that no one dare violate this sacrosanct imperative; and that the innocent death of even one life is a blow against the whole of humanity. (p. 4)

The motto appearing on the Righteous medal awarded to those non-Jews who have saved Jews from certain death during the Holocaust, is taken from the Talmud: "Whosoever preserves one life is as though he has preserved the entire world."

A Pearl of Great Price: The Danish Rescue of Jews

Acts of resistance and help were limited to individuals and groups. The Scandinavian countries alone took a firm and positive stand with regard to their Jews. Finland, despite its alliance with Germany, refused to let its Jewish citizens be deported. But it was the Danish people who provided the world with an example to emulate.

Powerless to resist a German takeover, this small country of a good-natured and civilized people came under German rule from April 1940. Allowed a surprising amount of freedom by their conquerors, the Danes finally came to the realization that further co-operation with their German masters, whose brutality increased with the years and with the worsening fortunes of war, was impossible - if they were to retain their self-respect and honor (Shirer, 1960). The crisis centered around the approximately 8,000 Danish Jews. At first left unmolested, largely because of the strong Danish stand regarding the status of their Jews, word got round of the Nazi intention to deport the entire Danish Jewish population to the German concentration camp, Theresienstadt, as part of the Final Solution.

Informed in time of the Germans' intentions, the Danes managed to save almost its whole Jewish community in a single operation in October 1943 - by stealthily spiriting them across the sound (the straits separating Denmark from Sweden) to safety.

Several aspects make the Danish story important in our effort to understand how **the power of good, once released and exercised in the light and under the direction of personal conscience, can grow to an act of powerful moral resistance in the face of evil.**

* **The Danish people were free of anti-semitism and actively resisted anti-semitic propaganda.**

The Jews in Denmark enjoyed the full privileges of the Enlightenment. Officially recognized as a separate community by the Danish people among whom they lived, they were given full freedom of religion and as citizens. Actively affirming the values of good neighborliness towards their Jews, the community had very little to do with Danish Nazis who, as a result, remained a very small party in Denmark. In 1939, the Danish parliament, to restrain the anti-Semitism of the Danish Nazis and to counteract Nazi propaganda, passed an amendment to the criminal law, stating that anyone who by virtue of false rumors or slander incited hatred against any section of the Danish population by reason of its religion, origin, or citizenship, would be subject to fine or imprisonment (Glentjoj, 1981).

* **When put to the test, the Danish people followed the dictates of conscience.**

The Danish people were quite unprepared for the occupation because of the Danish policy of neutrality. At first taken in by the German promises to respect the Danish democratic constitution and of providing a protection for the Danish citizens, which included Danish Jews, in exchange for becoming the bread-basket of Germany, this cooperation with the Nazi regime soon led to a conflict of conscience. A wave of national self-consciousness arose. Large crowds gathered, singing Danish songs and hymns. Underground resistance movements began. It was particularly the Nazi measures against Jews, which began to threaten the Danish Jew, that made the policy of negotiation with the Nazis repugnant to most Danes. **The growing conviction that measures against Jews would be the limit where government and people had to stand or fall,** was nurtured from many sources, particularly from pastors of the Lutheran State Church. The theological faculty of Copenhagen along with their students adopted a resolution to the effect that: in case of persecution of the Jews they would "give strong public expression of their opposition" (Glentjoj, 1981). In 1942 some 500 Danish doctors warned the Ministry of the Interior not to introduce the Nuremberg Laws in Denmark. When the deportation finally came, it was the necessary spark that set off an immediate popular movement to rescue the persecuted. The deportation

caused a breakthrough from passive to active resistance on the part of the majority of Danes.

* **The Danish people were willing to risk their own lives in obeying the dictates of conscience.**

The deportation of the Jews of Denmark was planned for the night of the Jewish New Year between September 30 to October 1, 1943. Getting wind of this plan, Danish leaders at once informed the leaders of the Jewish community. The King sent a letter of protest, warning that: "special measures in regard to a group of people who have enjoyed full rights of citizenship in Denmark for more than one hundred years would have the most severe consequences" (Glenthoj, 1981), but without any effect. Even before the deportation, a wave of protest engulfed the country. Read from pulpits in all Danish churches as the congregations stood listening, portions of the Church protest stated:

Persecution of Jews conflicts with the concept of humanity and the love of neighbor that are derived from the message that the Church of Jesus Christ set out to proclaim. The leaders of the Danish Church have a clear understanding of our obligation to be law-abiding citizens (but) should the occasion arise, we shall unambiguously acknowledge the Word that **we must obey God rather than men.** (Glenthoj, 1981, p. 105)

A very strong protest came on the 30th of September 1943, just before the deportation, from representatives of all the economic organizations of Denmark. Before more protests could be made, the deportation began.

In the night of the Jewish New Year, Jews were dragged out of their homes, transported on trucks to a ship which was ready to take them to Germany. But since all Jews were warned by their Danish fellow-citizens, the great majority were able to find hiding places. Christian homes were opened to Jews, so that those Jews who were taken in their own homes were those who tragically did not believe the warnings. Jews in trouble in the streets were protected from the Germans by Danes who happened to be on the spot. **Only 202 of the approximately 8,000 Danish Jews were eventually captured and taken to Theresienstadt.** Danish authorities, especially the Red Cross, immediately began to get in contact with them. The King sent his greetings to the Chief Rabbi who had gone with those captured, telling him that the Danes were praying for them. This had great impact on the captured Jews who felt encouraged and strengthened. In Denmark, fullscale organization began to transport the remaining Jews across the sound to Sweden. In addition to sail boats, row boats were used, requiring as much as nine hours for the crossing. On the Swedish side the help was both strong and official, so that when a boat had passed the half-way point to Sweden, there were Swedish boats, including police and military forces, to provide an escort the rest of the way. Among the first telegrams to be cabled to Denmark after the liberation was one sent by Danish Jews in Sweden to the King expressing their deep gratitude for the King's unforgettable intervention for the Jews in Denmark. The King answered with a personal telegram which was Denmark's answer: "Our deepfelt gratitude. Till we meet again! Christian Rex" (in Glenthoj, 1981, p. 113).

Glenthoj (1981) reports the deep satisfaction Danes experienced as they "passed from their shame to a good conscience" (p. 108).

The Jews and the Charge of History

The Unexplored Power of Good Over Evil

The way in which the Danish people were able to resist and triumphantly overcome evil in their defiance of Nazi decrees and in the rescue of the Jews of Denmark, provide powerful proof that man is able to rise to great moral heights, that **he is not powerless to deal with evil when it threatens him.**

Yet it was the Jew, the prime target of Nazi hatred and assault, who was called upon by history to demonstrate the power of good over evil. He was the one singled out for history's blackest moment: to be earmarked not only for extinction, but for the destruction of everything he stood for. **The meaning of his very existence was at stake.** How was he to survive such an onslaught on his very person?

Without a state or army, the physical means to defend himself, abandoned by a world's moral apathy, the Jew had nothing but his history behind him, nothing to hold onto but his faith.

Jews, God and history

Jews, God and history is the title Max Dimont (1962) gave to his first book on Jewish history. In his second: The indestructible Jew (1973), he uses as a framework for the saga of Jewish history, the thoughts of a famous sixteenth-century Jewish kabalist or mystic philosopher named Isaac Luria. History or human experience passes through three stages, or cycles.

The first stage Luria called the zimtzum, the "thesis" or "statement" of history. This first stage was the cosmic drama that ushered in world history and the special role of the Jews. Having made a statement of His will for man in the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai, and having given man full evidence of its outworkings in real life, God withdrew His direct (miraculous) intervention and teaching (revelation) from the scene, leaving man the freedom to enact the divine will as it would now be made manifest through man's own conscience.

The second stage Luria called shevirat ha'keilim, "the breaking of the vessels". This would be the "antithesis", that is, the "counter-statement". Everything that had been brought together in the first stage is shattered, and the Jews are strewn as "exiled lights" over the face of the earth. **It is in the face of contradiction that man learns to make a personal statement and to take a stand for what he knows is the truth.** This second stage is a cosmological drama in which man, **through his own personal stand and choices**, determines what would be his place in it.

Whereas the first act in the Jewish saga proceeded like an ancient Greek predestination drama, with God as the author, the second act was more like a modern French existentialist drama, with the Jew himself as the author. Dimont (1973), with this description, portrays the exiled Jews as standing in the lobby of history in the fateful first century A.D. On the brink of their adulthood as a people, they were faced with just such an existentialist choice, a choice that has been put before every Jew through the ages. **They must either accept or reject the notion that they have a manifest destiny or purpose in life to fulfill. They must either deny the meaning of their past or reaffirm it.**

Whereas in the past, unconscious impulses may have motivated Jewish destiny, in the second act **it was conscious, deliberate, pragmatic actions that shaped Jewish history** (Dimont, 1973).

Jews had to learn to embrace, affirm and retain their own identity in a world that was hostile and that was, time and again, violently **opposed** to them. Jews could always escape persecution through **apostasy**, by conversion, through assimilation and complete surrender of identity (Berkovits, 1973).

To retain their Jewishness, their God-given right to be a people in their own and unique right, **to keep faith with their destiny, their unique calling and purpose in life**, was virtually a matter of daily, and often painful and costly **choice**. Values which in the past they had passively enjoyed as blessings, they now had to **actively cultivate and preserve**.

Contrary to the painful accusation and narrow-minded view that the exile was a wholly negative thing: the result of "God's punishment of the Jews", a sign of their abandonment and redundancy as a people, it in fact became a key factor in Jewish survival. Instead of having doomed the Jews to extinction, it funneled them into freedom (Dimont, 1973).

The third stage, Luria called the tikkun, the restoration. This would be the "synthesis", the joining of the statement and the counter-statement into a new, higher concept. In this stage, all that was shattered in the second is **unified** into a new, greater, and final totality. The sufferer is vindicated, man is given the reward of **affirmation** of the truth he clung to in the face of every contradiction against it. This is the stage of the restoration of the Jew to the land of Israel. The final redemption of Israel will conclude the redemption of all things (Dimont, 1973).

History, according to this unusual and exciting perspective, is not a blind rise and fall of different world empires shaped by the fortunes and miseries of war, but is a history infused with **meaning**. Man is not perceived as a sorry victim of his own destructive impulses, forever doomed to be in conflict with his fellow-man. Nor is he, in the image of the Jew, a mere pawn in the game of power between opposing nations, the helpless prey of force and circumstance. Man is given the dignity of being able to realize a **purposeful destiny**. His fate is up to him.

PART VI: THE LIFE-WORLD OF THE HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR. HOW CAN WE BEST STUDY IT?

In the previous sections we have focussed on the meaning of **meaning**; the phenomenon of **suffering**; and the **Holocaust**. As this study is entitled: A heuristic study of the meaning of suffering among Holocaust survivors, the two remaining subjects to be discussed are: the Holocaust **survivor** and the **heuristic** research approach.

In Part VI we will have a close look at the life-world of the Holocaust survivor, specifically from the point of view of research contributions in the field of survivor studies. The concept of the **survivor syndrome** will be critically considered (Chapter 12). Our aim will be to determine which method of research to use in order to gain an effective entry into the life-worlds of the research participants. In Chapter 13, we will explore new paradigm research as a research approach in the humanities and in Chapter 14, we will turn our attention more specifically to the heuristic method of research as an example of new paradigm research and as the method most appropriate for the purposes of the present study.

CHAPTER 12

THE SURVIVOR SYNDROME

Suffering a Trauma Beyond Imagining

Des Pres (1976) sees the Nazi concentration and death camps as an embodiment of the archetype called Hell. Steiner (1984) asserts that the deranged horrors of a Belsen or an Auschwitz were a deliberate actualization of the demonic tradition in art and literature and theology, the most terrible instance of myth turned into history. For a few dark years, there was a transference of Hell from below the earth to its surface.

Dimsdale (1980) sees the Holocaust victims as having been assailed on all fronts. The cup of their suffering was made to overflow.

Physically, inmates suffered from starvation, severe crowding, sleeplessness, exposure, inadequate clothing, forced labor, beatings, injury, torture, medical experimentation, diarrhea, various epidemic diseases, and the effects of the long "death marches" from the camps in the closing days of the war. Death had to be faced daily in those who succumbed or who were beaten to death, shot, thrown into mass graves, burnt alive or crammed into the gaschambers. Heaped bodies of the dead or dying was a common sight.

Psychologically, the prisoners lived under the constant threat of death, and often witnessed the death of loved ones. Their survival needs: the need for safety, security, belonging and love, were all cruelly denied gratification. If not themselves the victim of casual violence or deliberate cruelty, the prisoners frequently witnessed such exhibitions. Since it was impossible to retaliate effectively, they had to smother their need to react, hide their deep disgust and hatred, bear with the terrible frustration of helplessness since even the appearance of resentment against the torturers could lead to instant death.

Socially, they were displaced from their homes. Social networks were destroyed. A high percentage of the survivors lost most or all of their families in the camps. Friendship was regarded as a crime, family members were often forcibly separated. Cries for help went unheard. They felt and were, in a very real sense, abandoned by the world.

Regimented, imprisoned, without a moment of privacy during the 24 hours, the **spiritual** onslaught was the most severe. Superbly qualified to mete out humiliation, the prisoner's human worth, his sense of an individual human identity, was under constant and savage assault. Reduced from individual human status to the status of a debased being, identified not by name but by a number, a conviction of his ineluctable inferiority was hammered into the prisoner by the SS jailers who needed to justify their own behavior by convincing themselves of the inferior, subhuman status of the Jews in their charge.

In fact, remarks Chodoff (1970) as he reviews these aspects, the prisoner's entire environment was designed to impress upon him "his utter protoplasmic worthlessness, a worthlessness which had no relationship to what he did, only to what he was" (p. 79).

Alvarez (1968) sees the concentration and death camps as having an existential meaning beyond politics or shock or pity. "They stir mud from the bottom, clouding the mind, rousing dormant self-destructiveness. They have become symbols of our own intumed nihilism" (p. 28), an exposure of the deep

sense of the demonic which lies buried in our unconscious.

Uncannily sensing what the human spirit lives by, the Nazi system could diabolically design conditions which were deliberately aimed at **destroying the human spirit**. Without a sense of meaning, the will to live dies. A Kafkaesque world was thus created in which the rules governing human existence were senseless, capricious, and often mutually contradictory, as for instance, when impossible standards of cleanliness were demanded, while, at the same time, the inadequate opportunities and senseless rules about toileting made even an elementary decency impossible (Chodoff, 1970).

An evil intelligence that knew precisely how to confuse, to throw the mind into disorder and distress, to pull the victim down into a cauldron of horror, took satanic delight in making the victim grovel in a state of abject humiliation.

Des Pres (1976) devotes a chapter to what he calls an **excremental assault** on the dignity of the victim. Through not only terror and privation, but a relentless assault on the victim's sense of purity and worth, **the death of the soul** was aimed at. Excremental attack, the physical inducement of disgust and self-loathing, was a principal weapon.

In The Symbolism of Evil, Ricoeur (1969) defines "dread of the impure" as the special kind of fear that is felt in reaction to "a threat which, beyond the threat of suffering and death, aims at a diminution of existence, **a loss of the personal core of one's being**" (p. 41).

Having to live in the most unhygienic conditions, suffering from diarrhea, yet having little water, no paper, most inadequate toilet facilities, victims were often forced by their cruel taskmasters to drink from toilets, eat, smear themselves with or stand in pits of excrement, in which many of them were drowned. Nothing more graphically symbolised their descent into hell. Being forced to wallow in their own excrement, marked the lowest point of a journey into death's underworld. "No worse assault on moral being seems possible" (Des Pres, 1976, p. 71).

A Battle of the Mind

A New Syndrome

"If a diabolical intelligence were to plan an experimental situation which would be maximally productive of disordered behavior in human beings, the German concentration camps could not be improved upon for this purpose", states Chodoff (1963, p. 329). It can serve as a paradigm of how humans react to stressful conditions which approach the outermost limits of human adaptability (Chodoff, 1970).

Presented with the effects of a trauma, the magnitude of which psychiatry had never before dealt with, old psychiatric frameworks proved inadequate to contain the symptoms which its survivors suffered from (Berger, 1977).

Survivors presented with a constellation of unique symptoms which included chronic states of anxiety, depressive moods, excessive guilt, and nightmares and flashbacks of genocidal content,

sleeplessness, obsessional ruminations of past traumatic events, disturbing associations, a sense of helplessness, despair, feelings of emptiness, withdrawal, suspicion, hostility, mistrust of the world, psychosomatic manifestations, and hypochondriacal preoccupations (Braham, 1988).

Such symptoms have also become recognized among the survivors of other such psychologically traumatic events that is outside the range of usual human experiences. The well-known work: Massive Psychic Trauma compiled by Krystal (1968), provides documentaries of other highly traumatic events and how these affected survivors. A contrast and comparison with the experiences, reactions and psychopathology of Holocaust survivors are provided. The DSMIII & IV new classification of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder describes what has come to be recognized as a specific condition.

The term Survivor Syndrome (also known as the K-Z or Nazi concentration camp syndrome), came to be used to describe the aftereffects of Nazi concentration camp experiences by psychiatrists assigned the task to interview and assess survivors as part of the survivors' restitution claims made to the West German idemnification courts in the 1950s and 1960s. The task of the interviewing psychiatric consultant was to determine the percentage of persecution-related psychological disability among claimants. It was largely within this context that much of the early research on survivors took place and from which many of the generalizations about survivors derived (1988).

The greater bulk of literature on Holocaust survivors focuses on the breakdown of the personality under such extreme stress (Barocas, 1970; Berger, 1977; Chodoff, 1963; Davidson, 1980; Dor-Shav, 1978; Eitinger, 1961; Eitinger, 1973; Eitinger, 1981; Kijak & Funtowicz, 1982; Klein, Zeller Mayer & Shanan, 1963; Klein, 1974; Krystal, 1968; Lederer, 1965; Lelav & Abramson, 1984; Luchterhand, 1970; Nadler & Ben-Shushan, 1989; Porter, 1981; Trautman, 1964)

Longterm Effects of Massive Trauma

It would be inconceivable to imagine that the massive, prolonged psychic and physical trauma of the concentration camp would not leave an indelible mark on survivors (Antonovksy, Moaz, Dowty, & Wijsenbeek, 1971). This fact: that the intensity of the trauma inflicted wounds and left scars on the personality which persisted over time, is stressed without exception in the literature on Holocaust survivors.

The studies of Klein (1963, 1974) with Holocaust survivors living in Israel, stress the ineradicable mark history has made on the psyche of the survivor. Even a mature, well-formed and harmonious person may, under the influence of overwhelming experiences which challenge his historical existence, suffer long-term damage, is the conclusion of Lederer (1965). The effects of the trauma which the Nazi concentration camp inmates suffered, persist over time and the struggle to deal with what happened to them, is **ongoing**, even carrying over to the next generation, Barocas (1970) found in his work with children of survivors, another huge field of study regarding the long-term effects of the Holocaust.

The conflicts touched off in the minds of survivors can never be completely resolved, is the opinion of Berger (1977).

Memory Recall of Survivors

Hypermnnesia

The survivor's ongoing struggle to come to terms with what happened to them, may account for a fact that is most important to researchers doing research with survivors in the nineties, some 50 years after the event, namely, the vividness of their recall of events which so deeply affected them. In fact, **the photographic-like associations and memories of deeply imprinted persecutory experiences came to be noted as a key factor in the symptomatology of the survivor syndrome.** Niederland (in Braham, 1988) speaks of hypermnnesia, the reverse of amnesia, namely, an overly sharp and distinct memory of the agony and terror experienced during the Holocaust persecutions as typical among survivors.

Twenty years after the Holocaust, Lederer (1965), a psychiatrist working with survivors, noted their **inability to forget.** This was noted again some years later by Rappaport (1968), a psychoanalyst, who was impressed with the fact of the vivid memories of Holocaust victims. More than 30 years after the Holocaust, the famous studies of Eitinger (1981) with Norwegian survivors noted that their reactions were just as acute, their memories just as alive as it was immediately after the war. Forty years after the event, several researches were impressed with these same facts (Nadler & Ben-Shusan, 1989).

Wagenaar and Groeneweg (1990) set themselves the specific task of studying the memory of concentration camp survivors. Survivors ranged in age from 63 to 82, with a median age of 66. They found that even after a lapse of over 40 years, the witnesses agreed about the basic facts and showed a remarkable degree of remembering. Despite an advanced age, they testified accurately on a large number of details. Details such as exact dates, names, camp registration numbers and such-like were not always accurately recalled or were forgotten but, conclude the researchers: "Memory appears primarily reliable and dependable; if the listing of errors in the results suggests otherwise, **this suggestion would be wrong**" (Wagenaar & Groeneweg, 1990, p. 86).

In instances where facts were important to the survivors, also the recall of smaller details were remarkably accurate.

Several factors can account for the astounding fact that, even fifty years after the event, memories of the survivors' experiences in the Nazi concentration and death camps are still very much alive.

The Retention of Meaningful/Traumatic Experiences

A highly interesting perception of memory is the one presented by phenomenologists. To the phenomenologist, memory means being able to retain a relationship with past events that can be made present to us **now.** Kruger (1979) maintains that the past that is significant, is the past as it shows itself to us now. We do not retain everything that we have experienced, but in the first place only those things to which we have had some relationship, and, secondly, which has some significance to us in the present.

Memory of past events are best recalled within a framework of **meaning.** What has impressed us in our lives either in terms of having been deeply meaningful and personally significant to us or its opposite, as **having been highly distressing to us and as having assailed our sense of meaning,** are

deeply imprinted in memory. Details or events that are personally unimportant or are unrelated to us personally, are more apt to be forgotten.

Psychoanalysis has clearly demonstrated the fact that we retain material that is important to us. Data may not be available to the conscious mind. If we are unable to deal with aspects of what has happened to us because of the destructive amount of guilt or trauma involved, the defensive systems of the mind such as splitting, denial and repression are resorted to. Traumatic material is pushed into and defensively guarded in the unconscious mind. Blocked from awareness, the person is protected from the distress and pain such memories would evoke. Dreams, shock flashes of memory, disturbing associations, a continued feeling of stress and struggle, are signs that these repressed memories are still very much alive. With certain cues and in a security giving framework of psychoanalysis or psychotherapy, the person can allow traumatic material to emerge. Psychotherapy often entails a vivid reliving (and meaningful reconstruction) of hurtful past events.

Delayed Trauma

There is no doubt, as the psychoanalytic literature on survivors (Bettelheim, 1943; Cohen, 1988; Klein, 1974; Krystal, 1968) and the literature on stress and coping of survivors (Chodoff, 1980; Dimsdale, 1980) reveal, that survivors availed themselves of psychological defence mechanisms during and after the Holocaust.

A common phenomenon has been the one of **delayed trauma**, that only some time after the Holocaust, when it was safe to do so, did survivors permit themselves to feel the impact of what they had gone through. The psychological scars of an extreme trauma often emerge some time after the traumatic incident has subsided. The passage of time offers a measure of security which in turn provides a **safe (meaningful) context** for the effects of the trauma to surface (Krystal, 1968). Hence, years after their release, some survivors began to manifest certain changes recognized as part of the concentration camp syndrome.

Researchers have been puzzled by and have misinterpreted this symptom free interval (Luchterhand, 1970). Kestenberg (1988) called it a latency period that had to be traversed before the survivors could give up the denial and repression of the unspeakable terror and the intolerable memories of the past.

A Trauma Beyond Forgiving (or Forgetting)

What happened to survivors in the concentration and death camps, is something beyond just a passing peril that the mind can deal with, and that can be allowed to fade into the background. The very immensity of the trauma requires a **lifetime** of trying to make some sense of and come to grips with it. The imprint of the Holocaust on the mind is **permanent** and beyond forgetting.

Rosenbloom (in Dimsdale, 1980) points out that survivors' post-Holocaust adaptations - pathological and functional - reveal the **lifelong processes** involved in mastering massive psychic trauma.

Wagenaar and Groeneweg (1990) state that, unlike other highly threatening and traumatic incidences in life such as rape and armed robbery, concentration camp atrocities were a way of life. Atrocities occurred daily and over an extended period of time. Atrocities were **expected** by the victims, they had to live with it from day to day.

The Survival Value of Alert Awareness

What happened in the Nazi concentration camps presented itself to the **conscious** mind of the victims. It was something that had to be dealt with daily, every minute, if they were to survive. A high degree of consciousness, alert attention to details of what was happening and could happen at any next moment, were called for. To be taken unawares, off-guard, could mean losing their lives. It is suggested that this is another reason why what happened to them, is so readily available for recall, even today, among the middle-aged or child survivors and aged or adult survivors of the Holocaust.

The Mission to Remember

Another key factor connecting the strength of memory to meaning, is that very many survivors have felt it their **moral duty to remember and to bear clear witness to what they had seen** (Des Pres, 1976). To remember was a mission. They had to remember all that they had seen to activate the world's conscience. In bearing witness they would establish a monument to the memories of their dead parents, siblings, families and communities (Lee, 1988).

Many survivors, like Frankl (1968) himself, felt to jot down memory cues when that was at all possible, to help them remember.

How strong the need was to record for posterity, can be gauged from the precious documents that have been discovered in places of hiding in the ghettos, concentration and death camps. Also scribbles and engravings in cattle train cars, on prison and barrack walls, had their own story to tell. "Take interest in this document, which contains very important material for the historian", reads the introduction to one of the most famous of the discovered documents, written by a Zalman Gradowski who died in Auschwitz and that was published by Mark (1985) with the title: The Scrolls of Auschwitz.

Just how meticulous the effort to remember was, can be seen in the following quotation from another famous diary, that of Chaim Aron Kaplan, written in the Warsaw ghetto on the 26th October 1939:

Even though we are now undergoing terrible tribulations and the sun has grown dark for us at noon, we have not lost our hope that the era of light will surely come. Our existence as a people will not be destroyed. Individuals will be destroyed, but the Jewish community will live on. **Therefore, every entry is more precious than gold, so long as it is written down as it happens, without exaggerations and distortions.**
(in Steiner, 1984, p. 252)

In fact, this mission to record for posterity, account for what has become a massive outflow of survivor testimonies, especially of late. At no time in recorded history have victims engaged in such massive efforts to leave a record (Dimsdale, 1980). Within the last few years, survivors have produced

an unprecedented volume of memoirs, testimonies and oral histories. These often involve interviews by mental health workers and are purposefully focussed on the entire lifecycles. The world, and the survivors themselves, realise that time to record what happened to them is running out.

Many organizations, the Yad Vashem being the most primary, have set themselves the task to collect and record survivor testimonies.

The mission to remember is succeeding in its purpose. The hundreds of thousands of memoirs are being increasingly utilized by historians as the most important source of information. The widely acclaimed works by Martin Gilbert: The Final Journey (1979) and The Holocaust (1986), and the nine-hour movie documentary Shoah produced and directed by Claude Lanzmann, are based nearly totally on testimony of eyewitnesses. Stephen Spielberg, is another famous film director, who has set himself the task of video-taping and recording survivor testimonies all over the world. His famous film on the Holocaust: Schindler's List, began this process that is still continuing.

Guilt and Unresolved Mourning

A factor related to the mission to remember is the obligation survivors feel to remember their dead (Danieli, 1988). Survivors fear that successful mourning may lead to letting go, thereby to forgetting the dead and committing them to oblivion, which for many of them amounts to perpetuating the Nazi crime of trying to annihilate the Jew. Hans Frank, the Nazi governor of Poland, had said, "We ask nothing of the Jews except that they should disappear" (in Kren & Rappoport, 1980, p. 7). Guilt towards those who **did** disappear, serves a commemorative function and as a vehicle of loyalty to the dead. In Elie Wiesel's words (1979): "they have no cemetery; we are their cemetery" (Danieli, 1988, p. 123).

An Ongoing Struggle for Meaning

In the context of this study, the factor of greatest importance in the vivid memory recall among survivors is the survivor's **struggle for and will to meaning**.

It is their ongoing struggle to make sense out of what happened to them, their profound search for meaning, that continue to make their Holocaust experiences an **urgent issue of the moment**.

This ongoing struggle for meaning becomes **particularly significant at the age most survivors are now, namely, in their sixties, seventies and eighties**.

According to developmental psychologists, the natural tendency of people in middle and late adulthood, is to engage in **life reviews**. During this stage, there is a normal tension between integrity and despair (Erikson, 1981). This is the time during which a person will struggle to make sense of his life by reconciling the content of their lives with their current self-definitions (Benner, Roskies & Lazarus, 1980).

In the case of survivors, the possibilities for achieving a satisfactory sense of meaning have been severely curtailed. Eitinger (1961, 1981) reports that an inability to find an adequate understanding of the Holocaust which might bring comfort and a sense of fulfillment to survivors, account for the feelings of vulnerability, moodiness, anxiety and depression that so many of them still suffer from. "It is not so much that specific threats experienced in given encounters with the environment cannot be managed, but rather

that the things that give the specific encounters significance within a background of meaning have been destroyed", remark Benner, et al., (1980, p. 247).

An aspect which has been neglected by survivor syndrome advocates and others, Marcus and Rosenberg (1988) believe, is the awesome significance, in terms of psychological disintegration, of the survivor's loss of his symbolic world. "When a man is so utterly stripped of life meaning (as was the concentration camp inmate) he has no furnishings for his inner life, he is as good as dead, even though his organism gropes blindly for life" (pp. 72,73). Without having a plausible symbolic world, an ultimate framework of meaning with which to make sense of his life, the survivor will not experience himself as a center of personal significance in a world of meaning (Marcus & Rosenberg, 1988). Psychological symptoms become inevitable. The survivor is caught in the struggle to establish a sense of self-coherence or **Integrity** (Erikson, 1981).

The past remains a painful problem of the present.

To review and come to terms with a life that has been torn apart and shattered; where the survivors' pre-Holocaust lives have been destroyed, their youth wasted, their families dead; to find meaning in a life that must rise out of the ashes, are no mean tasks. It asks for a constant review and study of the facts of one's life, a critical and alert attention to its details. **The quest is to remember, and by remembering, to try and understand.**

The Survivor's Will to Meaning

A Fundamental Motivation of Man

An aspect that has been neglected by survivor syndrome advocates, remarks Brahm (1988) is "the need survivors have to impose meaning on their suffering, so that the memories of the past with all their pain are bearable" (p. 70). The survivor's quest for meaning, is an effort to restore a sense of self-continuity and connection to his past, which was ruptured during the Holocaust.

This view of Brahm (1988) corresponds with the phenomenological view that one is one's whole life-history and one is one's lived time. One's life-history, and what one is, therefore include not only the past and the present, but the future as well (Kruger, 1979). In order to be fully human, we need an **openness to a dimension of meaning** (which includes feelings of hope, faith and trust in the meaningfulness of our lives). To be deprived of this, leads to a sense of **diminished being**.

Benner, et al. (1980) remark that the supreme trauma experienced by all survivors was a general sense of **futility** concerning society as a whole and the individual's place in it. Of prime importance in the mental struggle of survivors was a general **loss of meaning** - a sense of the orderliness and value of life and one's spiritual link with the past and the future; a belief in the value of being a good, dependable, concerned human in a world in which it is worthwhile to struggle for decency and excellence.

Lifton (1968) makes a similar observation about the survivors of Hiroshima, noting that death on such a massive, **shocking scale** causes "a fundamental disruption in the survivor's sense of the general continuity of human existence" (p. 88).

Humans are self-interpreting and must feel that their lives make sense, remark Benner et al.

(1980). The need to find purpose in what had happened and thereby re-establish a viable belief system was therefore **central** to the postwar experience of all the survivors. **It is this search for meaning that led to unending reliving of the past horrors.**

The Unique Symptomatology of the Survivor Syndrome

Whereas in the ordinary process of bereavement and grief, the mourner ultimately finds resolution in the acceptance of the loss, re-engagement, and the development of new commitments, death and loss on a scale suffered by Holocaust survivors can never be resolved or overcome (Pines, 1988).

It is a burden of anguish that every Holocaust survivor inevitably has to bear.

A most illuminating point is made by Benner et al. (1980) regarding the unique symptomatology of the so-called survivor syndrome. The troubled emotional responses of concentration camp survivors are not produced by intrapsychic conflict that block accurate perception of reality, but are rather the consequences of **having experienced a reality that most people, fortunately, never encounter**. It is perhaps this that explains why concentration camp psychoses and neuroses are usually not amenable to analytical, insight-based interventions.

Eitinger (1961) points out that the nightmares described by survivors are connected to **real events** in the concentration camps. The premise of analytical, insight-based therapy is that there is a better, more rational way to view a past event or anxiety-provoking memory. However, survivors who are **clearest** about their memories (i.e., who have the possibility of cognitive reappraisal) can generate no comforting or more reassuring interpretations (Benner, et al., 1980). To "soften" and change (reinterpret) their memories would mean to deny or **distort** the reality of what happened to them.

We are presented with the following question: Is it not conceivable that reactions that ordinarily, in the normal run of things, would be classified as "abnormal", may in fact be the only kind of reactions, the reasonable set of responses to a reality most of us cannot even conjure up in the worst of our imaginations?

Some other researchers have also begun to raise this question. Terry (1984) formulated the question as follows: "Must external trauma be pathogenic? **The traumatic and pathogenic are frequently confused by observers**" (p. 186).

A most important fact to consider is one that Frankl (1967) mentions, namely, that in a situation which is itself abnormal to the degree represented by a concentration camp, an "abnormal" reaction is something **normal**.

Sickness might consist of not having symptoms when you **should** have, Maslow (1968) maintained.

Does health mean being symptom free? I deny it. Which of the Nazis at Auschwitz or Dachau were healthy? Those with stricken conscience or those with a nice, clear, happy conscience? **Was it possible for a profoundly human person not to feel conflict, suffering, depression, rage etc.?** (p. 7)

The fundamental issue at stake here is that psychiatry and psychology have emerged from a framework where equilibrium, adjustment to circumstances, and a happy and care-free, guiltless

and mindless existence have been regarded as the criteria and norm of mental health. The contribution of the humanists is, as we have seen, that this concept of mental health has begun to be called into question.

There is a changing attitude of psychologists toward popularity, toward adjustment, even toward delinquency. Popular with whom? Adjusted to what? Delinquent because of what? What is sick is **not** to protest while the crime of crushing one's own true inner nature is being committed. **Is growth and self-fulfillment possible at all without pain and grief and sorrow and turmoil?** (Maslow, 1968, p. 8)

The Question of Guilt

The Holocaust, as we have seen, evokes profoundly disturbing issues for **anyone** who dares to study it. It disrupts our stayed way of thinking. It unsettles and unnerves us, calls our very way of being into question. It evokes uncanny feelings of **guilt**.

The responses of evasion, of counter-argument, especially in strangely blaming the victims for their behavior or defensively withdrawing from them, and of trying to fit the disturbing content of their distress and pain in the old safe categories of thought, may be efforts on our part to somehow **dispose** of the questions the Holocaust raises; to rid ourselves of our sense of implicatedness in the issues it so starkly exposes. A significant observation that lends support to this view, is made by Benner, et al. (1980): "Psychological theory and research have largely **evaded** notions such as general life meaning and therefore have little to tell us on the subject" (p. 251).

Traditional psychiatry and psychology have not perused suffering for its meaning, for a growth-potential of an order that falls **outside the range of the physical or psychobiological paramaters of being**. Presented with the symptomatology of suffering of the severest kind, namely, that of Holocaust survivors, the traditional reductionistic and one-sided approaches have **masked** the profound meaning-dynamics behind the emotional struggles of survivors.

German psychiatry after the Holocaust was largely based on the classifications developed by Emil Kraepilin (1825-1926) and hence, it maintained a **strict somatic view**. Organically minded practitioners insisted that mental disturbances stem primarily from biological inheritance. Psychoanalytic investigators (as opposed to psychiatrists) could also not assimilate survivor behaviors into their conventional categories and have tried to contain Holocaust reactions within the framework of the psychodynamics of personality development within the first few years of life.

The tendency among mental health workers and researchers have been to minimize **the reality and severity** of the persecutions suffered by the Holocaust victims (Kestenberg, 1988).

Lifton (1988) adds an interesting angle in pointing out that the inability to deal with the victim's suffering because it unnerves and confounds or implicates us, results in either maintaining an aloof and professional distance in our dealings with the survivor, or in a tendency to romanticize or glorify their ordeal and thereby to divest it of its unsavory dimensions. Either stance - spurious neutrality or compensatory glorification - diminishes the survivor and interferes with our understanding both of what is particular to his or her ordeal and what insight it may reveal about our own psychological and historical

condition (Lifton, 1980).

There are sensitive and concerned psychiatric and psychoanalytic voices which have contested the traditional approaches in dealing with the trauma of the Holocaust but, on the whole, the healing professions have a dismal record in relationship to the Holocaust (Lifton, 1980). In maintaining an emotional distance in dealing with or studying the subject, they have been kept in considerable ignorance on the fundamental issues raised by the Holocaust.

The Dignity of Suffering

The Purpose of Guilt

Suffering within the traditional parameters of psychiatry and psychology, has no meaning. Having no meaning, the prevailing psychotherapeutic approach is, therefore, that the effects of suffering like guilt and rage, have to be eliminated, smoothed over by interpretations that will allow the sufferer to readjust to society. That society itself may be sick, that the sufferer questions his own part in that society, that guilt is a revolutionary force seeking to establish a new world with different norms, higher ideals, are usually not considered.

In short, that suffering has meaning and that the sufferer, even with a heavy load of guilt and self-disgust has dignity, and is heroic, are seldom recognized.

Some researchers (Lifton, 1980; Marcus & Rosenberg, 1988) are beginning to recognize a largely **unconsidered** point in the literature on the survivor's syndrome, namely that of **the creative aspects of guilt**.

Survivor guilt has been much misunderstood, Lifton (1980) believes. Survivor guilt is epitomized by the survivor's question, "Why did I survive while he, she, or they died?" Part of the survivors' sense of horror is the memory of their own inactivation; of their inability to act in a way they would ordinarily have thought appropriate (save people, resist the victimizers, etc.) or even to feel the appropriate emotions (overwhelming rage toward victimizers, profound compassion for victims). "Death guilt begins, then, in **the gap** between that physical and psychic inactivation and what one feels called upon to do and feel" (Lifton, 1980, p. 118).

Berkovits (1973) makes the unusual and refreshing point that there is **dignity** in the sufferings of those Jewish victims who capitulated under the stress, who were unable to obey the dictates of their own conscience, **dictates that were blurred, even obliterated during their ordeals and which only emerged when they were released out of it**.

Reading the reports and studying the documents of the Holocaust, Berkovits (1973) confesses to being unable to visualize how **anyone** could survive even a single day in a Nazi death camp.

All the values of human existence were **deliberately** destroyed. Family ties were torn apart, not only physically, but morally, too. Parenthood was trampled underfoot. Compassion was derided. Whatever a human being ever cherished was degraded. And all this in conditions of ultimate physical misery and wretchedness.

How could human beings endure it **without** losing their senses? How was it possible for them **not** to have broken down and **not** to have lost the last vestiges of their humanity?

Berkovits (1973) points out that there are horrors that we **cannot** deal with without having to desperately defend ourselves against them.

The Function of Psychic Numbing

An unappreciated aspect of the survivor syndrome is that of **psychic numbing** or the diminished capacity to feel. Lifton (1980), who has worked with survivors of Hiroshima and other disasters, report on the common phenomena of "a paralysis of the mind", a dysfunction between perception and emotional response.

I came to recognize psychic numbing as a **necessary** psychological defence against overwhelming images and stimuli. In such extreme situations one is simply **unable** to experience "ordinary" emotional responses and maintain either sanity or anything like adaptive physical and psychic function. (p. 120)

The partial deadening is a way of avoiding actual physical or psychological death. In the Nazi concentration and death camps the severity of the trauma never let up, but continued day after day, month after month, year after year. Inmates were pushed beyond endurance, beyond any means of defending themselves against the relentless pressure. In a great many of the victims, their spirits were crushed. Psychological death **did** occur.

A common sight in the concentration and death camps was that of the "musselman", the person who, though **completely destroyed as a human being**, went on living. Known as "walking corpses" they had regressed to the level of being mere automatons, robot-like creatures, without any personal will or feeling. Nothing mattered to them any more. They had become insensible to everything (Poliakov, 1956).

Musselmann is the German word for Moslem and came into being under the false assumption that Moslems are indifferent to their environment. Levi (1977), a famous survivor, wrote of the musselman: "One hesitates to call them living: one hesitates to call their death death, in the face of which they have no fear, **as they are too tired to understand**" (p. 121).

In the survivor memoir literature, there are no more disturbing, shocking but highly illuminating accounts of the musselman than in the writings of Katzetnik 135633 (the pseudonym of a survivor who chooses to remain unknown) the most famous of these being: Sunrise over Hell (1977).

As there were physical "musselmen", so there were also moral "musselmen", namely, the victim become collaborator, Berkovits (1973) contends. Both were victims of Nazi barbarism, both are beyond condemnation and both should be afforded understanding. "The truth is that any act of cruelty committed by the victims of this inhumanly degrading system against their fellow sufferers was itself a German crime, the greatest of all their crimes, **the crime of dehumanization**" (Berkovits, 1973, p. 79).

The literature on the Holocaust has most often squarely condemned what has been seen as Jewish collaboration during the Nazi era. However, as Frankl (1967) points out: As long as we judge and accuse anyone who, under these terrible circumstances, capitulated or tried to save his own life, we have not arrived at the fundamental truth of the fact that we, being human ourselves, may have acted in exactly the same way. "Whoever wishes to condemn a man as a coward must first prove that in the same situation he himself would have been a hero" (Frankl, 1967, p. 111).

To compare members of the German appointed Jewish ghetto commanders and police or some of the Kapos (SS appointed Jewish camp overseers) to their SS taskmasters, is a sign of insensitivity for the monstrosity of the Nazi crime against the metaphysical status of man, Berkovits (1973) contends. The first form of inhumanity is **unnatural**, the other, the collapse of the human spirit under the maddening blows of unnatural cruelty, **natural** - the natural and direct result of the unnatural.

Guilt as a Factor in Recovery

The emergence of guilt some time after release from the trauma is a sign of **recovery** from the protective numbing of the spirit during the time of incarceration. In a setting that allows the survivor to move out of his protective shell, his spirit can become **revitalized**. He can now allow himself to experience feelings of condemnation for not having done whatever he believes should have been done during the incarcerations (e.g., preventing someone from dying, being more brave or assertive, sacrificing oneself for another, feeling compassion instead of numbness).

Guilt is a reaffirmation of the survivor's morality. Danieli (1988) views it as a restitution of lost human values, as well as a restoration of one's own human image. Both guilt and aggression serve to restore a feeling of justice and security in relation to the world. This is in complete contrast to the denial and rejection of any kind of guilt by the mass murderer and the silently acquiescent world.

Guilt restores a sense of responsibility, a responsibility so vehemently denied by the perpetrators and the bystanders.

Marcus and Rosenberg (1988) point out that these creative aspects of guilt have been totally overlooked and ignored in most post-Freudian thought as well as in the survivor syndrome literature. Psychotherapies with survivors based on the view that guilt and rage are **pathogenic** have, in fact, **assaulted** the survivor's sense of meaning and reality and have proved **counter-productive**. We need to consider more carefully what the survivors are trying to tell us, namely, that their rage is a **legitimate protest against evil** and that their guilt must be experienced to regain a full sense of being **human**.

Both rage and guilt over the evil in this world are healthy and essential aspects of true human dignity. It arouses a heightened sense of responsibility, a keener awareness of the fact that good has to be preserved and cultivated if evil is ever to be overcome and effectively dealt with.

Part of the difficulty with the concept of guilt in the survivor literature is the confusion about the relationship between the psychological and moral components of guilt feelings.

Moral guilt is a **spiritual** matter and involves a sober judgement of wrongdoing, based upon ethical principles and made by an individual (whether or not the transgressor himself), group or community (Lifton, 1980). Most researchers reduce and confuse moral guilt with psychological (super-ego type) guilt, which is an individual sense of badness or evil, with a fear of punishment. This does not permit them to see that guilt can play an important role in the recovery of the survivor, nor do they recognize the profound power of guilt in investing the individual with a sense of deep responsibility.

Heroes of suffering and guilt

There is a heroism in being unable to live in a meaningless world, in the capitulation of a musselman, in the committing of suicide, and in the painful suffering of guilt.

Elie Cohen. An example of the dignity of guilt is to be found in the painfully recorded confessions of a survivor, Dr Elie Cohen (1988) in his book: The Abyss: A Confession.

His Holocaust story starts with his being a transport doctor in Westerbork, a Jewish transit camp in the Netherlands. He at first supplied many false certificates of Jews being "unfit for transport" to save as many as he could from being taken to ominously unknown destinations. Upon being found out and threatened with being transported with his family he, from that moment on, worked "honestly", trying to keep himself and his family safe. But their turn to be sent out of Westerbork came. They discovered the destination of the transports: the concentration and death camps, and for them, Auschwitz. His wife and four year old son were gassed. "My reaction was not one of grief, or despair, or there being no reason for me to carry on any more. No, on the contrary, I fought for my life" (Cohen, 1988, p. xix). He wanted to survive and went as far as assisting the German camp doctor with the selections. He knew that it was a choice between life and death, and he chose life. But, when he was liberated and free from danger, another type of agony imprisoned him: guilt. He confesses: "the price was too high, I besmeared my conscience: I should have drawn the line at my willingness to collaborate. I think that I went across that line" (Cohen, 1988, p. xx). Even though he helped many inmates because of his position, it did not lessen the suffering. But, he turned his survivor's guilt into **survivor responsibility**.

Cohen (1988) researched human behavior in the concentration camp. Published as a book, his medical thesis is dedicated to his "beloved ones, who were killed in Auschwitz". This work is one of the earliest detailed accounts of the general organization of the concentration camps and their medical procedures and a most important document on the subject.

Elie Wiesel. No more profound a document exists on the spiritual struggle of the survivor to maintain his sense of humanity, to retain his values in the face of the onslaught against any sense of meaning, than Elie's Wiesel's (1972) account in his book: Night (its seventh printing).

Brought up as an orthodox Jew, it was the assault on his faith in his Holocaust sufferings that was most keenly felt. He recalls the most terrible of Nazi deeds - to empty truckloads of Jewish babies and toddlers alive into the huge, burning pits of the massgraves - in the following powerful passage:

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky. Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever. Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never. (Wiesel, 1972, p. 44)

Wiesel (1972) tells us how, as a 15-year-old boy, he took tender care of his sick father en route to and within Auschwitz, Buna, and Buchenwald. But when temporarily separated from his father, Wiesel was suddenly horrified at his wish not to find his father: "If only I could get rid of this dead weight, so that I could use all my strength to struggle with my own survival, and only worry about myself" (p. 118). When they were reunited and his father died in his arms, he did not weep and it pained him that **he could not weep**. "But I had no more tears. And, in the depths of my being, **in the recesses of my weakened conscience, could I have searched it**, I might perhaps have found something like - free at last!" (p. 124).

Wiesel (1972) described feeling "ashamed of myself, ashamed forever" (p. 118). The remaining time in camp, after his father's death, was spent in a state of dazed nothingness. A few days after liberation, he fell severely ill with food poisoning. Recovering in hospital, he saw a mirror hanging on the opposite wall. He had not seen himself since the ghetto. Gathering all his strength, he got up. "From the depths of the mirror, a corpse gazed back at me. The look in his eyes, as they stared into mine, has never left me" (p. 127).

It is out of the depths of his own sense of guilt, his own sense of human vulnerability, that a **passionate protest** against what had happened to him, and to countless others like him, living and dead, arose.

Wiesel's voice is a voice of conscience, **a conscience that was trampled upon and bruised in the victim, but a conscience that was absent in the world**. One of the most erudite speakers on the Holocaust, Wiesel is the author of many books and the winner of the French Prix Medici for 1969.

Survivors of the Nazi death camps have been called "collectors of justice"; "angry witnesses against the outrage of the Holocaust" (Braham, 1988, p. 91). Describing this as the survivor's **struggle for meaning**, Lifton (1980) points out that survivors seek something beyond economic or social restitution - something closer to acknowledgement of crimes committed against them and punishment of those responsible - in order to re-establish at least the semblance of a moral universe. "The impulse to bear witness, beginning with a sense of responsibility to the dead, can readily extend into a "survivor mission" - **a lasting commitment to a project that extracts significance from absurdity, vitality from massive death**" (Lifton, 1980, p. 123).

The Unsung Heroes

Research with survivors has accentuated the damage done to the psyche of survivors as a result of the severe trauma survivors were subjected to.

It was not from the research literature, but from survivor testimonies, from oral and written memoirs, that another picture - the inner, more hidden and unscathed world of meaning of the Holocaust victim - emerged.

Most astoundingly, survivor testimonies revealed that there were those in the ghettos, Nazi concentration and death camps, who somehow succeeded in not surrendering their humanity, who, on the contrary, attained to sublime heights of self-sacrificial heroism and dignity of human compassion and charity. **This was the true mystery of the ghettos and death camps**, remarks Berkovits (1973).

The collapse of the human spirit under the crushing and maddening blows of unnatural cruelty, is natural. To remain human in an inhuman world, **this is unnatural.**

Filled with compassion, rather than condemnation, those Nazi concentration and death camp inmates who kept the human spark alive, triumphed over the forces of darkness **on behalf of everyone of the victims in whose wretched lives it had become dimmed and where it had died.** It is exactly in the area of their compassion towards their fellow-sufferers that these heroes of the human spirit stood **in absolute opposition to the Nazi perpetrators of evil.** In the face of Nazi hatred and disdain of the human worth of the victims of their evil system, these exceptionally humane people, wretched victims themselves, shared their starvation diets, cared for the sick, and consoled the bereaved, and tried to encourage the despairing.

"Astonishingly", remarks Rosenbloom (1988), "we find that even in this substratum of existence there were instances of self-sacrifice, fundamental human decency, and altruism" (p. 151).

The recent and still growing body of memoir-literature sharply contradicts the earlier, stereotyped notions about Jews' passivity which brought them like "sheep to the slaughter". Myriads of examples of "resistance" are reflected in recorded acts of courage and altruism, in addition to the many acts of armed resistance in the ghettos and camps. "The writings challenge notions which emphasize regression, selfishness, and dehumanization, and clearly demonstrate that even in death camps prisoners were capable of a wide range of adaptation and humanity" (Rosenbloom, 1988, p. 147).

Under the most brutal conditions many inmates kept diaries, wrote poems, and created art, depicting the reality of a world of agony in the hope that these materials would survive and tell the world what had happened. Engaging in these activities gave some meaning to the suffering and helped in coping with the moral and psychological ordeals to which the inmates were subjected, remarks Rosenbloom (1988, p. 151).

Bettelheim (1961), the psychoanalyst and famous survivor of Dachau camp, had in his earlier work: The Informed Heart, emphasized the infantile and narcissistic behaviours of the Dachau prisoners. In his later book, Surviving (1979), he gave much clearer attention to the fact that those who lived for some ideal, cultural or religious, were able to cope more successfully.

Ian Mitroff (1981), in conclusion of his work The Subjective Side of Science, expresses the view that **"we have developed the kind of science (Apollonism) that knows how to reach the starry heavens**

above (but) we have yet to learn how to develop the kind of science (Dionysian) that knows how to reach the moral law within" (p. 271).

The testimony of survivors was delayed and has been recorded in full only recently, at the closing stages of their lives. Their stories contain rich evidence of the ability to resist, and even overcome, the effects of the horrors they have been subjected to. Before the full facts of the experiences of the survivors through their own testimonies became known, mental health professionals, who had focused only on the pathological aspects of survivor behavior, felt rather confounded when they did come across evidence of the personality strengths of the survivor.

"We have not discussed and cannot answer, why a few came through unscathed.." remarks Lederer in 1965 (p. 472).

In 1971 Antonovsky, trying to explain the fact of the successful adaptation of a not-inconsiderable number of concentration camp survivors, concludes: "We are, of course, aware of the fact that we have hardly begun to explain a mystery which has received so little attention and which merits no less attention than explanations of the breakdowns of survivors" (p. 192).

The adequate adjustment of so many concentration camp survivors has baffled mental health professionals, remarks Fogelman (1988, p. 79).

Very few examples exist in the literature of researchers who have emphasized positive aspects of the survivors and their families (Braham, 1988; Lee, 1988). Research has not been focussed on identifying the adaptive, integrative forces that helped so many survivors rise from the ashes, is the opinion expressed by Rosenbloom (1988). The need for a purpose in life as an effort to master the extreme sorrow and inner chaos resulting from confrontation with the senseless, destructive experiences of the Holocaust, is considered to be a key survivor task, the resolution of which may affect how survivors will cope with the process of aging. This is a hypothesis worth exploring, states Rosenbloom (1985).

Research on the positive aspects of "survivorship" should be encouraged, advises Porter (1981). Psychologists tend to emphasize only the pathological. They should take a cue from Abraham Maslow and begin to balance the picture with case studies of the strengths and self-affirmations of Holocaust survivors. They too often dwell only on the negative.

Research with survivors has mostly been based on clinical case studies and centered on pathological phenomena. Shanan and Sharar (1983) remarked at the beginning of the eighties: "The absence of studies dealing with former concentration camp inmates who did not suffer from particular diseases is striking" (p. 277). They make the illuminating comments that ethical considerations and guilt about "poking" into the past of unfortunate people who had been turned into helpless "objects" in the narrowest sense of the term, and using them as research objects, prevented studies other than with those survivors who had to be psychiatrically evaluated in terms of compensation claims. **Researchers experienced a distinct uneasiness in trying to fit the survivor into the experimental framework of the traditional positivistic research approaches.**

Two most important points emerge from the above review of the literature on survivors of the Holocaust:

- * **Coming from either a psychiatric or psychoanalytic background, researchers have focused only on the physical and psychological dimensions of survivor behavior. They have, therefore, missed to see the spiritual struggles and victories of survivors and have either misinterpreted data from the meaning-dimension of survivors' lives, or have remained perplexed in the face of it.**
- * **Coming from a positivistic research background, many researchers were sensitive enough to realize that a positivistic research approach failed to encompass the full extent of the survivors' sufferings or to give a proper interpretation of what their sufferings meant to them.**

After the close of the Second World War, within the psychiatric and psychological fields, no research approach existed which could do justice to and which could humanely encompass the immense sufferings of Holocaust victims.

A new research approach was called for.

The Hidden Spirit of Man

The concentration cum extermination camps may be considered as gigantic experimental laboratories, Kijak and Funtowicz (1982) observe. As the result of the extreme conditions to which the inmates were exposed, it was possible to see **unknown components of human behavior**, aspects of the psyche about which, until this moment, it was only possible to make conjectures.

The factor which emerged most strongly under the extreme conditions of the Nazi concentration and death camps was the essential meaning orientatedness of human behavior, man's will to meaning.

Stripped of all unessentials, what remained, according to Frankl (1967) was **man himself**, who in the white heat of suffering and pain was melted down to the essentials, to the **human** in himself.

In the Nazi concentration and death camps man was exposed to a force that not only sought to kill him, but which aimed at destroying something more fundamental: **man's humanity**. By a calculated and deliberate destruction of human values of everything that gave meaning to life, the death camp victim was faced with the demonic: **an evil that assailed man's very spirit**, who he was at the very core of his being. **It was man's humanity that was being trampled under foot.**

Evil is an assault on the basic dignity of man.

It is man's fundamental freedom to choose between good and evil; and his temptations, struggles and capitulations in the face of these choices; that the Holocaust laid bare.

The fundamental human struggle between good and evil, around choices, has been a neglected field of study in psychiatry and psychology.

The focus has been on the **peripheral aspects or the psychophysical overlay** of the personality. Research has centered on the **subhuman** dimensions of human existence: on physiological and psychological functionings.

Having to deal with survivors who have been subjected not only to a physical disaster or a psychological stress situation, but who have suffered **an assault on their very persons**, researchers have been faced with a relatively **unknown** (that is, unconsidered and unexplored) area of human behavior: **man's spirit**.

Recognized as an inexplicable area of strength and resilience, **something that could miraculously withstand the massive onslaught on every level of being**, a few sensitive researchers in the field of survivor behavior in the concentration and death camps, have given exciting attention to man's spiritual self.

Kohut (in Ornstein, 1983) distinguished between the bipolar self and nuclear self. The nuclear self is defined as: "the basis for **our sense of being an independent center of initiative and perception, integrated with our most central ambitions and ideals**" (p. 143)". This cohesive and enduring psychic configuration, Kohut believes, forms the central sector of the personality.

Ornstein (1983), studying the aging survivor of the Holocaust, uses Kohut's conceptualization to distinguish between the psychology of survival versus the psychology of recovery. He focuses on the survivors' ability not only to physically survive, but to retain their sense of human and creative abilities, as well as being able to recover from their numerous traumatic experiences. For Ornstein, survivors who were able to recover from their Holocaust experiences, had the capacity to retain a modicum of dignity, to experience the self as continuous in space and time, and to preserve it relatively **intact**.

Rustin (1988) observes that an aspect that contributed to remaining **human** in the face of a dehumanizing process in the Nazi concentration and death camps, was trying to maintain a code of ethics and morality in the most immoral world imaginable.

Des Pres (1976) in his work: The Survivor has provided a most graphic and perceptive account of the inner world of the victims and survivors of the Holocaust. His effort to understand and describe

what other researchers have also observed to be a core aspect in the survivor's ability to resist and overcome the debilitating effects of the Nazi concentration and death camp conditions, has resulted in a most important contribution in our understanding of man's spirit and his will to meaning.

Des Pres (1976) set himself the task to try and understand the capacity of men and women to live beneath the pressure of protracted crisis; to sustain terrible damage in mind and body; and yet be there, **sane, alive, still human**. He observed that living through the degradation of the camps, survivors discovered that in such extreme situations, **a sense of dignity is something that they could not afford to lose**. "Great damage has to be borne, much humiliation suffered. But at some point **a steady resistance to their obliteration as human beings** must be made" (Des Pres, 1976, p. 64). If this particular feeling - **of something inwardly untouchable** - is ruined beyond repair, the will to live dies. This innermost or spiritual core of the personality is, therefore, the very essence of human existence, he concludes. **Without it, man perishes as man**. Des Pres (1976) describes this inner core of the personality as a sense of **dignity**.

If we mean by human dignity an inward resistance to determination by external forces; a sense of innocence and worth, something felt to be inviolate, autonomous and untouchable, and **which is most vigorous when most threatened**, then, as in the survivor's case, we come upon one of the constituents of humanness, one of the irreducible elements of selfhood. (p. 65)

Dignity, in this case, appears as **a self-conscious, self-determining faculty whose function is to insist upon the recognition of itself as such**.

Des Pres (1976) was able to discern depths of meaning in the experiences of concentration and death camps survivors through an approach that was in stark contrast to the experimental approaches used by other researchers in the field. His work took nearly four years, years of reading through vast amounts of eyewitness testimony, of cutting through accepted notions of the camp experience, of informal talk with survivors, and finally, before getting firmly underway, a time of search for a way to set himself in relation to them. "I could not take a stance of detachment, could not be 'clinical' or 'objective' in the way now thought proper. ...I gradually came to see that I would have to stay within the survivor's own perspective" (Des Pres, 1976, p. vi).

The best way to study the experiences of Holocaust survivors was to capture, as sensitively as he knew how, **the meaning** that their experiences held for the survivors themselves. "My job has been to provide a medium through which these scattered voices might issue in one statement" (Des Pres, 1976, p. vi). **The survivor** is the figure who emerged. His book presents a portrait of man in extremity. "That such thoroughly human kinds of behavior were typical in places like Buchenwald and Auschwitz amounts to **a revelation reaching to the foundation of what man is**" (Des Pres, 1976, p. vii).

Des Pres is a sociologist. Another work outside the field of psychology that deserves special mention as an important complement and backdrop to the present study of the meaning of suffering, is the one by Eliczer Berkovits: With God in Hell (1970), a work also based on survivor testimonies, especially those of orthodox Jews. A Jewish theologian and most remarkable thinker, Berkovits looks at the retention and triumph of religious faith during the Holocaust.

Beyond Coping and Hardiness

Within the field of psychology, researchers have tried to explain the peculiarity of man's **spiritual** assets, his ability to go against the tide of conditioning forces and retain his sanity and sense of humanity under circumstances that, to all intents and purposes, should have broken him, as "hardiness". Some men just seem to be equipped with a stronger constitution, greater psychological resistance, more skill in coping with extreme stress.

Psychology is a helping profession. In studying what is interpreted as "coping mechanisms", the aim therefore is to define such coping mechanisms so as to develop them as **techniques** that can be employed to minimize the negative effects of stress.

Working within a strictly physiological (illness) and psychological (stress) framework, man's **spiritual** motivation, his will to meaning, is reduced to the level of a psychological mechanism, as mere psychological device to **escape** or **minimize** stress.

Visotsky, et al. (1961) studied what they called "the coping behavior" of polio-victims and remarked on the surprising resourcefulness of some of the victims and the role hope played in the more "hardy" victims; Hamburg and Adams (1967) tried to answer the question why not everyone broke down under life's common stress periods and situations and what types of "coping behavior" contributed to "favorable outcomes"; Kobasa (1979) found that high stress/low illness executives have a stronger commitment to self, an attitude of vigorousness toward the environment, a sense of meaningfulness and an internal locus of control than the high stress/high illness executives; Billings and Moos (1981) studied the role of coping responses and social resources in attenuating the stress of life events; Kobasa, et al. (1982) tested the hypothesis that hardiness - commitment, control, and challenge - functions to decrease the effect of stressful life events in producing illness symptoms; Kobasa and Puccetti (1983) examined personality, social assets, and perceived social support as moderators of the effects of stressful life events on illness onset; Holahan and Moos (1985, 1986) contrasted a Distressed Group (high stress, high distress) to a Stress Resistant Group (high stress, low distress) and singled out such factors as being easy-going and less inclined to use avoidance coping, having self-confidence, family support as buffers against the potentially negative health effects of life stress.

In the above examples, essentially **spiritual phenomena** have been interpreted as psychological mechanisms within the closed confines of a psychophysical and essentially **subhuman** framework.

Benner, et al. (1980) did a theoretical study on how general theory and research on ordinary life stress and coping might help us think about the special experience of the concentration camp and about the survivors who later successfully established new lives. From their theoretical perspective they concluded that one of the most central coping strategies is to seek meaning in suffering!

Undertaking research with Nazi concentration camp survivors, Dimsdale (1980) set out to prove that truly functional coping behavior not only lessens the immediate impact of stress but also allows the person to maintain some sense of self-worth and unity with his past and anticipated future. He mentions many different coping styles which vary in effectiveness. He sees the differential focus on the good, survival for some purpose, attitudinal mastery, the will to live, mobilization of hope, group affiliation as coping styles alongside such coping styles as psychological removal and denial and null coping (where a victim does nothing but simply surrenders to fate). These latter styles which were typically employed by the musselman in the concentration and death camps.

Rustin (1988), in a similar vein, mentions depersonalization, intellectualization and denial in the same breath as the search for meaning and the will to live, as coping strategies employed by Nazi concentration camp victims. Interestingly, coping strategies involving **meaning** were found to be more effective!

Lee (1988), a survivor herself, convinced that "not enough is known why I and other like me have gone on to lead fulfilling lives" (p. 69), interviewed four other teenage survivors like herself. Using psychoanalytic theory, she investigated the correlation between their ability to feel supported during the horror of incarceration and the inner resources cultivated during earlier childhood experiences in their family environments and concluded that the correlation was positive.

Not studying the phenomenon of meaning nor of suffering per se, some of the above researchers refer to the crucial role that meaning, a purpose in life, may have played during and after the Holocaust in the ability of survivors to have coped during their internment and to have built new lives after their release.

A New Approach in the Study of Survivor Experiences

In a review of the literature on the personality strengths or so-called "hardiness" and the "coping strategies" of Nazi concentration and death camps victims and survivors, we are left with an important question which must be considered.

Can meaning be employed as a coping strategy; can it be developed as a technique to diminish stress?

Frankl (1973) contends that this is **impossible**, since meaning, which is an **end**, is then turned into a mere **means** of reducing stress and tension. To try and use meaning to effect relief from stress, is to put the cart before the horse.

Frankl (1973) contends that true meaning fulfillment, like true morality, begins only when man acts **for the sake of something or someone, but not for his own sake**, that is, for the sake of feeling good (of feeling relieved of stress). Feeling good, or feeling better enabled to cope, (experiencing a reduction of stress) is a natural **effect** or automatic outflow of **finding** and responsibly **fulfilling meaning** (Frankl, 1967).

Moreover, if a man really attempted to gain pleasure (a relief from stress) by making it his target (even trying to employ meaning, if that were possible, to this end) **he would necessarily fail**, for he would miss what he had aimed at (Frankl, 1973).

The more we try to eliminate stress (our aim), the more stressed we would feel (miss our aim). **The aim is wrong.** Should we, however, become sensitive to what a particular situation is requiring of us and realize its unique meaning through our responsible or right actions, we would experience a sense of mastery over whatever caused us stress. **Meaning was our aim, however, not the effort to relieve stress and to use whatever means or techniques to get ourselves out of our predicaments or sufferings.**

It is important to realize therefore that **we cannot conjure up meaning, that is, invent it or bring it about**, any more than we can conjure up hope, force ourselves to have faith, or make ourselves feel love for someone. Spiritual phenomena are **found, discovered, or realized** in the face of something or someone **other than ourselves** (Frankl, 1973).

We **encounter** meaning, just like we have a meaningful encounter with someone. **It is impossible to experience the pleasant and uplifting and self-transcending (tension reducing) effects which we experience as a result of a meaningful encounter without such an encounter!** "A person's will to meaning can only be elicited if meaning itself can be elucidated as something which is **essentially more than his mere self-expression**" (Frankl, 1973, p. 16).

It follows that **if a person is totally focussed only on dealing with stress in order to somehow get rid of it, his suffering (stress) has no meaning.**

Dimsdale (1980) aptly described "coping" as having connotations similar to the concept of **defence mechanisms**. It includes a broad range of actions the person can **use** to help vitiate the impact of stress. The paradox is clear: **we cannot employ "meaning" as a way of defending ourselves against the stress of suffering.** To do so, would mean to cancel out the possibility of **finding** the meaning of our sufferings. Our sufferings would remain **meaningless!**

The accent in the literature on survivor behavior is on the psychic condition of man, not on the world of potential meaning and values which address the person and are waiting to be fulfilled and actualized by him.

Misinterpreting **meaning-effects**, the beneficial influences of having found and experienced meaning, and trying to formulate these as psychological coping mechanisms, results in the loss of the objective nature of meaning as it is presented to us in the real events and situations of our lives, **particularly during times of suffering.** We are left, not with meaning, but only with our futile efforts to avoid stress. The objects in the world (other people, tasks and causes, the hidden meanings of the situations

we are faced with) are no longer seen in their objective essence but, instead, only as more or less useful tools for the maintenance of homeostasis.

Frankl (1973) maintains that an adequate view of man can only be properly formulated when it goes **beyond homeostasis**, to that sphere of human existence in which man chooses what he will do and what he will be in the midst of an objective world of meanings and values.

A Concluding Statement of Research Intentions

In our own study with Holocaust survivors, our aim will be to elucidate the higher reaches of human existence. What will come under consideration, is what Terry (1984) tried to describe as **the maturity** of the psychic apparatus as he observed the unusual inner strengths of some of the Holocaust victims. The victims seemed to have emerged from their sufferings, not only inwardly unscathed, but stronger, more mature. Paradoxically, they seemed to have **grown**, become more admirably **human**, as a result of their sufferings. "One meets people out of those hells who survived and who have a dignity and serenity and even a hope far beyond the average. They carried something inside them that remained undamaged" (Terry, 1984, p. 151). That is not to say that these survivors of the Holocaust were not affected by what they endured and witnessed, but **their sufferings seemed to have given them unique wisdom, a keen appreciation of freedom and of life, a depth of maturity that few others possess**. "In short, not everything in everyone was damaged" (Terry, 1985, p. 151).

In the next two chapters we will explore the research approach best suited to study the "maturity of the psychic apparatus" (Terry, 1984).

CHAPTER 13

THE QUEST FOR A HUMAN SCIENCE

In order to clarify the use of a "new paradigm" research approach in the present study, a brief overview of the development of research approaches in the human sciences, is provided.

The evolution of research approaches in psychology runs exactly parallel to the evolution of the views of man which we have traced over the history of psychology and not surprisingly so, since one is the outflow of the other. There is a basic belief system, a specific set of assumptions, a certain **paradigm**, behind a particular way of practising science.

The Methodology of Radical BehaviorismMan as an Object of Experimentation

In seeking the more exact knowledge of the up and coming natural sciences, psychology, for the first period of its history, turned against its philosophical past. The elusive inner world of personal experience was ruled out of scientific bounds by its earliest proponents. Only the observable and quantifiable behavior of man was deemed worthy of scientific consideration.

In emulating the research method of the natural sciences, the natural scientific psychologist strove to subject his own subject of study: man, to the strict rigor of the scientific experiment. Human freedom and dignity had to be taken hostage as man was turned into an object of experimental study. Complex behavioral patterns had to be reduced to its simplest components. These components had to be further stripped of their imbeddedness in the thoughts, feelings and will of the acting person. The human element was even more effectively removed by way of animal studies which could be more easily done within the prescribed confines of a controlled laboratory situation. Facts began to be accumulated that could be built into theories.

Once the research stand of radical behaviorism turned into a theory of man, an illusion started operating, namely, that **only that which can be measured is real**. What began as a reaction against the metaphysical, ended as a proclamation that only the physical exists.

This scepticism of a reality beyond the proven facts of science has conditioned the mind of modern man - in the words of Polanyi (1968):

The history of rationalism and science is marked by an intensive striving to separate faith and reason. Once separated, it is normal to imagine that we only know what can be documented with empirical evidence. Yet we often know more than we can tell, let alone document. (p. 29)

Man as the Servant of Science

The rigorous requirement for quantification as a demonstration that any psychological research

is genuinely scientific, has exercised a stranglehold on psychology in the first half of this century. Neopositivism continues this persuasive or intimidating influence, judging by the fact that our scientific journals still abound in studies of isolated variables and their covariation with other isolated variables. Scientific methodology often fades into "methodolatry", Mahoney (1981) remarks. The state of our knowledge is frequently presented in scoreboard tallies of significant and insignificant outcomes.

The traditional research approach vigorously insists that the research accent remain on the rational, the logical, that which can be explained and "proved" experimentally. Research attempts venturing beyond the strictly guarded boundaries of the exact sciences are discredited. This autocratic stance of the orthodox behaviorist is reflected in his research approach.

In the traditional psychological research situation it is the experimenter who creates the boundaries of the experimental situation, and it is the subjects who participate in it without being allowed to contribute to its definition in terms of their experience.

The traditional experimental situation is **a-contextual and a-temporal**. Neither the subject nor the experimenter enters the experimental situation with a history or with an intention (Romanyshun, 1971). Without the context of their respective histories and intentions, the events which occur in the experimental situation are cut off from the events which occur outside of it. The focus is on a **factual bit** of functioning, irrespective of how the research subject may be experiencing it. The research participant's interpretation of what is happening inside the experimental situation, what is being required of him, how his responses will be used and for what, his opinion of the worth and validity of the experiment and his impressions of the experimenter, are variables the experimenter seeks to control (eliminate as influences upon the experiment).

The traditional experimental situation is therefore strictly **a-personal**. The methodological depersonalization which occurs in the name of objectivity also applies to the experimenter who, along with the subject, remains outside of the experimental task (Guba & Lincoln, 1990). Keeping himself and the research subject **outside** the experimental situation in an effort to control their possible contaminating influences upon the variable under experimental surveillance, both are rendered **inoperative**, made subject to the technique of experimentation. The tool of research is thereby tacitly empowered to the extent that it **subjugates** rather than serves its user (Mahoney, 1981).

The Counter-revolution of Science

The popularity of behavioral approaches reached a plateau between 1980 and 1986. The models of behaviorism have since the 1950s, been in the throes of dramatic revision.

Hayek (1951) wrote a book entitled: The counter-revolution of science to refer to the many challenges to some of the foundational assumptions of environmental determinism which were beginning to be expressed.

The paradigmatic critique of the empiricist epistemology by Kuhn (1970) in his work The structure of scientific revolutions, brought the traditional view of science under greater scrutiny. Kuhn made clear that observations were not "given", but were profoundly shaped by the observer's preconceptions and theoretical notions (paradigm). Since what the traditional scientist has given out as

the "truth" about man and his world could be questioned as theoretically biased, alternative ways of approaching man could be considered much more freely.

Mahoney (1989) notes that the following:

Changes within the behavioristic ranks itself have become increasingly apparent: a shift away from "justificational" (authority-based) epistemologies and toward nonjustificational (more open or critical) epistemologies; there has also been a shift away from passive and predominantly sensory/storage models of cognition toward **proactive** and motoric/process models; there has further occurred a shift away from presuming a discrete, static boundary between man and environment in favor of more fluid and dynamic regions and processes of demarcation; finally, there is an increasing recognition that the knower/observer cannot be removed from either the process or the product of knowing.

The Psychoanalytic Plunge into the Subjective Nature of Man

Moving from physiology to psychology, Freud's psychoanalytic approach to and study of man became profoundly subjective. "To be tied down to exactitude and precise measurement was not in his nature. On the contrary, it conflicted with certain revolutionary tendencies that would burst the bonds of conventions and accepted definitions", his biographer Jones (1967, p. 62), remarked about him.

Freud's psychoanalytic way of working was in many ways profoundly **phenomenological**. He sensitively worked his way into the inner life of his patients; contemplated his observations for hours, even days and months, waiting for the hidden meanings to dawn on him.

His years of self-analysis was a **heuristic** compliment to his phenomenological method of enquiry. Entering into the hidden depths of his own psyche, he supplemented the findings he had gained through the analysis of his patients, by the illuminations he had about his own psyche.

The tradition of clinical exploration, starting with the depth-psychology of Freud, is one of the forebearers of new paradigm research.

Particularly important for the new paradigm research method is the knowledge gained about the workings of the unconscious, and the way in which unconscious forces affect the investigator as well as the investigated (Reason & Rowan, 1981).

The Humanistic Revolution in Science

A much more open break with the paradigms of naturalistic and positivistic research orientations of the past, is to be found in the view of science held by the humanists. Maslow and Rogers particularly, were enthused with the faith that a **humanistic** science in the true sense of the word was possible.

Rogers (1959) wrote:

There is a rather widespread feeling in our group that the logical positivism in which we were professionally reared is not necessarily the final philosophical word in an area in which the phenomenon of subjectivity plays such a vital and central part. .. **Is there some view, possibly developing out of an existentialist orientation, which might find more room for the existing subjective person?**
(p. 251)

As the group of humanists challenged the traditional view, pointing out the need for new models of science **more appropriate to human beings**, they felt like David challenging Goliath - "a small voice of protest against a massive and solid system" (Rogers, 1985, p. 10). The voice of protest grew, however.

Humanists objected to the mindless empiricism of much psychological experimentation. The Newtonian model of science, they contended, made most psychologists small-caliber scientists, involved only with the simplest problems in the science of man.

There was a need for a personal, dedicated search of a disciplined, **open-minded** individual instead of the uninvolved aloofness of the natural scientific psychologist, if new knowledge is to be gained in the behavioral sciences (Rogers, 1985).

Oversimplification brings discredit upon science, was Allport's belief. Allport (1966) pointed out that the areas of **normaleky, meaning, vision and future-directedness** were left untouched by traditional psychologists.

Maslow (1964) believed it possible to develop "a suitably enlarged science" that will be able to encompass the psychology of the higher life. Psychologists must guard against premature closure in their conceptions of human nature, he urged. "The best way to define a psychologist is not one who knows the answers, but rather one who struggles with the questions" (p. 4).

We need a science with a far wider jurisdiction than it had within the traditional frameworks that have tried to be value-neutral and value-free. We need to enlarge our conception of objectivity to include not only spectator knowledge but also experiential knowledge, knowledge by participation, the deeper knowledge of what we together uniquely share as **humans** (Maslow, 1972).

New Paradigm Research

An Objectively Subjective Approach

The more thought-out stance of humanistic psychology towards human beings, their experience, actions and potential, has unleashed a spate of qualitative research endeavors in the field of psychology.

A "new paradigm" for research has in fact emerged, a paradigm which is being developed by all sorts of people in all sorts of fields all over the world. In 1977 researchers in London, known as the New Paradigm Research Group, sought to compile a handbook of new paradigm research approaches.

Opposing themselves specifically to orthodox research approaches in psychology, an approach was formulated which, in the words of Reason and Rowan (1981), does justice to the **humanness** of all those involved in the research endeavor.

In contrast to the extreme objectivism of the orthodox research approaches, and at the other extreme, the extreme subjectivism of psychoanalytic research endeavors, new paradigm research aims to be **objectively subjective**.

The old paradigm approach regarded certain kinds of research as "soft" (loose-construing, qualitative, hypothesis-generating, informal, discovery-oriented aspects of research) and as fit only for preliminary pilot work. It was loose and subjective. The real research was regarded as "hard" research, objective, tight and quantitative. New paradigm researchers contend that beyond this one-sided objectivity there is the possibility of a new kind of tight and rigorous synthesis of subjectivity and objectivity, which they describe as: **a new rigor of softness**. "What we are building in new paradigm research is an approach to inquiry which is a systematic, rigorous search for truth, but which does not kill off all it touches" (Reason & Rowan, 1981, p. xiii).

Consisting of many and varied research approaches, new paradigm research is beginning to impact strongly on our old views of what is scientific in the field of psychology and what is not.

What is changing, in fact, is our understanding of our subject of study, namely, man.

A new research manifesto

Old paradigm research, from the earliest days of the experimental pioneers, stipulated that psychology be adequate to science. The veneration of the natural scientific method outweighed the commitment that **psychological research be adequate to man** (Manicas & Secord, 1983). Humanistic psychologists, by contrast, insist that **science was made for man, rather than man for science** (Rogers, 1985). **Humanistic science is science in the grasp of men, not men in the grasp of science** (Kelly, 1969).

In seeking a science that will serve humankind, a psychology showing how men transcend and grow beyond the pressures of conditioning is needed (Jourard, 1968). The whole thrust of new paradigm research is to produce the kind of **active knowing** which will preserve and enhance the human capacity for self-awareness, for autonomous, self-directed action within a world that can be changed for the better (Reason & Rowan, 1981).

In their new paradigm research manifesto, Reason and Rowan (1981) state that, contrary to old paradigm belief, research can never be neutral. It is always supporting or questioning social forces, both by its content and by its method. It has effects and side-effects, and these benefit or harm people. What new paradigm researchers contend for most of all, is awareness of what is being done to self and others, and of what follows from that - both meant and unmeant. The outcome of research is knowledge. Knowledge is power. The wrong kind of research gives the wrong kind of power. The right kind of research gives the right kind of power.

As humanistic psychologists and new paradigm researchers, we are participants in one of the most challenging periods of psychology, Mahoney (1981) points out: "Psychology has now entered a realm of responsibility that we cannot afford to abuse or ignore" (p. 258).

Moving away from the old paradigm research position of autocratic control, new paradigm research seeks to establish a **meaningful dialogue**, a new democracy, between the investigator, the informant and the data, a position that questions conventional notions of validity (Taylor, 1990).

The Research Participant as Co-researcher

In the traditional framework of research, the subject is used for the purposes of the experiment. What the subject thinks about the experiment, belongs to the realm of the subjective and has nothing to do with the objective matter at hand. However, too often it turns out that the experiment the psychologist thinks is being performed is not the one in which the subject is engaged!

To look only at "behaviors" is to lose sight of man, Kelly (1969) states. To dismiss as "too unreliable" what the subject has to say about what he believed was at stake in the experiment undertaken, is to remain willfully ignorant of the experimentation that was actually performed.

The new paradigm researcher regards the subject as a research **participant**, a **co-researcher**. Behavior is not regarded as "object-like" but as **intentional**. The subject forms intelligent impressions of what is taking place or is at stake in the experimental situation, and responds according to these impressions, not to the experimental stimuli he or she is being subjected to. The subject's full co-operation or co-working is therefore necessary if the outcome of the research is to be valid. The humanistic psychologist will therefore make the most of what those are enlisted to help in the research have to say (Kelly, 1969).

It can be expected that the experimental psychologist with a quantitative research approach will be given easy access by the research participants to the peripheral aspects of their humanness, that is, to those aspects from which they can easily distance themselves and do not feel all that serious about (e.g. the type of information gained by opinion polls or market research). This, however, is not the case as far as deeper or core issues are concerned. Relating to what the person essentially is, these aspects of their humanness are highly personal and private and, therefore, **not** accessible to casual enquiry by an impersonal outsider. To study these deeper lying issues of human existence, a **research relationship** has to be developed.

The researcher has to gain the confidence and trust of the research participants. "People will disclose their aims and the ways they construe the world only to those whom they have reason to trust", Jourard (1968, p. 219) points out.

The new paradigm research approach is therefore **person-centered**. Maslow (1981) contended that "if you prod people like things, they won't let you know them" (p. 13), or in the words of Tillich (1961): "Every human being is an absolute limit, an unpiercable wall of resistance against any attempt to make him into an object" (p. 15).

To be able to gain a valid picture of the personal experiences or inner perceptions of the research participant, the humanistic researcher has to create the research conditions which are optimal for the revelation of the **person** of his or her research participant. The conditions which are optimal for the full involvement of our humanness, Rogers (1974) contended, are those of unconditional positive regard. Within such a research framework, the research participant can be expected to be genuinely himself and to give a real, undistorted, and therefore valid picture of his experiences.

To be able to engage the research participant in a full and authentic way also means, however, that the researcher must engage in the research process as a person. The researcher's involvement must be real, his or her motives and intentions, transparent.

The Researcher as Participant in his own Research

In his paper: Humanistic methodology in psychological research, Kelly (1969) stated that to the full extent that he is capable, researchers should experience what their subjects experience. The researcher is not outside the research process, but **part of** it. Researchers have to reveal to the research participants the kind of persons they are, what they understand and what they do not. They share their understanding and check things out. In humanistic research there is a **democratic co-involvement of the researcher in the research process**.

The researcher's sensitive appraisal of and co-operation with his research participants allow the research participants to set the pace and to lead the way. They are the people, after all, who are the authorities on what they have experienced. The researcher is in fact **dependent** upon the research participants to lead him or her into their experiences.

In humanistic research the research is as good as the fundamental grasp of the researcher; as his or her understanding of the intricacies of the phenomenon of the research. There is much to be said for a research strategy that insists on the psychologist having a **first-hand clinical understanding** of what is to be investigated (Kelly, 1969).

The Sovereignty of the Phenomenon of Investigation

A final point of consideration is that, as new paradigm researchers, we are involved in an even deeper level of democracy than a greater equalization of roles between researcher and research participant. **This deeper democracy is revealed in a respect towards the phenomenon of research itself.**

The humanistic researcher, working with data on the uniquely human plane, acknowledges the fact that the data is **beyond** manipulation. Rogers (1985), as a phenomenologist, stated that we must let go of the omnipotence of control and gain **the true mastery of commitment to the truth that is bigger than ourselves.**

Life, and its manifold meanings, cannot be known through "calculative thinking" but only through "meditative thinking" (Warren, 1989a, p. 295), or as Frankl (1967) so graphically describes it:

Meaning necessarily transcends man and his rational processes. It is rather accessible to **an act of commitment** which emerges out of the depth and center of man's personality and is thus rooted in his total existence. What we have to deal with is not an intellectual or rational process, but a wholly existential act. (p. 57)

A researcher's attitude towards the phenomenon of study on this level of being is therefore rightly one of **awe**. Life's meanings escapes the cold light of reason and are accessible only through an act of faith: an openness of belief in the existence of spiritual realities; a ready-mindedness to experience what the researcher acknowledges transcends any effort to control, manipulate, dissect and rationally explain or experimentally prove as "factual". Meanings are, in a sense, **sovereign**. They have an existence outside of the individual person experiencing them at any given moment of time. The moment any experimenter tries to take them out of their unique context or spiritual sphere, they are lost. Meanings and values cannot be "pulled down" and placed in little categories of man's storehouse of usable knowledge.

The new paradigm researcher, granting the phenomena of human experience their **rightful** place, namely as beyond sensory knowing and human manipulation, leaves the experimental scientist's seat of autocratic control, and assumes a more dependent posture towards the phenomena of study. The phenomena are, in fact, allowed full say.

The most basic value of phenomenological psychology, asserts Keen (1975), is that **it opens our eyes and our minds to lived experience.**

All new paradigm research methodologies stress the importance of an openness and receptivity to the phenomenon of research. In every one of them, periods of intense **immersion into the data** forms an integral part of the research process (Kelly, 1969; Kruger, 1979; Moustakas, 1990). The data is brooded over, reflected upon until it "makes sense" and key ideas and themes flow from it, until in fact, **the meaning** of the phenomenon is grasped.

The humanistic researcher relinquishes control over the research data and does not try to manipulate it according to theoretical expectations or pre-set hypotheses about the data.

Douglas and Moustakas (1985) refer to a feeling of lostness and of letting go, a kind of being wide open in surrender to the thing in itself, a recognition that one must relinquish control and be tumbled about with the newness and drama of a searching focus that is taking over. This surrender to what Rogers (1964) referred to as a **truth bigger than ourselves**, frightens some researchers and they protest that it endangers their "scientific objectivity" (Kelly, 1969). In the earlier stages, vague and formless wanderings are indeed characteristic in the earlier stages of an **indwelling** in the data, but a growing sense of meaning and direction emerges as the perceptions and understanding of the researcher grow (Douglas & Moustakas, 1985). What is required in a new paradigm research approach, state Reason and Rowan (1981), is a new rigour of softness which involves an ever more refined insight into the very ground, essence or meaning of some aspect of life.

How the researcher should go about letting the phenomenon disclose its nature, meaning and essence is dictated by the phenomenon itself. "The phenomenological method is itself phenomenologically derived", says Nathanson (in Kruger, 1979, p. 124). Each research process unfolds in its own way (Moustakas, 1990).

Polkinghorne (1982) concluded that a getting on with the development of a **science without certainty**, a science that deepens our understanding of human existence, is called for.

Smug certainties are upended and arrogant dogmatisms overthrown, stated Kelly (1955), in an approach which acknowledges that **truth is ever ahead of us**. Working within a paradigm in which "truth" is not restricted to what can be "objectively verified", but where the paradigm remains **open-ended**, challenges us to think imaginatively and innovatively, to search for answers **beyond** the obvious and the ordinary.

Bugental (1965) in his work: The search for authenticity, expresses the stance of new paradigm researchers: "I am not content to see man as mechanism or robot, as animal or organism" (p. 20).

In summarizing what the new paradigm psychology has meant to him, Bugental (1965) used one phrase: **It restores our divinity**, then adds:

It restores man to his central place in man's own experience and grants us the possibility of realising our fondest and most extreme imaginings about the human condition, **if only we will have the courage and perseverance to see them through.** (p. 20)

From the foregoing discussions it becomes clear that a new paradigm research approach is most suited to the phenomena that will be researched in the present study.

CHAPTER 14

THE HEURISTIC METHOD OF RESEARCH

Heuristic Inquiry: The Internal Search to Know

The heuristic method is one of the new paradigm research methods and the one employed in the present study. Heuristics as a philosophical and conceptual orientation, contains key ideas drawn from existentialism and phenomenology, movements we have discussed in Chapter 8.

Heuristics can be defined as a passionate and discerning personal involvement in problem solving, **an effort to know the essence of some aspect of life through the internal pathways of the self** (Douglas & Moustakas, 1985). It is a disciplined but intuitive search that explores, by every possible subjective means, the essence of personal experience (Rogers, 1985).

Our aim is to awaken and inspire researchers to make contact with and respect their own questions and problems, to suggest a process that affirms imagination, intuition, self-reflection, and the tacit dimension as **valid ways in the search for knowledge and understanding**. (Douglas & Moustakas, 1985, p. 40)

The word heuristic comes from the Greek word, *heuretikos*, meaning "I find", and is related to the familiar "eureka". **The power of heuristic inquiry lies in its potential for disclosing truth**. Through rigor and disciplined commitment, one follows the subjective **past ordinary levels of awareness**. Self-search, self-dialogue, indwelling, and intuition are **openings toward the illumination and explication of problems, questions, and human concerns** (Moustakas, 1990). From the initial immersion into a topic, the heuristic researcher enters into dialogue with others to further illuminate and clarify the phenomenon of study and to **deepen and extend his or her awareness of the meaning of the phenomenon**. The researcher must remain with the search relentlessly in order to root out its meanings completely (Douglas & Moustakas, 1985).

Contrasting heuristic research with the traditional paradigm, Douglas and Moustakas (1985) note that while empirical studies presuppose the actuality of cause and effect, heuristic inquiry challenges the scientist to uncover and disclose **that which is, as it is**. The object is not to prove or disprove the influence of one thing on another, but rather to discover the nature of the problem or phenomenon itself and to explicate it **as it exists in human experience**. Heuristics is concerned with meanings, not measurements; with essence, not appearance; with quality, not quantity; with experience, not behavior.

The focus in a heuristic quest is on re-creation of the lived experience, on full and complete depictions of the experience from the frame of reference of the experiencing person.

The Criteria of Heuristic Research

Recognizing the subjective as an essential element of truth, heuristic research has much in common with phenomenological research. Douglas and Moustakas (1985) draw the following distinctions between phenomenology and heuristics:

Phenomenological research is the study of ordinary, everyday phenomena. Through disciplined focus on the structure of experience (e.g. time, space, materiality, causality, interpersonal factors), the phenomenological investigation attempts to reveal the actual nature and meaning of an event, perception, or occurrence, just as it appears. Rigorous analysis transforms the subjective data (in the form of direct reports and observations) into objective accounts of reality. This requires an initial stepping back from the various suppositions and prior beliefs that the researcher holds. In other words, analysis of data must be unbiased. Phenomenological reduction (analysis) is complete when themes or patterns have been distilled from the data and when the essence of a phenomenon is fully disclosed through textural and structural descriptions.

Heuristics also moves toward revelation of meaning and involves disciplined scrutiny of the data. However, whereas phenomenology encourages a kind of detachment from the phenomenon being investigated, **heuristics emphasizes connectedness and relationship**. Whereas phenomenology permits the researcher to conclude with definite descriptions of the structures of experience, **heuristics leads to depiction of essential meaning and portrayal of the intrigue and personal significance that imbue the search to know**. Whereas phenomenological research generally concludes with a presentation of the distilled structures of experience, **heuristics may involve reintegration of derived knowledge that itself is an act of creative discovery, a synthesis that includes intuition and tacit understanding**. Whereas phenomenology loses the persons in the process of descriptive analysis, **in heuristics the research participants remain visible in the examination of the data and continue to be portrayed as whole persons**. Phenomenology ends with the essence of experience; **heuristics retains the essence of the person in experience** (Douglas & Moustakas, 1985).

However, there is much overlap in the research process between these otherwise two distinct methods of research.

The Heuristic Research Process

Engaged in real life, the heuristic researcher is involved in a process. "The steps of heuristic inquiry unfold spontaneously, yet they are guided by a desire to illuminate the phenomenon" (Douglas & Moustakas, 1985, p. 45).

The Preparatory Phase: The Refinement of the Researcher as Research Instrument

The heuristic researcher, duly recognizing that we can only know the nature of phenomena as we subjectively experience them, seeks a **maximum openness towards the phenomenon in question**. Seeking a truly experiential grasp of a phenomenon, the researcher will seek to heighten his or her

awareness of the phenomenon by a **sensitive contemplation** of the researcher's own experience of the phenomenon. The researcher's openness in searching into the problem will lead to a study of whatever can be found on the phenomenon, whether it be in literature, in a dialogue with others about their experiences, and even if this involves visits to places and institutions connected with the phenomenon in question. The researcher will record his or her own thoughts and impressions, and contemplate the thoughts and impressions of others.

The study of the literature is more to **raise questions** than to find answers.

The focus at these initial stages is on achieving a preparedness of mind, a maximal receptivity to the phenomenon that the researcher is going to research.

Deepening into a **pre-reflective**, more subjective dimension of knowing, the researcher draws upon perceptual powers which allows him or her a grasp beyond the known, the expected, or the merely possible (Douglas & Moustakas, 1985).

The first phase of heuristic research is, therefore, to awaken to the question by a clearing of the blockages and distortions of preconceptions, and by an intentional readiness and determination (commitment) to discover a fundamental truth regarding the meaning and essence of the phenomenon to be researched.

The Formulation of the Research Question

Through a process of watching, listening, and participating through observation, conversation and discussion, the heuristic researcher seeks to become more closely attuned to the phenomenon (Douglas & Moustakas, 1985).

When the phenomenon begins to formulate itself clearly in the researcher's own mind, or when a field of doing research opens up to the researcher and he or she feels drawn or invited into it, the researcher is ready to launch into the research. A research agreement has been reached, as it were. The researcher feels presented with a definite task to research. The moment the researcher is committed to the task, he or she is set on a course **where the phenomenon itself will draw the researcher into a discovery of its essence and nature.** "Discovering a significant problem or question that will hold the wondering gaze and the passionate commitment of the researcher is the essential opening of the heuristic process. It means finding a path" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 176).

Eliciting the Co-operation of Research Participants and Aid of Mentors

Research participants are selected on the basis of their first-hand experience of the phenomenon in question. Their ability to articulate the experience; their cooperation, interest, willingness to make the commitment; enthusiasm; and degree of involvement; are primary considerations in the choice of research participants (Moustakas, 1990).

A firm research agreement is necessary which includes time commitments, place, confidentiality, informed consent, opportunities for feedback, permission to tape-record, permission to use material in a thesis, dissertation and/or other publications, and the co-operation of participants in the verification of the

findings (Moustakas, 1990).

An important component of heuristic research is for the researcher to have access to **the regular appraisals of research mentors**, those involved enough with the process to help the researcher establish what is happening at any particular point of the research, to gain clearer perspective and to help him or her stay on course. Reason and Rowan (1981) contends that valid research cannot be conducted alone.

"There is always a need in research for colleagues, peers, mentors, friends willing to act as enemies **who can challenge and shock one out of habitual ways of thinking and experiencing**" (p. 247) .

The perceptions of research participants at each important juncture of the research process, are also invaluable (Kelly, 1969).

The Heuristic Interview or Research Session

The core of the research process, if research participants are involved, is the interview or research session. The heart of the heuristic interview is **dialogue** (Moustakas, 1990).

A climate that will encourage trust, openness, and self-disclosure, is all dependent upon the relationship that the researcher has succeeded in establishing with the research participants. **The establishment of this relationship may take some time**, depending on the nature of what the research participants are expected to share with the researcher.

An informal conversational approach is employed in which **both** researcher and research participant enter into the process fully. While an important emphasis remains with explication of the world of the research participant, the dynamics of the interviewer are explicitly part of the process (Reason & Rowan, 1981).

The data generated is dependent upon **accurate empathic listening**; being open to oneself and the research participant; being flexible and free to vary procedures to respond to what is required in the flow of dialogue. The aim is to encourage expression, elucidation, and disclosure of the experience being investigated (Moustakas, 1990).

The Time Frame of Heuristic Research

The time frame of heuristic research is fluid. Ideas explored on one occasion may be temporarily laid aside, only to be re-examined in a changed context later.

Heuristic research is rooted in experiential time, not clock time, and works its way towards a natural closing (Moustakas, 1990) or saturation point (Reason & Rowan, 1981). This applies both to the length of a single interview and to a closure of the interviewing period itself, as well as to how many research participants will be involved.

Working from the basis of one participant, the researcher expands the inquiry through the experiences of other participants until the researcher feels that a point of understanding has been reached. **Further investigation with more participants would take the process beyond its natural closure or saturation point.** This most often means that the heuristic researcher cannot decide beforehand how many

research participants will be involved in the research process.

The Study of the Data: Gaining an Intuitive, Holistic Grasp

The data consists of the transcriptions of the tape-recorded interviews; the notes made following each interview as to what the researcher felt transpired during the interview; plus any supplementary data, such as personal documents, which add additional depth and meaning to the experiences of the research participants.

The data is organized by the researcher or brought together in a way that allows the researcher to peruse the experiences and life-worlds of each research participant.

The focus is on the research participant's experience of the phenomenon under consideration.

Using an approach which Husserl called the *epoche*, the researcher "puts the world between brackets", holding every interfering thought or value judgement in suspension as the phenomenon is allowed to fully be.

With this method, observation is greatly enhanced: the less apparent elements of phenomena manifest themselves with increasing richness and variety, with finer gradations of clarity and obscurity, and eventually previously unnoticed structures of phenomena may become apparent. (May, 1958, p. 96)

Taylor (1990) refers to the ontological experience of seeing things stand out as significant over and above the surrounding phenomena. Kelly (1955), in his clinical interpretations, spoke about identifying those sentences that stand out with "painful clarity" (p. 329).

A network of themes slowly begin to emerge along with sometimes sudden flashes of insight into some area the researcher may have pondered over.

The process involved is what has been referred to as the hermeneutic circle:

Instead of a single cycle of data collection, there need to be multiple cycles, where the theory, concepts, and categories are progressively extended and refined, differentiated and integrated, reaching towards a theoretical saturation. This is a rigour of clarity, accuracy, and precision. (Reason & Rowan, 1981, p. 249)

If, for example, one is interested in descriptive research, one can start with crude and obvious categories and cycle towards ever more subtle distinctions or, if one is interested in discovering meaning, one can start from initial interpretations and move towards deeper insights (Reason & Rowan, 1981).

When the data analysis is properly located in the hermeneutical circle, it becomes an openminded, highly interactive process, oscillating between concentration on the original data and an overview of the data via the analysis (Taylor, 1990). The process of unfolding understanding (the hermeneutical circle) involves **an interpretation and reinterpretation of the facts as the researcher goes over the data again and again**, involving the research participants and co-researchers for a clarification of issues whenever the need arises.

The process is one in which the researcher's presuppositions are continually being corrected and his or her understanding deepened by an ever more refined grasp of the data.

The Phase of Explication

Having gained an intuitive holistic grasp of the data, the heuristic researcher again reviews all the material derived from **one specific individual**, perhaps a participant whom the researcher feels most clearly launches him or her into the process of understanding the phenomenon. Taking notes, the researcher identifies the qualities and themes which have emerged from the data. Using these themes, the researcher is enabled to construct an individual depiction of the experience of the phenomenon. The individual depiction retains the language of the research participant. This individual depiction is contrasted with the original data from which it was taken to ensure that it fits the original holistic picture.

The individual depiction may also be shared with the research participant for affirmation of its comprehensiveness and accuracy, and for suggestions for deletion and addition (Moustakas, 1990).

The same course is taken in the organization and analysis of the data for each research participant.

From the individual depictions, after the researcher again enters into an immersion process to understand the "universal" qualities and themes of the experience, a composite depiction of the experience is constructed. "The composite depiction should be vivid, accurate, alive, and clear and should encompass the core qualities and themes inherent in the experience" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 185).

Moustakas (1990) suggests the compiling of exemplary portraits of individual research participants who most clearly exemplify the group as a whole, or which can serve to highlight unique perspectives of the same phenomenon. These portraits are compiled from the individual depictions and whatever other data on the individual that the researcher deems relevant.

The individual portraits should be presented in such a way that both the phenomenon investigated and the individual persons emerge as real.

A Creative Synthesis

Noting this as a final step of the heuristic research process, Moustakas (1990) suggests a wide range of freedom in characterizing the phenomenon. It entails an original integration of the material that reflects the researcher's intuition, imagination, and personal knowledge of the meanings and essences of the experience of the phenomenon that has been researched.

The researcher may express this in unique ways, e.g. through poems, a story, whichever way he or she feels best captures the spirit or essence of what has been revealed to them about the phenomenon in question.

The Question of Reliability and Validity

It is how well any heuristic research effort has succeeded in revealing or in casting clearer light on a specific phenomenon, that determines its value.

The validity of a heuristic research endeavor revolves around the sensitivity of the researcher and research participants towards the phenomenon being researched, that is, their ability to let the phenomenon emerge and reveal itself in a way that will speak to (meaningfully engage) the

reader. "The effectiveness of this reflection is what we call reliability and validity" (Taylor, 1990, p. 106).

The Researcher as the Right Instrument of Research

The literature on new paradigm research, without exception, stresses the primary role of the researcher as a person in the research process. Validity in new paradigm research, states Reason and Rowan (1981), lies in the skills and sensitivities of the researcher, in how he or she uses himself or herself as a knower, as an inquirer. "Validity is more personal and interpersonal, than methodological" (p. 244).

The most confounding factor in heuristic research is that not anybody can do it. There is no "how-to-do" manual for heuristic research (Douglas and Moustakas, 1985). The competence and skill needed for this type of research, much like becoming a good psychotherapist, can be learnt only through experience.

Heuristic research does not proceed from a platform of ignorance. An ignorant or ill-informed person has a **closed mind**. A person of limited experience has a confined way of looking at things. Prejudice and naivety, also in the scientific field, are based on a narrow view and limited understanding of issues that are much broader than the prejudiced person is willing to concede, or the naïve person is able to comprehend.

An unbiased approach is a state of preparedness or openness of mind that can only be achieved through a great deal of intelligent contemplation on and an in-depth study of the nature of the phenomenon to be studied, plus a willingness to be led into whatever avenue may reveal more about the subject and enable the researcher to have a better grasp of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1990).

What is required to make the subjective perceptions of the researcher **objective**, is a high-quality and discriminating awareness (Reason & Rowan, 1981). There is a high level of **spiritual awareness** (maturity) required in phenomenological research if a full and clear view of the phenomenon being researched is to be achieved. This high quality awareness is related to the **self-transcendent** abilities of the researcher, the ability to disentangle him- or herself from preconceptions to gain a clear view of and a perspective on what is happening during the research process, on how the phenomenon is manifesting itself, as much as it is related to what Tillich (1965) called: **the courage to be**, to launch fully, with no holds barred, into an inquiry that will require full personal involvement.

An openness to the meanings of human existence implies not only a rich experience of them and, as a result, greater emotional maturity and more refined understanding of them, but also a greater grasp of **what it means to be human**.

An excellent heuristic researcher can therefore be expected to have a deep sense of **humanity**. How else will the researcher be able to establish the kind of relationship with the research participants that will allow them to be absolutely open with the researcher?

It can be expected that the impact of the researcher's humanity will enable the research participants to enter the research process more fully. **Not only will they be able to be more open with the researcher, giving the researcher the real facts of their experiences but, with the help of the researcher, they will be able to grasp meanings of the phenomenon that were hidden to them before.**

This sharing experience around a phenomenon that is of crucial importance to both researcher and research participants, and which they together come to understand more profoundly, impacts upon the persons of both the researcher and research participants.

Heuristic research, if it is authentic, **valid in the deepest sense**, is a growth experience.

A final criterion of validity in heuristic research and which incontestably contributes towards the excellence of the research endeavor, is the depth of the commitment of the researcher to the research.

If a research into the phenomenon has not been experienced by the researcher as a **personal task**, one that the researcher, personally, has been challenged to do, how can he or she be committed to producing the type of research that will be a valid and valuable contribution to human science?

Dealing with human existence, heuristic research, at its best, is a life-task, responsibly fulfilled.

The Correct Choice of Research Participants

The choice of the right research participants is more likely if the research topic is an outflow of some deep interest of the researcher. The researcher, through an interest in a certain field, will then find him- or herself in a setting where his or her interest will be evoked by, and where he or she will feel drawn to certain people that the researcher intuitively senses are **just the right people** to invite into the research process.

Being in the flow of the researcher's real life, a choice of research participants in this way, lends greater authenticity and validity to a heuristic research endeavor.

It is the research participants who, by virtue of their first-hand experiences of the phenomenon, "invite" the researcher into the research process. They are the experts in the field. It is from the research participants that the researcher is hoping to learn and gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question.

The research participants have been placed in the position of authority by their experiences of the phenomenon. The deeper that experience; their own struggle to come to grips with their experiences; to find the meaning of it; the greater their authority on the subject and the more valuable their contributions to the validity of the research.

Letting the Phenomenon have its Full Say

A fundamental postulate of a heuristic research persuasion is that the world can be known **exactly because we have been designed**, so to speak, to know it. Our whole being is geared towards **knowing**, towards a discovery of life's meanings through an interaction with our life-worlds. In the research situation the phenomenological postulate that **the meaning of phenomenon is waiting, as it were, to be discovered**

by us, implies the following:

- * The researcher launches into the heuristic inquiry with a sense of trust (confident expectation) that he or she will be led along a path of discovery into the meaning and essence of the phenomenon of the research.

Boyd and Fales (in Douglas & Moustakas, 1985) in their study of reflective thinking, speak about "a trust of self to discover and recognize relevant information" (p. 45). This is akin to what Rogers (1972) described as **organismic trusting**, an intuitive knowing of what a situation requires (or says to us), how we must respond or act in the face of it.

- * The research participant, having experienced a phenomenon in question, enters the research situation with the confidence of being able to communicate with the researcher and to transmit to him or her some valuable information regarding the phenomenon of research.

Warren (1989) speaks about "the conversation that is humankind" (p. 296). Within the research relationship, the research participants' intentions are to communicate to the researcher something about their experiences, understandings, beliefs, the meanings of being-in-the-world. The task of the researcher as interpreter is to recognize these phenomena as forms of communication and to seek the "ground" or the "abstract invariant" (essential meaning) of the communication (Taylor, 1990).

- * The researcher and research participant, in their interactive research relationships are in dialogue with one another about the subject of research. They have full confidence that the phenomenon of research will take on clearer dimensions; that aspects hitherto obscure to both of them will, in their joint search, open up to their understanding.

Frankl (1970) contends that: "we must recognize that this dialogue defeats itself unless I and thou transcend themselves to refer to a **meaning outside themselves**" (p. 8).

Moustakas (1990) makes the same point when he asserts that interviewing is only really possible when the interviewer and the participant are both caught up in the phenomenon being discussed.

The implicit stance of both researcher and research participant, therefore, is that the meaning of their dialogue **exists independently of them**. It is their acknowledgement of this fact, their respect for the sovereignty of the phenomenon in question, that allows for maximal openness towards that phenomenon. The phenomenon has the right, as it were, to reveal itself to them in whichever way it pleases, to contradict their views of it, and break down the barriers to a fuller understanding of it and to change **them** in relation to it.

Giorgi (1986) states succinctly: the experience of the situation as described belongs to the subject, **but the meaning transcends the subject and is available to others once it has been expressed**.

- * The reader is expected to "connect" with the data presented to him or her, to find common ground with the researcher regarding the phenomenon that has been researched.

The researcher has the final expectation that the meanings that have stood out as relevant to the phenomenon will, in the communication of it, be coherent to the reader and reconcilable with the reader's own intuitive sense of the reality of the phenomenon in question.

If the reader can be meaningfully involved throughout the research process and be satisfactorily convinced of the validity of the final conclusions reached by the researcher, concurring with it in the reader's own understanding of things, his or her own lived experience, the research can be regarded as a success. "Consensus is achieved when the researcher is able to write up this hermeneutic so that the reader of the report can identify, through his/her intersubjectivity, with the closure that emerges" (Taylor, 1990, p. 116).

Reason and Rowan (1981) speak about our having been moved towards an intersubjectively valid knowledge which is beyond the limitations of one knower. Rogers (1955) referred in this regard to **intersubjective verification**.

It is in its **intersubjectivity**, that heuristic research rests its case of reliability and validity.

PART VII: A HEURISTIC STUDY OF THE LIFE-WORLDS OF FIVE HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

In this section the different phases of the heuristic research, as it unfolded in the present study, will be described. In Chapter 15 we will discuss the preparatory phase leading up to the joining of the survivors' organization in Johannesburg as a participant observer. We will discuss how, during the period of participant observation, the research question was clarified; the aid of mentors was elicited; and the survivors, who became research participants, were singled out. The key themes of the meetings attended over this two-year period of participant observation will then be discussed.

In Chapter 16 the acquisition and explication of the data: how the data was gathered by means of interviews and the ways in which it was explicated and presented, will be described.

In Chapter 17 the relationships with the research participants will be described and portraits of each, given.

In Chapter 18 the presentation of a composite picture and a creative synthesis of the data will conclude the present study.

As the reader is led through the research process, as described above, he or she is also led into the life-worlds and experiences of the research participants. Through a mind's journey, the reader will be taken into the darkness and horror of the Nazi concentration and death camps. The struggle of the research participants to find the meaning of their sufferings, will form the final focus of our research attention.

CHAPTER 15

ENTERING THE LIFE-WORLDS OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS AND INITIATING THE RESEARCH

Introduction

Several activities served as a sensitizing background to an entry into the life-worlds of Holocaust survivors. We will briefly review these activities and then proceed with a discussion of those activities which allowed the researcher entry into the life-worlds of the research participants themselves. All these activities, taken together, form part of **the preparatory phase** of the present research.

The Preparatory Phase

Heuristic researchers point out that heuristic inquiry is guided by a desire to illuminate the phenomenon in question (Douglas & Moustakas, 1985). An ever deeper or more refined grasp of the phenomenon may be sought through, for example, self-reflections, literature searches, visits to places and institutions or through dialogue with others.

In terms of reviewing the literature, the aim in heuristic research is to generate as many questions and to open up as many avenues of thought around the topic of research as possible. The use of a literature study is a sensitive issue in studies of a phenomenological and heuristic nature. This issue will be discussed in a critical review of the present study at the end of Chapter 16.

The general aim during the early or exploratory phase of heuristic research is to maximize the researcher's sensitivity and receptivity towards the phenomenon in question.

In the present study the researcher attempted to sensitize herself to the phenomenon of the experience of suffering and of its meaning in the following ways:

- * **a contemplation of a personal experience of the meaning of suffering** (cf. Chapter 1). The experience of the death of her father while attending a course on the meaning of suffering given by Viktor Frankl, also in his capacity as a survivor of Auschwitz, deeply sensitized the researcher to the question of the meaning of suffering. It also awakened her interest in the subject of the Holocaust and its meaning in the context of Jewish and world history.
- * **an exploration of the meaning of suffering through an in-depth study of Frankl's writings on the subject** (cf. Chapters 3 and 4). A strong element of self-searching was continued in the effort to arrive at an essential description of the concepts: meaning and suffering through the study of Frankl's writings on these subjects.
- * **a study of the theme of the meaning of suffering in mainstream psychology** (cf. Chapters 5 - 9). The aim of this rather intensive and in-depth literature study, which involved a study of the

personal lives and views of mainstream psychologists concerning suffering and its meaning, was to further highlight the views of Frankl and to generate more illuminating questions around the topic of research. On the basis of these questions, some preliminary impressions of suffering and its meaning were formulated (cf. Chapter 10).

- * **a study of the Holocaust both as a crisis of meaning and as psychological adversity** (cf. Chapter 11). Looking at the Holocaust both from a personal and historical perspective, further served to sensitize the researcher's mind to the phenomenon of the meaning of suffering, more particularly, as experienced by survivors of the Holocaust.

After reviewing the field of survivor studies and looking at the research methods employed in order to determine the best approach to gain entry into the life-world of the Holocaust survivor (cf. Chapters 12 - 14), the researcher pursued avenues which would more directly acquaint her with the life-worlds of Holocaust survivors themselves. These included the following:

- * **Visits undertaken to the Yad Vashem or Holocaust Memorial Museum in Jerusalem**, the most comprehensive archive on Holocaust literature and documentation in the world. The Yad Vashem offers courses, by various experts in the field of Holocaust studies, to educators from abroad. Two of these three-week courses were attended.
- * **Joining an organization of Holocaust survivors called: the She'erith Hapletah**, (a Biblical term meaning: the surviving remnant), based in Johannesburg. Meetings were attended monthly over a two-year period.
- * **Study of original documentation and reports on some of the main Nazi concentration camps in which the research participants were interned.**

The remainder of the chapter is set out as follows:

Firstly, a visit to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Jerusalem is described. Secondly, the period of joining the She'erith Hapletah and becoming part of the world of the survivor is covered. Finally, some key impressions of the main concentration camps in which the participants were interned are given.

In discussing the attendance at the meetings of the survivors' organization, the following are dealt with: how the researcher came to join the organization; how the idea to do research with survivors dawned upon her; how the co-operation of mentors was elicited; and how the survivors that became participants in this research became singled out. The key themes of the meetings attended over this two-year period are then described and serve as another important context in which the individual life-worlds of the participants can be placed.

A Visit to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Jerusalem

One of the most outstanding factors which contributed towards the shaping of the researcher into a more sensitive "instrument" of research into the meaning of suffering among Holocaust survivors, was the first visit to the Yad Vashem or Holocaust Memorial Museum in Jerusalem in 1981. Several visits to the museum followed, including the attendance of two three week courses in Holocaust studies in 1994 and 1995.

This first visit, as well as the more personal accounts in the remainder of Part VII, will be described in the first person.

The Yad Vashem consists of several buildings in a memorial garden on the hilly slopes of Jerusalem. Its main building or museum is devoted to the history of the Holocaust through a display of documents and photographs, and the presentation of slide-shows and films.

As I walked slowly through the main museum, the faces in the blown-up photographs on the walls stared back at me, as if frozen in the act of suffering, waiting to be freed from what imprisoned them. It was as if some huge hand had smothered their cries. They were trapped in a silence, waiting to be broken.

In a darkened room an automatic slide-projector threw one stark image after another on the bare wall opposite it. The fearful click of the machine after each deep imprint on my stunned mind, was like some monstrous heart-lung machine, supplanting the beat and rhythm of the natural life of the victim. Suppressed cries were clutching desperately at my own heart. Swollen with response, the weeping broke free at last, tearing out of me from some immensely deep and hidden source.

The weeping (whimpering moans) continued for days afterwards. I felt vulnerable, softened and filled with love, a love that was bigger than my capacity to understand it or to carry it alone.

Like a vow, it committed me to more than I could, even in my dedication to it, conceive of. "But Ruth said: Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me" (Ruth: 16,17).

I was left defenseless in the face of another's grief, since I myself felt forever acquainted with it. Abzug (1985) in his work: Inside the vicious heart, quotes the words of a Susan Sontag as she captures elements of the same experience in viewing an exhibition of pictures of Bergen-Belsen and Dachau, taken by its liberators in 1945. "Nothing I have ever seen - in photographs or in real life - ever cut me as sharply, deeply, instantaneously. When I looked at those photographs, something broke. **Some limit had been reached**, and not only that of horror. **I felt irrevocably grieved**, wounded, but a part of my feelings started to tighten; something went dead; something is still crying." (p. 10)

Back in South Africa, the researcher and her husband joined the S.A. National Yad Vashem Memorial Foundation. Here they learnt, only some years later, of the existence of the Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in Johannesburg, the She'erith Hapletah, an organization they finally joined in 1988.

The She'erith Hapletah: the Life-worlds of the Surviving Remnant

The She'erith Hapletah or survivors organization in Johannesburg, functions like a loosely-knit family with members from every level of society. Most of the survivors are from Poland, Hungary, Lithuania and Latvia. Others are from Germany and Holland. Most of the survivors are women. A small number of child survivors are in their late fifties and the rest are adult survivors, well into their sixties, seventies and eighties. There are about 200 Jewish Holocaust survivors living in South Africa, about 50 belonging to the Johannesburg organization. Prominent people are invited to give lectures, mostly pertaining to the Holocaust but also of general Jewish interest. At the same time, the monthly meetings allow the survivors to keep in touch with each other and to see to one another's needs.

Another activity of the organization is to disseminate knowledge on the Holocaust and some of its members give talks to schools, groups and organizations.

The Dawning of the Idea to do Research with Survivors

We attended our first meeting on a Sunday afternoon in August, 1988.

Being non-Jewish, I provoked special interest and during the tea break was approached by quite a few members with fascinated questions as to why we were attending their meeting. I told them that because I was married to a Jew, I had not only a personal but also a long-standing research interest in the Holocaust and Jewish history, having studied with the famous survivor, Viktor Frankl. Without exception, their responses were warm and friendly.

During the conversation, a more aloof, strikingly attractive and obviously highly cultured, little red-head lady in her late fifties, made a remark that struck home to me: "Hitler could not kill my idealism, my romanticism, my values. He could kill my body, but he could not get at me".

The thought of involving the survivors in research and studying the way they experienced their sufferings - what it meant to them - gripped me. I felt quite excited about the idea. **It was as if a unique opportunity, somewhat like a challenge, was being presented to me.**

Next to me sat a motherly old lady, who had already impressed me with her unusual warmth. She invited me to come and visit her at the Jewish Old Age Home where she lived. I felt that a door had been opened to me and the intention to follow through, took root.

When I approached the chairman and asked whether we could join the organization, he indicated that although all the members were Holocaust survivors or children of survivors, he did not think there would be any problem. After discussing it with some other members there, we were given forms to fill in and paid the membership fees.

After having given the idea to do research with survivors careful thought, I sent a letter to the chairman, expressing how privileged my husband and I felt in being accepted as members of the organization and requesting his permission to also attend the meetings in a research capacity. Would it be possible to interview some of the members? His response was as follows:

"My committee and I have received your letter and thank you for your kind words. We are very glad to have you and your husband with us and appreciate the interest that you have shown in ourselves

and in the horror that has marred our lives. Please be assured of our co-operation and assistance in your research. The granting of interviews obviously rests with each individual but we hope that our support for your endeavors will weigh in your favor."

Eliciting the Aid of Mentors

It has been noted that an important component of this type of research is that the researcher must have access to the regular appraisals of research mentors.

As the idea to do research with Holocaust survivors began to take shape, the researcher engaged a senior colleague, Prof. Cora Moore, in the Department of Psychology at the University of South Africa, in conversation about this. She indicated that she would be interested to become involved in the research in the capacity as mentor and promoter.

Just prior to joining the She'erith Hapletah in 1988, the researcher had attended a conference at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in Pretoria on qualitative research methodology. One of the main speakers at the conference was a qualitative researcher, Dr Willem Schurink. When the researcher spoke to him during one of the tea breaks, indicating that she had an interest in qualitative research and in the works of Viktor Frankl, and wanted to perhaps do research on a subject relating to Frankl's experiences as a victim of an unjust and cruel system, he responded with interest and some thought-provoking suggestions.

Mentioning the meeting to Prof. Moore, she thought that Dr Schurink's involvement, especially with the practical side of the research, would be invaluable. Dr Schurink was contacted and after meeting with Prof. Moore, agreed to become involved as a second mentor and co-promoter of the research.

Prof. Moore was involved throughout the entire process and Dr Schurink was consulted as the need arose. Prof. Moore assisted the researcher in the clarification of her thoughts around the topic of the meaning of suffering. Dr Schurink's contributions indeed proved invaluable and centered on the methodology of the present study.

The Survivors who Became Singled Out as Research Participants

After many months of regularly attending meetings, and interacting with the survivors, I finally arranged to interview the lovely old lady who had invited me to visit her and whom I had already visited on a number of occasions. We will call her MALKE (meaning: queen in Hebrew).

After giving a report on meetings she had addressed, another survivor, whom we will call SARAH, also offered to participate in my research. Unlike Malke, who had a peasant-like simplicity, Sarah was obviously a most learned lady. She impressed as a leader and showed active concern for her fellow-survivors. She had written a dissertation on the works of Katzetnik, a famous survivor, which she advised me to read. She was emigrating to Australia where her one daughter and family lived. Managing one interview, another was conducted on a brief return visit some months later.

The impressive and fiery little redhead, who had sparked off this research with her remark that Hitler could kill her body but not her spirit, also invited us to visit her. She took a strong liking to my

husband, who is Jewish, but held me, a non-Jew, somewhat at a distance. I sensed that she possessed a treasure of information which she, however, kept very much to herself. Only much later, after several visits and requests to join in the research, did she eventually agree to become a research participant. We will call her **DEBORAH**.

The chairman of the organization impressed me as an astute thinker and philosopher. When we spoke about my research, he offered to also assist me with the research by becoming a participant. We will call him **DAVID**.

The last participant, whom we will call **ESTHER**, once gave a brief report on her visit to Auschwitz. I was so moved and impressed by her that I asked her whether she would participate in my research. After some hesitation, she agreed.

How the co-operation of each of the above survivors was elicited, and how the interviews conducted with them evolved, and a research relationship with them developed, will be described in Chapter 17.

The Researcher in the Role of Participant Observer

After joining the organization towards the end of 1988, meetings were attended over a two year period. The researcher spent the time among the survivors in the capacity of **participant observer**. Participant observation is a qualitative method which is especially suited to a study of social behavior in **natural settings**. By utilizing this method, behavior in such settings is generally not disturbed by any artificiality that is the inevitable consequence of experimental situations, which scientize, objectify and externalize the social life-worlds of research participants (cf. Schurink, 1988). In studies involving participant observation, the researcher becomes a member of the group which he or she wishes to study. Benson and Hughes (in Schurink, 1988) describe the task of participant observation as a discovery of the values, norms, categories, rules and so on, that typify a group from the "inside" by participating, in some fashion, in the way of life of the actors concerned. The observer attempts to mentally operate on two different levels: **becoming an insider while remaining an outsider** (Schurink, 1988).

In the present study the primary aim was not to understand the Holocaust survivors as a group, but through an understanding of the group processes, to gain deeper access into the life-worlds of the individual survivors who became singled out as research participants.

A better understanding of the experiences and personal views of Holocaust survivors in general was deemed necessary in allowing the researcher a deeper grasp of the experiences and views of the research participants.

The Keeping of Field Notes

The use of **field notes** which is typically employed in qualitative research was also an important feature of the current study. Field notes formed the data base from which observations and impressions were made. Following Schurink (1988), questions such as the following were kept in mind as the behaviors of the actors and social processes were observed: who was involved? what happened? where

did it happen? when did it happen? how did it happen? Was there a developing theme to the happenings? More specifically, in attending the monthly meetings of the survivors organization and accompanying survivors to Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremonies, brief notes were made of each meeting and occasion. Impressions of the key issues raised during such gatherings and the researcher's impressions of the gathering, were written out after each event.

At the end of this period, the notes on all the gatherings were read through a number of times. Themes were noted, particularly as they unfolded not only in the data, but also in the mind of the researcher.

Since the aim of this period of participant observation was to gain an understanding of the overall picture, especially in terms of the **themes which occupy the mind of the survivor**, it was deemed necessary to single out these themes. They will now be described in order to shed light on the life-worlds of the research participants.

Themes Which are Significant to Holocaust Survivors

A number of themes were noted as emerging most frequently during the meetings. They are the following:

The Mission to Remember

The survivors see themselves in an assigned role to remember the dead. This main dynamic and motivation of the organization are expressed in the leading article of the Annual Commemoration Issue of April 1965:

"The living reminder of a great people - that is the She'erith Hapletah. This is our great Jaccuse to the world - to the active world of murder and villainy, and to the passive world which observed unconcernedly. We must never permit our voice to be silenced - the voice of the exterminated people which calls for REMEMBRANCE."

A strong motivation behind this mission to remember seems to be a feeling of burning injustice at the senseless slaughter of millions of innocent people. It is like a case that is still pending. The evidence is still being brought in, most of the arguments are yet to be heard. The final jury still has to sit and the judge still has to pass sentence. One of the survivors told the following story:

A man was fictitiously given the opportunity to catch Hitler, which he did. He started throttling him. When he was almost done, he glanced up to heaven, from where his grandmother said to him: "Too little." Whereupon he let go of Hitler's throat. Taking him to the highest tower, he tied him to a rope and pushed him over. As Hitler was dangling by his foot on the rope, the man looked up to heaven. "Too little, my son," his grandmother said. Then he threw Hitler into a river, still tied to the rope, to drown him. The man looked up to heaven. "Too little, my son, too little." Hauling Hitler out of the river, he threw him into a fire and looked up to heaven. "Too little, my son, too little."

The feelings among survivors seem to be the following: Who can avenge a crime of such magnitude? Has it been avenged by the fact that a few Nazis have been brought to trial? Can the financial

restitution that has been paid to a few survivors right the wrong committed? Can even the fact that some German communities of today have made efforts such as inviting survivors to return to their former communities to have some honor bestowed on them; or the establishment of an Israeli Embassy in Germany and a German Embassy in Israel, do it?

Survivors seem to feel that to ask them to sweep the past underneath the carpet, to glibly tell them to forgive and forget, is to do injury to their sense of justice and to grossly minimize their suffering. The following generations need to understand what happened to them and to those who perished, if some great catastrophe is not yet again to befall the world. The survivors seem to feel that they have a duty to pursue the matter, to keep the subject alive.

"In our blood, in our hearts, and in our brains is clamoring the death-murmur of our brothers and sisters, who commanded us on their last march: **If you survive - REMEMBER!**" (Editorial, Annual Commemoration Issue, April 1965).

Grief Beyond Comfort

The survivors share a grief beyond consolation. This theme which emerged from their conversations, from their responses to lectures and which impressed itself on my awareness when I attended the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom Hashoah) during April 1989.

I was attending this commemoration with Deborah, and was invited to sit with the other survivors in the special area that had been reserved for them. I had been to such commemorations before and had found them very moving. However, this time, sitting among the little group of survivors, I felt uninvolved, forlorn and outside of it all.

What was happening on stage, the speeches, the prayers, the songs and the poems and readings, the memorial fires being lit, even though it had its moving moments, felt like a show being put on. It tried to portray the shock, grief and anger at the suffering and death of six million innocent Jewish victims but could not succeed. I found my mind wandering. Portions of Scripture that I had studied in relation to the Holocaust, kept coming to mind. "You have drained to its dregs the goblet that makes men stagger. . . Who can console you?" (Isaiah 51:17, 19). "Behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow.. No-one is near (enough) to comfort me, there is no-one (who understands enough) to comfort me" (Lamentations 1:12,16).

Not being able to concentrate on what was being presented, it felt better to listen to the wind, to look up at the clear blue sky, and to ponder how, much like silent witnesses, the straight and tall cypress trees, that lined the Jewish cemetery, looked.

After the ceremony, Deborah told me the following: "My going to the cemetery is my date with the dead ones, with my beloved ones. I usually look up at the sky and there I see them. I've got the feeling that it is transparent as the air, their souls, their beings. They are gathering around us to say it is their date with the living and it is the date of the living with the dead. I don't think about myself, I only say hello to them. I greet them, I talk to them. I speak to my late mother, to my late father, to my sister, my brother, my sister-in-law and their children.. It is not because I want to remember and cry for myself, it is crying for them. If the choir sings, the singing comes from above. It comes from the suffering of the six million,

it is their song, the outcry of the dead."

Attitude towards the Perpetrators and the Outside World

"Never to forget" is also: "Never to forgive". A crime of such magnitude goes beyond the limits of forgivable behavior - such remarks were often made by the survivors.

The feeling among the survivors is that the perpetrators have gone far beyond the point of no-return. True repentance was impossible. The actions of the perpetrators were inexcusable and unforgivable. Without exception, the survivors found the perpetrators as despicable as the crimes which they had committed. Perpetrator and crime had become one: evil.

The attitude towards the German people at the time was strongly ambivalent. "Every German who had been in Germany at the time and is over 60, is guilty either of what he did or of what he did not do," was the comment of one survivor. More lenient is another remark: "Every German who is over sixty and who was in Germany at the time, must first prove his innocence before he can be accepted."

However, those Germans whose innocence is beyond question, are warmly accepted. At meetings touching the subject, due recognition is given to the exceptional German, like Pastor Niehmoller and Oscar Schindler and such men, men who went against the common tide.

Many of the survivors went to attend a Yad Vashem Foundation meeting where Dr Beyers Naude came to speak on: "The German Confessing Church (Bekennende Kirche) and its opposition to the Nazis."

On one occasion, one of the survivors brought along a Gentile Pole to the meeting. This man had hid the survivor and his brother (then young boys) and had so saved them. The brothers kept in contact with this Pole and arranged for him to come to South Africa in view of a Yad Vashem ceremony to honor "righteous Gentiles" (Gentiles who had helped Jews during the Holocaust). They paid for a costly operation to his eyes (his eyesight was failing) as a small gesture of gratitude.

One of the strongest feelings voiced was that of **abandonment**. While they were rendered the helpless victims of those who cruelly tortured and killed them, the world stood by. There was no one to intervene or to rescue - help, when at last it did come, came hopelessly too late. The damage was done. The feeling among the survivors is, therefore, one of overwhelming loneliness. The world did not care. It did little to help them, and it could not be bothered now.

"Where was God?"

This question was passionately raised on more than one occasion, but somehow seemed to recede into the background again. The most urgent question seemed to lie elsewhere, in **man's relation to his fellow-man**.

In contemplating the above point, I wrote the following poem:

THE JEWISH QUESTION.

"Where was God in the Holocaust?.."

How shall I answer you?

God is indefensible. I can only declare Him, by being like Him, tell you that HE IS.

When I asked Him where He was in the Holocaust, He replied:

where were you? .."

"Led like Sheep to the Slaughter?"

This question never failed to evoke hot discussion at the meetings and came up time and again. Intense anger was expressed at the allegation that Jews were led like sheep to their deaths, that they offered no or little resistance, that, therefore, they are partly to blame for what happened to them.

One of the liveliest meetings on this very subject, was conducted by David himself. The first response was of anger at the ignorance of those who make such statements.

One survivor recalled that he was involved in an escape effort at Sobibor. Of those who did get away, only fourteen survived the escape. For those fourteen, 18,000 were killed in reprisal. Open revolt was foolishly suicidal. It was, in a sense, also selfish, unthinking and unrestrained behavior. It took far more courage **not** to resist. **To survive was to resist.**

However, many instances of resistance were cited by the survivors. When the real facts became known, underground movements started. In ghettos, weapons were smuggled, bought and stolen. Manifold and varied efforts at resistance among the survivors may not have been as dramatic as the Warsaw uprising, but spoke of the same courage.

A speaker came to address the meeting on the propaganda myth of a world-wide "Jewish conspiracy" to overthrow Gentile governments and to seize control of the world (Jews, according to this myth, are seen as capitalist world bankers as well as the moving force behind Communism), a conspiracy myth Hitler fervently employed to rationalize his "final solution" of the "Jewish problem" (the solution being to kill every Jew). The speaker pointed out that this myth of sinister Jewish control and organization behind the scenes of political events in the world, was, in a sense, unfortunately and dismally disproved. Jews were unable to prevent the carnage and destruction that took place.

Spiritual Resistance

Remarks made during the tea break after the discussion David led on whether they were led like lambs to the slaughter, were:

"We did not have weapons, but we had hope."

"To stay a mensch" (a caring and humane person) "was the most heroic resistance."

A rabbi came to give a talk on: "The dignity of man at the abyss." He spoke about the fact that those Jews and the younger generation who have not suffered like the survivors did, find them difficult to

relate to. The survivors somehow confront them with the cruel side of human nature, a side which they would rather not contemplate. Who can identify with the suffering Jew? Only recently did people begin to take another look at the survivor. It is only now that the dignity of man at the abyss is being recognized.

The lecture was received in an atmosphere that lent it authenticity, as if it did indeed contain the truth; as if the audience, in their response to it, affirmed it.

This was the same impression, and even more so, on another occasion not long afterwards when the Chief Rabbi of South Africa came to address the survivors. Judaism is not pacifist, the Chief Rabbi stressed, but it does not teach revenge. It is a duty to protect life. Jews must take a defensive stand only if they have to. They must seek peace if they can, and only fight when they must. Great scrutiny is necessary in the face of any war-like action. Jews must, for example, defend Israel in the face of an enemy onslaught designed to annihilate Israel, yet its army must remain open to criticism and to restraint. Above all, Jews have a duty to seek peace, and must do everything possible to live in peace with their neighbors.

He also referred to the Carmelyte convent that was erected at Auschwitz to pray for the Catholics who were murdered by the Nazis (the overwhelming majority killed there were Jews, however). The erection of this convent provoked much controversy. Jews never make a holy place out of an evil place. The best monument to those who died, is Jewish survival and the maintenance of high moral standards. Jews are to be living monuments. At the Yad Vashem in Jerusalem is the inscription: **IN YOUR BLOOD, LIVE!** from the book of Ezekiel (16:6). For the six million Jews not to have died in vain, let Jews try to build a better world, showing love and respect for the dignity of another person. "We have a mission to the world, to show them morality, decency, genuine peace.. if they will only allow us. We are in the world not to destroy, only to uplift."

There was a silence after the Chief Rabbi's talk, a most unusual phenomenon among this lively group of survivors. There seemed a real reluctance to say anything more.

During the tea break I was introduced to a survivor I had not spoken to before. He was a very bad stutterer. I was told that he was interned as a 10 year old boy, taken and hung till his tongue protruded, only to be taken down again, in a kind of cruel cat and mouse game. He told me with great difficulty that he had been sent to the gaschambers twice, that both times he prayed fervently. He said he prayed in every way he could think of, to Moses and to Jesus. He laughed and said he does not know who answered his prayer! He told me that he has never harbored prejudice towards anyone, that he often attended Christian functions. "I do not understand hate. I cannot understand how Christians can call us Christ-killers. Jesus was a Jew and he died as a Jew. Hundreds of other Jews were crucified also.. I have lost all my family, except for a brother who now lives in Israel. But I have a family again. A wife and three children. From when they were little I have taught them to love everybody, that it is wrong to hate anyone."

A Last, Lingering Impression

The following is a very well-known Yiddishe song, always sung at the Holocaust memorial services, and seemed to sum up the final impression of all of my experiences with the survivors during the many meetings.

The Partisan Song

Come what may, you mustn't say this is the end,
 Even though you walk alone without a friend,
 For the day we all dreamed about is near,
 When we'll shout to the world "We are still here."

From the land of sunshine and the land of snow,
 We'll be coming and we'll bring our song of woe,
 And where a drop of Jewish blood fell yesterday,
 On that very spot we'll build again today.

And the morning sun will banish all our woe,
 All our yesterdays will vanish with the foe,
 And if the sun does not appear to bring us light,
 Then this song will be our beacon in the night.

For we wrote this song with blood, and not with lead
 When we lived not with the living but with the dead,
 And we sang this song behind the ghetto walls
 When we cried for help and no one heard our calls.

That's why they'll never make us say this is the end,
 For we know somewhere some day we'll find a friend,
 And the day that we all dreamed of will be near,
 When we'll shout to all the world "We are still here."

The Concentration Camps in which Research Participants were Interned

As already indicated, it is necessary to briefly describe these camps in order to reach some understanding of the situations which faced the research participants.

Auschwitz/Birkenau

Let us first look at Auschwitz/Birkenau since Esther and Deborah spent the major portion of their internment in this infamous camp.

Feig (1981) describes the camp as the core of the Holocaust, "the symbol of all camps; the mother camp; a way of dying for all seasons; for all people; an empty void where four million once lived" (p. 333). Auschwitz/Birkenau, only a monument today, was a gigantic extermination center in Poland, 50 kilometers from Cracow. It covered 40 square kilometers. The camp was divided into Auschwitz I, the

base camp, which included the central administration, the Gestapo, and various armament firms; Auschwitz II, or Birkenau, dedicated to the destruction of prisoners in the gas chambers; and Auschwitz III, or Buna, a labor camp. The Nazis had evacuated several nearby towns as early as 1940 and subsequently used them for subsidiary camps within the huge establishment. Auschwitz was opened on June 14, 1940, with the arrival of the first transport of 728 Polish political prisoners. The camp grew rapidly. By the end of 1941 it could accommodate 18,000 prisoners, and by 1943, 30,000. "A great Himmelerstadt", a mammoth city devoted to the death industry that could hold 750,000 prisoners and have a daily crematoria capacity of 40,000 was the eventual aim (Feig, 1981).

With Hitler's order to the SS to solve the "Jewish question" permanently, the infamous Nazi leader, Himmler, earmarked the Auschwitz complex, especially Birkenau, for that purpose. Together with Eichmann and Hess, two other infamous Nazis, gas was decided on as a means for the mass extermination of the Jews.

The Auschwitz complex was both the largest of all camps, and with the added gas chambers, the largest installation for extermination. Its famous main gate, carried the inscription: Arbeit Macht Frei (labor frees), designed to deceive its victims as to their immediate or eventual fate: death. Auschwitz was also equipped with a special Block where medical experiments were performed on the victims, those of the Nazi, Dr. Mengele, especially with twins, dwarfs and hunchbacks, being the most infamous. Inmates were used as guinea pigs for the widest variety of experiments, including sterilization and artificial inseminations. Metal baskets covered the windows of adjoining Blocks to suppress the groans of the tortured and starved prisoners in the cells.

Since the gassing process generated enormous piles of corpses, the crematoria could not cope, so corpses were thrown into mass graves. Various techniques were used to try and dispose of the corpses: covering them with chlorine, lime and earth; burning them first on wood pyres, and later in pits (Feig, 1981).

Conditions in the camp were indescribable. Gross overcrowding of the living quarters, lack of ventilation, totally inadequate toilet and washing facilities; rags for clothing; starvation diets; slave labor; beatings; torture; death.. this was life in Auschwitz.

Most of the victims that were gassed in this death camp were Jews, but also almost all Gypsies and thousands of non-Jews - selected for particular reasons - were gassed. The estimated number of those gassed at Auschwitz, stands at 2,000,000 (Dawidowicz, 1975).

Dachau

The next camp we need to take a closer look at is Dachau where Malke spent seven months.

Dachau was situated some ten miles east of Munich and was the first Nazi concentration camp established for political prisoners. In May 1945, the official camp figures showed the total population as 31,432. Of the 300 women in Dachau, 225 were listed as Jewish (reported in Suzman & Diamond, 1978). The inmates ranged from children of 13 and 14 to those of 60 and over.

A report on the Dachau concentration camp signed by C.S. Coetzee and R.J. Montgomery, who visited the camp on the 7th May, 1945, at the instruction of Mr J.H. Hofmeyer, the then acting Prime

Minister of the Union of South Africa, records the overcrowding, the virtual total absence of medical facilities and describes some of the unbelievable punishments and various forms of torture inflicted on the inmates. Attention is drawn in the report to the text of Himmler's order, on the eve of surrender, reading as follows: "The surrender is beyond doubt. The camp is to be evacuated immediately. No prisoner may be allowed to fall living into the hands of the enemy" (in Suzman & Diamond, 1978, p. 117).

During 1944 the number of deaths had been 4,884 whereas the total for the first four months of 1945 was shown to be 13,000. The daily death toll stood at about 125. The report describes the gaschamber, which bore the inscription Brausebad (shower bath) above the entrance. Behind the crematorium they reported seeing a place of execution for those who had to die by rifle fire and ample signs that the place had been in frequent use.

The report ends by stating that on the evidence they were able to gather, the investigators were forced to conclude that:

the SS men in charge of Dachau habitually submitted the prisoners to varying degrees of torture and brutality;

the high death rate in the camp was the result of a policy of deliberate and systematic starvation after the prisoners had served their purpose as factory or agricultural workers; and

the general conditions under which the prisoners were obliged to live reveal a callous disregard for human decency (Suzman & Diamond, 1978).

Bergen Belsen

In concluding this brief overview of concentration camps we take a look at Bergen Belsen where both Esther and Sarah were sent to die.

Extracts from reports on this camp, situated in Germany give us a glimpse of what it was like:

"The majority of the inmates of this concentration camp were slave workers of every nationality, with a preponderant number of Jews, who had been declared unfit for any form of further labor service and were sent to Belsen to die from slow starvation." "When the British arrived there were about 50,000 people in the camp. About 8,000 lay dead on the ground in piles three feet high. Several more thousand were dead inside the huts. The initial mortality rate was 540 a day. Those still alive had had no food or water for seven days after a long period of semi-starvation during which the daily ration averaged a bowl of watery potato soup and perhaps a small crust of bread." "Sanitation was virtually non-existent. Men, women and children lay indiscriminately on the floor of the huts in their own excreta. Typhus, as well as other diseases, was rampant." "The dead were fortunate compared to the living, who were crowded together in their own squalor, four hundred or more in a hut which should not have housed more than 50." "Some 23,000 bodies had been buried by SS and German prisoners-of-war under British supervision in mass graves." (Report by Coetzee & Sole, 25th May, 1945; quoted in Suzman & Diamond, 1978, p. 118).

"As we walked down the main roadway of the camp, we were cheered by the internees, and for the first time we saw their condition. A great number of them were little more than living skeletons. There were men and women lying in heaps on both sides of the track. Others were walking slowly and aimlessly about, vacant expressions on their starved faces. There was no sanitation of any sort in the camp, not even

trenches for use as latrines. .. It was quite obvious that unless food and water arrived very soon, the whole camp would starve to death" (Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor, 1945, quoted by Gilbert, 1979, p. 212).

Other camps in which the research participants spent some torturous time were: Ravensbruck, Sachsenhausen, Matthausen, Neustadt, plus several smaller camps. Time was also spent in the Kovno and Rheim ghettos. Since the conditions to which they were subjected in all these places of terror, are best described by Esther, Malke, Sarah, Deborah and David themselves, they will not receive attention here.

Conclusion

From the platform of the knowledge gained as a participant observer among the survivors as a group, the researcher could launch into a heuristic study of the life-worlds of the survivors who became singled out as research participants. We will first give attention as to how the data on the life-worlds of the research participants was gathered, explicated and presented. A more intimate acquaintance with the research participants as persons will then be afforded the reader when, in the chapters to follow, the unfolding of the research relationship with and a portrait of each, are presented and their life-stories analyzed and reflected upon.

CHAPTER 16

ACQUISITION AND EXPLICATION OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS' EXPERIENCES

As was seen in the foregoing chapters, the researcher gained a clearer understanding of the life-worlds of Holocaust survivors by attending the meetings of the She'erith Hapletah in the role of participant observer. Having singled out the five research participants, heuristic research methods were then employed to study their life-worlds in more detail.

The interview is probably the data-gathering method most frequently used in social research. Since this method was used to acquire the data relating to the life-worlds and experiences of the research participants, some attention will first be given to the distinguishing features of the method of interviewing in heuristic inquiry. Special attention will be given to the way the heuristic interview was used in the present study.

The explication phase will then be discussed. Firstly, attention will be given to the acquisition of an intuitive, holistic grasp of the data. Then it will be explained how the transcribed interview material of each research participant was ordered and written up into protocols - the protocols are also known as **individual depictions** of the experiences of the phenomenon in question. Hereafter, the reader will be given insight into the further processes of the explication process, namely, the compilation of a **composite picture** and the **creative synthesis**.

Attention will then be given to the verification of the explicated data. Finally, in considering the validity of the present study, the objections that may be raised against it and the shortcomings of the methodology, will be discussed.

The Acquisition of the Data

As already indicated, the data in this study was acquired through the employment of the heuristic interview. Since interviewing is so widely used as a data-gathering process in both qualitative and quantitative social science research, it is essential that we take a closer look at how interviews are utilized by exponents of heuristic research as well as in the present research.

The Distinguishing Features of the Heuristic Method of Interviewing

The different types of interviews employed in the social sciences can generally be distinguished on the basis of the depth of involvement of the researcher in the interviewing process.

Although the establishment of **rapport** is regarded as a necessary component in the interviews employed by the positivistic researcher, the researcher, using a quantitative approach, does not enter the interviewing process in any personal way.

In qualitative approaches, the type of interview typically range from the open-end interview which is based on a pre-arranged set of questions; to a more unstructured interview which uses a schedule according to which the interview is conducted; to the depth interview which involves an intensive process

on the part of the interviewer to explore thoroughly - more deeply than in the typical rapport interview - the views and dynamics of the interviewee (cf. Reason & Rowan, 1981).

The heuristic researcher prefers to employ the phenomenological type of interviewing which is characterized by **maximal mutuality of trust** in which interviewer and interviewee respond to one another as total persons. There is little by way of simplistic question/answer exchange; rather free-form modes of communication identify the process (cf. Reason & Rowan, 1981). The time frame is fluid. While an important emphasis remains with explication of the interviewee's world, the dynamics of the interviewer are explicitly part of the process.

We have an important example of the heuristic method of interviewing in the study of Moustakas (1971), a prominent heuristic researcher. In his heuristic study of loneliness, he took the heuristic interview to a depth of involvement on the part of the researcher not found in any other type of interviewing.

Heuristic research originates in the personal experience of the researcher. Painfully experiencing the crisis of having to decide whether to let his daughter undergo major heart surgery or to let her face an uncertain future and premature death, Moustakas (1971) started his search into the nature and meaning of loneliness without design or purpose, with no object or end, and with no hypotheses or assumptions. He set out to know the meaning of the phenomenon of loneliness, not by defining and categorizing, but by experiencing it **directly** and through the lives of others, as a simple **reality of life**. Entering into **dialogue** with hospitalized children, watching and listening, he had moments of sharing with the children in which he felt he had gone "wide open", at moments ceasing to be a separate individual, as he was wholly related to the other person.

A depth of sharing, of a revelation of the phenomenon in question on the part of the research participants, thus seems directly related to the researcher's own depth of experience and intuitive understanding of the phenomenon in question.

Application of the Heuristic Method of Interviewing in the Present Research

To gain entry into the life-worlds of Holocaust survivors was a particularly formidable challenge to face. Unique adjustments in terms of approach and manner of interviewing had to be made, as the following accounts will demonstrate.

Approaching Survivors from a Platform of Personal Experience and Involvement

Having been launched into the present research through a personal experience of deep suffering, the researcher literally "soaked" (immersed) herself in any and every form of experience and searching related to the meaning of suffering among Holocaust survivors. The two-year period spent among the survivors as they met on a monthly basis to share in the activities of their organization, was particularly fruitful in establishing the kind of interchange between researcher and research participants that, to a large extent, is based on mutual trust.

The following example from the field notes taken at the time, illustrates the importance of this period of sharing and togetherness, not only in establishing relationships of mutual trust with the survivors,

but in clarifying important research issues.

A questionnaire had been sent out by a research organization based in New York to survivors worldwide relating to their experiences during the Holocaust. This provoked angry response, especially on the part of Esther. "How dare they! What arrogance! To be treated like a statistic, we who were made objects of experimentation in the Nazi death camps! What impudence!.." She angrily pulled up her sleeve to show the number tattooed on her forearm. "I was nothing but a number, see!.."

Esther's response underlines the importance of not approaching the survivor from an impersonal distance (with a research stance of aloof objectivity). To try and order the responses of research participants according to some or other set technique (questionnaire), removes the researcher from the scene and places him or her in an autocratic position of control over the research participants. It is this stance of superiority on the part of a researcher that a survivor like Esther found problematic, possibly for the following reasons:

Stripped of their identities during the Holocaust and known only by their numbers; made the helpless victim of a system that manipulated them at will; using them as tools of forced labor; eventually discarding them as useless, as mere numbers that could be scrapped off the list of the unwanted; have made the survivors hyper-sensitive to having to submit to any form of manipulation. They are very quick to detect any superior distance (arrogance) on the part of those who approach them.

(Diary entry: 1988-09-25)

In seeking to do research involving survivors, the employment of any uniform method or specific "technique" therefore seemed to the researcher most inappropriate. It denies the individuality of their persons; turns them into objects of experimentation; manipulates their responses and, in a sense, "uses" them to prove one or other point in the mind of the researcher.

The choice of a heuristic method of research which allows the researcher **maximal involvement as a person** in the interviewing process and which is expected to elicit maximal trust on the part of the participant, was therefore deemed appropriate.

Approaching Survivors from a Platform of Knowledge

Another example drawn from the field notes underlines the importance of being not only intimately acquainted with the subject of the Holocaust but also **intelligently informed** about it **before** trying to elicit the survivor's participation in the research.

*David told the researcher that he had been approached by a young student to be interviewed. He asked her how much she knew about the Holocaust. "Virtually nothing", she replied. "Well, then you have no right to interview me", he said as he politely showed her the door. Great irritation on the part of survivors at the unconcern of outsiders who did not care to become informed about the Holocaust, has often been noticed. Deborah regarded such ignorance with disdain. To her mind, it was indicative of a superficial and irresponsible world-view on the part of someone who is woefully ignorant about the history of the world we live in. She was the one to tell me that if I wanted to do research with survivors, then I had to start by studying Holocaust literature. Both Deborah and Sarah, before I interviewed them, urged me to read the works of famous Holocaust survivors. To their mind, **ignorance means lack of understanding,***

an inability to grasp experiences that they were reluctant to share with just anybody. The main thrust of the She'erith Haplethah is, in fact, to disseminate knowledge, an occupation David and Leah practiced as they spoke to various audiences on the subject of the Holocaust. (Diary entry: 1989-07-02)

The conclusion reached was that **respect for the survivors is shown in making a deep and intensive study of their Holocaust experiences before the researcher knocks on the door of their life-worlds, seeking entry.**

Unlike Moustakas (1971) who only undertook a literature search towards the very end of his study into the experience of loneliness, the present researcher undertook a literature search during the **early** phases of the present study.

Survivors as Experts of the Holocaust

In Chapter 17 Deborah's extreme irritation at being asked any directive questions during the interviews is described in some detail. Nevertheless it will be briefly dealt with here since it illustrates some important points in interviewing the survivors.

At the outset of the first interview with Deborah, I suggested that she might start by telling me something of her childhood. She was immediately put off. "Don't start with where I was born, my childhood.. it has nothing to do with my sufferings. .. As my past goes, you are the one who should sense what my background was", she angrily responded. As if speaking to a child that needed to be taught a lesson or two, she continued: "Imagine you are travelling in a train and somebody walks in and takes a seat next to you and he will tell you a few chapters of his life. But you start asking him, where were you born, what was your childhood like!.." (Diary entry: 1989-03-08)

Examples like the above underline the following important facts: **Holocaust survivors are heroes of suffering. Respect is shown in allowing the survivor to be the authority on the subject of suffering. This is reflected in allowing the survivor complete freedom in the interviewing process.**

An effort was therefore made to allow the research participants to lead and close the conversation. They were allowed to set the tone and held the floor. The interviewer allowed herself to be cast in the role of attentive listener as well as that of a guest. Interviews were conducted in the participants' own homes as an outflow of the fact that the researcher had been invited into **their** worlds and shown the incomparable horror of what they had to go through, a horror that only those who had experienced it can have a real grasp of.

Finally, the research participants were allowed to determine how many interviews were necessary, at what times, and over how long a period. The time structure was fluid. Interviews ranged from one hour to a whole morning to conversations over an entire weekend, morning, noon and night (as happened in the case of Deborah and which is described in Chapter 17).

Depth of Involvement of the Researcher

Does the fact that the researcher was treated as a guest and as somewhat of a novice in the area of suffering, mean that she was outside the research process? Or was it indicative of a sense of humility

towards the survivors who are, after all, the authorities on a subject they have had such a deep, intensive and first-hand experience of?

That it was the latter case rather than the former, is supported by the following important endeavors on the part of the researcher:

Keeping in the flow of the Evolving Relationship

The researcher tried to keep herself in the natural and spontaneous flow of the interviewing process by sensitively responding to the cues (the tone set) by the participants. This also meant that the researcher fully accepted the roles the participants assigned to her.

As it will become clear from the discussion of the evolution of the research relationship with each participant in Chapter 17, the researcher felt **comfortably herself** in every role into which she was cast. She had to be a sensitive sounding board and had to shift positions whenever the situation demanded it.

For example, in the case of Deborah, where the researcher felt uncomfortably out of tune with the depth of her experiences and wisdom, the discomfort was part of the process. The cry of the sufferer in the book of Lamentations (1:12) reflects Deborah's stance towards the researcher (the outsider): Is there a suffering like her suffering? Who then is able to understand it?

The Psychotherapeutic flavor of Heuristic Interviewing

The researcher is a practicing clinical psychologist. Years of doing psychotherapy had comfortably cast her into the role of attentive listener and had practiced her in the ability to grasp and respond to hidden cues and unspoken communications on the part of the client (participant), factors which facilitate the interviewing process to a great extent.

The heuristic interviewing process, because of the depth of involvement between researcher and research participants, undoubtedly has **psychotherapeutic overtones**. As we have noted in Chapter 14, heuristic research is a **growth** process.

In the present study, as the research relationships evolved, it took on greater depth and meaning. It was a growth experience not only for the researcher, but for the participants themselves as their responses to their protocols, discussed at the end of this chapter, will show. Not only did the researcher experience breakthroughs of greater understanding but so did the research participants. They experienced moments of new insight into their own experiences - which testify to the depth and sensitivity of the relationship between researcher and participant (cf. Chapter 17).

The Balance between Subjectivity/Objectivity, Involvement/Disinvolvement in the Interviewing Process

Qualitative researchers stress the importance of having professional skills in conducting effective interviewing (Reason & Rowan, 1981); also of maintaining the delicate balance between involvement/disinvolvement in order to evaluate the interviewing process objectively (Schurink, 1988).

In the present study, the researcher entered the research relationship as a professional, not as a friend; much like a psychotherapist who, although involving him- or herself in intensely subjective interaction with the client, remains a professional in the psychotherapeutic relationship.

Even though friendships did in fact develop between Malke, Deborah and the researcher, friendships which continued after the research was concluded this, as far as the researcher could establish, did not negatively influence, but was in fact an essential and real part of the research relationship between researcher and participant.

The point of importance is that, during the interviewing process itself, **the emphasis was on the issue of research**. The emphasis **shifted** to cordial togetherness after the research period ended and friendships with some of the survivors continued.

Flexibility in the Giving of Instructions

Instructions were given to the participants in an informal way and as the situation demanded. Esther wanted the instructions spelt out clearly before the interviews started. Deborah was highly irritated with them and Magda ignored them. Sarah responded directly and to the point and David seemed not to need to be told what the researcher expected of him.

Nevertheless, questions put to them in one way or another were: what happened to them during the Holocaust; how did they feel and cope at the time; what kept them going; how did they manage to survive? How did they come to terms with what happened to them; how do they feel about their experiences during the Holocaust now? These questions were thought to be effective in eliciting data around the topic of the meaning of suffering.

However, as soon as the interviews started, each participant took his or her own unique course. **There was little or no need to keep the phenomenon of the meaning of suffering in focus**. This topic was central to all of their experiences; **it was the focus point in each of their struggles to come to terms with what happened to them**.

The Use of Pseudonyms

At the outset of the interviews, it was explained to the participants that, according to social science practice their identities should not be divulged; that pseudonyms would be used; that the material to be published would be given to them to be verified and approved. At first, the researcher thought that this would set them at ease and make them more willing to share experiences they might otherwise have withheld. However, this conjecture was proved wrong.

As it will be explained at the end of this chapter, their agreement to the use of pseudonyms at the outset of the interviewing period, was an indication of their **reserve** towards the researcher and not a matter of confidentiality.

Once the participants felt convinced that the researcher could in fact capture the meaning and essence of their life's stories, they found the use of pseudonyms unnecessary and even bothersome and

annoying.

The researcher compromised by using their pseudonyms in the dissertation yet respected their wishes to be known by their real names by indicating the identity of the person behind the pseudonym.

Utilizing a Tape-recorder

The rationale for using a tape-recorder. The participants had to give permission for a tape recorder to be used. The participants seemed to grasp the reason for its use, namely, to allow the researcher maximal concentration on what they were telling her without the restraining effect or fear that she might not remember all that they told her. They were also in agreement with the stated fact that having their testimonies on tape would allow the researcher to reflect their experiences more accurately in the writing up and presentation of their accounts.

Having the interviews on tape served another important purpose. It allowed the researcher to listen to the original interview, to make notes on what she felt occurred during the interview as she took note of her own and the participant's recorded responses.

Finally, the recorded interviews proved invaluable in the immersion phase of the explication process since it allowed the researcher to listen to the tapes again and again, to compare it with her notes and to use it as a fresh reminder of the original experience.

Responses to the use of a tape-recorder. Of all the participants, only Malke responded with some anxiety about the use of a tape-recorder. Should everything she tells go on tape? We agreed that I would erase anything she did not want to have recorded. This related to her sexual experiences which, even though she shared them with me fully, she felt uneasy about having on tape.

The Use of Field Notes

The keeping of regular notes on the interactions with research participants, of impressions about the interviews, were regarded as highly important - an activity the co-promoter, Dr Schurink, strongly advised.

Diaries were kept on each research participant. Many illustrative examples like those used in the discussions above, could be drawn from the diaries. The unfolding of the relationship with each participant could be described on the basis of the entries in the diaries. Portraits could be compiled not only on the basis of the protocols, but also on the basis of notes made about each research participant: how did they come across in the interview? how did they respond to the researcher? what more could be learnt about them from what they had related during the interview?

Particularly interesting, were the notes kept on the responses and experiences of the researcher in her interaction with each participant. With Esther, who invited the researcher to tea after each interview - times during which they shared their personal lives in an intimate and open way - the researcher felt like a close sister. With Deborah, the researcher was a fumbler. Her fumbling in and out of Deborah's world, was indicative of Deborah's awesome depth of insight and wisdom, her culture and learning, her

sophistication and pride. With Sarah, the researcher was a co-professional. Sarah involved the researcher in her doctoral work and was keenly interested in the doctoral work of the researcher. With David, the researcher was a philosopher. David sometimes involved the researcher in provocative argument, challenging her thoughts on a particular subject; often leaving her with thought-provoking and disturbing questions. With Malke, the researcher was a delighted child. Malke mothered the researcher, fed her and showered her with affection.

The roles into which each of the research participants cast the researcher, said much about themselves and the way in which they approached their worlds. The diaries that the researcher had kept for each of them, also told a story about the researcher: how shocked and pained she felt, how angry and depressed at the injustice, the horror, survivors were made to suffer. Her anguish about man's inhumanity to man, her own struggle with the incomprehensibility of human suffering, were recorded in many pieces of prose and poem.

Working towards Saturation

The interviewing period stretched over two years (1989 to 1990). After the researcher had concluded the interviews with the fifth participant, she felt that a **saturation point** had been reached and that involving more participants would take the process beyond its **natural closure**. The phenomenon had been richly revealed. At that point, enough information about it seemed to have been gathered.

Glaser and Strauss (in Schurink, 1988) describes the point of saturation as follows: "Saturation means that no additional data are being found whereby the (researcher) can develop properties of the (given) category" (p. 147). With a phenomenon as complex and as vast in its dimensions as suffering and its meaning, the sense of saturation is often intuitive.

An example is the point of closure experienced in psychotherapy with a client. A point is reached, often long before everything is said, when both psychotherapist and client (researcher and participant) feel that the process should be concluded. Life goes on after this point and moves beyond the confines of the psychotherapeutic (and research) process. Should the process be made to continue, a flatness enters into it. Conversations become repetitive, nothing really new is forthcoming (Reason & Rowan, 1981).

Moustakas (1990) noted that heuristic research is rooted in experiential time, not clock time, and works its way towards a natural closing. When a sense of agreement that "enough has been said" is reached between researcher and participant, the research can be accepted as closed.

The Explication of the Data

Gaining an Intuitive, Holistic Grasp

After all the interviews of the respective participants had been carefully transcribed and a file created for each of them, the first step in the explication process followed, namely, the effort to gain **an intuitive, holistic grasp of the data** of all the recorded experiences. This rather momentous task took several forms - a reading of the transcriptions, sometimes of one, at other times of another participant;

comparing the experiences of different participants; listening to tapes while driving in the car or when settled in bed at night. Sometimes the researcher would just listen to the tapes; at other times she would be making copious notes.

Breaks were taken, sometimes for weeks. These occurred naturally: other duties had to be attended to, or the researcher felt saturated and needed to get away from the data for a while. At times she felt quite urgent about returning to it, or sought for a particular passage or experience that suddenly came to mind and that she had a question or an idea about.

In referring back to the data time and again, a process that has been referred to as the hermeneutic circle, an ever more refined grasp of the data was being obtained.

This procedure often led to a breakthrough of sharp insight, an exhilarating realization that some aspect has been really understood.

For example, it dawned on the researcher that, in their sufferings, the participants were engaged in a **conversation with their own consciences**. They were confronted with choices, invited into making the right choice and, if obeying the dictates of their own consciences, they were supported by the satisfaction that they were brave enough to have made such a choice, however difficult and costly it was. Was **this** the meaning of suffering?

It was most exciting to find the above intuitive, holistic theme emerging strongly as the explication process proceeded.

Constructing Protocols

A stage was reached when the researcher felt that she wanted to organize the data in some way. In the organization of the data, some aspects of the phenomenological method of research, as expounded by Kruger (1979), was found most helpful.

After an intuitive holistic grasp of the data has been gained, this method breaks down the data of the individual participants into naturally occurring units - each conveying a particular meaning - which emerges spontaneously from the data. Kruger (1979) defines a natural meaning unit as "a statement made by the subject which is self-definable and self-delimiting in the expression of a single, recognized aspect of the subject's experience" (p. 128). The subjects' own terminology is adhered to in order that the data may "speak for itself".

Having listed all the natural meaning units, the researcher then proceeds to eliminate those units which are repeated, that is, which convey an identical intention or meaning. Having done so, the next step is to eliminate any irrelevant units. **The remaining units are considered tentatively to be non-repetitive and relevant descriptive statements concerning the experience being investigated.** This is termed the **first order profile**. This first order profile is then converted into a constituent profile description, which is a **condensed summary of the original data in the words of the researcher**, containing the essence of what the subject expressed.

A **second order profile** results from a repeat of the process on the constituent profile description. The elements emerging from this procedure are then listed. These elements are then used to write an **essential description** of the raw data. An essential description is described by Kruger (1980) as "a

succinct description emerging from the process of explication - the making explicit that which is implicit in the raw data - and containing all the essential elements in the structure of the phenomenon under investigation" (p. 130).

In using the above procedure in this study, the data of one participant, Esther, seemed to give a most comprehensive overview of the experience of suffering and its meaning. Her data was therefore explicated in more detail and written out more completely than in the case of the other research participants. The main themes (clusters of meaning units) from Esther's data unfolded in a **life-story context**. It was felt that in giving the **essential description** of each group of meaning units (relating to her childhood and background; her Holocaust sufferings; the experience of meaning in her sufferings; her post-Holocaust life; and present life orientations) throughout Esther's unfolding story, would help capture the key elements of each section.

Having completed Esther's protocol first, the same course was taken in the organization and analysis of the data of each of the other research participants, although in less explicated detail.

Although a phenomenological method of explication of the data was followed, the protocols* were written up according to **themes** (main meaning units), using quotations from the original data (**first order constructs**) in expounding these themes.

Each protocol was contrasted with the original data from which it was taken to ensure that none of the important aspects of the original accounts were lost and, above all, that the flavor or character of the original holistic picture was retained.

Drawing a Composite Picture

After the individual depictions or protocols had been written, the researcher again immersed herself in the material in order to understand the "universal" qualities and themes of the recorded experiences. According to Moustakas (1990), the composite depiction "should be vivid, accurate, alive, and clear and should encompass the core qualities and themes inherent in the experience" (p. 185).

To assist her in the process of selecting key themes from the data of all the participants, the method of Kruger (1979) was once again used in the writing of what is called: **an extended description** of the combined data of all the research participants.

From the data of all the research participants, the researcher gathered those descriptive statements which had similar, though not identical, meanings into clusters termed categories. These categories, or **theme clusters**, were then arranged in a hierarchical fashion. From these categories, or key themes, arranged in meaningful order, starting with one and going on to the next, the researcher wrote an extended description. From this extended description, the researcher could gain an **overall picture** of the experience of suffering and its meaning.

* **The protocols of the research participants, plus the biographical information of each, are presented in the Addendum.** The protocols are presented not in the order of interviewing, but in a way that, to the mind of the researcher, made it read like one unfolding story.

In following the above procedure, the researcher was struck by the fact that the themes of the extended description unfolded in a clear and discernible pattern, best described as a vivid **story of choice**. What emerged in exquisite clarity in this final stage of explication was that, in their sufferings, the research participants seemed engaged in a **conversation with their own consciences** in terms of the choices each situation called upon them to make. Right choices sustained them, imbued them with a sense of meaning. This sense of meaning was strong enough to carry them through the worst situations.

This pattern, revolving around choice, was the very pattern that had impressed itself on the mind of the researcher during the stage of seeking an intuitive, holistic grasp of the data of all the research participants and one that emerged even more clearly as, in the next stage, the data was broken down into meaning units and combined again in order to gain a grasp of the **essential theme or pattern** inherent to the experience of suffering in the case of each research participant. The **essential theme of choice**, inherent to the experiences of every individual research participant, emerged as a **composite picture** when their experiences were taken together as a whole, during the last stage of the explication process.

This **theme or pattern of choice** unfolding in ever greater clarity over the different stages of the explication of the data, is therefore presented as a **composite picture** of the phenomenon of the meaning of suffering. Along with a creative synthesis of the data, it will be presented in Chapter 18, the chapter which covers the final phase of the research process.

Towards a Synthesis of the Data

Douglas and Moustakas (1985) point out that a synthesis goes beyond the distillation of themes and patterns. In presenting such a synthesis, the researcher is challenged to generate a new reality.

The views of Viktor Frankl on the meaning of suffering and his experiences as a survivor of Auschwitz, formed the backdrop of the study of the life-worlds of the research participants. It therefore seemed most challenging to compare his own story of suffering, and his own struggle for meaning, with those of the research participants. Dramatic new light was thrown on the phenomenon of the meaning of suffering in approaching it from this unusual and unique angle.

The above synthesis of the data is given after the presentation of the composite picture in Chapter 18. It complies with the requirements of what Douglas and Moustakas (1985) call: a creative synthesis (cf. Chapter 14).

The Scientific Merit of the Present Research

In any research it is considered appropriate, and in a qualitative study such as the present one, even imperative, to consider its validity and credibility. In this section the scientific merit of the present study will therefore be considered.

In a critical consideration of the reliability and validity of the present study, we will judge it by several of the more well-known criteria used by new paradigm researchers.

It was already noted that the scientific merit of a heuristic research endeavor revolves around the sensitivity of the researcher and research participants towards the phenomenon being researched, that is,

their ability to let the phenomenon emerge and reveal itself in a way that, in a reflection of this process in the final report of the researcher, will meaningfully engage the reader. Taylor (1990) contends that the effectiveness of this reflection is what new paradigm researchers call reliability and validity.

It is how effectively any heuristic research effort has succeeded in explicating the core qualities of or themes inherent to a specific phenomenon, that determines its final value.

What the heuristic researcher is thus seeking as he/she presents the research question, methodology and findings to the reader, is an "a-ha" affirmation on the part of the reader. It is in its **intersubjectivity** (that it makes sense to all concerned) that heuristic research rests its case of being scientifically meritorious.

The aforementioned criterion relates to **face validity** employed in traditional research. To establish this type of validity, the question is asked: does it "look right" to the reasonably discriminating and critical observer? In new paradigm research we will rephrase this to mean: does it "feel right", "does it ring true", "does this make sense", "can the reader concur with it in his/her own understanding of things"? Keen (1975) contends that the most basic value of phenomenological psychology and research is to open our eyes and our minds to **lived experience**.

In an effort to meet the above criterion, and to enhance the scientific merit of her own research, particular attention was devoted to the following:

- * The development of a relatively high-quality and discriminating level of awareness towards the phenomenon in question.

New paradigm researchers are in agreement that a researcher must undergo a high level of self-development before he or she becomes capable of relationally valid action. Certain aspects of human experience (and not necessarily esoteric ones) can only be experienced within specific states of consciousness. The researcher, seeking to illuminate such phenomena, must develop high-quality, discriminating awareness (Reason & Rowan, 1981).

The researcher sought to achieve this high-level awareness in various ways, namely, through: an in-depth study of the meaning of suffering in the works of the Holocaust survivor and the existentialist: Viktor Frankl; an appraisal of the personal views of mainstream theorists on the topic of suffering and the meaning of human existence; an exploration of the Holocaust as a crisis of meaning; an entry into the life-worlds of survivors by spending a two year period with them as they met monthly at their organization, the She'erith Hapletah.

- * The achievement of a discriminating self-awareness through rigorous self-searches.

Reason and Rowan (1981) point out that we cannot study human processes except as aware human beings, and for this we require self-knowledge through processes of self-inquiry. It seems to them important that the researcher should **actively** explore the stirrings of his or her own unconscious while engaged in research.

It seemed an advantage in the present research that the researcher had undergone a personal analysis and is a practicing psychotherapist. It came naturally to her to constantly study her own hunches, reactions, feelings and experiences during the research process.

Some of the questions she asked herself as she studied her field notes regarding her own reactions and feelings during the research process were: How did she influence the process, what effect did her responses, attitudes and person have on the research participants; how did the participants, their persons and what they shared with her, influence and change her own perceptions; what effect did the phenomenon of the Holocaust, what it says of man and of his nature, have on both the researcher and the research participants; where did they agree or collude in their understanding of the meaning of suffering; how did both the understanding of the researcher and the research participants grow as the phenomenon of the meaning of suffering became more evident to all of them during the process of research?

It is believed that such a self-critical stance, at least to some important extent, eliminated the distortions of a clouded judgement (the bias of thoughts and feelings that have not been subjected to close scrutiny).

* The critical appraisal of research mentors.

Torbert (in Reason and Rowan, 1981) accentuates the value of mentors in the role of friends willing to act as enemies.

The researcher was often challenged to higher levels of thinking and to a more precise way of going about the research through her mentors, often in a situation of painful confrontation. After examination, the dissertation was returned to the researcher for a clarification of some important research issues. The external examiners, both experts in their own field of research, have therefore also played an invaluable role in their interaction with the internal examiners in directing the researcher towards a more precise methodological exposition.

Reason and Rowan (1981) point out that confrontation, challenge, disagreement, picking holes and so on, must be built into a valid inquiry.

* Re-searching and re-checking the data, time and again.

Valid inquiry is also based on *cycles* of research, that is, by going round the research cycle several times. Only by checking and re-checking impressions, conclusions, concepts and themes, will these be refined, more deeply clarified.

In the present study this process was specifically followed during the period of participant observation, and with the explication of the interview material.

* The employment of different forms of knowing.

Any form of knowledge can have validity in its own right. However, as Reason and Rowan (1981) phrase it: "Knowing which is a laminate of several layers is more valid than single sheet knowing"

(p. 249).

In the present study, the phenomenon of research was approached in various ways: through personal, experiential knowing; through theoretical illumination (how mainstream theorists saw and experienced it); and through practical research of the phenomenon as it manifested in the lives of Holocaust survivors.

* Combining various research strategies.

Mouton and Marais (1988) refer to inter-methodological cross validation as a means of enhancing the validity of a research endeavor. Using more than one method of data-gathering can be expected to result in a more valid assessment of the subject of research.

The validity of the present study may have been enhanced by studying the phenomenon of the meaning of suffering among Holocaust survivors, both in the capacity as participant observer and as heuristic researcher. Even using different methods of explication (a combination of phenomenological and heuristic methods of data explication) may also have allowed the phenomenon of study to emerge more clearly.

* Feedback from research participants.

To control the accuracy of the researcher's explication of the original, tape-recorded data, and to gain feedback on the validity of her impressions and interpretations of the data of each research participant, the protocols of the research participants were given to them to be checked and commented upon.

However, the portraits and the creative synthesis, which have been compiled on the basis of the protocols of the research participants, were not given to the participants. These depictions move **beyond** the research participants' own stories and involve a more general (universal) interpretation of the meaning of suffering.

The research participants were not only in general agreement with the way the researcher had depicted their stories, but even expressed gratitude that the researcher could capture their stories: the essence and meaning of it, in the way she did.

The only corrections made, concerned some sequences of events and the correct spelling of some camp names and Hebrew words used.

Looking at their own stories almost in a new way (through the eyes of the researcher), a most unexpected response on the part of the research participants was evoked.

Even though they had agreed to the use of pseudonyms at the outset of the interviews, this was probably linked to a reserve towards the researcher at the time. They were probably reticent to have their identities disclosed since they were uncertain of her ability to really understand what they went through and to adequately reflect what is, after all, a most private and painful matter.

However, after the research participants had read the protocols compiled by the researcher, that reserve seemed to dissipate. They could identify with the researcher's depictions of their accounts (the protocols). It was **their** stories. They were proud of their stories and now found the use of pseudonyms

unnecessary and even annoying. They now wanted to be identified by their real names, as the following accounts from the field notes will illustrate:

Soon after delivering Esther's protocol to her, she phoned the researcher, telling her that she was ready to discuss it. Only two factual corrections had to be made. Esther seemed eager that the researcher should be satisfied with her story. Did she come across well?.. Her husband, whom the researcher had not met before, joined our conversation. He questioned the researcher at length regarding the research aims, method and findings. Would the dissertation be published as a book? He showed the researcher a book which his mother had written after her Holocaust experiences. He felt that everyone who knew Esther, would recognize her story. The thought that her identity will be known, however, did not seem to disturb either Esther or her husband. In fact, the researcher had the impression that the use of a pseudonym seemed to them unnecessary.

The researcher had left Malke's protocol with her after a visit to her at the Home. Spending some time with another friend living in the same Home, the researcher decided to go and say a last good-bye to Malke before she left. The researcher found her sitting on her bed reading the protocol, and crying. "It is exactly like it happened!.. oh, I remember so well!.." She looked excited and even happy, despite her tears. "But why do you call me 'Malke'?.." she wanted to know, almost angrily. "I am going to make many copies. I will give one to the Home. I will put down my own name," she determined, most emphatically.

It was a most marvelous coincidence that Sarah, who had emigrated to Australia soon after our interviews, paid a visit to South Africa just as the researcher had finished her protocol. The researcher met her at her brother's home and they read the protocol together. She clutched onto the researcher's arm as the researcher read the protocol to her. She corrected a few minor details. When the researcher had finished reading it, she took the researcher's face in both her hands and kissed her several times, weeping. However, she insisted that her real name be used. I must promise to send her two copies. One she wanted to keep for herself, and one she wanted to give as a gift to the Sydney Holocaust Memorial Library, where she now worked.

Deborah had spent a day with the researcher at the researcher's home, when the protocol was given to her. Looking through it, she looked up. With tears in her eyes, she said, softly: "Thank you!" Having some difficulty with her eye-sight, she wanted the researcher to come and read it to her, which the researcher did, the following weekend. She was totally enthralled, reliving everything. She became weepy several times during the reading. At the end of it, she said that the researcher was to make a copy for her son in America and send it to him. However, her own name was to be used.

After dropping David's protocol in his post-box, he phoned the researcher to tell her there were a thing or two which needed correction and that the researcher and her husband should come and have tea with them, which they did. Both David and his wife expressed gratitude that the researcher had succeeded in "capturing" his story; that it had been "understood so well". They treated the researcher with love, and deep respect. From their response it was clear that they too, felt it was David's story and that his real name could be attached to it.

To the researcher the responses of the research participants were most rewarding since it indicated that the research participants had judged the protocols favorably. It was deemed by them to be a **valid reflection** of the key theme of their sufferings: its meaning.

Questionable Methodological Issues in the Present Research

An objection that may be raised in a critical consideration of the validity of the present research is that it fails to be completely representative of a specific research method. It cannot be regarded as phenomenological since it has too many heuristic features. But is it truly heuristic? The present researcher did an extensive literature study **before** she launched into her research. Does this fit into the picture of phenomenological and heuristic research? Is this research what it contends to be, namely, new paradigm research, or are there too many elements that can be regarded as belonging to the traditional research paradigm?

In trying to give an account of the way the researcher set about the research, the role of a literature study in phenomenological and heuristic research will be briefly reviewed as well as the way it was used in the present study.

The Use of a Literature Study in New Paradigm Research

The use of literature is a sensitive issue among phenomenological and heuristic researchers in their effort to break away from old paradigm research.

New paradigm researchers contend that the positivistic researcher's efforts to try and prove pre-set hypotheses based on some set theory or other about the phenomenon in question, can blind the mind of the researcher and make him or her insensitive to the true nature of the phenomenon. The phenomenological and heuristic researcher seeks an experience of reality **as it exists**, independent of any theoretical predispositions about it. Fearing to be indoctrinated by theory in a study of the literature, the phenomenological and heuristic researcher usually chooses to do a literature study at a point near the end of the research, not at the beginning, where it might act to predispose and predetermine or color the researcher's awareness (Moustakas, 1971).

The Use of a Literature Study in the Present Research

Responding to the possible objection that the researcher in the current study used a literature study before, and not after, the research phase, it is contended that a literature study can serve different purposes and that it need not lead to theoretical bias.

Depending on the way it is conducted, a literature study can also serve the purpose of **opening the researcher's mind** by removing the obstacles of ignorance and lack of understanding. It can break down stereotypical ways of perceiving, **reveal presuppositions that the researcher may not even have been aware of**. It can shock the researcher into new ways of thinking and feeling; sensitize him or her to the issue at hand.

For example, Holocaust scholars testify to the importance of holding one's mind in the fires of the Holocaust long enough for it to be purified, that is, freed from false presuppositions and vanities of thought (Kren & Rappoport, 1980). This is a truth the present researcher herself experienced, as the

following example will illustrate:

The researcher spent several months struggling through the monumental documentary on the Holocaust written by the historian, Martin Gilbert (1986), breaking down several times as the horror of the events at the time, overcame her. This is a book that David told the researcher he cannot read, even though he constantly uses it as a source of reference.

Particularly horrifying to the researcher, and an issue which provoked a deep and painful soul-search, was the realization that a root of anti-semitism, however small, if unchecked and, in fact, not ruthlessly eliminated from the heart and mind of a person, can grow and lead to the murder of six million men, women and children. A root of racial hatred is the dynamic behind the actions of the perpetrator of violence and behind the inactions of the passive bystander. The length to which man can go in his inhumanity to man (his prejudice against and his unconcern towards the plight of his fellow-man), is the history which the Holocaust presents to the conscience of humankind. (Field notes: 1989-07-30)

An intensive study was also made of the views of Frankl on meaning and suffering. However, these views of Frankl, although it dramatically contributed to a deepening of the impressions of suffering and its meaning, were not used as hypotheses in the traditional sense of the word. Both Sarah and Deborah urged the researcher to read the works of famous Holocaust survivors (Katzetnik and Elie Wiesel). Sarah and Deborah felt that these famous survivors gave voice to their own experiences. A study of the works of Katzetnik, Wiesel, Frankl and also other famous survivors was deemed necessary since, in the opinion of the research participants, it will serve to heighten the researcher's grasp of their own experiences of suffering.

The question may be asked: has the study of such literature biased the researcher?

The researcher is of the opinion that it had quite the opposite effect upon her.

In struggling through the Holocaust literature, for example, the researcher experienced a horror at her own ignorance. She became more sensitive towards the survivor; she had an increased understanding of the anguish of suffering; she could more accurately identify with being the helpless victim in a situation of distress or adversity that the sufferer can do little or nothing to change. It made her more acutely aware of the reality of being in such a situation: how would she react? what would there be left for her to do?

A literature study in the present research served to heighten the researcher's awareness of issues of importance, and allowed a more sensitive appraisal of such issues. A more accurate and valid investigation of the phenomenon of research became possible.

For example: the researcher experienced an increased capacity to place herself in the shoes of the survivor; to have the kind of compassionate understanding or empathy that allowed the survivor, not to hold back out of fear of being misunderstood, but to bear his or her own soul.

Without such a depth of revelation, would an in-depth grasp of the meaning of suffering among the survivors have been possible?

It is the contention of the present researcher, therefore, that an intensive study of the literature on the phenomenon of research during the preparatory stage of the research, does not disqualify the research as phenomenological or heuristic in nature.

Which purpose a literature study serves is dependent on **how** a literature search is used, in fact, on **how** the researcher reads.

Finally, when and how a literature study is used, should be determined by the phenomenon that is being investigated.

Giorgi (1971) puts the matter succinctly when he points out that it is phenomenologically **unsound** to establish a method that **must** be used prior to and independent of the phenomenon to be investigated. The method must dialogue with the content, states Kruger (1979). He points out that **the phenomenological and heuristic method of research is reflexive in nature and intent. The phenomenological method is itself phenomenologically derived.**

After having considered the methodology of the present study, the researcher now hopes to lead the reader into the world of the research participant. The aim is to illuminate the world of the Holocaust survivor and, through a revelation of that world, to give the reader a more vivid grasp of suffering and its possible meanings.

CHAPTER 17

THE RESEARCH RELATIONSHIP WITH AND PORTRAIT OF EACH RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

In this chapter we will discuss the establishment and development of the research relationship with each research participant. We will also present brief portraits of Esther, Malke, Sarah and Deborah, based on their stories as recorded in the Addendum.

David's portrait is presented in much greater detail since his philosophical quest to find the meaning of his sufferings, gives us a **natural overview** of the experiences of all the research participants.

Esther: *Eva Weisz*Initial Contact

On the 15th October, 1989, Esther was invited to give a brief report on her recent visit to Poland and Auschwitz, a talk which she entitled: "The pilgrimage of my soul." A prominent and well-known speaker had spoken before her on the topic: "God and the Holocaust." It was a theological and highly academic approach to the subject by someone who had no firsthand knowledge of the Holocaust, not being a survivor. Esther's very brief but impassioned talk after this rather bloodless lecture, came as a shock. The unreality of theoretical argument suddenly gave way to the stark reality of someone who bore suffering testimony of what she was speaking about.

After some irritation at the speculative nature of the first speaker's lecture, I was profoundly moved by the few things Esther had to say. A whole world seemed to be hidden behind the few sentences which she had uttered. I felt strongly drawn to her and, at the tea break, went to speak to her. "I wish you were given more time. I feel there are so many things that you left unsaid", I remarked to her. "Well, whenever you want to, I am willing to speak to you about it," she replied. I asked her whether she would like to participate in my research. After some hesitation, she agreed.

Interviews:

- 1st: 12th March, 1990
- 2nd: 26th March, 1990
- 3rd: 23rd April, 1990
- 4th: 30th April, 1990
- 5th: 11th June, 1990
- 6th: 8th August, 1990

The interviews were from one to two hours in duration, followed by more informal conversation at the tea table of about another hour. These mornings were spent with her in her own home.

Development of Research Relationship and General Remarks

When I phoned Esther to arrange our first interview, she asked me to explain the exact nature of the research, a question that she repeated when I came to her home for the first visit.

I told her what I more or less told every other research participant: I am interested to know what happened to them during the Holocaust; how they felt at the time; how they dealt with what they had to face. What sustained them, kept them going? How did they manage to survive? How did they come to terms with what happened to them? What do they think and feel about their Holocaust experiences now? She can tell me as little or as much she liked. I want to use a tape recorder so that I can give her my undivided attention; it is also important to not have to rely on memory, but to record her experiences as exactly as possible. The material will be used for research purposes. Her identity will not be divulged. I will give her the protocol of the interviews to read and correct before its printing or use.

She seemed satisfied, allowed me to start the recording and chose to start by relating her recent visit to Auschwitz, the visit I had expressed a desire to know more about.

She spoke easily and vividly, often with great emotion. I felt myself quickly drawn into her enthralling descriptions to the point of becoming tearful. This obviously touched Esther and I sensed a kind of breakthrough in contact between us.

During a natural break she said she had better go to the cloakroom. When she returned, she asked if we could have tea. I felt that we had rounded off the conversation for that day and said that tea would be welcome. Maybe we could continue the interview on the next occasion? She said that she thought so too.

The word: "interview" felt wrong. I had hardly asked any questions, only to clarify a point or to affirm an observation. She often asked, for example: "Wouldn't you agree?..." She set the tone, however, and related what she wanted to in the way and order she desired to tell it. She was also the one who ended it at the point where she excused herself, by asking whether I was ready for a cup of tea.

She had prepared a lovely tea with cake, all set out on a beautifully laid table. She wanted to know about my family and I naturally enquired after hers. She obviously loves her husband deeply, is very proud of her daughter, whom she called a deep thinker, and of her son, whom she described as a sensitive and compassionate child. She has a particularly deep affection for her aged mother, whom she described as her closest friend, counselor and guide.

After all this warmth, I found it a bit surprising that she suggested that we meet again only after two weeks. I realized that, however open Esther was beginning to feel towards me, and however easily she spoke, it was nonetheless a traumatic and very exhausting and emotionally depleting experience to recall what she did. She seemed to need some time to get over the distress it evoked and to build up enough strength for a further discussion of her Holocaust experiences at a next meeting.

Her ambivalence about opening up the trauma of the past was reflected in the fact that she tried to get hold of me on the morning of the 2nd interview to cancel the appointment. I had already left home, however. The tea table was nonetheless laid out beautifully once again, she had prepared another gorgeous tea with eats, something she must have prepared before she tried to cancel the appointment, obviously at the last moment.

Once she got going, she again spoke easily, this time sharing her life in Transylvania and the events that led up to their capture. She cancelled the next two appointments. Upon reflection, I realized that she had skirted the Holocaust: by telling me about her recent visit to Auschwitz first, and then about her wonderful childhood. To enter into a description of what actually happened to her during the Holocaust, was difficult to do.

During the 3rd and 4th interviews, appointments which she kept, she took the plunge, however, and took me into the very heart of her Holocaust experiences. The next appointment was cancelled again. The 5th interview only took place a month later, covering the latter and worst part of her internment.

I felt that the break in between was to prepare her to divulge this final onslaught. Almost two months passed after this exhausting talk. In the 6th and final interview she reviewed her life after the Holocaust and up to the present.

What struck me was that, despite these interruptions, Esther had no difficulty whatsoever in picking up exactly where she last left off. Her memory was uncannily clear, as if she had the whole story in front of her, knowing exactly where she broke off and where she needed to start again. She unfolded the story step by step, through all the camps up to the liberation, then onto her life after the liberation. She ended where she had begun: her visit to Auschwitz.

This event, a visit to the place of her horror, so many years later, concluded what the Holocaust did and meant to her. Her final words were: "And this is my story."

I did not feel the least inclination to ask any more questions or to continue beyond this point. The interviews were concluded.

Esther: A Woman of Valour

Esther was a mere 13 year old girl when, what she described as a happy and wonderful childhood and family life in Transylvania, were brought to a sudden end. Together with her father and mother, she was captured and eventually taken to Auschwitz, the dreaded Nazi concentration and death camp. Her father was killed, but she and her mother survived.

Esther's full story is presented in the Addendum (pp. 381-402).

Esther's story is a vivid portrayal of a woman of great moral courage. She made a life-long and heroic effort to bring the disjointed parts of her life together. **"My childhood was a very big chapter in my life and then there was another chapter."** She presented her experiences in a life-story context, trying to connect her life before the Holocaust to her life after it.

Her Holocaust experiences came as a shockingly sudden and extremely harsh severance from her warmly loving and happy childhood. **"There was no transition."** **"My whole life stopped, my childhood stopped at the age of 13 when we arrived at Auschwitz."** She was at the brink of adolescence when she entered Auschwitz, accompanied by her mother. When she was liberated a year and a half later, she had lost her youth. **"I grew up and became old within hours."** At 15 friends of her mother called her: **"the little old lady."**

In the camp she made the resolution that: **"If I ever survive, I want to return as a free person."**
"I made to resolution that I would re-adjust."

She began the laborious task of rebuilding her broken life. **"Slowly, slowly, we picked up our lives."** What had been most precious to Esther: the warmth and loveliness of a happy family life; family values of love and respect for one another; the preciousness of family ties, the sacredness of the family unit; are the things she sought to rebuild. She had lost her wonderful father, the intimacy and warm security of love which they had shared as a family during what she called her wondrous childhood. She encouraged her broken-hearted mother to remarry. Only then did she marry and have two children, devoting her whole life in building up a secure and happy family life. **"Slowly, slowly, my faith was restored."**

At last her two children had grown up, without having lost their precious youths. Both her daughter and her son are people of integrity, having embraced and upholding the values she had taught them. She had given them what had been snatched away from her: **"Growing up in such a happy atmosphere, I always imagined that when I am grown up I would like to get married and I would like it for myself, just as it is."**

She could, at last, fulfill her vow: to return to Auschwitz. After 45 years; after a life's work of inner restoration, she made what she called: **"the pilgrimage of my soul"** Only then she was able **"to close it all up. This is it. I have retained myself."**

Malke : Magda Haydu

Initial Contact and Impressions

Malke attached herself to me from the first day we met. She came to sit next to me on our first visit to the She'erith Hapletah and engaged my husband and myself in conversation. She invited us to visit her. We both took to her immediately.

Even though she speaks animatedly and has a loud laugh, there is a sadness and nervousness about her. Her eyes have a look of hurt. There is a self-defensiveness about her, as if she is expecting to be rejected. Once the door to her room is closed, however, the world is shut out. You find yourself within a cosy, nesty little sanctuary and somewhat overwhelmed by her warm motherliness.

Malke addresses us as **"my little darlings.."**. She is always delighted to see our children. A child-minder during her youth, she obviously adores children.

She is a collector of dolls. On her bed, on the chairs, in a display cabinet, on the window sills, perched on her table and television set, are dolls of different shapes and sizes. Dressed in colorful costumes of different countries, they lend a bright and cheerful look to her room.

Her room is in the sick-bay section, even though she is perfectly healthy. **"I close my door and don't even see these kuckaloo (senile) old people.."** She has all her meals there; and she keeps left-overs in her fridge. We are, in fact, often given parcels of **"perfectly good food"** to take home with us. She often buys and prepares food for herself.

She has been in this same room for over twenty seven years, ever since she came to the Home. When the section was converted into a sick-bay, she was allowed to stay on in her room since it had become home to her.

Interviews:

1st: 24th April 1989

2nd: 25th April 1989

3rd: 26th April 1989

Having set aside a week, we concluded our interviews after three full mornings.

Development of Research Relationship and General Remarks

Malke never at any point showed any reserve or hesitation in her relationship towards me. In fact, she positioned herself next to me, supporting herself, also in an emotional sense, as she hooked her arm into mine whenever we ventured outside of her room. Her reserve and uncertainty seemed directed towards the outside world, which she was almost expecting to be hostile. She was particularly afraid and suspiciously defensive towards Black people with whom she, as a result of her distrusting attitude, often clashed. Singling out "nice and kind" ones, she would shower these with affection and gifts but also gave gifts to those Black members of staff whom she thought it wise to appease.

Bent with age, she walks with some difficulty. She insists on carrying a bag filled with several warm sweaters, even in summer. She also keeps a supply of white bread in her bag when she goes out to eat anywhere. I felt it was connected to the cold and the hunger that she had suffered in the camp. The fact that she has her own supply of bread always handy, seems a source of comfort to her. She described the meager portions of bread they received in the camp as "bad bread, but bread.." "Now I eat real white bread."

Malke looked forward to our interviews which she regarded as something special and exclusive between the two of us. She had bought biscuits, had a fresh supply of her favorite, most expensive coffee, which she always kept as a "special treat" and for some special occasion.

She was eager to start although a bit concerned about being recorded. "Shall I tell everything?.." It became clear that she wanted to record her experiences as accurately and as fully as possible. The "everything" referred to the sexual aspects of her life.

Being assured that she could share only what she wanted to make known, she nonetheless told me everything about herself, including what turned out to be a hilarious one day marriage with a man who proved to be impotent. We were in fits of laughter as she described the incident, but, on her request, I agreed to erase these portions from the tapes. "Life is life, but even so..".

She was completely open and frank about all her feelings, and although speaking with a heavy Hungarian accent in a broken English, she was most graphic with the descriptions and statements she used, most of which are memorable since it so caught the meaning that an event had for her.

It was paradoxical that, even though we were dealing with such traumatic material, we thoroughly enjoyed piecing all the events together. We were involved in a joint project of great importance: she was keen in letting her own testimony be heard. The accent was not on the horror, but on giving as accurate an account of what happened to her and what she felt and experienced, as possible. This did not detract from, but added to the seriousness of her account. She was fulfilling a life's commission in making me understand what happened to her and in passing on her story. **"God gave me that story to tell, the truth and only the truth."**

Malke: A Mother to the Needy

Malke, born in Hungary, was a woman of 28 when she was taken to Dachau. Her only living relative is a cousin.

Malke's full story is presented in the Addendum (pp. 403-410).

In Malke we have a portrait of natural and spontaneous human goodness; a motherly goodness that even the horror of her Holocaust experiences could not destroy.

Having grown up in a loving, caring home, she accepts, without questioning it, that it is right and natural to be good (loving, hardworking and absolutely honest). These are the natural ingredients of family life; its values that had been transmitted to her and that are as spontaneous to her as breathing. This is simply what life **should** and was meant to be, and **is** like, if you behave in a right and proper, that is, an affectionate and caring way, the way she had been taught as a child.

"I had a terrible love for my Mommy, who does not? Everybody loves Mommy and Daddy..", not so? To her, it went against the natural or human grain to not be loving or caring; to not help people in need. When such help is withdrawn because of prejudice, something has gone wrong. To act inhumanely does not make sense, like when fellow-inmates urged her not to help a dying woman because she was German: **"From the terrible suffering we had, we talked nonsense."** A person who acted inhumanely, like the Jewish Kapo whom she met in the camp and who had cremated his mother and four sisters in Auschwitz, was **"not a human being any more."** People who went even further in the perpetration of evil, like the Nazis, she called: **"bastards"**. They were outside the normal pale and pattern of things.

Evil is something she is a stranger to, it is out there, in the hostile world, outside her inner sanctuary that is filled with a goodness that she feels comfortably and consolingly part of. Evil had invaded the sacred sanctuary of her happy and sheltered life before the Holocaust. But evil always remained outside of her, like some alien thing. Evil is something frightening and horrible that is done to man. Evil is a terrible, destructive disease like the typhus she contracted in the camp: **"the typhus got in me."** She was **delivered** from it: **"God kept me.."**. She was not **"taken away"** by it.

In the original and final scheme of things, things were, and will be, only good: she was born into a good family, there was the horror of the Holocaust in between that disrupted their lives, but her murdered family, and those who died naturally and who were **"lovely, lovely people"**, are in heaven. She will see

them again. "You see, I believe in this."

There is a God and He is altogether good": "God kept me." God can be totally trusted, no matter what. Hitler was like **the devil**, he was evil. He tried to destroy everything that was good. He sought entirely evil ends: to totally destroy the Jews. He harmed her; he killed her precious mother. **But it was not God who abandoned them.** Even when she felt totally abandoned, she felt that God helped her, that He gave her strength to carry on; that He helped her survive; He saved her life to enable her to tell her story so that others can learn from it.

Sarah: Leah Leibowitz

Initial Contact and Research Relationship

Sarah occupied a leadership position in the She'erith Hapletah. She acted as Chairlady for many years.

Well-groomed and stately, she has an aristocratic yet gentle, motherly look about her. She impresses with her calm and controlled, highly efficient manner and professional attitude.

When we were first introduced to her, she welcomed my husband and myself most cordially and immediately involved us in friendly conversation. She told us that she was doing her doctoral studies on the famous survivor with the pseudonym, Katzetnik. Hearing of my research intentions, she urged me to read his works, telling me that it would give me an unusual and in-depth insight into the sufferings of Nazi concentration camp victims.

She very naturally offered to assist me in my research wherever she could and indicated that I could involve her as research participant. However, she was emigrating to Australia, where her two daughters and their families had moved, and was extremely busy in her preparations for it.

Managing only one interview, another was conducted on a brief return visit some months later. Sarah gave me every personal document she could lay her hands on: notes, articles she had written on her experiences, reports in magazines about her, an unpublished manuscript of her doctorate work, books illuminating aspects of her experiences and a detailed and extensively researched document, reflecting many hours of conversation with Sarah on her life and Holocaust experiences, written by her granddaughter.

We spent two entire mornings together, tape-recording her personal accounts which she gave in a vividly detailed and comprehensive, intelligently ordered way. We agreed to correspond about any further questions I might have.

Interviews:

1st: 28th May, 1990

2nd: 18th July, 1990

Sarah: A Portrait of a Leader

Sarah was living in Lithuania with her husband, baby son and mother-in-law when they were captured. They were sent to the Kovno ghetto. Separated from her family, she was sent to various concentration and labour camps and was liberated from Bergen Belsen. Sarah's husband, baby, mother-in-law and many extended family members perished in the camps.

Sarah's full story is presented in the Addendum (pp. 411-423).

With Sarah's story, we are given a portrait of a leader. Nurtured in a childhood of rich intellectual bounty, her intellect and gifts as a leader could be fully developed. **"I finished with top marks."** This was her first fundamental life's orientation: that she would get on top of things, no matter what the difficulties. In the camps, separated from her close family and stripped of everything that she could still possibly cling to, having nothing but herself, she was presented with her first real challenge. She was given the job of a Stubenalteste (barrack cleaning lady). She rose to the occasion, not only fulfilling her cleaning duties zealously, but taking compassionate charge of the women whose barrack she had been assigned to keep clean. Soon came her second commission, an enlargement of her leadership responsibilities. She was offered the position of Blockalteste (a person in charge of a block of barracks).

Her leadership positions allowed Sarah to gather a group of some 300 women around her, among them her "adopted" daughter. With their liberation from Bergen Belsen she was triumphantly able to gather all her women together, sick and dazed as she felt. **"All that I remember is going back to the barracks and getting my girls, all of them."**

Having lost her own family, Sarah was given a family of 300 women and, in later years, all their children and grandchildren, along with an "adopted" daughter, plus a new family of her own. She has led a life of teaching others, both Jews and non-Jews, in her own efforts to bridge the gulfs of prejudice and enmity between man and man.

Sarah's story bears striking resemblance to a portion of Scripture in the book of the prophet Isaiah, Chapter 54:

More are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman, says the Lord. Enlarge the place of your tent, and let them stretch out the curtains of your habitations. . . You will not remember the reproach of your widowhood any more. O afflicted one, tossed with tempest and not comforted, behold.. all your children shall be taught by the Lord, great shall be the peace of your children. In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression.

Deborah: Dinah Benedikt

Initial Contact

Deborah is the fiery little redhead who sparked off this research with her remark: **"Hitler could not kill my idealism, my romanticism, my values.. He could kill my body, but he could not, somehow, get at me!"**

On our first visit to the She'erith Hapletah, Deborah came up to us, obviously keenly interested in what my husband and I were doing there among the survivors. **"How did you know about us?..** Telling her that we had heard about the organization through the Yad Vashem Foundation which we had joined some years ago, she said; **"Oh, I do so like their meetings. I am also a member, but I do not have transport and do not have anybody to take me there."** We offered to take her the next time we went.

Several visits to her home and one to ours followed. A friendship developed, particularly between herself and my husband. **"He has crept into my heart, I love him. Aren't you jealous?"** My non-Jewish background made her rather critical of how much I understood and appreciated a heritage she was very proud of. **"It is a privilege to be a Jew."** **"We have the human touch in us, more than any other nation."** Despite our growing friendship, I always felt somehow on the fringe of things with her.

Being so fascinated with what I keenly sensed was a most unusual and often shockingly different but very profound perception of the survivor's Holocaust experiences, she was the only survivor whom I actually actively tried to persuade to become involved with the research. She refused.

When on one occasion, on the 8th March 1989, I visited her on my own for the first time, a most unusual event occurred. She started sharing some of her experiences with me without my asking about it (or having a tape-recorder etc. ready!)

Taken aback with the importance of what she was telling me, I found myself **insisting** that she became part of the research. It was a shame, I said, for her not to share her story with us who can learn so much from it; that it was a treasure she was hiding from a world that very much needed to hear it. She finally agreed to officially participate in the research (that is, to have her experiences recorded, studied, explicated and published).

When I assured her that she could review and edit what I had recorded and written about her experiences, I got the impression that she was not particularly interested in doing so. Once she had shared something, she let go of it. Her world was her own. What others would make of it, was their business.

Interviews:

1st: 8th March, 1989

2nd: 4th May, 1989

3rd: 21st May, 1989

4th: 28th May, 1989

5th: 4th June, 1989

Weekend interviews: 14th - 17th September, 1990

Development of Research Relationship and General Remarks

General Remarks

With Deborah, I often felt out of sorts. The depth of her feelings, insights, wisdoms, what she had learnt from a suffering I cannot even conceive of, often went beyond me, hence her irritation and impatience with me on so many occasions. She was seeking a great depth of response from me, a communion, as if she sensed that I may have such potential. However, I felt she was demanding more of me than I could give her. She ended up expressing disappointment in both myself and my husband, even though our relationship was most affectionate and sincere, remarking as she once did: **"I have no real friends."**

Her definition of the friendship she was seeking for was a relationship of great exclusiveness.

"You can't open yourself to most people, they will not understand. You see, my suffering gave me something so deep.. but I cannot show it, it's too open, too holy."

I found myself fumbling into her world and, without a sure footing, could never quite succeed in coming to grips with the full impact of what she was trying to tell me. I felt that I did not succeed in getting the full message. She too often caught me off balance, unprepared for what she was ready to give me. As a consequence, her vastly rich and deep world of experiences, the heights of her unusual spiritual triumphs have, to some extent, eluded me. Her innermost world remained largely her own.

"No doors can be opened there to anybody. It is much stronger, much fuller, much more than my actual life. I have never opened the tiniest bit of a door to anybody, including my own, most beloved son, my only child who is to me more precious than my own life. To nobody."

Apart from my own inability to penetrate the barriers she has erected; the walls within which she has enclosed herself, it is in the nature of her experiences, in the nature of a suffering that goes beyond words and understanding, that makes a full sharing of it, a total comprehension of it, impossible.

"There were such shocks to ourselves. The life in the concentration camps have been described by so many people but no matter how much and how deep, it's only scratching the surface of the matter."

As we more or less and finally concluded our research time together, I too, was left with a sense of disappointment. I have only succeeded in scraping the surface of her experiences; of who she is, jealously and exclusively, and very proudly, within herself.

"If you had not been you, I would not have done it, I would not have done it. I cannot talk about my feelings with just anybody. I have never shared my feelings with anybody except now. It is in me, with me, its mine."

Development of the Research Relationship

Early in the relationship with Deborah, it became clear that she will only reveal something of her innermost self in an unusually intimate setting. She started off by being very guarded in her relationship with me. She had a type of super-awareness of the interaction between us that was always under critical

focus. I felt that she was standing guard outside herself, continually defining her boundaries of privacy in a highly alert and defensive way. She deflected any close approach immediately, however much she seemed to invite it.

My research experiences with Deborah proved that the most important data in a heuristic approach emerges spontaneously during special moments which are beyond prediction (and ordered control). Two instances deserve mention:

On one occasion I had invited her to come with me to visit a well known Jewish bookshop in a predominantly Jewish district in Johannesburg. This was the first occasion that we were alone together (without my husband and family). There was a greater intimacy, and openness on her part. Driving along in the car, after a few moments of silence, she suddenly asked whether I ever had the inclination to go off on my own, without my family, "you know, to be with yourself, to think, to search your soul." To my affirmative reply, she said: "Do you know why I ask that?.." I answered, intuitively: "You mean that it would be nice if you and I could go away alone together?.." "Exactly!", she exclaimed, "that we can really talk about things."

During what turned out to be our first spontaneous research session while driving along in the car, she started relating certain fascinating incidents which had happened to her during the Holocaust. Reaching the bookshop, I parked the car in the shade, switched off the engine and turned in my seat to be able to look at her while she spoke. "Nobody really knows me", she remarked. "The people I know are like acquaintances, not friends. Friends know each other. Not even my husband knew me, I never told him of myself, really. This depth in me is like eternity, it goes beyond everything.."

Her face had become almost transparent, as if some light lit up her very fine and smooth skin. Her eyes were luminous and large, filled with tears. Great quietness filled the atmosphere. I felt in awe and dis comforted, too aware of myself and suddenly, painfully aware of my superficialities. She was giving me a look into her soul which I had no right to have. I thought of Moses at the burning bush, removing his shoes because the ground on which he stood had suddenly become holy; of Isaiah who felt sinfully out of place when he caught a glimpse of the glory of God. Then, as if suddenly gaining an insight, she exclaimed: "You know, I had to go through hell to get into heaven..that's it! I went through hell to get to heaven! .. isn't that strange, that I had to have hell to have heaven!.."

She gave a little disbelieving laugh, her eyes shining. I felt as if I had to back away a little, out of respect. I quietly suggested that we go to the bookshop and see what books they have.

On another occasion, when I had thought that our tape-recorded sessions were drawing to a close, she suddenly brought an incident to my notice which drew me right back into the heart of her sufferings. I realized in retrospect, that deeply hidden experiences will emerge only as the spontaneous pace of the research conversations and interactions work towards a point of revelation. I was, of course, completely unaware of the fact that, having begun to share in depth with me, Deborah was working towards a particular point of disclosure of something that she found most difficult to share. The involvement of our relationship prior to this event is most illuminating:

Once we were "officially" on the way, tape-recorder and all, and in the privacy of her lounge, and I suggested that she might start by telling me something of her childhood, she was immediately put off. "Don't start with where I was born, my childhood.. it has nothing to do with my sufferings. The

whole story starts with the concentration camp. As my past goes, you are the one who should sense what my background was."

She very firmly put me in my correct place. She was to do the leading and I, however clumsily, was to follow. **"Imagine you are traveling in a train and somebody walks in and takes a seat next to you and he will tell you a few chapters of his life. But you start asking him, where were you born, what was your childhood like!..."**

I was never more instructed in the heuristic research process than I was through my research experiences with Deborah. Questions on my part too often came as interruptions, after which she simply returned to her own line of thinking. **"Now I remember what we were speaking about..."** Her spontaneous thought-world would not be structured according to any chronological ordering. She hated having to recall dates or historical contexts and detail. **"To understand what a survivor wants to say, when it comes to giving the story, there is no beginning, no end. Its jumping from point to point, no clarity, a sort of confusion I would even say. It is very hard on me to, in a particular style, start from the beginning and go to the end.. I have to be inspired. I have never made a prepared speech in my life."**

What I, in fact, ended up having, were inspired accounts of certain outstanding chapters of her life, all relating to the Holocaust.

I was taught by my research experiences with Deborah that, instead of, however gently and sensitively, imposing a structure from without by seeking answers to some set questions in my mind, it was important to scrap all my thoughts about a matter and to abandon all efforts to place events in some kind of order as I simply followed her through the mazes and checkered patterns of her own thoughts and feelings and ways of remembering. In fact, I soon learnt that the more spontaneous her communications, the more illuminating and real it was. What I tried to draw out of her, fell into insignificance and turned out to be of no real importance.

This proved itself vividly at the time of our fifth, and what I had thought was to be our final interview. I went to her, preparing to "round things up". I started by asking her questions about points I felt needed more clarification; facts that would tie disconnected parts together. Her responses to the questions I put to her, faded.. and then she started telling me of an incident in the Kovno ghetto, one that she told me she had been carrying around in her for weeks in preparation for sharing it with me. It was an incident that she could not get herself to share with anyone before, one that she had been carrying with her for all these more than 45 years! It was a scene which she had witnessed during the liquidation of the Kovno ghetto.

When, some months after this particular research session she asked whether we could not go away for a weekend together, I jumped at the idea and arranged a quiet weekend at a secluded hotel in the country. During that unrushed and intimate time together, sharing the same room, dining together, having coffee in the lounge, or drinks on the patio, sitting under the trees in the garden, or having sundowners at the pool, during our long drive there and back, very many missing details came to the fore, queries got answered and problems solved, outside of any effort to secure such information. Many deep insights were also added. **"I could never open myself to you as much as this weekend because we had an uninterrupted time together where we could settle down to talk properly. We are more intimate**

than ever we were.."

I felt that the weekend had a particular meaning for her, since she herself, could retrospectively search out the meaning of her own life and reach some rather satisfying conclusions.

Even though I had drawn the research relationship to a close after that weekend, Deborah kept on adding from the storehouse of her rich experiences over the time of our ongoing friendship.

How can I ever know what other experiences are still remaining locked up inside of her?..

Deborah: A Portrait of Spiritual Loneliness

Deborah entered the Kovno ghetto as a young girl and was sent to Auschwitz without her family. She had to fend for herself; she had to get to grips with her sufferings on her own. Apart from her two brothers who had emigrated to South Africa before the war, Deborah lost her entire family during the war.

Deborah's full story is presented in the Addendum (pp. 424-439)

Deborah placed the accent on her Holocaust experiences. The background she came from, become vividly evident in her Holocaust accounts as she remembers and thinks about and interprets them. She stressed the importance of what they mean to her, now. **"My past is my present. I am my past. I want to be understood for what I am today."**

Her post-Holocaust life, she bluntly stated: **"has nothing to do with it. That is an entirely different and another story."** That she chooses to handle her life in this way, gives us a portrait of who she is.

In Deborah, we have a portrait of spiritual loneliness. Her story is one of lament, expressed by the suffering servant portrayed in the book of Isaiah: "I have labored (suffered) in vain. I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain" (Chapter 49:4).

She has accumulated a wealth of experience, of depth, a treasure of understanding - a spirituality that is almost painful to have. She has gained a maturity, a depth of meaning through her sufferings that she describes as: **"much higher up, much more above.."** Nobody in her life has yet been able to reach her. **"I have so much to give, and nobody to give it to."**

Having risen to a level of understanding few people have, she finds herself an isolated figure. **"My sensitivities are perhaps too developed."** Her rich culture belongs to a world that has been shattered. **"There was a life like that. There were human beings like that. It disappeared, it's not existent any more, but I still belong to that period."** She is strangely out of place in the morally empty and existentially vacuous world of today. Seeking an audience, she has not succeeded in finding one. **"When I came out from the tremendous stress and pressure of the concentration camp, I thought the world will be open, everyone will not only be eager to hear, to listen to every word I will be saying, that they will also carry me on their hands as something very special; that I will be invited to talk and be treated like a precious jewel. And what did I find? A nothing. The exact opposite.**

Nobody wanted to know. And if they did listen, they walked away from it and stepped back into their daily nothingness. It hurt me so much and I was so disappointed that instead of being a free-speaking person, telling the world what took place, I became an introvert. I closed myself up. I locked everything in. And that is where my bitterness and hurt lies, in my disappointment in humanity, let alone in finding real friends. I am misunderstood by everyone of them." Not expecting such rebuff and disappointment, she has withdrawn into her own private world, keeping her spiritual treasures to herself. "I don't share. Its very hard for me to share because I do not even know how in a way. And then, why I don't share has a little bit of a reason and the reason is that if I give too much out of myself, I remain with a feeling of being empty. I don't want that feeling that I gave away my treasure for nothing."

Who has had such deep and anguished experiences, such suffering? Who, consequently, can it possibly be shared with? Who can "hold" her treasured realizations, contain it in a way that she will not lose it, be emptied because of a lack of sensitive response from the listener?

In a sense trapped by the inexpressible depths of an anguish that is difficult, even impossible, to communicate to the world, she is seeking a mouth and a mind that can express and comprehend what she and all the survivors had gone through.

Sarah had referred me to Katzetnik who, in her words, "**described what I had experienced and what I myself had wanted to write about**". Deborah has a passion for the works of Elie Wiesel: "**He is me and I am him. When I read Elie Wiesel, every few minutes you'd hear me say, but those are my thoughts, those are my feelings! I identify myself to such an extent that it could have been me, every bit of it, whatever he says, whatever he felt. His philosophical approach, the tragedy and the way he took it, his sufferings.. that's me! I'm him.**" Like Sarah asked me to read all Katzetnik's works, Deborah urged me to read every book of Elie Wiesel that I could lay my hands on. This seems to represent her ongoing search for greater articulation of what she feels is of profound significance to all of mankind. Speaking on behalf of all survivors like herself, Deborah lamented: "**We haven't got a teacher to lead us.. to make the Churban (Holocaust) literature known, to have us carry out our mission, to make the Jews a strong nation**". This unfulfilled mission burns in her own heart as a desire to see a better world rise out of the ashes of the Holocaust. The superficiality and the shallowness of the world she observes around her, distresses and depresses her. "**You would say that I am looking for too much, for too high, and too big. Perhaps it is not too much and not too high and not too big. It is the world that is at fault. Humanity is at fault.**"

Hers is an absolute but lonely authenticity, an authenticity gained through a depth of suffering few can even conceive of. Painful and discomforting to behold, Deborah, like the suffering servant of Isaiah 53, presents a portrait that is a J'accuse (an accusation) to the world.

"The world was guilty of our Holocaust"

David: Don KrauszInitial Contact, Development of Research Relationship and General Remarks

Conducting the meeting when my husband and I visited the She'erith Hapletah for the first time, David was the one to welcome us and the one to introduce us to Sarah and some of the other survivors. He was also the one whom we spoke to concerning joining the organization and of the possibility of my doing research with the survivors and attending the meetings in the capacity of a participant observer. As Chairman of the organization, he sent a letter of approval to me and, during one of our phone conversations regarding my research, he offered to become a research participant himself.

Like Sarah, David also often addressed schools, clubs, other organizations etc. His natural leadership talents, namely, to be objective and rational in his organizational activities, developed through the sobering influences of his camp experiences into having a rather reserved, questioning and philosophical outlook on life.

What originally impressed me about David and continued to impress me was his inquiring, philosophical nature. Although he could at times become quite heated in debating a point of great importance to him, especially in the area of religion, he had an overall attitude of calm and control, a no-nonsense efficiency. With these characteristics he was accepted by the group as one of their natural leaders and, although younger than most members, as a type of father-figure who was turned to for advice or help.

Never overtly emotional or obvious in his friendliness, an unspoken type of special closeness developed between us as soon as he himself entered the research. The closeness deepened over the time we spent together recording his experiences. He had lost his father, who died in Buchenwald, in his boyhood years and his time of suffering drew him closer to the significant women in his life: his mother and sister. His close and protective relationship towards them was also reflected in his relationship with his wife whom he describes as someone that he felt completely at home with. **"My wife and I are friends. We understand each other. We can spend hours and hours talking. I find that adequate"** (in the sense that he does not need other friends). Our own research relationship was relaxed and open once we got talking about his experiences. He easily drew me into his deeply philosophical arguments, leaving me with many profound, disturbing and most challenging questions.

Interviews:

1st: 2nd July, 1989

2nd: 30th July, 1989

3rd: 19th August, 1989

4th: 3rd September, 1989

David: A Man with a Quest

David, who grew up in Holland, was interned at the age of twelve in the Westerbork transit camp together with his parents, younger sister and extended family members. From there, he was sent with his

mother and sister to Ravensbrusk, the notorious women's camp in Germany. With the exception of his mother, sister and an aunt, the rest of David's family perished in the camps.

David's full story is presented in the Addendum (pp. 440-458).

David related his experiences in the camps more in terms of his impressions about events, about those around him whose behavior he was observing and trying to understand, than in terms of his own personal life's story. To get a portrait of David, is to do so via his way of dealing with life, namely through his observations, thoughts, his questions.

David is an avid student of the Holocaust in terms of what gave rise to it and in terms of its implications. He said that he had a need to authenticate his experiences, his memories about the camps in a broader, historical context. **"My recollections were of a child, but I've spoken to my mother, I've read books on the subject, I've spoken to other people who were in those camps."**

David's astute observations, his scientifically based findings and conclusions after a life-time of thought on the subject, deserve particular note. A life's experiment, his reflections on the meaning of suffering present a most riveting picture of the subject of our research.

The Thinker

In David, we have a portrait of a philosopher, of an earnest seeker after truth.

It is very significant that David was sent to the camps soon after his twelfth birthday and the celebration of his Barnitzvah, his coming of age. In Jewish tradition this means that a boy has entered manhood, the age of independent thought and understanding, the age of personal responsibility. This event, celebrated in the Westerbork transit camp, marked the beginning of a life-long study of the meaning of suffering.

The Presentation of the Problem

As an innocent child, David found himself the target of irrational and illogical hatred. His crime was that he happened to be born a Jew. During conversations which he managed to have with Nazis while in the camps, he was presented with the rationale of Nazism: **"You see, it is like this. I like you. I think you're a nice chap. But you're a little Jew, and if we don't do something about it, you'll become a big Jew, and that's no good."** The inexplicable was explained to the pained mind of a child. Fate had earmarked him for destruction. There was no sense in it, but that is how it was.

Is suffering at the hand of man an inevitability as this Nazi made out?.. Are there those who belong to a fortunate elect, some superior caste, and those who, unfortunately, through no doing of their own, find themselves outside of it?

Is this fate?..

It is the perplexity of human suffering, **that man can impose it on man and justify it**, that prompted David to query man's behavior and to address the issue of the senselessness of his own suffering as a concentration camp inmate of the Nazi system.

Experimental Conditions

David came from a non-racial and liberal background. He spent his childhood in an open and free society. He moved easily across racial and ethnic barriers. This background allowed him to have an unprejudiced and open view of things, a philosophical and broad outlook on life. Although suffering the loss of his freedom, the concentration camp amazingly provided a similar setting. As a child among other children and adults of various nationalities, he was interned in Ravensbruck, a concentration camp where Jews were in the minority. Both the women's and the men's camp were made up out of political prisoners from various countries along with a wide range of so-called "social undesirables": criminals, homosexuals, Gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses. **"There was not a race or nationality that you did not find there. We had the lowest of the low, also the nobility of various occupied countries."**

Formulation of the Hypothesis

Given a cross section of humanity, David could observe human behavior under the most adverse conditions and start an inquiry into human behavior, the conclusions of which address a question of universal significance:

What is man?

Experimental Observations

What happens to man if he is subjected to adversity? How does he deal with and understand suffering? What is the nature and meaning of human suffering?

* **The laws of justice that man ordinarily lives by, cease to operate during times of adversity**

David's first observation about the nature of suffering and one which was to be his final conclusion, is that God is removed from the scene. Life's ordinary blessings, its comforts and reassurances, its securities and hopes, are suddenly withdrawn. Suffering comes as a shock. The ordinary, smooth-running circumstances of life are brought drastically to a halt. The sufferer gets pushed out of life that others still enjoy and seem to jealously possess. The sufferer gets cornered and becomes the prey and unfortunate victim of adversity while life for the rest, who seem only too relieved to have escaped the sufferer's fate, goes on.

This was the Jewish experience during the Holocaust.

"It wasn't a matter of the Germans against the Jews - the whole world was involved. It was possibly one of the strangest manifestations of history ever seen, where a situation was created where

a group of people was earmarked for destruction. There was no government that was prepared to help in any way. Now it either had meaning behind it or it is a very, very sad reflection on the human race. It poses very serious questions. Why do human beings react that way? Why after two thousand years of Christianity - not that I'm pointing a finger at Christianity - why was there no love for one's fellow man, why was there no love for one's neighbor? What did that teaching or religion amount to?.." (quote from original data)

* **The sufferer gets abandoned**

"There was a very strange withdrawing of help and humanity. I want to know why. I know how, I know when and where. I want to know why.." (quote from original data)

The most painful impact of suffering is the feeling that nobody cares, that you are left utterly alone with your misery. You become a victim of the horror that has befallen you, with no one to intervene or rescue you out of your suffering. You are at the mercy of the perpetrator.

This was the Jewish experience of the Nazi concentration camps. "There was no such thing as appeal. You were completely at their mercy. It was a reign of terror."

Suffering rudely disillusioned the sufferer. "You mentioned faith in other people. I am afraid I haven't got that anymore, definitely not. I get on with people, better than most. At the work place I have been told I am one of the friendliest people in the whole place. I have very few enemies. I like talking to people, but I know that when the chips are down, I'm on my own" (quote from original data).

Solace and reassurance from his Dutch fellow-countrymen, those among whom Jews in the pre-war years had been welcome, and who had become resistance fighters during the war, was rudely denied him. David had to learn that under difficult circumstances, even those whom you believed were your friends, desert you.

"In Sachsenhausen I had opportunity to ask Dutch resistance workers - and who were they? they were people who tried to assist Jews - if they knew what they were in for, whether they would have resisted in the way they did; they said: Never!"

Those who are prepared to be drawn into the sufferer's suffering and who will sacrifice their time, risk (or disturb) their own lives, turn their attention away from their own problems and worries, and who will be supportively there for the sufferer in his or her hour of need, are "very, very few and far between."

* **Suffering strips the sufferer and starkly exposes reality**

The sufferer is brought to rock-bottom realizations. That which under normal circumstances is concealed, suffering exposes. "The concentration camp did not necessarily bring out the best. In fact, anybody who tells you that suffering has an ennobling quality - you can forget about it. Suffering brings you down to the basics and the basics are, I for myself."

Instead of uniting to combat and resist the effects of evil, most people, in seeking to protect only themselves, will turn on one another and become hateful towards each other.

"We were living under conditions of terrible tension, great animosity. There was no such thing as all for one, one for all, everyone against the common enemy. We never saw the German; the German was someone at the gates; the German was someone in the watchtower. We were our own worst enemies."

Suffering exposes human nature, it leaves no room for pretense.

"It is quite possible that had they lived in normal circumstances, these aspects of their character would never have come to the fore. They would have lived normal lives, have been normal people, have been caring parents and so on."

* **Suffering exposes human nature**

Through his observations of the behavior of people in the Nazi concentration camps, David came to the following conclusions:

In the ordinary, relatively good circumstances of everyday life, the two extremes of human nature: its saintliness and its baseness, are not seen in sharp relief. During adversity, good becomes more distinguishable from evil. **Good is to act with consideration towards others, often at cost to oneself. Evil is to care only for oneself, no matter what the cost to others.**

Suffering exposes man's potential for evil:

During adverse times or under life-threatening circumstances, the dormant (and undecalt with) evil in man's nature is provoked. **"If the circumstances are as negative as they were in Germany between the First World War and 1933, then you have got a lot of tinder lying around. And all it needs is one match and Hitler was that match."**

Suffering also reveals man's ability to resist evil and his potential for good:

Who were the people who could resist the tide of evil? Who could show the good side of human nature even in the Nazi concentration camps?

The people who, in David's experience, retained their human decency and goodness towards outsiders, as much as they also upheld values of respect for and loyalty to their own group, were those who had the courage of their own strong convictions. In David's experience in the Nazi concentration camps, such people were found among a group of Czech and Russian communists. They were amazingly and triumphantly fearless in the life-threatening conditions of the Nazi concentration camps. **"They were idealists, they believed that communism was the answer to the world's problems."**

According to David, **whether communism proved to be all it promised to be, was not the issue, but rather that at that time, the communist women in Ravensbruck believed in what they perceived was a just cause, namely, the freeing of the oppressed peoples of the world. They were inspired for**

that reason to take a strong stand against the evils that were being perpetrated by the Nazi oppressors.

* **During adversity, man is forced to exercise his freedom of choice**

There was not one reaction common to all people subjected to suffering, David observed. Where the dormant evil in man's nature was made manifest in some, others illustrated that they were able to courageously resist evil, that it was possible to rise to heroic heights even in circumstances as horrible and as life-threatening as those of the Nazi concentration camps.

Man retained his freedom, even under the worst circumstances, to exercise choice.

"I've seen in myself and in others during the camp experiences that it is possible to make a right choice. There were people who were categorically and manifestly evil, when I say categorically - they were criminals, they were murderers and they were placed by the Germans in the concentration camp because of completely unacceptable, anti-social behavior. They became instruments in the hands of the Nazis, instruments for the humiliation and destruction of others. But I have also seen some of those people that fall into that category, being given the opportunity to exercise the positive side of their nature, which they did. Some of them had the strange contradiction of being a person who could be a murderer and a savior at the same time" (the German Barrack Leader who took a fancy to David, and who treated his Jewish group well but then became a murderer with a later contingent of prisoners under her control). "I've known a number of cases like that, showing this duality within human nature" (the German Nazi who tortured and killed Jewish children, yet clearly, cared for his own). "Both these aspects can be brought out in the same person, which leaves one with the question: What are we? And how will we respond if placed under these kinds of circumstances?"

The Implications and Applications of the Findings Concerning Man's Behavior under Situations of Extreme Stress

* **"Adam, where are you?" - a question every man and woman has to answer**

David believes that the worst and the most vile of human sufferings, such as those experienced in the Nazi concentration and death camps, have proved that as humans, we have indeed been given "the wherewithal" to make the right choices.

We can be held accountable for our actions. We are neither robots (programmed one way or the other) nor angels (experientially above evil-doing). Man knows the nature of both good and bad, and knowing what good and evil are like, having experienced it in his own life, he is able to clearly distinguish between them. He cannot plead ignorance, he **knows** that good is good, and bad is bad. And being intelligent about such issues, he has the responsibility to protect others from harm, to resist what he very well knows to be wrong (hurtful and destructive).

The torture of innocent children, witnessed by David, is an indictment against adults who can be expected to know the difference between right and wrong. A Nazi or a common criminal, a murderer, is not some aberration outside the jurisdiction of human law; not some hopeless psychopath outside the ordinary human pale. Whoever harbors racialism and is motivated by envy, hatred and greed, is a potential Nazi, criminal and murderer.

Interacting and conversing with, even winning the confidence of Nazis and murderers in the concentration camp, brought David to the following conclusion:

"The Nazi who acted the way he did might not have been a complete psychopath. He might have been an ordinary human being, a weak human being, that had no very pronounced views on right and wrong or morality and found himself acting according to the examples set by his peers and demanded of him by his environment."

A point David pondered is: What implication has the correlation between a weak conscience and moral lukewarmness on the one hand, and the easy perpetration of evil on the other, for society in general?

What was happening to the Jews during the Holocaust, and what was happening in the Nazi concentration and death camps, were known not only in Germany but throughout the world. That no active help or intervention was forthcoming is **"a very, very sad reflection on the human race."** David expressed the following ideas:

Lukewarmness and passivity in the face of evil, a doing what everybody else does (or does not do) will not solve the world's problems.

To stop man's inhumanity to man and to end our own part in it, requires an unequivocal and pronounced: NO, to evil.

Only a strong moral stand in the face of evil will make it flee from us; otherwise we will continue our partnership with what we know is wrong and morally inexcusable; we will remain with a sword of condemnation hanging over our heads. We will be **incapacitated** by guilt. Moral cowards, we will never have the courage to do something about the evil inflicted upon others, or for that matter, on ourselves. We will remain the helpless victim of evil. Evil will triumph in the world. Oppression, violence, war and genocide will continue. Man's conflict with man will remain unresolved, since we in ourselves, have not settled the case with evil.

Good has the power to overcome evil, but then good must be resolutely exercised.

* **The lessons (experimental findings) of the Holocaust must be put into personal effect**

David was a key subject and participant in the experiment of suffering posed by the Holocaust.

"When I came out of the camp as a 16 year old boy, I asked myself, well, what is this all about? I'm Jewish and I can't show anything for it except three years in the concentration camp. That's not good enough."

In breaking the only friendship he had at the school he started attending after his liberation, because his friend insisted on senselessly killing a lizard, he took his stand: **"I abhor and hate killing"**.

From this platform, he began his quest to know what it is that man was meant to be, and put the resolve to **be it**, into effect.

It was a journey into loneliness: he had inadvertently joined the select **"very, very few and far between"**. Man is capable of making the right choice; however, although **"there are very, very few people who would act out of a feeling of right or wrong."**

To be what he was meant to be, meant going against the tide. **"It made me a much lonelier human being. It made me very much of an outsider."** It meant contradicting the common practices of most and to stand apart, on the outside and among the ranks of the exceptional few. **"I do not regard myself as superior. I regard myself as different."**

Maintaining standards of decency and moral uprightness as far as his own person was concerned, he could emerge from his camp experiences with his hands **"fairly clean"**. That his hands were not altogether clean, however, referred to his defensive behavior when it came to protecting his mother. He had been involved in **"a battle royal"** in order to look after the welfare of his mother, physically struggling with other women, even hitting them over the head, in trying to secure a little three legged stool for his mother to sit on after the long and exhausting ordeal of standing for hours in the hot sun or the extreme cold during the daily roll-calls.

The moral legitimacy of his defensive behavior when he found himself under the extreme stress of the Nazi concentration camp, kept on worrying him. Could he justify his actions? This conflict seemed to have been the dynamics behind his decision, after the war, to take up shooting as a hobby. He also tracked animals, but never killed anything.

The question with which he seemed to be wrestling was: **in defending ourselves, say in a situation of war, or if we feel under threat, how far are we allowed to go?** What would be the boundaries of the permissible? **Is killing ever justified?**

When he found himself in Israel, he joined a rifle club there. **"I was looking for something."**

Questioning young Israeli soldiers who were snipers in the defense of their own beleaguered country, Israel, he confronted them with the moral legitimacy of their confessed war atrocities. The fact that he could address their consciences, settled the issue for him.

The perpetrator is without excuse, no matter who he is or what the situation he finds himself in, or what the provocation. Even a victim of injustice, has no right to retaliate unjustly.

Conclusions: The End of the Quest

* **"Am I my brother's keeper?" - a rejection of the legitimacy of an attitude of moral apathy**

David concluded that the **"No"** to wrong must be total. If it is not, if loopholes are allowed, it will lead to moral weakness and decay. To allow racism to enter your thinking, to let circumstances hold sway, to overlook or excuse, **offer a rationale for wrongdoing**, is to lose your moral footing, to be caught in the trappings of adverse social circumstance and become **callous** in the face of wrongdoing. Based on David's

reasonings on this matter, we can conclude with the following observations:

* **The psychology of the collaborator**

One act of passivity in the face of evil, can lead to feeling defenseless (feeling a guilty accomplice) in the face of the perpetration of another, more serious offense. Accepting one bit of untruth (bit of propaganda), can dull the conscience. By not exposing the lie in the first place, thereby allowing it to take root and gain legitimate ground, can lead to falling trap to a next and bigger lie (another self-defensive rationalization). Evil begins to gain the upperhand.

Trapped by feelings of guilt, and feeling accused by the innocent victims of violence or oppression, can even lead to joining the ranks of the perpetrators of injustice. Indoctrinated by Nazi propaganda, the murder of one Jew, can lead to a desire to see the obliteration of an entire race, as if to wipe the slate clean, to remove all incriminating evidence. Evil takes over.

It is his own part in hurtful behavior towards fellow-inmates that set David on a life-long course towards a final and total stand against evil.

* **The courage to live by personal conviction**

Man must, in each and every circumstance, stand before the naked light of his own conscience. His attempt to do so, must be resolute. He cannot excuse evil, but must **hate** it.

This is what his sufferings, David believes, taught him.

Man cannot hide behind a God (or a Satan) whom he blames for his suffering, nor see his being spared the suffering others are exposed to, as some sign of being "special", of belonging to the fortunate group of the "elect". David does not regard the fact of his survival as a sign of being better than those who perished. All such reasonings are mere evasions of personal responsibility; no more than moral cowardice; a refusal to be confronted with one's own part in wrongdoing.

God did not create some men good, others evil. One does not "have" goodness as a matter of course, nor is it "bestowed" on you in some sort of mysterious way. Nor were some some men "destined" to be saved, and others "destined" to perish. **In the experiments of all experiments: the Holocaust, both good and bad perished and survived.**

In the worst of circumstances, even the worst people proved that they were capable of a sudden change in their mode of behavior; that they could do good. Those who were good were so not because of some mysterious (and blessedly "fortunate") reason, but simply because they exercised the good that every man is capable of doing even in the worst circumstances, whatever his religious or political persuasions, background, or genetic make-up.

We are not good because of our culture, race, religion, background or the teaching we have received. A Jew is not good because he is a Jew. If he is good, he is what every man or woman on earth has been created to be and is therefore capable of being.

David's conclusions are endorsed by Frankl (1968):

There are two races of men in this world, but only these two - the "race" of the decent man and the "race" of the indecent man. Both are found everywhere; they penetrate into all groups of society. No group consists entirely of decent or indecent people. In this sense, no group is of "pure" race. (p. 87)

* **The responsibility of becoming fully man**

"Are we good, are we evil? Are we both? Are we saints, are we sinners, what are we? And what am I?"

David is unequivocal about what his suffering both taught and revealed to him.

What we are, what I am, is what we constantly, and whatever our circumstances, choose to be.

This is the same, unequivocal statement made by Frankl (1967), after his own concentration camp experiences:

What then is man? He is a being who continuously decides what he is: a being who equally harbors the potential to descend to the level of an animal or to ascend to the life of a saint. Man is that being, who, after all, invented the gaschambers; but at the same time he is that being who entered into those same gaschambers with his held held high and with the "Our Father" or the Jewish prayer of the dying on his lips.

This then is man. (p. 110)

The fact of man's freedom: of his charge to commit himself to good and to resist evil, to exercise: his freedom of choice **responsibly** is, in the final analysis, the meaning of suffering; the truth it reveals. This is its concluding statement, its expose:

We pass sentence on ourselves. **"I do not hold God accountable, basically because I have taken God out of the picture. I do not say there is no Creator, but the God that we understand as sitting in judgement on us, I do not accept anymore.**

What I do accept, is that there is Man."

* **"Therefore, you are inexcusable, O man.." (Romans 2:1): the meaning of suffering**

Man retains his freedom of choice even under the worst of circumstances. The Nazi concentration camps proved that a criminal and murderer could turn from his wicked way and change, he could decide to exercise good. An upright and moral person in one set of circumstances, can lose his or her sense of integrity and become capable of evil action under another set of circumstances. Nothing is determined, one way or the other. **The options between good and evil are always open.**

Suffering afflicts everybody, indiscriminately: it does not ask whether you are deserving or undeserving; whether you are a baby in the cradle or aged, on the brink of death; whether you are religious or irreligious, a saint or a sinner; nor does it ask what your station in life is; nobody can buy or wangle himself out of suffering. Suffering is something neutral.

The crucial factor, therefore, is not **why** we are suffering, but if we are adult enough to do so, **how** we deal with it.

"There are different ways of dealing with the very selfsame situation." It is not our circumstances, but rather what we decide to do in the situation in we find ourselves, that is the crucial factor. **Choice determines the outcome of suffering.**

If David as a child could distinguish between right and wrong, as he was able to do even at 6 and at 13, 14 and 15 years of age, then an adult can be expected to be even more able to do so. **"It is not something I was taught.. It was part of my nature."**

If we cannot deny the fact that we have an inherent sense of right and wrong; that to be human is to have a conscience; and that if, furthermore, it is possible, even under the worst of circumstances, for anybody, both religious and non-religious, criminal or saint, to resist evil action and to do what is right; then there is never an excuse for wrongdoing, under any circumstance, by whosoever.

"I was left with a very strong feeling that it should be possible for the individual to say: This I do not do! I don't do this! It is wrong."

Man has a conscience, that is why a wrongdoer can be stopped in his tracks, why he can be made to realize that what he is doing is wrong.

"I was incidental to the action. All that was required was for somebody to say: Stop! This is wrong!"

We have a duty to **resist** evil. Man can and **must** be brought to account. This is his human right, a prerequisite of human dignity.

Having the wherewithal to resist evil and to do good, it is man's **right and privilege** to suffer. Suffering gives man the chance to prove himself, even to himself.

How else can he call himself a man?..

Concluding Thoughts

The research relationship with each participant has afforded the reader an acquaintance with the person behind the experiences of the meaning of suffering. The portraits provided **five unique perspectives of the phenomenon of meaning in suffering.**

David, because he became identified with the quest and painful struggle to find the meaning of the sufferings of the Holocaust survivor - a quest which earmarks the lives of Esther, Malke, Sarah and Deborah - stood out as the spokesman of the group. In David's philosophical overview of the meaning of his experiences in the Nazi concentration camps, we find an extraction of the "universal" qualities and themes relating to this subject among all the research participants.

In fact, David's astute observations and riveting conclusions regarding the meaning of suffering prove to have been a scientific venture, a heuristic study, of the highest order. He has brought us to a consideration of the very essence of the meaning of suffering.

In the concluding phase of the research process, presented in Chapter 18, we will present the core features and themes related to the meaning of suffering in a **composite picture** of the data of the research participants as a group.

As a final step in the research process, Moustakas (1990) suggests a wide range of freedom in characterizing the phenomenon. Since there has been such a strong focus on the views of Frankl throughout this study, it seems meaningful to integrate Frankl's own experiences as a Holocaust survivor with those of the research participants. In seeking to then present a **creative synthesis** of the data, we will therefore explore the core themes presented in the composite picture of the data on the meaning of suffering among Holocaust survivors, in the stories of not only the research participants, but also in the Holocaust experiences of Viktor Frankl himself.

The final picture we will seek, is of the person who can experience meaning in sufferings of the most senseless and horrific nature imaginable.

The question we will conclude with, is the following:

If people like Frankl, Esther, Malke, Sarah, Deborah and David could triumph in their sufferings, **can we?**

CHAPTER 18

A COMPOSITE PICTURE AND CREATIVE SYNTHESIS OF THE DATA

The theme of the meaning of suffering is one we have pursued from the outset of this dissertation to its closure. It is a theme that has unfolded itself to us in ever greater clarity. Dramatic new light is cast by survivor accounts on the earlier deliberations on the meaning of suffering. A brief recollection of the main points of these deliberations will lead us onto a presentation of **the composite picture** of the phenomenon of the meaning of suffering among Holocaust survivors.

As a **creative synthesis** of the data, the core themes of the composite picture will be pursued, first in the story of Frankl, and then in each of the stories of the research participants.

A final synthesis of the data on the meaning of suffering will then be presented in the form of a brief reflection on optimal humanness - on the characteristics of the man who has been made "perfect" through his sufferings.

Suffering as a Watershed

We have noted in our earlier deliberations on the meaning of suffering that the experience of suffering is, at first, extremely negative.

There is the shock of sudden and drastic change; we can no longer continue the pattern of our past way of living; the future is suddenly very uncertain. All we have is the immediate moment. We have lost the sense of control over our own lives; our old secure footings in life are gone. We are brought into a position of helplessness and dependency. We feel cornered, trapped. We can take flight nowhere, no longer hide behind anything or rely on others. No one can suffer for us; we suffer alone.

Stripped of all our past defenses, or old securities and our familiar ways of doing things, we find ourselves in great doubt, even immobilized and in a panic of indecision. We do not know how to tackle something bigger than ourselves; something beyond our ability to manipulate or change. We feel naked and exposed; unable to avoid what we feel is a confrontation with ourselves. Our whole life comes up for review. We feel uncannily addressed; called to task somehow.

This, we have considered, is a watershed.

Suffering brings us to the crossroads; to going one way or the other.

The stark aloneness of the sufferer can scarcely be more poignant and real than in the case of Holocaust victims. **"There was a cutting away of your normal life"**, stated Esther. Frankl (1968) described the experience in the following way: **"The illusions some of us still held were destroyed, one by one, and then, quite unexpectedly, most of us were overcome by a grim sense of humor. We knew that we had nothing to lose except our so ridiculously naked lives"**, an experience repeated in almost the same words by Malke: **"we had nothing but our poor life"**. Sarah recalled: **"That is how our life started for us, without family, without anything. And without your clothes. They gave us a dress, not anything else, just a dress. That is how our life in the camp started"**.

David captured their sense of abandonment with the words: **"When the chips are down, you are on your own."**

Suffering as a Challenge

The sufferer suffers alone. Yet it is this very fact that can make suffering, in the way it is borne, the sufferer's own achievement. A tragedy can be changed into a triumph, Frankl (1970) contends. What matters is the stand we take - a stand which allows for transmuting our predicament into an achievement.

It was noted in our earlier deliberations on suffering that if we make the choices immediately presented to us in our suffering situation and, with a heightened sense of responsibility, begin to seize the day and live the moment, we seem to find our feet, as it were. We are set on course. Filled with a sense of integrity, we seem to be making progress in some inner sort of way.

The spiritual side of our nature emerges: we feel deeper, we think more profoundly, we have a stronger sense of self. Our suffering causes us to mature and grow. As we realize this, we can even have peak moments of joy and exhilaration, the kind of "Yes!" to life, which Frankl (1982) describes. We lose our sense of fear since we now have the clear and unshakeable conviction that life retains its meaning under all circumstances, even those of suffering and in the face of death itself.

Studying Frankl's writings on meaning, we have arrived at the following essential description of what we understand by meaning.

Meaning is the unique opportunity, task or duty intuitively discerned by our conscience as a choice which, put before us in the unique situations of our own personal lives, if responsibly realized or met, relates us to life in a vital and growth-provoking way by purposefully directing us towards a future which beckons, inspires and sustains us.

A Composite Picture of the Data

Meaning as a choice which is set before us through our consciences in each particular situation of our lives, is the common theme that sharply impressed the researcher as true of each of the research participants in their own unique life-situations of suffering.

It was a theme that impressed itself on the mind of the researcher during the phase of seeking an intuitive, holistic grasp of the data of all the research participants. The realization that dawned upon her was that, in their sufferings, the participants were engaged in **a conversation with their own consciences**. They seemed confronted with choices, invited into making the right choice, and if obeying the dictates of their own consciences, they seemed supported by the satisfaction in having been brave enough to do so. **Was this the meaning of suffering?**

It was most exciting to find this intuitive, holistic theme emerging strongly as the data was broken down into meaning units and combined again in order to gain a grasp of **the essential theme or pattern** inherent to the experience of suffering. The recorded experiences of each survivor began to emerge as a **story of choice**. After each protocol had been compiled and the researcher again immersed herself in the material in order to understand the universal qualities and themes of the recorded experiences and to write

a composite picture of the data, **the theme of choice** unfolded in exquisite clarity.

According to Moustakas (1990), "the composite depiction should be vivid, accurate, alive, and clear and should encompass the core qualities and themes inherent in the experience" (p. 185).

The following amazing pattern is evident in each of the stories of the research participants:

The survivor was called upon to make certain crucial and critical choices either before or very early in their suffering experiences. If the survivor had the courage to choose according to the dictates of his or her own conscience, these choices presented themselves as tasks or commissions. Once embraced, the survivor experienced a sense of meaning which had a sustaining power in even the worst situations of suffering. The experience of meaning in the midst of their sufferings allowed them to come through their terrible experiences with a sense of intactness and spiritual triumph. Even though badly shaken, disillusioned in mankind and deeply hurt, they were able to take up their lives again and make something extremely meaningful of them.

In seeking to present a creative synthesis of the data and in deciding to compare Frankl's own story of suffering with those of the research participants, it was most exciting to discover that his story unfolded in almost exactly the same pattern as the one recorded for the research participants above. Frankl's own story of suffering is a story of choice par excellence!

Greater validity is lent to the composite picture by exploring the story of Frankl as it affirms the experiences of each research participant. In the discussions to follow, it will be the theme of meaning as it is presented as crucial choices in the situations of suffering in which the sufferer found him- or herself, that we will be taking particular note of.

The Cup of Frankl's Suffering

The story of Frankl's Holocaust experiences has been recorded in his work: Man's search for meaning (1968, pp. 1-93).

The Initial Critical Choice

Shortly before the United States entered World War II Frankl, living in Vienna at the time, was confronted with the crucial choice of whether he should continue his life's work in America by accepting an exit visa for himself and his young bride, or whether he should stay with his aged parents and run the risk of being sent to the concentration camps.

"I was called to the American Consulate in Vienna to receive my immigration visa. My old parents expected me to leave Austria as soon as the visa was given. However, at the last moment I hesitated: The question of whether I should leave my parents beset me. I knew that any day they could be taken to a concentration camp. Shouldn't I stay with them? While pondering this question I found that this was the type of dilemma which made one wish for a hint from Heaven."

"It was then that I noticed a piece of marble lying on a table at home."

"When I asked my father about it, he explained that he had found it on the site where the National Socialists had burned down the largest Viennese synagogue. My father had taken this marble piece home because it was a part of the tablets which contained the Ten Commandments. The piece showed one engraved and gilded Hebrew letter. My father explained that this letter is the abbreviation for only one of the Commandments. Eagerly I asked, 'Which one is it?' The answer was: 'Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land.' So I stayed with my father and my mother upon the land and decided to let the American visa lapse" (Frankl, 1967, p. 34).

Frankl's Watershed

Frankl had made what he knew would be a costly choice. His parents were aged. Captured, they would most certainly not be allowed to live. But he chose to die with them, if it must be. Risking his own life, he also risked the life of his young, beloved bride.

His work as head of the Department of Neurology at the Rothschild Hospital in Vienna was cut short. He had just completed his first manuscript which he desperately wanted to have published. Even that, was no longer possible.

The whole family was indeed sent to the concentration camps. His father died in Theresienstadt in 1943, while Frankl, his mother and his wife, Tilly, were taken to Auschwitz in October 1944. His mother went straight from the railway station to the gaschambers. His brother, Walter, died in Auschwitz and his wife, Tilly, in Bergen-Belsen.

With only his manuscript in his inner pocket, Frankl entered Auschwitz. There, he was confronted with a second most fundamental choice: how was he going to deal with suffering, the horrible situation in which he suddenly found himself?

The need to cling to one's former life, to hold onto old securities, plans and hopes, was desperate.

"No one could yet grasp the fact that everything would be taken away. I tried to take one of the old prisoners into my confidence. Approaching him furtively, I pointed to the roll of paper in the inner pocket of my coat and said, 'Look, this is the manuscript of a scientific book. I know what you will say; that I should be grateful to escape with my life, that that should be all I can expect of fate. But I cannot help myself. I must keep this manuscript at all costs; it contains my life's work. Do you understand that?'"

"Yes, he was beginning to understand. A grin spread slowly over his face, first piteous, then more amused, mocking, insulting, until he hellowed one word at me in answer to my question, a word that was ever present in the vocabulary of the camp inmates: 'Shit!'"

"At that moment I saw the plain truth and did what marked the culminating point of the first phase of my psychological reaction: I struck out my whole former life."

"The illusions some of us still held were destroyed one by one, and then, quite unexpectedly, most of us were overcome by a grim sense of humor. We knew that we had nothing to lose except our so ridiculously naked lives" (Frankl, 1968, pp. 12,13).

The Charge and his Commission

"Let me recall that which was perhaps the deepest experience I had in the concentration camp. The odds of surviving the camp were no more than 1 to 20, as can easily be verified by exact statistics. It did not even seem possible, let alone probable, that the manuscript of my first book which I had hidden in my coat when I arrived at Auschwitz, would ever be rescued. Thus, I had to undergo and to overcome the loss of my spiritual child. And now it seemed as if nothing and no one would survive me; neither a physical nor a spiritual child of my own!"

"So I found myself confronted with the question whether under such circumstances my life was ultimately void of any meaning."

"Not yet did I notice that an answer to this question with which I was wrestling so passionately was already in store for me, and that soon thereafter this answer would be given to me. This was the case when I had to surrender my clothes and in turn inherited the worn-out rags of an inmate who had already been sent to the gaschamber immediately after his arrival at the Auschwitz railway station. Instead of the many pages of my manuscript, I found in a pocket of the newly acquired coat one single page torn out of a Hebrew prayer book, containing the main Jewish prayer, Shema Yisrael ("Hear, O Israel"), i.e. the command: 'Love thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might' or, as one might interpret it as well, the command to say 'Yes' to life despite whatever one has to face, be it suffering or even dying."

"How should I have interpreted such a 'coincidence' other than as a challenge to live my thoughts instead of merely putting them on paper?" (Frankl, 1967, pp. 25-26)

"A bit later, I remember, it seemed to me that I would die in the near future. In this critical situation, however, my concern was different from that of most of my comrades. Their question was, 'Will we survive the camp? For if not, all this suffering has no meaning.' The question which beset me was, 'Has all this suffering, this dying around us, a meaning? For, if not, then ultimately there is no meaning to survival; for a life whose meaning depends upon such a happenstance - as whether one escapes or not - ultimately would not be worth living at all'" (Frankl, 1967, p. 103).

Joy in Suffering: A Breakthrough into the Dimension of Ultimate Meaning

"The dawn was grey around us; grey was the sky above; grey the snow in the pale light of dawn; grey the rags in which my fellow prisoners were clad, and grey their faces. I was struggling to find the reason for my sufferings, my slow dying. In a last violent protest against the hopelessness of imminent death, I sensed my spirit piercing through the enveloping gloom. I felt it transcend that hopeless, meaningless world, and from somewhere I heard a victorious 'Yes' in answer to my question of the existence of an ultimate purpose."

"At that moment a light was lit in a distant farmhouse, which stood on the horizon as if painted there, in the midst of the miserable grey of a dawning morning in Bavaria. 'And the light shineth in the darkness.'"

"For hours I stood hacking at the icy ground. The guard passed by, insulting me, and once

again I communed with my beloved. More and more I felt that she was present, that she was with me; I had the feeling that I was able to touch her, able to stretch out my hand and grasp hers. The feeling was very strong: she was there."

"Then, at that very moment, a bird flew down silently and perched just in front of me, on the heap of soil which I had dug up from the ditch, and looked steadily at me." (Frankl, 1968, pp. 39-40).

Finding Meaning in Suffering

"Under the influence of a world which no longer recognized the value of human life and human dignity, which had robbed man of his will and had made him an object to be exterminated (having planned, however, to make full use of him first, to the last ounce of his physical resources) - under this influence the personal ego finally suffered a loss of values. If the man in the concentration camp did not struggle against this in a last effort to save his self-respect, he lost the feeling of being an individual, a being with a mind, with inner freedom and personal value. He thought of himself then as only a part of an enormous mass of people; his existence descended to the level of animal life" (Frankl, 1968, p. 49).

Frankl was number 119,104. Most painful to him, was this humiliation of his person. He was made nameless, without worth or dignity. To be treated like a thing, an animal, was the hardest thing to bear. It was the injustice of being subjected to such inhumane treatment, that was for him the most painful aspect of his sufferings. His pain was spiritual, more than physical.

"Almost in tears from pain (I had terrible sores on my feet from wearing torn shoes), I limped a few kilometers with our long column of men from the camp to our work site. Very cold, bitter winds struck us. I kept thinking of the endless little problems of our miserable life. What would there be to eat tonight? If a piece of sausage came as extra ration, should I exchange it for a piece of bread? Should I trade my last cigarette, which was left from a bonus I received a fortnight ago, for a bowl of soup? How could I get a piece of wire to replace the fragment which served as one of my shoelaces? Would I get to our work site in time to join my usual working party or would I have to join another, which might have a brutal foreman? What could I do to get on good terms with the Kapo, who could help me to obtain work in camp instead of undertaking this horribly long daily march?"

"I became disgusted with the state of affairs which compelled me, daily and hourly, to think of only such trivial things. I forced my thoughts to turn to another subject."

"Suddenly I saw myself standing on the platform of a well-lit, warm and pleasant lecture room. In front of me sat an attentive audience on comfortable upholstered seats. I was giving a lecture on the psychology of the concentration camp!"

"All that oppressed me at that moment became objective, seen and described from the remote viewpoint of science. By this method I succeeded somehow in rising above the situation, above the sufferings of the moment, and I observed them as if they were already of the past. Both I and my troubles became the object of an interesting psychoscientific study undertaken by myself."

".. Suffering ceases to be suffering as soon as we form a clear and precise picture of it" (Frankl, 1968, pp. 73-74).

Discovering the Crux of the Matter - The Key to Authentic and Worthwhile Living

"He who has a why to live for can bear with almost any how."

"Woe to him who saw no more sense in his life, no aim, no purpose, and therefore no point in carrying on. He was soon lost. The typical reply with which such a man rejected all encouraging arguments was, "I have nothing to expect from life any more." What sort of answer can one give to that?"

"What was really needed was a fundamental change in our attitude toward life. We had to learn ourselves and, furthermore, we had to teach the despairing men, that it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead to think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life - daily and hourly. Our answer must consist, not in talk and meditation, but in right action and in right conduct."

"Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfill the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual. These tasks, and therefore the meaning of life, differ from man to man, and from moment to moment. Thus it is impossible to define the meaning of life in a general way. Life does not mean something vague, but something very real and concrete. They form man's destiny, which is different and unique for each individual".

"No man and no destiny can be compared with any other man or any other destiny. The same way with suffering: no one can relieve another of his suffering or suffer in his place. His unique opportunity lies in the way in which he bears his burden."

"Once the meaning of suffering had been revealed to us, we refused to minimize or alleviate the camp's tortures by ignoring them or harboring false illusions and entertaining artificial optimism. Suffering had become a task on which we did not want to turn our backs. We had realized its hidden opportunities for achievement."

Suffering is a cross that, in bearing it in the right way, will lead us to the highest peak of perfection that life can offer us. Realizing this, Frankl and his fellow-sufferers changed their attitudes towards their sufferings. Instead of begrudging it, they embraced their suffering as a mission.

"How much suffering there is to get through!" (Frankl, 1968, pp. 77-78).

The Victory

"One day, a few days after the liberation, I walked through the country past flowering meadows, for miles and miles, toward the market town near the camp. Larks rose to the sky and I could hear their joyous song. There was no one to be seen for miles around; there was nothing but the wide earth and sky and the larks' jubilation and the freedom of space. I stopped, looked around,

and up to the sky - and then I went down on my knees. At that moment there was very little I knew of myself or of the world - I had but one sentence in mind - always the same: "I called to the Lord from my narrow prison and He answered me in the freedom of space."

"How long I knelt there and repeated this sentence from memory I can no longer recall. But I know that on that day, in that hour, my new life started. Step for step I progressed, until I again became a human being" (Frankl, 1968, p. 90).

With the trial of his sufferings at last behind him, Frankl had gained the prize, the treasure of having suffered bravely, of having seen it through to the end. "The crowning experience of all, for the homecoming man, is the wonderful feeling that, after all he has suffered, there is nothing he need fear any more - except his God" (Frankl, 1968, p. 93).

Stories of choice:

Similarities between the Story of Frankl and the Stories of the Research Participants

Frankl's experiences in terms of the choices he was called upon to make during the time of his Holocaust sufferings, bear a striking resemblance to those of the research participants. We seem to be reading the same story from different, unique viewpoints!

Esther (Addendum pp. 381-402)

The Initial Critical Choice

Jammed in a cattle truck with about 80 other people on their way to Auschwitz, Esther was lifted by her father to peer out of the small barred window when the train had drawn to a stop. There, on the siding, she saw a patient of her father's, and this man shouted to her: "I'm so very, very sorry. I cannot help you or your wonderful father because where you are going, there is no coming back." It was a message he expected her to give to her parents. "It was a terrible task given to me". She was faced with a drastic decision. It was a decision of choosing between her own desperate needs to be reassured by her parents (to tell them what she heard) and the welfare of her parents (to keep the news to herself).

She made the first and critical choice with which her sufferings confronted her. "To this day my mother doesn't know what I heard. When I think back that at the age of 13 to have had this tremendous power of withholding painful things which could hurt my parents!.. I tried to save them from more trauma because I saw how traumatized they were. I didn't tell them."

The Charge or her Commission

Upon arrival at Auschwitz they were torn apart. As he was being dragged away, her father shouted to her mother in French: "Do not say the child is 13!.." When she stood before Mengele, who with his little baton was ready to wave her, a mere child, to the left (which was to immediate gassing), she

suddenly felt she had been entrusted with a **commission to survive**.

"This is what I heard my father say. So that when it came to the selection, this is what was in the back of my mind, so that when Mengele, the great butcher asked me, 'How old are you?' .. I said, 'I'm sixteen and I can work'!.."

Standing upright, she had answered him in a bold and perfect German. With her mother, she was directed to the right. From that moment on, mother and daughter were bonded together in the mission: **"Thou shalt survive!"**

The Watershed: Survival for What?

Soon afterwards, as she witnessed some women fighting over a cup of water, she realized that it was not a question of whether you survived or not, but how you survived and how you died.

A dramatic reorientation was needed. Life no longer bestowed its familiar blessings. She was no longer the happy recipient of its meanings.. A rude change had taken place: **"I was lifted out of a loving, wondrous home into a most unbelievably abnormal situation."** **"There was a cutting away of your normal life.."** **"My life stopped, my childhood stopped at the age of 13 when we arrived at Auschwitz."** **"Your whole life suddenly changed around, a reverse of your whole value system. We realized that we had to start thinking on different terms, not straightforward or believing.. we had to start changing our whole outlook.."**

The responsibility to now actively embrace, preserve, and fight to retain the values and meanings she had previously so easily and naturally enjoyed, was thrust upon her. **"You grew up and became old within hours.."** Around her, the values she had been accustomed to live by, were collapsing. **"After a couple of hours of such horrific circumstances people already started to look after themselves.. people already began being cruel to each other to safeguard their own lives.."** **"People became like animals!.."**

A strong resolution to retain human values and dignity, to uphold moral standards of behavior, was necessary.

Making this watershed choice, a story of sacrificial love unfolded, where mother and daughter did their utmost to help the other to keep up her spirits and to retain hope.

Meaning in Suffering

The power of their love for each other, their compassion for and care of others, deepened their persons. Faith, hope, the belief in the power of human goodness to overcome the evil they were being so cruelly and mercilessly subjected to, sustained and carried them. Many a time, they felt miraculously delivered, or uplifted. **"Somebody must have watched over me.."**

Her father, a man who epitomized the human values of love for each other, of care and compassion in one's dealings with one's fellow man, had given them the commission to survive. It was a commission to retain their sense of family, the values of intimate and caring human togetherness.

This commission became an inspiring aim. **"I vowed to return to Auschwitz, a free person."**

Taking a resolute stand against the evil which assailed their persons and which threatened to destroy the values they held dear, that future goal: to re-establish, re-embrace the dignity and beauty of family life and humane living, became an inspiring vision, something that sustained them through many a desperate hour.

The Victory

Faced with the terrible post-Holocaust trauma of having lost everything: her beloved father, their extended family, their home, community life, every possession.. Esther and her mother were nonetheless able to take up their lives again. **"I am sure that the previous normal, wondrous, happy life we had, helped us through."** Whereas so many had lost their human face by having become beastly in their behavior towards one another during the time of their suffering, Esther and her mother had become deepened in their love for one another, more sensitive and caring towards others. **"I am so grateful to God that I did not become like that. That is why we were able to take up our life again."**

The task of the restoration of their pre-Holocaust lives, stretched ahead of them. **"It took a lot of hard work, a lot of horrific nightmares over years before we were able to call ourselves whole again."**

Values which she had enjoyed as a child, Esther now actively realized in her role as a daughter, wife and mother, as a member of the human race. After passing onto her own children the values and joys of family life, after having given them the youth that had been snatched from her, Esther was ready to return to Auschwitz.

She found herself on the bus to the Auschwitz museum with two young Germans who were inquisitive about her Holocaust experiences. **"Now I had all the courage in me to tell them.."** Upon enquiry, she showed them the number that had been tattooed on her arm. Doesn't she want to have it removed? they asked. No, she replied. **"I want to live with it for so long as God would grant me the years ahead of me. I do not want it to be removed."**

Standing in the gaschambers, at last, and weeping at the memory of those who had died there, her soul had made its pilgrimage:

"They were not able to destroy me. So many people's emotions have been destroyed completely and utterly. They could not destroy my finer feelings, my humanity."

She had taken her own soul into eternal possession. She had immortalized her own life. She had found and realized the meaning of her sufferings. "Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory?" (Isaiah 25:8; Hosea 13:14).

Malke (Addendum pp. 403-410)

A First and Costly Choice

The first crucial choice Malke made during her own trial of sufferings, was reflected in her attitude

about a decision she could have regretted. She had been working in England when, in 1939, she went back to Hungary to visit her mother. The war broke out and she was unable to return. **"That is how I was sent to Dachau. I don't regret having left England to be with my darling Mommy."**

The Watershed Choice

The second, and watershed choice came when she was offered the chance of escape from an intended Nazi roundup of Jews in Budapest.

"The family that I was with, a lovely lady and her husband and two little girls" (whom she looked after) **"was a rich family who had many servants who all went away. This family said to me, Malke, tomorrow the Nazis will collect the Jews from all the houses and we must all wait downstairs. You know, Malke, we paid a lot of money to one of the Nazis, we don't have to go down, and you don't have to go down."**

"The whole night, even today I shiver, the whole night I never slept, I just cried. Then I said, no, I'm going down, I go, where is my Mommy? If Mommy must die, I also die." "Then I dressed myself. I never said to them a word. I went out of the door, slowly closed it and I went downstairs."

She joined the people waiting in the street, **"my Jewish fellow-mates."**

Just how crucial this choice was, Malke only realized much later. **"It struck my head last night, what is the fate in life. I wouldn't be alive today if I stayed with Mr and Mrs Schwarz who said, stay with us, we have paid a Nazi lots of money, you will be safe. That was one Nazi. Another Nazi reported them: there are Jews living in that house. The bloody Nazis swept them out of the house, the two darling daughters, the Mommy and Daddy and thousands of others that they found like this, because there were also spies all over. And they took them to the side of the Danube river and they shot them, or tied them together, and shoved them all in the Danube. When I was liberated I wanted to go to them and then I heard how they were shot and thrown in the Danube. If I had stayed with them, my life would have been in the Danube. I was thinking of this last night, how I decided I must go to find my darling Mommy and I survived in Dachau. God was with me."**

Meaning in Suffering

Even though she was in a situation she experienced as extremely unjust: **"that you were Jewish, that was your fault; the whole world hates the Jews"**; and stripped of everything pertaining to human worth and dignity: **"we had nothing but our poor life"**, she rose to the occasion. People around her were saying: **"if I can't take it, I commit suicide.. I never saw it like this; this kind of people die.. I was never like that, that I will commit suicide."**

Her cheerfulness, her basic and unshaken faith in life and love of others, carried her through. **"all my life I was a cheerful person. I wanted to cheer people up."** She never lost her sense of connectedness to a God whom she believed constantly helped and supported her. **"I was there always helping, just like here. Here when someone is sick I will go and feed them. God gave me the energy and I am grateful, I've got my two legs, my mouth, my brain, everything is in place."**

In Dachau, Malke aligned herself fearlessly on the side of helping others, even if it evoked hostility from onlookers and bystanders. "One woman next to me in the barrack, her name was Gertie, got typhoid, mind you, she was an outstanding little girl and I looked after her. From the terrible suffering we had, we talked nonsense. I was told by some of the non-German Jews - not everybody was like this - not to look after Gertie because she was a German Jew. I said: 'don't talk nonsense, my Mommy was also a German Jew, that does not make her a Nazi'. I had a small basin with water and used to wash her all over, I helped her. Gertie cried because she heard what they said, 'why do I help her? I must leave her'. But I said, look, 'don't talk nonsense', and I helped till she was taken to hospital and died. Then the typhus also got in me. I got a high fever and I thought, 'my gosh, the next day they will take me also..' but God kept me. The fever in the morning was gone. They didn't take me! A wonderful thing, what happened to me".

Malke felt that every act of simply doing what was right was blessed by God Who, in turn, sustained and kept her, gave her strength and saved her, time and again. "I myself, I could save my life" (act, self-preservingly, at cost to others), but God saved my life."

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" (Job 13:15)

A crucial choice in terms of her attitude towards her sufferings was presented to her upon hearing the news of the death of her beloved mother.

"One day I was told by the Hungarians that came from Auschwitz that my Mommy was gassed there. Then I was thinking, 'oh! my darling Mommy, how could I live without my darling Mommy, no husband..' but Mommy is always the first in the world, 'Mommy, Mommy, Mommy'. Then I talked to myself. I said, 'look Malke, I'm alive, Mommy is gone, my sisters are gone, my Daddy is gone..' do you know, I talked to myself and said 'if I die I will meet them..' and this gave me a little courage to carry on. I will meet them. You see I believe in this." "I was depressed but I was alive, and life must go on. I always prayed to God, please help me."

God's most miraculous intervention, she believed, was in having Dachau liberated just in time. "After six months I was also finished and went outside to the yard and said: "God, I can't take it any more.' I was feeling that I will also just lie down and do nothing because I'm finished." "That was six months and in the seventh month, rumors began to spread that the Allies were moving closer. That helped us stay alive. Others also said to me: 'Malke, we will survive, hold on, we will survive!'"

"Then, two weeks later, it was April, the 29th of April, for the rest of my life I won't forget it, the Americans came and we survived."

"Through God we will do valiantly, for it is He who shall tread down our enemies" (Psalm 108:13)

"You don't know this feeling: 'I'm alive! I'm alive!' I shouted: 'We Jews rule the world!.. The bandits are finished.'

"If the Americans came only two days later, we would all have been killed because, later I

was told, Himmler gave the order that all the inmates of that camp must be gassed - there was a gaschamber there." "Hitler he wanted to kill all of us, that there should be no one left to tell the story that I am now telling you."

"It is for some reason, for me to tell the story, that I was kept alive.. that I can tell the next generation. That is what you must learn in life, sweetie, you young people, never give in, not in trouble, in bad or in good, never give in!"

"Their plan was that we should all perish, but they did not succeed. God gave me that I can tell about it."

The Reward

"After 70, I thank God that I am still alive. I've got a peaceful old-age home, beautiful room, you can see, every comfort, after that suffering, God gave me every comfort here, that I can tell you."

"I have worked all in my life hard and I have succeeded now. I have saved money, nothing short. All right, I'm not a millionaire, I've got a few bob in the bank, if I'm short, I can draw. So my old age is beautifully done."

Sarah (Addendum pp 411-423)

Early, Critical Choices: An Adolescent Preparation for Adult Suffering

From the idyllic setting of her early childhood, a childhood which nestled in the warmth of family happiness in a setting of exquisite beauty, Sarah had her first introduction to suffering when the family was forced to leave the beautiful estate where they had been living so contentedly because of border fighting and tensions between the Russians, Poles and Lithuanians in the 1920's. Having missed out on formal schooling, the adjustment to primary school in the town they had moved to was not easy. Separation from her close-knit family when she was sent to high-school brought about a crisis.

She fell ill and returned home. With the protective help and guidance of her parents, she overcame her fears, caught up with the schooling she had missed, returned to high school and finished her schooling with distinctions in all subjects.

This was her first fundamental life's orientation: that she would get on top of things, no matter what the difficulties.

The Watershed Choice

Only after Sarah had a family of her own: a husband and baby boy, did she have to deal with the full onslaught of suffering.

"Everything stopped."

Thrown into the disaster of the Kovno ghetto experiences with her husband, baby boy and mother-in-law, those years were spent doing the best they could, looking after each other, hoping that they might somehow survive it all. **"Nothing was in your hands. You did not know what tomorrow would be."**

Sarah's watershed choice came when she was faced with the possibility of losing her own family when her husband was selected to be taken away. She had a choice of whether to go with him or not. Going with him might mean certain death to them all. She made her choice. **"If they kill us, we will die together."**

As soon as the choice had been made to go with her husband, she was separated from her baby and her mother-in-law, whom she was never to see again. Separated also from her husband, Sarah, in a nightmare train journey to her first concentration camp, was confronted with the challenge of finding a way to deal with her suffering.

Her Charge or Commission

Upon arrival at the concentration camp, she was stripped of everything. Her past life was struck out as if it never existed. **"We were left like animals. We had no more brains, no more thoughts, feelings. We just were numb. That is how our life started for us, without family, without anything. And without your clothes. They gave us a dress, not anything else, just a dress. That is how our life in the camp started."**

Only then, with nothing to hold onto anymore, was she given her own peculiar charge or commission. **"One day the gong goes and it is an Appel"** (roll call). Quite incredulously, she was given the charge of becoming a cleaning lady of her barrack. She set about her task zealously. Her commission to take care of those who would be placed in her charge, began.

"There was disorder. So I said, let us make a list. The younger and stronger ones can go, and let the others stay and work in and around the barracks - there was always something to do. And after two days, I promise you, those who have worked two days can have one day of rest on the third day, and then we'll change. I will rotate it in such a way that every one has rest in between two days of work. They agreed. So I had the names and every morning at seven o'clock my group was outside without any screams and without any cries and without any damage done to people."

The faithful performance of her first commission led to an enlargement of responsibility: being appointed a Blockalteste (a person in charge of a block of barracks). Three barracks of a 100 women each, were placed in Sarah's care. These 300 women became Sarah's charge throughout the years of suffering that followed. Sarah also "adopted" a young girl (of about 14 years but who looked no older than a 10 year old). **"I kept her with me and never let her out of my sight. All the rest of the time she was with me and that is my adopted daughter."**

Her "Lucky" Breaks

Sarah experienced miraculous deliverance from death when her whole family were "sent to the right" during a selection at the Kovno ghetto and in surviving after having contracted typhus in the camp.

Of great survival value, of course, was the fact that she was given jobs in the camps to which she was sent.

"I had these breaks. In every camp, after some weeks, I was chosen for some position without my doing anything about it. I don't know why, maybe it was Providence, God's will, I don't know, but this happened in every camp. In all the 5 years that I was in camps, I was always given a chance of some leading job."

Like in the case of Malke, Sarah's liberation also entailed being saved from certain death. **"The instruction was that if the German guards who fled (they left Hungarian SS in charge), did not return in two and a half days, the camp must be destroyed with all the people in it. Not returning, it meant that the German guards could disperse in the woods where the Hungarian SS could follow. .. There was nothing we could do, we couldn't get out, the fences around the camp were electrified. But after two days, we saw all the Germans coming back.. They could not get through.."** **"Then at twelve o'clock on the 15th of April, the first British motorcycle, with two people on it, rode through the fence!"**

The Joy of an Accomplished Task

A sweet triumph of her liberation from Bergen Belsen was collecting together the women who had been entrusted to her care.

"All that I remember is going back to the barracks and getting my girls, all of them."

They had survived, every precious one of them! She had kept the charge given to her.

"I have a very clear conscience. I like myself. I have not failed myself. I can live with my own conscience. If I could do something, I did. I put myself out to help others. I saved my girls, and my adopted daughter. Being a Stubenalteste and Blockalteste had its own temptations and choices, but I did what I knew was the right thing to do."

The Reward

"The girls were my family. They are today also my family. When I get to Israel, I meet them, I meet my 'daughter', with their children and grandchildren. It is a reunion."

"I feel my survival was not for nothing, that I have an obligation. I have dedicated my life in the remembrance and for the sake of those who died."

Deborah (Addendum pp 424-439)A Job-story

Deborah's story of choice casts another and unique light on the meaning of suffering. Hers, like indeed the story of Frankl and each of our research participants, is a Job-like story.

Deborah, in her own words, **"stepped into the concentration camp full of life, romanticism, devotion, love for humanity, love for the next man, looking for great friendships, romances, ideologies."**

Her life prior to the Holocaust was filled with a rich culture of learning, of artistic living, symbolized in the lifestyle she had shared with her uncle, a respected professional and an intellectual of great stature. **"What I learnt from that household! That was in fact most of my background."**

Through him, she had learnt to be a lover of classical music, an ardent student of literature, a connoisseur of the arts, of life itself!

Separated from him and having to move from Riga to Kovno in Lithuania when the Russians occupied Latvia, she continued her rich intellectual lifestyle and met up with an elderly Russian Jew, a wealthy banker and collector of Russian classics and antiques, **"a fantastic figure of a person"**.

But her life was to take a sudden and dramatic turn.

When the Germans invaded both Latvia (which resulted in the murder of her beloved uncle) and Lithuania, the Jews in these countries suddenly found themselves in desperate circumstances.

However morally and culturally elevated her life had been; however exemplary, Deborah, along with her fellow-Jews, was suddenly redefined as worthless, and less than worthless: as some vile thing that had to be exterminated. All the basic human rights were suddenly and totally stripped from them.

They found themselves outcasts.

"Can you imagine the turn from a civilized, well-to-do or organized life of a civilian, overnight being converted to an animal - no rights to walk on the pavement, the yellow stars, surrounded by guards, spat at, looked on by the passers-by, marched in the street in columns and if you would step out of it, you were beaten, being put in a ghetto with high fenced electric wires and whatever you possessed taken away. This all overnight."

"I went to Kovno ghetto a single girl. I didn't see my parents. My parents went to their death without me." (as did the rest of her immediate family) "...They're all gone. I was all by myself in Kovno, without my own family."

A First Choice

"The first thought when I had to go into the ghetto - I was a single girl, a youngster - I thought about my friend. .. It was already forbidden to go into the streets, but I took the risk."

She found and helped her Russian friend (whose family was on an overseas trip at the time) to collect some belongings together and went with him into the ghetto. Staying in a little shack they found for themselves, Deborah looked after him. **"I used to collect grass and cook it for us in a bit of water."**

"My Russian friend died of shock. He didn't survive at all. He had brought with him the

manuscripts he was busy with. He hung onto these more than to gold or whatever.."

With his death, the remaining vestiges of the old, culturally rich life she had spent with her uncle and Russian friend were wrenched from her.

She was left with nothing, and had nobody; like her fellow-Jews, she found herself abandoned; she was to suffer alone.

The Watershed Choice

"I don't know how it happened, someone must have told the nuns at a nearby monastery about me. But one day someone called me and said there were two nuns at the fence wanting to talk to me. I went to them. They told me that they could help me. I had to wear nun's clothing, I had to do everything they do. I had to pray to Mary and Jesus as if I meant it, and I had, of course, to make the sign of the cross. But I told them I could never do that, to pray to a strange God, to make the sign of the cross, even if I pretended. I was Jewish. I would rather stay and share the fate of my brothers and sisters."

Instead of deserting her fellow-Jewish sufferers by accepting the chance of escape offered her by the well-meaning nuns, Deborah decided to share the fate of her fellow-Jews.

Basically, it was a decision not to betray (desert) her own Jewishness but to retain her unique identity and destiny as a Jewess.

The Commission

Her choice to be and remain Jewish, to proudly maintain Jewish values, became a charge which she had to keep even if it meant death.

"At that time someone from the underground contacted me and asked me to get involved."

Jumping at the opportunity to help her fellow-sufferers, even if it meant risking her own safety, Deborah was later caught by two Nazi guards and brought to the Gestapo headquarters where she was imprisoned. After four days, she was brought before the Commander.

"To describe what kind of a man this Commander was.. He used to kill a Jew every day. Every day a Jew was brought from the ghetto to shave the Commander. When he was all nicely cleaned up, he would offer the Jew a cigarette from his gold case, light his cigarette, then take out his revolver and shoot him in the mouth."

The Commander had been puzzled by her behavior. She had refused to eat the food that had been brought to her. Even though shut up in a death cell, she had neither cried nor begged for mercy.

"He studied me, then asked: 'Don't you realize that I have authority over life and death? Why don't you kiss my boots like the others and beg for your life?'"

Struggling in her weak state to stand upright, she answered him:

"Whether I live or die, is your decision. But that I do not beg for my life, is mine." "I stood, just looking back at him. A few moments passed, then he called the guards. "Take this Jewish girl back to the ghetto!"

"He must have found out who I really was." "I was taken to a car and got in. We came to a crossing. To the left was the place where they shot Jews and threw them into this mass grave. To the right was the ghetto. Would the guards obey the Commander's orders? My heart pounded. They turned to the right and I was brought to the ghetto."

Her defiant stand in her confrontation with the Gestapo commander had, paradoxically, saved her life! She had succeeded to evoke in this otherwise willing servant of evil, the human feelings of respect and admiration. For a few moments at least, he ceased to be a hardened criminal and became a man, moved by the courage of a mere fourteen year old Jewish girl who had the nerve to defy the all-powerful Nazi system.

The Battle for her Own Soul

Deborah's life was spared, only to be sent to Auschwitz when the Kovno ghetto was liquidated.

There is a suffering worse than dying.

"Their system was not only to attack you physically. Their aim was to attack you morally. They wanted to break you into pieces. They wanted to convert you into an animal."

"To make you crawl on all fours to beg for a crumb of bread, to break the spirit and the human being, the dignity to a nothing, that was what they were doing in the first place before they took you to the gauchambers and the mass graves. To me that was worse than just being shot."

"To me the degradation of my personality, of my being human, of my Jewishness, of what I am.. to break that, to me was worse than just being killed."

Like a Job, Deborah entered into argument with God. Harnessed like a horse, and having to drag a wagon of heavy logs along with other women, she passionately protested: **"Wasn't that enough degradation?.. If there was a God, my outcry to Him was, often, saying in Yiddish, 'God in heaven, have a look, what are You doing'?'.."**

The Defiant Power of the Human Spirit

She may have been harnessed like a horse, made to sleep in cow dung, treated like the lowest of the low, subjected to every humiliation imaginable, and yet.. the very forces of hell itself could not succeed in touching or soiling her spirit.

"They could not do a thing to me inwardly. All that they could do to me was physically, but they could not get me there.."

"No matter what they were doing to me, I was still above them. They could not kill my romanticism, they could not kill my personal thoughts, they could not kill my life in me, my own world."

"I used to say at that time: 'Come and get me.. In me I have got all my values, in me I am above you. You are the nothing! You've got the gun, but you are the nothing!'"

"That is what has kept me alive, that in my heart of hearts I said: 'I am above you.' My food was anything and everything I have ever acquired. It was feeding me. I never degraded myself in

anyway whatsoever. I did not get down on my knees. I didn't beg."

The Paradoxical Experience of Joy in Suffering

"The more we were depressed, the more we were converted into nothing.. the more were our higher thoughts."

Everything that she had ever treasured: music, art, literature, came flooding back to her. Her thoughts became refined, her observational abilities sharpened. **"I used to take up debates with myself, or if I found somebody with whom I could debate, we used to elevate ourselves out of the dirt of everything around us, much higher up, much more above."**

"I think I never ever thought so nobly and so high emotionally and intellectually as then in hunger, degradation and in cold and in sufferings."

The Victory

"They wanted to prove to themselves that they could break the Jewish nation, that they could break our spirit, our values, to break anything which is human. To convert us to the level of nothingness, that is what their aim was. Shall I tell you something? They did not succeed!"

"Morally, spiritually, no matter how much we were skeletons, (we were nothing) still we had the human touch in us more than any other nation under those circumstances."

"We were heaps of skin and bone, heaps of dead bodies, but they could not somehow get at us."

"We remain."

"Now the Lord Blessed the Latter Days of Job More than his Beginning" (Job 42:12).

Retrospectively, Deborah realized that her suffering had meaning.

"I had to go through hell to get to heaven! .. isn't that strange, that I had to have hell to have heaven!"

"Suffering gives you something.. you grow. I think that the compensation for my suffering, for all my going through hell and back, is that it gave me a new look. It gave me depth. It has taught me to know myself. It mellowed me down in many a respect. It made me wiser, much wiser, if not cleverer. It is hard for me to tell you what depth I have achieved. And that is the compensation for my sufferings."

"And it healed me of something. I suffered quite a number of anxieties right after the liberation. Through those sufferings, I got rid of those anxieties. I am capable of being on my own now. .. I recovered out of it and was leveled out all by myself, with my own strength. I do not permit fear to take over any more. Is that not a compensation for my sufferings?"

The Question that Remains: "Why?.."

"My question would be to you, you are the religious one, I would ask you the question right out. Why did God allow a Holocaust on human beings?.."

Deborah's question is a question posed by a Job.

Job's first contenders tried to convince him that he was suffering because of unconfessed (and undealt with) sins; that God had rejected him, was punishing him for his sins, his stubbornness and self-righteousness. Job was unconvinced, as Deborah was. **"Why should our great God say to humanity, have you seen what happened because you didn't behave..?"**

When Job failed to be convinced by his first contenders, another contender appeared on the scene. If Job could not understand the reason for his sufferings, perhaps he should just let the matter rest. Job should not question God, even if he felt that he had suffered unjustly. Who was Job to question Almighty God?..

Deborah, like a Job, refuses to be pious in her faith.

"When I meet up with God one day, I will have quite a few questions to put to Him."

The so-called religious defenders of God, she believes, harbor the same agonizing doubts in their hearts as to why God can allow the innocent and the righteous to suffer so cruelly. They have no real answers to the question of suffering themselves.

God's wrath was aroused against Job's contenders! "You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has" (Job 42:7).

If there is injustice in this world, we are meant to do something about it. If we suffer unjustly, we are challenged to search out the why's and the wherefores.

"There was not a day in Jewish history where we did not suffer. Right through. Why?.. (sigh) I don't know.."

"All my life I wanted to be a very decent human being. All my life I was looking for depth and sincerity and avoided any wrongs. If I do wrong, I've got a conscience and that conscience will not let me go. How my conscience developed, I wouldn't even know, really, but I've got a very highly developed conscience and that does not permit me to do wrong things."

Deborah refuses every argument that puts the blame on her or on the Jews for being subjected to the horrors of the Holocaust.

Like a Job, Deborah believes that God Himself owes her, His own people, the Jews, and every innocent sufferer throughout history, an answer. **His answer alone will do.** Only His answer will hold good. In the final instance, God must obliterate evil and, in so doing, vindicate the sufferer!

Why should she be satisfied with the many answers and explanations everyone tries to give her?
In the final analyses, the issue is between the sufferer and God alone.

David (Addendum pp. 440-458)

A Clarification of Choice

David could recall having stood up for what was right as a mere six-year old. Not intimidated by fear of adults, he could call an adult to task.

His first or fundamental choice was made in the Westerbork transit camp with the celebration of his Barmitzvah, his coming of age. Embracing the beauty of the teachings of Judaism, he refused to limit his thinking by becoming religiously fanatic.

"I went to Shul (synagogue) three times a day, put on tallis (prayer shawl) and tefillin (prayer phylacteries) and that lasted for a period until I found myself clashing with some of the more fundamentalists."

The letter of the Law (strict observance) may be important, **but it is the spirit of the Law which gives it life**; without it, the Law is a dead letter. (Judaism in fact teaches that observance, however meticulous, without a love of God and one's fellow-man, is devoid of real spiritual content: is meaningless.)

David's story is a story of choice par excellence. His concentration camp experience launched him into a lifetime of inquiry.

What is man, what is he meant to be?

His constant challenge to others to weigh up what they were doing, to evaluate what they used as an argument for their wrong attitudes and actions in the light of their conscience, both in the camp and afterwards, served as a clarification of his own stand in the light of his own conscience. **He must be able to account for his actions, his beliefs, fully, without excuse or argument.**

The conclusion he came to after a lifetime of inquiry into the matter was: **A ruthless No! to evil was necessary; a total Yes to a life that had renounced evil in every shape or form, especially as it is rationalized in the indoctrinated and warped mind of man, was required.**

He wanted to know what man is supposed to be like, what he was created to be, and then to be it. **"It is as simple as that."**

The Watershed Experience

David's watershed came on a day in the camps when he, as a 14 year old boy, challenged a Nazi about his behavior and beliefs. **"Look,"** explained the Nazi, **"it is like this. I like you, you're a nice kid, but you're a Jew and if we don't do something about it, from a little Jew you're going to become a big Jew, and that's no good, that we cannot allow."**

David realized with shock that a man's mind can be poisoned to believe that the murder of the innocent is justifiable. Wrong can be blatantly accepted as right. Man can play tricks on his own conscience.

This shocking experience marked a decisive turn in David's life. He was to refute the irrationality of the rationale of the bigot, the hypocrite, the ideologically indoctrinated and religious fanatic from that moment onwards.

A Final Stand Before the Judgement Seat of Conscience

It is in moral weakness, through the poorly exercised conscience of man, that the door to evil is opened.

David did battle with his own moral weakness.

He had to come to a clear, decisive and absolute stand in his own thinking.

Man must be able to refuse compromise. He must be able to exercise total goodness, have the wherewithal to do it, otherwise what does it say of his Creator? **Man might not be able to explain the existence of evil, but he should be able to renounce it.** Good should have the absolute power to overcome evil, otherwise it is no good.

His deliberation as the suffering victim of a Nazi concentration camp, a deliberation from which all illusion had been stripped, brought him to an irrevocable conclusion:

"It should be possible for an individual to say: This I do not do. I will not do this! It is wrong."

No man can excuse himself, plead to be let off the hook. He will **have** to give an account. Man is what **he** chooses to be.

Optimal Humanness: Man on the Dimension of Meaning

A Glimpse of Glory: The Perfect Man

The vital and exhilarating truth is that in suffering, more than in any other less stressful and therefore, also less challenging situation of life, we can realize life's **highest values**. In suffering, the choices between right and wrong, what is required or expected of us, are clearest. In difficult circumstances, where the right choices are costly, our consciences are most sharpened and acute. Only man has a conscience. In suffering, therefore, more than in any other situation in life, we can, through our choices, be made perfect, that is, be **optimally human**.

A man who can suffer with dignity (the hope and faith that his life has meaning, despite adversity, despite the blows fate seems to have dealt him, despite the reproach and rejection of his very person), has lost all fear. He no longer needs to avoid issues, evade problems or run away from difficulties. He can deal fully with whatever life brings across his path. This means that his pleasures are more real to him too, since he is better able to appreciate life's blessings, knowing from bitter experience how precious these are. **He can take the good and the bad.**

The courageous sufferer gains and never loses. For him, life multiplies its blessings!

Man, if he but chooses to be what he knows he should be, can emerge from suffering a victor, a hero, a saint. If he does not flounder, panic or defensively retreat, he can progress beyond the stage of fear and helplessness. He can gain a clearer definition of what he can be, of what his suffering is challenging him to be.

The perfect man, paradoxically, is "a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3).

Characteristics of Optimal Humanness

Our research participants have highlighted characteristics of man on the dimension of meaning. They have revealed to us features of spiritual maturity not ordinarily found in the textbooks of human behavior.

They have something to say to us about the levels of growth man is capable of reaching and what his behavior can be like, under even the most soul-destroying circumstances imaginable. They have stood the test of suffering. What they have gained in unusual greatness of mind and maturity, has been achieved through having suffered heroically.

Their gains in terms of personality growth and maturity are beyond the physical in terms of material power; beyond the psychological in terms of hardiness (coping strengths). They have achieved in the area of their **humanness**. Their gains are **spiritual**. There is a strength made perfect through weakness (suffering) (2 Corinthians 12:9)!

The lives and persons of our heroes of suffering reveal some fascinating features of **spiritual maturity**.

- * They have reached a state of optimal humanness through **choice**.
- * They have a clear sense of who they are and what they were meant to be: they have a **clarified mission in life**.
- * They have **dignity**, a sense of self-possession in that they are living on a supremely and uniquely **human** dimension.
- * They have an unequivocal and passionate, even **defiant** sense of right in the face of wrong; the triumph of good **delights** them, the wrong **grieves** them. There is nothing lukewarm or passive in their attitude towards life.
- * They live **self-transcendingly**. They focus on something greater than themselves - on that which transcends and takes them beyond the constraints of self-centeredness.
- * Their lives are earmarked by an **ongoing quest** - the future is ever beckoning, life is never at an end, there is always something more ahead of them.
- * There is no sense of closure, or of final answers, no dogmatism in their attitudes towards life - life remains unpredictable: they live comfortably with the fact of **uncertainty**.
- * They keep **faith** with the future - the uncertainty of what may be ahead of them does not fill them with fear, but with **hope**, the hope that the more final answers of life will be good ones, something to look forward to!
- * In fact, all their lives are **infused with meaning** - they seem to be living in the presence of the Eternal, of that which is forever ongoing and supremely **meaningful**.
- * They are truly men and women in the optimal human sense: **they live by their consciences**. Their attitudes and actions are earmarked by **accountability**. They **like** themselves, since they have nothing to hide. They have **reversed** the Adamic position of shame.

Living by Choice

The stories of Frankl and the research participants are stories of **choice**. They have reached the heights of spiritual maturity and optimal humanness through the exercise of choice. The call directed to every man and woman: "Adam, where are you?", they have answered, even in the most life-threatening and fear-provoking situations imaginable.

They have exercised **the courage to be** (Tillich, 1965).

We miss the opportunity of realizing our full capabilities and human potential by hiding ourselves behind our defences in an effort to escape the cost of becoming involved with the problematic and difficult (tragic) issues of life.

A response of availability: "**Here I am, send me!**", even if the going gets tough, is a choice in the direction of growth and self-fulfillment. The door to opportunity remains open. Ever further horizons beckon.

We enter the wide vistas of optimal humanness through **choice**. Spiritual maturity is an achievement!

The demand-quality of life, the choices we are continually called upon to make, is particularly evident during times of adversity and personal suffering. Through suffering, therefore, we are offered life's choicest gains.

Having a Clarified Mission in Life

Suffering during the Holocaust hit the survivors in terms of who they were, emphasizing what was important to them in the face of its threatened loss.

The evil, which sought to rob them of their very selves in the all-out-onslaught against the values they stood for and believed in, shocked them into having to make choices to retain that which they have previously so richly enjoyed and were the free and effortless (blessed) recipients of.

The choices to preserve and retain that which was extremely important to them as human beings, became, through the struggle and fierce effort to not lose them, **more authentically theirs** after their sufferings.

Having gained a supreme and spiritual victory over the forces which sought to dehumanize them, their uniqueness as human beings, who they were elected to be; what role in life they were elected to play; became that much clearer. Their "calling and election" or their individual and unique destinies, were made "sure", so to speak (2 Peter 1:10).

Esther, raised in the beauty of family togetherness and love, and daring, during the period of her internment, to uphold these values that were more precious to her than life itself, could, after her liberation, build a monument of remembrance to her precious father and to those who had perished, by embracing a mission of being a daughter to her mother, a wife to her husband, and a mother to her children (and, as I am writing this, a grandmother to her precious grandson).

Malke, who treasured motherliness and caring for the needy before suffering snatched away her precious mother and other family members, was given the very task of caring and helping her fellow camp-inmates during her period of internment. After her liberation, her whole life was devoted to the needy and she became a mother to all who are privileged to really know her.

Sarah, who before the Holocaust learned to triumph in the face of fears and difficulties by achieving top marks in school, had entrusted to her charge 300 women to care for in the camps. Having lost her own precious family, including her baby son, these women (and a young girl whom she took under her protective wing) became her adopted family not only during her sufferings, but also after the liberation. Enjoying her adopted family, their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, and her own children

and grandchildren, she has spent her life after the Holocaust in leadership positions, disseminating knowledge about the Holocaust in a fight against the folly of senseless prejudice and ignorance.

Deborah delighted in her rich heritage as a Jewess. During her internment, she chose at great cost, to retain her Jewish values and identity. After her liberation, she took up a controversy with God, whom she vowed she will not let go of, until He vindicates her sufferings. Her life's mission is expressed in the words of one of the prophets of her people, Isaiah: "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns" (62:1-1).

David, given a philosophical nature and a background which allowed him to develop a broad outlook on life, was tested in this very area in the Ravensbruck concentration camp where he dared to challenge even the Nazi to give an account of his heartless actions and prejudiced views. His life after the Holocaust has been a philosophical quest to establish, beyond a shadow of a doubt, what it is that man has been created to be.

His conclusion, that it is possible for every man, no matter what his religious persuasion, his political views, his background and circumstances, to say No to evil, addresses the conscience of the world. No man can argue or excuse himself as he is brought before the Judgement Seat of his own conscience.

We have a most amazing demonstration of a clarification of a life's mission during the trial of suffering, in the case of **Frankl**.

A fascinating feature of Frankl's story is that, after his suffering experiences, he could pick up where he had left off, but this time, with a much greater depth of insight.

When he set out on his journey of suffering Frankl had just written his manuscript, a first draft, as it were, of what after his liberation, became a deepened and uniquely authenticated life-task. He was to become a first-hand witness and authority on the subject of meaning.

Losing his manuscript, he was challenged to live his thoughts **"instead of merely putting them on paper"** (Frankl, 1967, p. 26). Nearly at wits end because of his terrible sufferings, but nonetheless and at great cost, struggling to retain his sense of humanity; he was inspired by a vision that would be realized after his liberation. **"Suddenly I saw myself standing on the platform of a well-lit, warm and pleasant lecture room. In front of me sat an attentive audience on comfortable upholstered seats. I was giving a lecture on the psychology of the concentration camp!"**

After his liberation Frankl rewrote his manuscript, along with several other volumes. Between 1946 and 1950 Frankl published 12 books; to date he has produced 30, which have been translated into 22 languages. His best known book, Man's Search for Meaning, the story of his concentration camp experiences, has run into 80 editions and in the United States alone, more than five million copies have been sold. In addition to Frankl, 109 authors have published books on logotherapy in 15 different languages. There are teaching institutions and scientific societies devoted to logotherapy on every continent. Frankl has been awarded many prizes in appreciation of his work. 24 honorary doctorates have been conferred on him by universities all over the world, including two from South Africa.

Frankl's pre-Holocaust thoughts on meaning have been authenticated by real-life experiences, therefore the great impact of the truth of his teachings. His work has been immortalized in the lives of millions of people, struggling with the issue of the meaning of their sufferings.

Having been given the promise that "he would live long on the land" in choosing to honor his aged parents by staying with them in their hour of need, Frankl at the ripe old age of over 90 is still travelling the world, lecturing to attentive audiences in the well-lit and comfortable auditoriums of universities and institutions all over the globe!

Retaining Human Dignity

Man does not live by bread alone. This was a most riveting truth to have emerged from the stories of Holocaust victims and survivors.

Man lives by meaning.

Without a sense of purpose or meaning in life, life in the concentration camps descended to mere animal existence. Their former lives destroyed, and with no prospect for the future, inmates lapsed into a mere struggle for brute existence. Self-survival became the driving force behind all their desperate efforts to cling onto life.

The concentration camps proved that if a man was deprived of something or someone to live for, something to be responsible for, he will soon come to lack a sense of worth and dignity. Life will become devoid of value, of spiritual content. Man will become a thing among other things. His world will become material. Living outside a dimension of meaning, man will become an outcast. **He will lose his human face.**

Without exception, every research participant felt that the battle in the inhuman and senseless environment of the Nazi concentration and death camps, raged around retaining their sense of humanness. Deborah voices the feelings of every one of them when she states: **"Personally, the biggest tragedy was not the hunger part, it was the degrading part. I was starving every day. To me that part was not so hurtful as the hurtfulness of degradation. I feel thousands felt the same way without knowing how to express themselves, to sort out what hurt them more. When I saw a piece of bread I used to shake, saliva used to flow. But that is a physical reaction to hunger. That is a natural reaction. It does not abrogate the spiritual battle that was uppermost."**

We can conclude from the observations of our research participants that, to be subjected to poverty, to disease and to hunger, to filth and maltreatment, is painful **because** it disacknowledges, spurns and despises the worth and dignity of the person of the sufferer. **To be dehumanized, is the real source of suffering.**

It follows that to feel at his optimal best, man needs to be living a life of worth and dignity. He needs the opportunity to be creative: to feel that he is contributing something of value to his fellow-man (**the creative values**). He needs to feel a meaningful part in the process of living in being able to experience the beauty and joys of life. He wants to love and be loved (**the experiential values**). Above all, he needs to be inspired by ideals, by a meaningful purpose in life. He wants to have standards to live by, values to live for - a spiritual aim in and orientation to life which enables him to transcend problems

and difficulties and to come to grips with the tragic aspects of life (**the attitudinal values**).

Taking a Defiant Stand for What is Right

It is in the nature of the human spirit to be free. Man is **spiritual**. To drag a man's existence down to mere physicalities, is to do him **injustice**. A man who is no more than a product of his environment, and who is manipulated, patterned to type by the sway of powerful environmental influences, is a **victim**.

Frankl and our research participants were among those in the concentration camps, who **refused** to yield to the ugly and senseless force of circumstances. They took up a **spiritual battle**.

They proved that no matter how miserable or decadent the circumstances, that it is possible for man to remain **man**.

To be **man**, was to defy the forces which defined man as no more than an object, something to abuse and discard. By retaining their human values, Frankl and our research participants made a statement **on behalf of man**.

Theirs was a battle for **the human cause**.

Man has a right to meaning; to a life of value and human dignity. To deny him this, is to stunt his growth, to deny him his human right, the right to realize his full human potential.

The deprivation of man's fundamental rights: his **spiritual** rights as a human being, calls for **protest**.

Living Self-transcendingly

As much as the Nazi concentration and death camps proved the fact that man needed to live for something more than just himself if we was not to become totally egotistical, decadent and monstrous, it also proved that in the most trying and terrifying of circumstances, man's spirit could triumphantly break through all barriers. Self-transcendence is the essence of human existence (Frankl, 1968).

Frankl and our research participants fought and won a **spiritual victory**. Not falling victim to despair, they proved that hope could be retained; a sense of perspective, a future-orientatedness could be achieved in the severest sufferings imaginable. They succeeded in retaining their humanness, their dignity and self-respect, their compassion and respect for others, no matter how severe the pressure to do otherwise, to give up the struggle and fall victim to moral decay. They proved that it was possible to still believe that there was something to live and struggle for, something that they dare not fail, but wanted to keep themselves worthy of.

Living Life as an Ongoing Quest

The most outstanding characteristic of a man who lives on the dimension of meaning, is that he lives in terms of **a quest that is ongoing**. He does not ever feel that he has arrived. The best seems forever ahead of him. This has been expressed by Deborah: **"I still have a long climbing to do. I still have not reached the real heights"** (quote from original data).

Man has a need to be ongoing, to immortalize himself. There must be a future ahead of him, something beyond the here and now, something that will continue after his own death. Deborah again graphically expresses this most fundamental of human yearnings: **"I do believe that a human being doesn't die completely. I think it lies in our memories. It is in us that it doesn't die. It remains in the living person, not in the dead person. It sits in the living one, not in the dead one"** (quote from original data).

There must be a reward for a life of effort, sacrifice and heroic suffering, something that will go on after our life on this earth is over. **"What remains alive is in the living person, the memories, what he thinks about the dead person; what impression his life has made. What remains is the spirit, the soul."** (Deborah, quote from original data).

To think that there is nothing more than just this life, with death as the end of the matter, obliterates any sense of meaning. **"It is a peculiarity of man that he can only live by looking to the future,"** states Frankl (1968, p. 74).

Stamp out man's future-orientatedness, his hope, his self-transcendent nature, and you stamp out his humanness, his very will to live.

Having the Maturity of Uncertainty

Does suffering cancel out hope? Indeed not, testifies Frankl and the research participants. But in suffering, hope for the future gets stripped of mere (and unfounded) optimism.

Hope gets deepened by meaningfully living the moment, even in the face of future uncertainties.

There is reward (hope) locked up in the very performance of an action we are proud of, even if it is in facing death heroically, with the victorious faith that our lives have not been meaningless. And who knows what awaits us? **"No man knows what the future will bring, much less the next hour"** (Frankl, 1968, p. 82).

Can we predict what tomorrow will bring, or even the next moment? When all seems lost, as it did in the Nazi death camps, one may even be spared. Your life can be given back to you. And if not, who is to know if death is the end of the road?..

What matters is that we do what has to be done today; that we do not neglect the opportunities, tasks and duties presented to us each and every moment of our lives, **even** in suffering.

Keeping Faith with the Future

Even though each research participant, and including Frankl himself, have achieved victories of meaning in their lives, they have in no way reached any kind of final conclusion (or destination).

The **why** of suffering remains.

But in every one of their cases, they have moved away from dogmatic and final answers, the premature closures of mind, the bigotry typical of any type of fanaticism, whether in the area of science, religion or politics. It is exactly their ever expanding **openness** to a dimension of meaning which itself is limitless (without the constraints of a beginning or an end), that earmarks their spiritual maturity.

They are, indeed, heroes of faith and of hope, of the intangibles of eternity! "Hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, then we **eagerly** wait for it with perseverance" (Romans 8:24,25).

Faith, **despite** life's uncertainties, Frankl (1968) contends, is the highest and most mature form of believing. "**What is demanded of man is not, as some existential philosophers teach, to endure the meaninglessness of life; but rather to bear his incapacity to grasp its unconditional meaningfulness in rational terms. Logos is deeper than logic**" (p. 120).

It is faith that can endure a lack of final answers.

Infusing Life with a Sense of Ultimate Meaning

Each and every research participant was involved in a struggle for **meaning**. Life is not worth the living if it is not infused with a sense of purpose and destiny.

In his deepest being, man has a will to meaning. He desires truth (goodness) in his innermost self (Psalm 51:6). He **wants** to live a life of value and beauty. His will to meaning is not a futile endeavor. He will be met by Meaning!

To live in the most optimal sense, is to infuse every situation of life with meaning. Our entire lives need to be revitalized with meaning or, put in another way, to be **spiritualized**. This is the triumphant fullness of life that a Job attained after his sufferings. He saw the Eternal. **He had an encounter with the Transcendent, also in the suffering moments of life.**

His life lost all its unconcern, every last trace of callousness: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Job prayed for his friends and God blessed him. All of life's moments, also paradoxically its incomprehensible ones, its sufferings, were flooded with meaning (eternal life)!

I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. .. I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. (Job 42:5,6,3)

Living by One's Conscience: Man in the Image of God

Frankl and the research participants lived by the dictates of their own consciences. Having done so, they felt free to give an account of themselves. In fact, the research participants were proud to have their stories told!

Man needs to live by the light of his own conscience. He is most fully himself, likes himself best, when he realizes values he can feel good about, proud of. It is an achievement to be able to say, like Sarah did: **"I have a very clear conscience. I like myself. I have not failed myself. I can live with my own conscience. If I could do something, I did. I put myself out to help others. .. I did what I knew was the right thing to do."**

We are our brother's keeper!

The Commission

The Holocaust, one of the most tragic events in human history, contains, most paradoxically, the greatest challenge and hope for humankind.

It has given us evidence to believe that man does have the power to overcome evil with good. He is not the hapless victim, either of an evil nature or of evil circumstances.

Our research participants have proved that every right action and attitude, especially under trying circumstances, has had a self-affirming, strengthening and inspiring effect upon them. It caused them to grow, to become better people. They liked themselves more. And they gained our respect and admiration.

Ecce Homo!

What man **ought** to be, he is **capable** of being! This is the challenge and meaning of suffering.

We need not be slaves to incapacity (and passivity). We need not become hapless victims of evil, either as its perpetrators or as its accomplices as passive bystanders.

We can undertake the **joint task** given to us as humankind to combat poverty, oppression, injustices - to alleviate suffering.

We have experimented with evil. We know its consequences. Have we experimented with good? Do we know its power?

PART VIII: REFLECTIVE REVIEW

This section consists of Chapter 19, the concluding chapter, in which we will review the research objectives and consider whether they have been met. The limitations and methodological shortcomings of the present study will be briefly discussed with a view to how they could be neutralized in subsequent research. We will offer suggestions for further research in the light of some of the interesting questions that the present study have raised. A final statement on the value of the present study will then be made.

CHAPTER 19

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The final conclusions and recommendations of the present study will be set out in this chapter in a brief and critical discussion of the following: the research focus and rationale of the present study; its research objectives; its limitations; recommendations for further study; and a closing reflection on the value of the present study.

The Research Focus and Rationale

The primary objective of this research was to gain an understanding of the meaning of suffering among Holocaust survivors.

The premise was that if meaning can be found in the worst and most senseless sufferings imaginable, then the potential to discover meaning in all other situations of suffering must exist.

The Research Objectives

In pursuing the main objective: to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning of suffering among Holocaust survivors, the following research objectives came into focus:

- * to illuminate the theme of the meaning of suffering in mainstream psychology, using the works of the famous Holocaust survivor and existential theorist, **Viktor Frankl**, as a base;
- * to study the Holocaust as a crisis of meaning, both in the personal and historical sense and, by using Holocaust survivors as research participants, to make a contribution to Holocaust research;
- * to contribute to the debate on what constitutes a human science by demonstrating the scientific merit of a heuristic research approach, one of the many qualitative methods in what is known as new paradigm research;
- * to gain a greater understanding of the higher levels of psychological functioning and personality development by illuminating the extraordinary personality strengths of Holocaust victims in dealing with their suffering.

The Theme of the Meaning of Suffering in Mainstream Psychology.

Exploring the concept of meaning in the writings of Frankl, his particular view of man was implicitly elucidated: fundamental to human existence is the fact of man's freedom of will; his will to meaning and the fact that man finds and experiences meaning in life, even in suffering.

In order to more sharply elucidate Frankl's concept of a will to meaning as an inherent and core feature of human nature, a phenomenon that emerges most strongly during times of suffering, the behavioristic views of **J.B. Watson** and **Fred Skinner**; the psychoanalytic view of **Sigmund Freud**; and the humanistic views of **Gordon Allport**, **Abraham Maslow** and **Carl Rogers** were explored. It was particularly fascinating to consider **the personal stance** of each theorist on the question of the meaning of life and, particularly, of suffering.

Most interesting was that, in considering the mainstream theories from the inception of psychology as a science to the present day, **the history of psychology as a discipline itself emerged as a struggle to understand the meaning and purpose of human existence; to explain and try to deal with the question of human suffering.**

Another fascinating course over the history of psychology which the present study could trace, was the progression of thought away from the religious dogmatisms of the nineteenth century to a new, most illuminating look at **the authentic faith of the psychologically mature person.**

The Holocaust as a Crisis of Meaning

The Holocaust was addressed as one of the most stringent tests of meaning imaginable. It was studied as a personal crisis, as a Jewish crisis and as a crisis of Western civilization. The Holocaust was illuminated, particularly, as a crisis of conscience. Finally the Holocaust was considered as a challenge to meaning not only in a personal, but also in a historical sense.

In trying to gain entry into the life-world of the Holocaust survivor, the Holocaust was studied as psychological adversity.

The Nazi concentration and death camps can serve as a paradigm of how humans react to stressful conditions which approach the outermost limits of human adaptability.

Surveying the research literature on the Holocaust survivor, the predominant focus of researchers was found to be on the pathological reactions of survivors. The new classification of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, also known as the Survivor Syndrome, in the DSMIII & IV, describes what has come to be recognized as a specific condition.

The bulk of research with survivors accentuates the damage done to the psyche of survivors as a result of the severe trauma they were subjected to.

An aspect that has been neglected by survivor syndrome advocates is the need of survivors to find meaning in their suffering so that the memories of the past with all their pain are bearable. Studies dealing with the personality strengths of survivors, however, are sparse indeed.

It was not from the research literature, but from survivor testimonies, that another picture - the inner, more hidden and unscathed world of meaning of the Holocaust victim - emerged. It was this rich inner world of meaning of Holocaust survivors that the present research sought to illuminate.

A New Paradigm Approach: Heuristic Research

The fact that the bulk of the research literature on the Holocaust victim focuses only on the breakdown of the personality under stress, can be seen as the result of the employment of positivistic research methods in studying survivor behavior. The deeper dimensions of the personality of the sufferer remains out of reach of this type of research approach.

After the close of the Second World War, within the psychiatric and psychological fields, no research approach existed which could do justice to and which could humanely encompass the immense sufferings of Holocaust victims. Coming from a positivistic research background, some researchers were sensitive enough to acknowledge that a completely new research approach in survivor studies was called for.

In using a heuristic research approach in the present study, one of the many qualitative methods of what has become known as new paradigm research, access was gained into the experiential worlds of Holocaust survivors. Heuristics has been defined as "a passionate and personal involvement in problem solving, an effort to know the essence of some aspect of life through the internal pathways of the self" (Douglas & Moustakas, 1985). It is a disciplined but intuitive search that explores, by every possible subjective means, the essence of personal experience (Rogers, 1985).

Moving away from the traditional research position of control, new paradigm research seeks to establish a meaningful dialogue, a new democracy, between the investigator, the informant and the data, a position that questions conventional notions of validity (Taylor, 1990). The research participant becomes co-researcher, the researcher a participant in the research; above all, the phenomenon of research is allowed to dictate the method of research.

All the characteristics and phases of the heuristic research were generally evident in the present study:

During the initial phases, the focus was on **preparing the researcher's mind in order to maximize her receptivity for the data of research**. This phase included an intensive study of Holocaust literature, several visits to the Yad Vashem or Holocaust Memorial Museum in Jerusalem and the attendance of courses at the Yad Vashem given by world authorities in the field of Holocaust studies.

In terms of **personal preparedness** for the study of the subject of research, two particularly significant experiences relating to suffering and its meaning were described in Chapter 1 (a deeply personal experience of meaning in suffering) and Chapter 15 (an experience of intense identification with the suffering of the Holocaust victims themselves).

To move more sensitively into the life-worlds of Holocaust survivors, a two year period was spent among South African based Holocaust survivors as they met on a monthly basis at their organization: the She'erith Hapletah, in Johannesburg. This period involved watching, listening, and participating through observation, conversation and discussion until **the phenomenon of research began to clarify itself in the mind of the researcher**.

A natural relationship developed with five members of the She'erith HaPletah. The unfolding of each research relationship both before, during and after the interviewing period was recorded.

After the transcription of the recorded interviews, followed by a period of **immersion into the data** by long periods of contemplating the life-worlds of each research participant, **an individual depiction** of each participant's experience of suffering and its meaning could be constructed.

Based on these individual depictions or protocols, and the personal interaction with each participant during the interviewing process, **a portrait** of each research participant could be drawn. The unique perspective of each participant on the meaning of their sufferings could thus be retained.

A composite picture of the core qualities and themes inherent to the experience of suffering among the whole group, could then be constructed.

A creative synthesis was offered in comparing the story of Viktor Frankl, a survivor of Auschwitz, with those of the research participants, tracing the core themes of the composite picture in the story of Frankl and in the stories of each research participant.

It is clear that the use of a heuristic approach is novel in the field of Holocaust studies. It has a lot to offer. For example: in the present study it allowed access into the inner worlds of Holocaust survivors and provided an in-depth understanding of the meaning of suffering from the participants' own, unique perspectives.

The Expansion of the Body of Knowledge on Psychological Maturity

An analysis of the personality strengths of the research participants highlighted areas of psychological maturity not ordinarily found in the textbooks of psychology.

Having stood the test of suffering in having suffered heroically and with dignity, the research participants developed an unusual greatness of mind and achieved a high level of moral excellence.

The stories of Frankl and the research participants emerged as **stories of choice**. The following pattern was evident in each of their stories:

The survivor was called upon to make certain crucial and critical choices either before or very early on in their suffering experiences. If the survivor had **the courage to choose according to the dictates of his or her own conscience**, these choices presented themselves as **tasks or commissions**. Once embraced, the survivor experienced **a sense of meaning which had a sustaining power in even the worst situations of suffering**. The experience of meaning in the midst of their sufferings allowed them to come through their terrible experiences with a sense of intactness and **spiritual triumph**. Even though badly shaken, disillusioned in mankind and deeply hurt, they were able to take up their lives again and make something extremely meaningful of them.

By transcending themselves, by rising to the occasion in each and every situation demanding choice, the research participants were brought onto a dimension of meaning.

They proved that particularly **in situations of suffering, the courage to act according to the dictates of conscience, can have the outcome of a most remarkable growth in moral strength, courage and conviction. The sufferer can emerge from his or her sufferings psychologically more mature and spiritually enriched.**

Through this research a most valuable angle has been added to the contributions of the humanists regarding the optimal level of human functioning and personality development, namely, that of **the growth value of suffering and affliction**.

The perfect man, the one who has gained his full human stature is, paradoxically, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3).

Limitations of the Present Study

Various shortcomings and limitations can be mentioned with regard to the present study. While some of the present study's methodological flaws will be briefly discussed with a view to how they could be neutralized in subsequent research, the reader is referred to Chapter 16 for a more detailed exposition of the validity of the present study. The emphasis in this section will be more on general issues that need to be addressed in future research as it became apparent during the course of the present study.

The Methodological Shortcomings of the Present Study

The present study evolved over many years. Its methodological shortcomings can be attributed to the fact that it proved extremely difficult to set out the heuristic research process in clear and discernible stages as so many of its phases overlapped over the long course of the present study.

A serious objection can be raised that the researcher was not meticulous enough in keeping a detailed account of each phase of the research. The explicit phases, and how exactly the researcher went about it, could not always be spelt out clearly enough, making it difficult for the reader not only to follow the course of research, but more importantly, also to judge the reliability and validity of the heuristic research methodology employed in the present study.

The present study may therefore have failed in one of its research objectives, namely, **to fully demonstrate or prove** the scientific merit of a heuristic research approach as representative of the new paradigm research approach in psychology. At most, the present study only indicated the possible merits of such an approach in the research of phenomena of experience such as suffering and the struggle to find its meaning.

In the light of the above objections it is therefore recommended that in a future research of this nature, the researcher clarifies his or her research interest more exactly and demarcate the field of study more precisely before setting out on the actual or practical part of the research. Meticulous notes should be kept on every phase of the research process so that in its presentation, the reader will be left in less doubt as to the reliability and validity of the entire research process.

Issues that Need to be Addressed in Future Research

The Theoretical One-sidedness of the Present Study

As a Holocaust survivor, Frankl's works, views and experiences, have received predominant attention in the present study.

The theoretical one-sidedness of this study in focusing on the meaning of suffering from the perspective of Frankl's writings on the subject, is proposed as warranted because of Frankl's impact on the researcher's own life and the heuristic implications of the consequently provoked personal interest in the meaning of suffering, particularly among Jewish Holocaust survivors.

However sharp the insights into the meaning of suffering provided by this specific angle of the experiences and life-worlds of Holocaust survivors, including the story of Viktor Frankl himself, it represents but one shaft of light on a most fascinating topic, a topic relevant to every sufferer in the manifold situations of suffering life presents.

Approaching the Phenomenon of the Meaning of Suffering from Other Perspectives

The present study could be enriched by a more intensive study of the views of other existential theorists on the reality of death, of man's consciousness of responsibility in the face of it, and of embracing life as a given task (Boss 1968; Boss, Binswanger & May, 1974; May, Angel & Ellenberger, 1966; May, 1969, 1983; Tillich, 1961, 1965).

Especially helpful in illuminating the fact of man's will to meaning that is especially provoked during times of suffering and great anxiety, is the excellent work of Reeves (1977) in his overview of the experience and meaning of anxiety; the significance of human will and the challenge of an integrated existence in the psychology of Rollo May.

Like Frankl, May (1958b) believes that the fundamental issue that we as humans present as problematic in our lives, is the question of meaning. Patients are bringing to analysis or psychotherapy, not psychosomatic illness, nor ultimately a precisely psychological problem, but rather a philosophical question, namely, the question of the meaning of our own existence. Can the experience of meaning of individuals undergoing psychotherapy be an avenue of research to pursue more rigorously?

Employing other Research Approaches in the Study of the Meaning of Suffering

The heuristic method of research used in the present study contains key ideas drawn from existentialism and phenomenology, but departs from the existential-phenomenological method in critical ways.

Whereas phenomenology permits the researcher to conclude with definite descriptions of the structures of experience, heuristics involves a synthesis that includes intuition and tacit understanding. This means that the persons, both of the researcher and the research participants, are never lost in the process of research. Two prominent heuristic researchers, namely, Douglas and Moustakas (1985), point

out that phenomenology ends with the essence of experience; heuristics retains the essence of **the person** in experience.

The present research accentuated the personal both in a theoretical study of the works of Viktor Frankl and mainstream psychologists as well as in the life and experiences of the researcher herself. Also the person of the Holocaust survivor remained in sharp focus during all the phases of research and in the explication and presentation of the data.

However appropriate in the present research the heuristic method proved to be, it is nonetheless only one of the several research methods within the broad spectrum of new paradigm research that can be employed in illuminating the phenomenon of the meaning of suffering. Therefore, different perspectives should be used and other avenues of research employed in subsequent research to highlight the varied ways in which the meaning of suffering can be experienced.

The field of research that has become known as the existential-phenomenological alternative in psychology (Valle & King, 1978), is a most fruitful avenue to pursue in seeking a broader vision of the phenomenon of suffering and its meaning.

Some of the studies using this approach and which relate to the subject of the meaning of suffering, are the following:

Fischer and Werts (1979) made an empirical phenomenological analyses of being criminally victimized. Fischer (1978) undertook an empirical-phenomenological investigation of being-anxious as an example of the meanings of being-emotional.

These two studies give us a different view on the experience of suffering and of how we feel anxious (in the face of a unmanageable and distress-provoking situation).

The following existential-phenomenological studies also throw interesting light on the experience of meaning in suffering as it has been highlighted in the present research:

Van Kaam (1986) conducted a study on feeling really understood, a key element in the experience of meaning. The dawning of greater understanding is a meaning aspect which the research participants in the present study have experienced as a result of their suffering.

The phenomenological moments of learning have been pursued in a study of Colaizzi (1986). Particularly relevant is Colaizzi's apprehension of learning as a gaining of new perspective. A true learning experience discloses hitherto unrealized aspects of a particular phenomenon. This greater sense of realization eliminate confusions generated by the prevalent system of knowledge concerning the phenomenon in question.

Frankl (1968) described the above process as explicated by Colaizzi (1986), as a breakthrough into **the dimension of meaning**.

Recommendations for Further Study

Several ideas for further research have emerged in the present study in the review of the literature and in a study of the Holocaust as psychological adversity. Particularly exciting, is the possibility of further investigating the spiritual dimensions of human functioning on the psychologically more mature reaches of personality development - an area highlighted in the present study.

A New Look at Mainstream Psychologists from a Meaning Perspective

In reviewing the evolving theories of man over the course of the history of mainstream psychology from the perspective of seeking answers to the problems of human conflict and suffering, many avenues for further research and for a fruitful reconsideration of what many of us regard as outdated theories in the history of psychology, were opened.

- * **Fred Skinner, the man.** The behavioristic stance of a man like Skinner can be researched as a way of coming to grips with the vexing problems of the evils of human society. What can be learnt from his theories and fruitfully be put into effect in the betterment of human society?
- * **A new appreciation of the contribution of radical behaviorists in launching psychology into an authentic search for ways and means and for the tools to overcome the problems of evil and suffering.** It is worth considering that had the feet of psychology not been brought onto solid ground by behaviorists such as Watson and Skinner, little progress in terms of a down-to-earth grappling with real-life problems within the field of psychology could have been made.
- * **A radical reconsideration of the value of the contributions of Sigmund Freud.** Freud, particularly, has been stereotyped and his theories presented as time-bound (outdated) in textbooks of psychology. Yet the two forces of human nature illuminated by Freud: **sex and violence**, are the two main themes in the news, in magazines and books and on our television and film screens of today. The unchecked release of sexual violence and murder, and the sanction of acts of terrorism and genocide in the name of some or other ideology, need to be seriously addressed. It is a matter of most urgent concern to behavioral and social scientists to find ways and means by which these vexing social problems of our day can be counteracted.
- * **The dire need in society to foster the development of authentic value systems among its members.** A most fascinating theme to pursue in terms of its psychology is one highlighted by Watson and Skinner, by Freud and particularly by the humanists, namely, that religious fanaticism and social dogmatism (in their condemnation and persecution of the outcast) play the same oppressive and destructive role as any despotic ideology in the field of politics. Moral condemnation does serious injustice to the human worth and dignity of man. Its influences obstruct rather than enlighten man. The healthy personality growth of those subjected to religious or moral indoctrination, is seriously hampered.
- * **The exploration of man's potential for good.** This is the primary contribution of the humanists who advocate the necessity of acknowledging and respecting the dignity and worth of any person, irrespective of what grouping the person belongs or does not belong to. There is a vast field of study that we need to explore in order to secure knowledge of what human beings are capable of if given the chance (if placed in a growth-inducing setting). Questions well worth pursuing are

- what we as human beings in fact need for optimal growth and the attainment of emotional maturity and spiritual integrity.
- * **The power to combat evil.** Finally, the study of the personalities and lives of those who could overcome even the worst set-backs, overcome the most evil circumstances, are and will remain the most fruitful avenues for further study. The well-known saying of Frankl that he who has a **why** to live for, can deal (bear) with almost any **how**, should lead us to explore what things give meaning to man's life: what things he will be willing not only to live for, but to die for (struggle against all odds to achieve and preserve).

The Study of the Holocaust as a Crisis of Meaning

Research issues that the study of the Holocaust as a crisis of meaning have raised and which should be pursued further, are the following:

- * **The psychology of the perpetrator.** Particular issues that should be addressed are the following: How was the potential for good crushed in the personality of the perpetrator? The consideration given to the psychology of Nazism and of its leader, Adolf Hitler, in the present study offers interesting indications for further research.
- * **The psychology of the bystander.** Questions which should inter alia be given attention to are the following:
Have we been indoctrinated to fear evil? By fearing evil, we acknowledge and thereby give it its power. Which factors contribute to moral courage and, on the other hand, to moral ineptitude and apathy? Some interesting studies by sociologists in this regard were discussed and can be further explored.
- * **The psychology of the victim who becomes spiritual victor.** It is in this area that it is felt that the present research made an important contribution which should be taken further. Our research participants are Holocaust survivors who have emerged from their sufferings with a sense of triumph. Adversity did not break them; in suffering they have attained greater human stature. They have grown in wisdom and understanding. They have emotionally matured. The growth value of suffering can be pursued in the very many other situations of suffering that life presents.
Studies of hardiness and coping in stressful life situations have been undertaken and were discussed in the present study in Chapters 2 and 12, but the possibility to find meaning in situations of unavoidable stress, and through an experience of meaning in suffering, to psychologically mature and grow, needs to be further explored. It is **the spiritual dimension** that needs to be highlighted in studies of suffering and victimization using research approaches which will give access to this dimension.

A Study of Man on the Dimension of Meaning

We have considered Frankl's (1958) contention that if we study man on a dimension lower than the uniquely human or spiritual dimension of being, we will get a distorted picture. Not observing man's self-transcendent abilities, we will miss to see what makes him uniquely **human**. The dimensional ontology of Frankl has been highly illuminating in a review of the views of man of mainstream psychologists.

Studying man on a predominantly **physical dimension of being**, the radical behaviorists, Watson and Skinner, viewed man as a mechanism, conditioned to seek a perfect fit with his environment. Studying man on a predominantly **psychobiological dimension of being**, Freud saw man as a creature driven by need. Humanistic psychologists such as Allport, Maslow and Rogers studied man on the higher **psychosocial dimension of being**.

Many moments of living on a **psycho-spiritual dimension of meaning** became evident in the study of humanistic theory and research: man's freedom of will, his metaneeds and abilities to transcend lower level needs in a striving to realize goals to which he has come to attach personal meaning.

It is the existential psychologist, however, that more clearly stresses man's **responsibility** in the light of his freedom of choice.

Nowhere is man more challenged to give an account of himself than in the face of the tragic factuities of life. How will he suffer?

Allport (in Frankl, 1968) called Frankl's illumination of the depth-moments of suffering one of the most significant psychological contributions of our day.

It is the challenge of suffering in conditions of physical and psychological hardship, but particularly of spiritual distress, which Holocaust victims like Frankl had to face, that the present study sought to highlight. Does the worst sometimes call out the best in man?

Do we need to further broaden the horizons of psychology as a science by an inclusion of the **spiritual** aspects of human nature and behavior? Man's conscience: his moral consciousness and choices; his struggles and victories of faith in situations of unavoidable suffering, are aspects that seem to need inclusion in our consideration of what constitutes psychological maturity on the highest levels of personality functioning and growth.

We know man as a product of his environment; as a creature of need; as a social being. Do we, however, know the strengths and beauty of the human spirit?

A Closing Reflection on the Value of the Present Study

Maslow (1964) believed it possible to develop what he called: a **suitably enlarged science**, a science that will be able to encompass the psychology of the higher life. In its development, he urged that psychologists must guard against premature closure in their conceptions of human nature. To his mind, the best way to define a psychological scientist is not one who knows the answers, but rather **one who struggles with the questions**.

Perhaps the validity and worth of the present study is to be seen, not in the answers it gave, but in the questions it raised in its struggling efforts to grasp the incomprehensibilities of human suffering. Its final appeal is directed not to the arrogant mind, but to the questioning heart of man.

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ADDENDUM:

DATA ON AND PROTOCOLS OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Next

ESTHER EVA WEISZ

Biographical information

Age at time of interviewing: 59 years

Country of birth: Transylvania

Ghettos and camps: Reghin
Auschwitz
Cracow
Matthausen
Neustadt
Grossrosen
Bergen Belsen

Duration of internment: One year and six months

Age at internment: 13 years

Family losses: Father, grandparents on both sides, extended family members

Surviving family: Mother, two aunts

Post-Holocaust family: Husband (married 28 years), daughter and son

Present situation:

Lives in a large, homely double story home in an upper middle-class suburb in Johannesburg; obviously reasonably well-off. Happily married and full-time homemaker. Her daughter is married and has a son, and her own son is working at a profession. She was very close to her mother who, ill and bed-ridden and in her late eighties, passed away in 1993, after the interviews were recorded.

PROTOCOL

Background

Very Positive Relationship with both Parents

Esther was born into a fairly well-to-do Transylvanian Jewish family of high social standing. She felt that she had an exceptionally loving and warm relationship with both parents who loved each other deeply, were happily married and who provided her with a very happy and secure environment. **"Growing up in such a happy atmosphere, I always imagined that when I am grown up I would like to get married and I would like it for myself, just as it is."**

Richly Stimulating Home Environment and Strongly Value-orientated Jewish Upbringing

She remembers her mother as **"a vivacious person, full of life and fun. She delighted in having lots of people over and in entertaining them with very lavish meals at beautifully decorated tables."** She described her father as **"a wondrous, wondrous person. He was a very, very good Jew. He was always such a humane, loving man. He qualified as a medical practitioner in Paris, and even though he came from an extremely religious background, he worked on the Sabbath and every Jewish holy day because he was so dedicated to his profession. He treated hundreds of poor people without remuneration and was revered as a saint by Jew and Gentile alike."** He wanted her to have a stronger Jewish upbringing and sent her to a Hebrew high school. As an active Zionist, he took her along to meetings from the time she could walk. **"At the age of three I sang the Hatikvah (the Jewish national anthem) for the first time."** A prominent leader in the Jewish community, he was also decorated for bravery as a soldier in the First World War and was held in high regard by the Gentile nobility.

Encouragement towards Independence and an Emulation of her Parents as Role-models

As an only child, she spent a great deal of time in adult company but also had lots of friends. **"I was never lonely."** She perceived both her parents as being mature people with strong, rich personalities.

"They were wondrously good parents, very intelligent, for they could have suffocated me but they gave me complete independence and they taught me to be independent and to start thinking for myself for which I am ever so grateful. Few parents give such liberty to a young child, it was very unusual but because of their intelligence they saw much further than most parents. I think because of that at the age of 10 I was already very mature."

She believes that her own value-system had its foundation in her childhood through the example set by her parents. They were both very caring, charitable and hospitable people whom she admired, loved and respected deeply. **"They say that it does not matter where you come from but I believe it does, because what I have seen in my parents' home: so many good deeds, and such a lot of genuine help and sincerity that consequently in my life I still get disappointed because people are not sincere. This**

is how I was brought up and this is how I will die... In spite of my disappointments in people, I will still give the other cheek."

Essential Description

Esther treasures her childhood. She remembers it as infused with love, rich stimulation and values of respect, care and compassion for others, a life-style which she strives to emulate and preserve and one from which her own sense of worth, secure selfhood and values are derived.

Holocaust Sufferings

The Shock of Drastic Change

"I was lifted out of a loving, wondrous home into a most unbelievably abnormal situation.." Disbelief, dismay and then a state of total shock earmarked the sudden and drastic change their lives underwent. **"It was beyond anyone's comprehension that they were exterminating the Jews."** Events at the time were experienced as a nightmare: the deceptions they fell prey to, believing the many rumors purposely spread by Nazi propagandists aimed at deceiving Jews as to what was really happening, fooling them to believe that all was well; not heeding early warning signs; then being arrested and transported to the ghetto, a former brick factory into which hundreds of people were herded. **"It was the first time in my life that I saw such things. There was no washing or toilet facilities, little holes had to be dug to be used as toilets. The food we brought into the ghetto had to be cooked in the most primitive way. People were sleeping next to each other on the stone floor. You were with complete strangers. This was not a snobbish thing, it was just so strange and so humiliating."**

The change was drastic. **"I was a child for not very long. After only two weeks, from the time we were in the ghetto, people already started being cruel to each other to safeguard their own lives."** The trauma of their train journey to Auschwitz, where 80 to 90 people were crammed into a cattle truck with one small window - it was the height of summer - and being given nothing to eat or drink along the way so that hundreds died during the journey, numbed them with shock. "Where you are going there is no coming back.." was a message of doom Esther heard along the way which filled her with a sense of terrible foreboding. The arrival at Auschwitz: the enormous commotion, the shouting and the screaming, "everybody out!", people tumbling out and trampling on one another, the thousands milling on the platform, the forced separation of male and female, her father's desperate cry to her mother as he was being dragged away, never to be seen again: "Do not say the child is 13!", clinging onto her mother as the sea of people were being pushed to the gate with the inscription: "Arbeit macht frei", the incomprehensibility of the selection that took place: to the right, to the left, remembering her father's last words to them as she was being eyed by the infamous Nazi, Mengele, then sent to the right with her mother to a place where they had to strip, part with all their possessions and stand naked as all hair was being shaved off their bodies, to then be pushed into showers and afterwards to be thrown odd bits of clothing and to be made

to sit in a blazingly hot sun until they were panting with thirst.. made it impossible to fully grasp what was happening to them. **"Everything happened so fast that there wasn't time to digest what was happening.. your whole life was changed, but so dramatically and so drastically which under normal circumstances can't be done because every transition takes time. There was no transition.. all your normal life was suddenly cut completely and utterly away."**

Harsh Severance from their Former Lives

"We didn't have anything that belonged to us, not even a handkerchief was allowed. We were stripped of everything." There was nothing they could hold on to or take with them as a reminder of the world they had to leave behind. Harshly severed from their former lives and faced with a very uncertain and threatening future, they lost their emotional hold.

"You lost complete count of time and everything because the circumstances were so abnormal and so very frightening with all those thousands and thousands of people shaven-headed, looking terrible, not even like humans, that you lost count of everything."

Helpless Rage at the Humiliation of her Mother

Particularly horrifying to her was having to witness a former patient of her father shaving the hair off the body of her naked mother and blowing disinfectant in her rectum. **"Can you imagine the humiliation? the horror?.."** (The recall of this incident caused her such agony that she desperately reverted to memories of her childhood). **"Now if you want me to elaborate more on my childhood which was the most beautiful part of my life, I could do it (almost weeping) but uhm (fighting back the tears and then calming herself) it is sufficient to say that I had a very happy childhood. I had a happy home, lots of friends, lots of dinner parties, lots of laughter. Every year my mother's father came to visit us for three months, we had a house full of people always. We lived in a very beautiful spot which was surrounded with mountains and there was so much happiness.."** (weepy again). When she had recovered her composure, she recalled being thrown a piece of strange looking soap and shouted at: **"here, wash yourself with your mother.."** and in a burst of rage said: **"Is there any greater height of cruelty?.. how can you forgive them? They murdered all the people one loved. They jerked out their gold teeth, they shaved off their hair, they humiliated them and then their body fat was reduced to soap!.."**

Keen suffering was experienced because of her own helplessness to protect her mother from such humiliating happenings. She recalled the beatings her mother were given during the years of their internment with particular distress, especially since they were connected to efforts on her mother's part to protect her. **"I was in such a hopeless position.."**

The Constant Abuse of Their Persons

The assault on the dignity of their persons was one of the worst ordeals that they were forced to

endure. **"The German overseers were very cruel, horrifically cruel with their black boots, their black uniforms, their screaming voices.. shouting, calling us all kinds of derogatory names like: 'you whores, you scum of the earth, you leeches, you horrendous race..' this continuous barrage of abuse. When I think about it, it is quite miraculous that we did not lose our minds."**

The Shame and Humiliation they were Torturously made to Suffer

It was the abuse of their persons that was the most painful and hurtful thing about the conditions they were being subjected to. Their uncomely physical appearance, without any hair, an odd bit of clothing on their bodies, with no underwear, seemed to make a mockery of them as women. **"One friend got a full length lace evening dress which had no lining and she had to put this on her naked body, with a shaven head. She looked tragi-comical."** Being starved, and then given "food" they could hardly stomach - **"in the evening some horrific brown liquid was brought in big barrels"** - being woken at 3'o clock in the morning and made to stand for hours on end, being counted again and again, like sheep, and tattooed with and known only by their numbers, had a deeply humiliating and dehumanizing effect on them. **"One could only go to the latrines - which at Cracow Plasow consisted of long rows of wooden planks over just a hole - when you were allowed to. Often when people had to go, guards would let loose their dogs and people were torn to pieces in front of our eyes."**

The Licensing of Evil

Under a **"rule of terror and psychological torture"** they were being victimized very often by criminals who were sentenced for murder, rape and other atrocious crimes and who were released to come and serve as guards. **"You can imagine what abnormal, cruel people they were. They were sentenced to life imprisonment so that they had nothing to lose."** At Bergen Belsen, the camp to which they were sent to die, the latrine consisted of an enormous big hole floating with excrement. **"Those who could still crawl, crawled to the hole. The Ukranian woman guard would hit some of them with a big piece of wood. They fell into and suffocated in that excrement. Such dehumanization!.. such cruelty!.."** This particular guard was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of both her parents.

The Efforts to Break their Spirits

"Everybody looked like out of a horror movie. You couldn't recognize faces. A woman without hair in that one rag, that piece of garment which just hung on you.. we were skeletons.. we looked absolutely frightening, everybody looked frightfully strange.." Everything seemed engineered to break their spirits. **"The whole aim was to demoralize us. This was also expressed in tearing every mother, sister and daughter apart because to be on your own, you cannot fend for yourself because there is not so much purpose in life anymore."** Nothing was purposeful, everything was senseless. In some camps they were worked to death, in others, like Cracow, they had to pick up heavy rocks, carry it up a hill and then down again and repeat this senseless action all day. At Auschwitz they had nothing

to do, "people were just staggering around by the hundreds or just sat around the harracks all day.. The days were horrifically empty, yet so traumatic. You did not know what the next hour might bring.. a sudden roll call, a selection.. your life was hanging on a thread all the time.. this went on day in, day out. You can't imagine the monotony, the hopelessness." Death when it came, was arbitrary and mindless: "to have a pimple on your face was enough for a selection, or not looking straight, or not looking away.. the Germans had all kinds of causes for exterminating people, but for what?.." Sometimes people were brought to the camp that had simply been rounded up, people from all walks of life, "priests, women in fur coats, people of all description, would arrive by the hundreds. A big hole was dug and they were shot. Many a time they would put us in a row of ten and told us that every tenth one would be shot, for no reason or rhyme.." When they were sent to Cracow they were greeted by a horrible sight - mountains of babies' shoes. "They did not have enough time to dispose of it and it was of no use to the Germans. Hair they have used, the fat of killed people they have used, the gold they have extracted from people's mouths.. but babies' shoes were of no use to them." They asked the inmates who had been there for a long time about it and were told that thousands and thousands of such children were already killed and that was the evidence. "This is what I cannot forgive the Germans. It wasn't a war, it wasn't that we were fighting for anything. I was a child and there were tens of thousands of children.. This was premeditated murder. This was premeditated torture. And this cannot be forgiven."

Being Pushed over the Brink of Despair

"There was so much trauma and tragedy that if I would have had years, I would not be able to express to you the pain, the hopelessness, the sadness.. I thought that I would never be able to smile again.. I can recall that I felt such pain in my heart that I felt that I will never be able to be normal again. It was very, very traumatic, unforgivable for the rest of my days. I can never forgive them, never!.." The immensity of the horror, the selections, the blows, the torture and killing, the continuous terror: "will we be alive in the morning? if so, will we be selected? if so, for what? gaschambers, work, to be shot?.. your life was hanging on a thread all the time.." were taking a terrible toll. People lost the will to live. To die was to be released from terror. "Many people were running into the electrified fence, taking hold of it and getting electrified. We have seen these things.. which was horrendous, absolutely horrendous!" Permeating the atmosphere was the dreadful stench of burning flesh. "This is a smell that cannot be described, not of one, but of tens of thousands of people. Every evening we huddled together on our bunks with that smell and we woke up with that smell. It permeated even the one rag we had on. It was horrific, the knowledge that there were thousands of people going up in smoke. Twenty four hours those chimneys did not stop hilling out smoke.."

If they thought that things couldn't possibly get worse, it did. With the approach of the Allies towards the end of the war, camps were being evacuated. The German guards fled ahead of the armies, taking their pathetic captives with them. "People could not walk anymore, people were dragging each other. People were collapsing and you just had to leave them and they froze to death within one

hour. The cold, no food.. the hunger pains were excruciating, this empty pain in the pit of your stomach. But that was more bearable than the devastating cold. It was like being cut up with sharp knives. There was no more strength left in our body and in our mind. The hope had left me completely." They traveled about 20 kilometers per day - from Neustadt, where they were sent from Auschwitz, to Matthausen, to Grossrosen. "I mean, how much can a human being endure? We were reduced to one tenth from the time we left Neustadt. There were just a few dozen of us left. There were not always the same guards, this would be too much for them. At each and every stop, new guards were given, so that, God forbid, they should suffer, but they had to see that those few survivors of the death march would be put again into a camp from which there is no escape. I mean, is that forgivable?.. On the way we saw hig, big piles, covered with snow - a leg sticking out, an arm, a head.. full of bodies." When they, miraculously, reached their last destination: Bergen Belsen, what greeted them were piles and piles of rotting bodies. The barracks were infested with lice. Typhoid was epidemic. She contracted the disease, fell into a coma and was unconscious for three weeks. "Mom had to keep her eyes open and her mind.. as little as she still had left.. to watch over me because if somebody crawled across me and collapsed, I would have died, because that was enough for that tiny bit of breath to have left me."

The Pathos of "Liberation"

She somehow passed the crisis and eventually regained consciousness. At just this time, the English entered Bergen Belsen and liberated it. "We were at the window, which was a wonderful position, because the stench in the barrack was something terrible, from excrement, from dead people, because by this stage not all the dead were taken out. It was horrendous, horrendous!.. Somehow a few living people helped me.. No food, no water during the last few days.. we were complete, utter skeletons. You could pick us up, hardly alive as we were, with a finger. And a few of them pushed me up and there I saw the English!.. soldiers, marching in with gasmasks on and some generals with highly decorated golden stars, with no gasmasks.. tears rolling down their cheeks. These were hardened, veteran soldiers who have seen hundreds of dead in their years of fighting. But they were seeing something that they could not imagine existed."

Essential Description

The most devastating experience was to be thrown into circumstances which were in sharp contrast to the life she had been accustomed to and which contradicted every principle she had lived by. From wondrously happy circumstances, she was thrown into the depths of misery and horror, from the experience of close, loving bonds between family members, she was being subjected to a cruel disruption of those bonds by being torn away from her father and by witnessing unimaginable family trauma and tragedy. The humiliation of her beloved mother was particularly painful in that she was helpless to prevent it. The constant abuse of their persons, the shame and humiliation they were torturously made to suffer, were experienced by her as a vindictive assault by envious, evil powers that were intent on breaking their

spirits and dehumanizing them. The circumstances seemed engineered by these demonic powers with the aim of robbing them of any sense of meaning or hope and to force them, in a fierce battle to survive, to abandon all human values of decency and consideration towards each other. But the horror went beyond human endurance. It went to the point of having no strength or will left to fight. Evil had triumphed, or had it?.. Both she and her mother had survived. Her description of their liberation is not only poignant, but seems strikingly symbolic:

In the barracks the dying were lying side by side with the rotting dead when the British entered Bergen Belsen. A mere skeleton with only a remnant of life left in her almost weightless frame, she was lifted by her mother and a few helpers to be able to look out of the window. There she saw their liberators who, although hardened soldiers, were numbed with shock at what they encountered and who, at the pathetic sight of them, wept.

Meaning in Suffering

The Commission: How was she going to Deal with Suffering?

Crammed into a cattle truck on their way to Auschwitz, her father lifted her up to look out of the only small barbed wire window when the train drew to a stop. One of the people on the platform outside shouted to her: "I'm so very, very sorry. I cannot help you or your wonderful father because where you are going, there is no coming back." **"I was sure that this man thought I would pass on the message. It was a terrible task given to me.."** It was a terrible task because she could see how traumatized her parents already were and this was a message of doom.

What was she to do? Give in to her own needs to be reassured by giving them this terrible message, or keep it to herself and save them the trauma of such news?

"I was lifted out of a loving, wondrous home into a most unbelievably abnormal situation. Yet I didn't tell them."

"Thou shalt survive!"

Her father's shouted instruction when they were separated at Auschwitz: "Do not say the child is 13!.." was received by her as a commission to survive, for them to stay alive for each other. It was as if they were bonded together in this unspoken covenant to survive as Esther and her mother, holding tightly onto each other, were being pushed towards the gates of Auschwitz. **"Mom was always holding onto me, but not for them to see."**

Her first brave performance of the task she felt her father had delegated to them, was when she stood face to face with the infamous Mengele. In his hand was the baton with which he directed people to the right (to life) and to the left (to death). "How old are you?" he asked in German. **"Remembering my father's words I said very boldly and uprightly in perfect German: 'I am sixteen and I can work.' And he said: 'To the right!'", and Mom came with me."**

The Watershed: Survival for What?

"We were sitting in the blazingly hot sun. Two people managed to crawl into the kitchen for the German officers and they came back with a cup full of water. Well, for a cup of water most people were already willing to sacrifice their lives. I went to this one woman and said to her, 'please'.. I was a child.. 'please give me just one sip'. She said, 'I will not give you one sip because you will drink it all'. I said, 'I promise you, one sip.' I must have had parched lips already." "She did not give me any." Esther was startled. This was a completely different world from the one she was accustomed to. The ordinary values of concern and compassion for and sharing with others, held no sway here. A totally different principle was operating: each man for himself. **"Your whole life suddenly changed around, there was a reverse of your whole value system. You realized that you had to start thinking on different terms, you had to start changing your whole outlook."** This was not a world in which human values were upheld or the laws for just and compassionate conduct obeyed. **"You grew up and became old within hours.."** The innocence and beauty of her childhood were lost forever. Her eyes were opened to another reality, to a world very different from her own. Yet, seeing the type of behavior that was so foreign to her: **"It was such a mad world, Mom and I could not identify with it.."** made her also realize whom she really was. **"Should I have been given a cup of water I would most probably have distributed it and I would not have any, not because I was so good, but I was a giving child.."** And with that, the choice before her became dramatically clear. It was a question of either the one: **"please I'll do anything!.."**, or the other: **"there are things that I cannot and will not do, come what may."**

She inwardly resolved to resist what she could see was beginning to happen to people around her who were capitulating under the sway of extreme stress. **"People became.. animals, many of them."**

It was a question of retaining her humanity.

The Striving after Meaningful Purposes

"Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?.. Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death." (Song of Solomon 8:5,6)

To love and honor her parents. Hiding their family bond from the guards as best they could, Esther and her mother were deeply committed to each other and passionately intent on helping each other to survive, but never at the expense of anybody else. **"Mom got a work in the German kitchen and what she managed to do was to drop a cabbage leaf or two, a potato.. a couple of treasures in this big water container. She would say to someone, 'here, if you see my child, give her some'. But she didn't say 'this is all for my child'.."**

Whatever job her mother could find to do, she did, always with the intent of finding extra rations to share with Esther, even though she often risked her life in doing so. Whenever the opportunity arose, Esther also volunteered for work even though they were never quite sure whether the selection was indeed for work or for the gaschamber or to be shot. They both took joy in earning an extra ration which they

could share with each other. **"We had an extra piece of bread, this was a treasure. Mom would break it and give me 3/4 of it and she would keep a 1/4 and I would say no, I would break from mine and make our portions equal. Our love and concern for each other was just as justified as in normal circumstances."** In fact, Esther believes, they might not have survived if it had not been for the mutual care, protection and support they could give each other. **"Nobody stands alone, no matter how brave they are. I always used to say to my Mom, she already started feeling desperate, 'Mom, don't give up! We will go home, you will see, you mustn't give up!'. I would imagine, being an adult, a mother, who saw the hopelessness of the whole situation, that it was harder for her. I was 13 years of age, I still had hope in me. My youth, I'm sure, had given me this extra strength."**

Yet, when her own strength was giving way, it was her mother who, in turn, encouraged her. When on the death march, Esther collapsed, **"now the hope had left me completely, there was no more hope left in me.."** it was her mother who urged her to eat a tiny bit of turnip she managed to get hold of. **"I heard it from far away as Mom begged me: 'please, chew it! I am here, we have to go through it, we will survive, do it! do it!'. Everybody's strength was leaving them, so there were really and truly just the two of us left, trying to help each other wherever and in whichever way we could."**

Even when there was hardly the strength or will left to help themselves, they always found the strength to help each other. Love was like a third partner that kept them when they no longer had the strength to keep themselves. Not only did their love for one another keep the will to live in them alive, it also kept them from collapsing morally. When they were transported in open railway trucks, it started to snow.. **"It was more like sludge and it froze on us. The one garment we had on was frozen stiff and my mother's eyes, that had a bad infection and were full of puss, got frozen together and she couldn't open them. After a 24 hour journey we got a tiny hit of horrific brown nothing. And she said, 'did you drink it'? and I said, 'yes, but it is so much, let me wash your eyes off'. I didn't drink it. I washed her eyes so that she could see, and there were people, between you and me, who would have drunk it and not washed anybody's eyes. People became.. animals, many of them. That is why I said to you that I am so grateful to God that we did not become like that."**

To uphold what they believed in and stood for. On the very day of her arrival in Auschwitz, with the shock of being refused a sip of water by a fellow-prisoner, Esther saw what an evil, oppressive and totally inhuman system was already doing to its captives. At this dramatically early moment, she inwardly vowed not to fall prey to a system that was obviously geared to rob them of their human worth and dignity. She and her mother remained true to themselves and loyal to the world they had come from. **"People started to steal. Now I and my mother.. we never stole anything from anybody. We just kept to ourselves because this was such a different world, such a mad world to us, that we could not identify with it. We would rather have died of hunger, but stealing, this was beyond us. Our culture wouldn't have allowed us."** Even when they themselves were dying of hunger in Bergen Belsen, they couldn't be driven to the extremes of behavior other prisoners fell captive to. **"Ninety percent were either dying or dead. Just piles of dead skeletons. From a few bodies a bit of skin was cut from the thighs of the corpses.. cannibalism! People were eating.. people were eating those.. we could never do that! We couldn't, we would have died but we just couldn't!"**

Whenever she could, she tried to find some work to do, not only to help her mother but also to try and maintain some sense of purpose. "As soon as a person was working, mentally and physically the strain was a little bit less because there was a purpose, you were being used. Also, if you are needed, your life is prolonged. I'm sure this is the psychology behind it and this is what I thought at the age of 13." She tried to bring some order and perspective into the senseless, purposeless and empty days in other ways as well. "I remember I got hold of two little sticks.. this was a treasure!.. and put it down and there was a little sandclock, and I could tell Mom and others: it must be midday and so on, because to be so disoriented is a horrific state of affairs to normal people. And there were those who didn't care any more."

Efforts to bring some purpose into their existence became progressively more difficult as their strength gave way. "People were just sitting in a *dwaal* (a type of conscious coma). Some of them, I'm sure, had lost their minds. There was nothing to do. Then one day a big truck arrives, laden with bread. Well, you can imagine, people started to scream as though they all went mad. I was stunned. And I thought: 'this will give our lives back now, definitely'. But a rumor started to go round that this bread was poisoned and apparently it was. And when it was rationed out, Mom and I didn't eat it. We didn't eat it! And I cried and cried from sheer torturous sadness - that there is this bread and we can't eat it."

Eventually struck down with typhoid, which affects the stomach and causes constant diarrhea, she still insisted on crawling to the toilet which was an enormous big hole, floating with excrement. "I still had some human decency left in me. Mom had to try and manipulate me in such a way if she could, many times she couldn't, that that diarrhea went into that spot where it was supposed to." Their deep sense of decency and culture was reflected in their joy at the better conditions in Neustadt, one of the camps they were taken to. "These barracks had bunks! and a dining room! even a clock! and it had a toilet, a normal toilet! All those things which are normal necessities for normal people, it was so tremendous for us!"

The belief that good will ultimately triumph She felt it was incumbent upon them to survive in obedience to her father's shouted commission to do so when they had entered Auschwitz. In surviving, and in the way they survived, they would be honoring him. "A worker who was sent in to fix bunks knew my father, and how this man spoke about my father! And so I said to Mom, 'you see, Dad will go home, we will go home and be together again!'"

They would outlive the evil they were being subjected to. They would triumphantly take up their lives again as a statement that what they stood for, was not and could not be destroyed.

The Effect of these Meaningful Purposes on her Psychological Well-being during the Adversities

The power of love. "Train up a child in the way he should go and, when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6) Esther unequivocally ascribed her ability to keep up her own spirits, to see herself through the worst situations without a total loss of faith or hope, to the love and clear direction, morally and spiritually, that she had been given in her own home. "Many survivors could not

bounce back and return to normality because they were crushed - it was enough to crush anybody. But it is because I was brought up with so much love, that I survived." She had the rare privilege of having her mother with her and was able to observe the attitude and behavior of this, obviously, remarkable woman. **"As I always told you, my mother was a wondrously strong person, this gave me so much inner strength. What she hasn't done! what she didn't risk! She wasn't a hundred per cent either, far from it! She really and truly sacrificed herself."** The fact that she could share and continue to practice the values of her Jewish upbringing with her mother during the time of their internment, was a profound source of support and encouragement to her. **"It was her strength and her love and all the love that I was brought up with, besides some other miracles, that helped me survive."**

The underpinning of hope. The very fact of their continued survival against incredible odds, filled her with hope. **"No matter how hopeless things looked one still had one thing: one's own life to cling to. No matter how, I still had hope and kept on saying to Mom: 'we will go home, in spite of all these terrible happenings'."** She recognized the extreme importance of having hope: **"Hope was a very, very valuable commodity in such unbelievable situations. Giving up hope was the greatest failure, because as soon as you gave up hope, that was it."**

The inspiration of faith. **"Faith, not religious faith kept me going."** The love between Esther and her mother, and the unspoken vow to remain true to what they essentially were, their at-oneness with the values they revered, had an inspiring and uplifting effect on both of them. It was as if they were assisted, kept and protected by the very power of what they believed in. It was like a Source of strength outside of and present with them. Every time they felt that it was the end, either because they had no more strength left, or because they were facing certain death, there was a way out. Unexpected help was given or some kind of deliverance came. At one time they were both selected for the gaschambers and were actually waiting in front of the gaschambers in Auschwitz and then, for some unknown reason, the gassing stopped and they were sent back again. **"We thought this was the end, that's it, this is final. (Softly) But, thank God, it wasn't. Whether the crematoriums were all full with other thousands of innocent victims, or what the reason was.. we don't know."** At Bergen Belsen, when they were both nearing the end of their strength and she was already dying from typhoid, her mother heard that there was going to be a selection, nobody knew exactly when. Her mother had also learnt that one of the people from their hometown was in charge of the washroom. **"She crawled there - she was very weak and could not walk any more. She just crawled there like a dog. The distance was probably no more than a hundred meters, but it took her the whole morning. And I was very afraid that she was not coming back - that they would catch her and shoot her and that's that. On my own I couldn't make it, I knew it. But she did come back. And she told me that this woman would hide me should there be a selection. And the next day there was a selection. It came so fast. There was not enough time for Mom to try and drag me to that washroom. There was a window which was open and Mom begged for help and threw me out. The height must have been a meter. It was a miracle that by this time I didn't break every bone in my body because I was a skeleton. Someone must have watched over me. (softly, reflectively) I always say that. And I did crawl to that washroom alone. And Mom was taken away**

with the selection and I was sure that that was the last that I would see of her, because we were at our end. .. But she did come back. She crawled away from the selected group and came into the washroom. This was already late afternoon.. (Her voice broke and she became tearful) That was a miracle so wonderful because I knew that by having come back that maybe.. maybe we will survive. It is something which I cannot describe to you - the pain, the anguish, the joy of being alive. We just sat and cried and cried. I don't know for how long. This really saved us. Because the group that had been selected.. they all perished."

Essential Description

Her love and concern for her parents were the first of the meanings in her life that surfaced in the terrible circumstances into which she was so harshly thrown. Upon hearing a message of doom, that from Auschwitz, there was no coming back, her concern for her parents, who were already so traumatized, took precedence over her own need to confess this news to and to be reassured by them. Right at the outset of that journey into horror, it was as if she was confronted with a choice: How was she going to deal with suffering?

A second fundamental choice was made when at Auschwitz she and her mother were forcibly separated from her father. He had shouted to her mother: "Do not say the child is 13!.." This instruction was embraced, both by her mother and herself, as a commission to survive. When she was face to face with Mengele, the arbiter between life and death, she could say, uprightly and bravely: "I am sixteen, and I can work!"

After the selection, the shaving, showers and the receiving of a single item of clothing which suddenly turned her into and identified her as a camp inmate, she was dramatically faced with a third and most fundamental choice: **how** was she going to survive? When she was refused a sip of water by a fellow inmate who kept a precious cup of water only for herself when around her, others were desperate with thirst, she seemed posed with a vivid question: what would **she** have done if she had the cup of water? She felt put before a crossroad. Around her she could see most people capitulating under the stress, being prepared to do **anything** in an effort to save themselves. Amazingly for a child of 13, she quickly grasped the fact that not so much their physical survival was at stake, but the retention of the values they had upheld and practiced in their lives before their capture. Around her people began losing face. She felt herself recoiling from that. With that, she had made her decision. Without the love, caring, the humane way of life of the world she had come from, life was not worth living. To lose those values would be to lose the very things that had given her life meaning. All her many choices after this crucial point: "**I grew up and became old within hours..**" were an outflow of the fundamental grasp of this truth: Not whether you lived or died was the issue, but how you died and how you survived.

Principles that she had up to that moment enjoyed and spontaneously lived by, now became defined as set goals and purposes which she now actively embraced as commissions. She drew tremendous support from her mother, a woman of exceptional integrity and courage. Their relationship became the symbol of all she believed in and stood for and sought to maintain: man's humanity to man, against the assault of man's horrendous inhumanity to man. With her mother she strove never to act against what they

believed in for the mere sake of staying alive. As much as they sought to help and protect and encourage each other, they acted humanely and unselfishly towards the other prisoners. They retained standards of decency and culture as much as they were able. They sought to retain their dignity.

In aspiring to remain true to what they were and experienced themselves to be, they felt lifted out of the circumstances they found themselves in, however deeply these circumstances anguished and terrorized them. They were carried by their love for each other, by their faith that evil cannot overcome good, that good will triumph in the end and that evil will receive its just retribution. The hope that they would outlive the horror and re-establish the life they believed in, also out of love for and in honor of her wonderful father, never failed to lift their spirits even when the strength and will to fight, seemed to have left them. Even when they were pushed over the brink of despair, in situations past imagining, they found themselves lifted again, believing. That their deliverance came when they were way past the point of being able to help themselves any longer, seemed strikingly symbolic of this fact. "Somebody must have watched over me.."

Post Holocaust Life

"Shake thyself from the dust, arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion." (Isaiah 52:2)

Taking up Life Again

"I am sure that the previous normal, wondrous, happy life we had helped us through and enabled us to follow up to this stage." They had not only survived, but had survived spiritually intact.

Love was the strongest meaning in her family life, and it was because she and her mother were loving people, and kept expressing love towards each other and towards others that, also in loving memory of her father, they could uphold every other value of truly humane people.

Many of the other inmates lost their inclinations to act decently and humanely and became almost beastly in their fierce fight to survive. **"I am so grateful to God that I did not become like that. That is why we were able to take up our life again."** **"Many survivors could not bounce back and return to normality because they were crushed - it is enough to crush anybody. But it is because I was brought up with so much love, that I survived."**

Her new life began by being carried out of Bergen Belsen on a stretcher to a clean camp. **"We were all complete skeletons, seven of us on a plank of wood that could not have been wider than a meter.."** **"An absolute miracle must have happened because within a week, although I was still skeletal, I had reverted back to a human being. I was thrilled to eat, however little I could. I was thrilled to be taken to a clean bathroom. Within a couple of months, I was able to walk again."** Mother and daughter found ingenious ways of working in the camp and earning, not money that had become valueless, but cigarettes and parachute silk, which paid their way as they left the camp.

Shock at Family Losses

The first realization of the immensity of the number of lives lost in the Holocaust, struck home when they met a surviving aunt who had lost her husband and only son, then another aunt who had lost her husband and all four of her daughters. **"There was not a day that Mom did not cry for my father. People were trickling back, two, three, four.. Of a family of eight, one came back. And this is when the realization started taking its effect."** There were only 3 girls her age who had survived in the seven counties of Transylvania. Children, because they were too young to work, were sent straight to the gaschambers. It was, therefore, unusual for a child to have survived. **"People even came from far away to look at us because this was such a miracle that 14 year olds came back."**

They made their way back to their home town. Their own home and all their possessions had simply been confiscated. They were later able to recover only some bits of furniture. They gave her father's name to the Red Cross to try and trace him, but there was a disruption of communication everywhere. **"As the days went by Mom became more desperate, but she never admitted that he perished, although we felt it in our hearts."**

Getting onto their Feet Despite Hardships

They made brave efforts to get on with their own lives. **"We were very, very upset that we were being fed by a charity and after two weeks Mom decided that she was going to look for a flat and she is going to start picking up our lives, which she did, very bravely and very wondrously."** Her mother enrolled her in the local high school with only a promise to pay the fees as soon as she had secured work. **"Peasants used to bring us things from all over because of my father's goodness to them before the war. We didn't want to accept anything but they insisted."** Her mother took in sewing and in the evening she sold cinema tickets. **"The only things I had were a pair of shoes and two little outfits that Mom made me from a khaki duvet. Winters were very cold. She somehow got hold of a grey blanket and made me a coat. I carried that coat on me as if it was a pure fur coat. It was the first garment that kept me warm. And then slowly, slowly we picked up our lives."** She joined the Lichud Habonim, the young crowd, a Jewish youth movement. **"Mom also became a hard-working Zionist again like she used to be before the war. As a matter of fact, there was a conference in a far away town and she was given the honor to carry the flag as a delegate."**

Hearing about the Death of her Father

After two years, a colleague of her father managed to trace them and brought them the news of the death of her father. He had died a hero. Afterwards other reports confirmed what a saint he had continued to be in the deathcamps. He was in Dachau when it was evacuated. Hundreds of prisoners were forced onto a train in an effort to flee the advancing Allies. The train suddenly drew to a stop. The German guards all fled into the bushes. This colleague of her father's begged him to flee as well but her father would not leave the sick and ailing in the truck, even though he had no medicines with which to treat

them. He could only give them his consoling presence. His colleague fled but afterwards made his way back to find her father. The train had been bombed by the Allies. The shock to Esther and her mother was immense. **"It was a terribly traumatic time for us because we still clung to the hope that he would come back. Even after the news, we still deluded ourselves. It was very hard. I thought sometimes my mother would lose her mind. It was such a wondrous marriage. He was such a wonderful father, a wonderful husband, a wonderful doctor, a wonderful friend."**

Dealing with the Trauma

"There was so much that I can speak about, volumes of emotional trauma. For over two years I still had nightmares, every night I would wake up screaming because I dreamt that I was in front of the gaschambers." Again, the love and support of her mother saw her through the worst. "She was my best counselor. She said to me, 'Darling, its all behind us,' and she hugged me and she loved me and I was secure." Again, Esther was there to reciprocate when her mother, in her turn, needed help. It seems striking that with the news of her father's death, Esther's nightmares diminished. Her mother now needed help and she owed it to her mother to pull herself together. "My mother who really saved me on so many occasions with her own body that they shouldn't trample on me, with her instinct, with her love, with her everything.. I owed it to her to be strong and to persevere because she brought me back from there." Her focus now became the welfare of her mother. "And so, eventually, I talked my mother into getting remarried. I was 15 and a half and she was only 38. One day I turned round to her and said, 'Mom, there are so many wonderful men that want you as a life's partner. I one day hope to marry and who knows, I might go to the other side of the world. I don't want you to be alone. And I know that you will love father always'." "We still speak about my father. I try not to, but she brings it up and still cries, after so many years."

Her selfless love for her mother had again taken precedence over her own needs. **"There were other youngsters who said that in no way their parents should remarry. And I found that horrific. I honestly believe that we all need companions. And that I realized at 15 and a half. And I was right. Mom has been married now for 40 something years, and they are companions. Life is nicer when you share it."**

Creating a Home and a Family of her Own

"I eventually established a normal life. Oh, I had my nightmares, not as often, but I had them. I coped with it. That inner strength that was given to me, I am sure helped me and also my mother's uprightness. How she fought for me, how she tried to do everything in her power so that, in those few years as a young person, I should have a little childhood, something!" But Esther had grown up before her time. "Only my years were 15 and a half. I was very old. Mom had friends who used to call me 'the little old lady'. Because I had witnessed so many tragic sadnesses, I had lost my childhood."

Her mother and stepfather emigrated to South Africa. After spending some time in Israel, Esther followed. Eventually she got married herself and had a daughter and a son. **"I had made a resolution all those many years ago that I would re-adjust."** She did. She became a loving wife and devoted mother. She did everything to make them a happy, normal family. Her husband had been in a forced labor camp in Germany during the war. With the surviving members of his family, he emigrated to South Africa in 1952. Setting themselves the task of building a life in South Africa, they did not dwell on their past and seldom spoke about it. Esther kept her memories to herself. During their lifetimes the children had often asked their parents: **"What makes us different? What does it mean to be Jewish?"** **"It was a critical thing for the children that they have so few relatives. They said, 'how come we only have two cousins, where is the rest of our family?'"** They could not comprehend that an entire family could have been wiped out. She protected them from the horror of what had happened to their family and with the Jewish people when they were still young and, for that reason, refused to join the survivors' organization until they were grown up. **"I had a feeling that if I will join the society, I might revert back in seeing people who are still depressed and I wouldn't allow anybody's tragic circumstances to upset my family, even though I have my own tragic memories. I have reverted back to normality and I wanted to be as normal as everybody else."**

Keeping the Balance Between a Normal Present and an Abnormal Past

Readjustment did not come easily. **"In our heart and in our soul we were absolutely crushed people. I would say we were destroyed and it took a long time to be reverted back into our normal selves. It took a lot of hard work, a lot of horrific nightmares over years before we were able to call ourselves whole again."** To cite but one striking example: In the camps, big Alsatian dogs were trained to tear people apart. Such horror, Esther had witnessed on more than one occasion. She began to develop a dread for the animals. **"For a number of years I was very afraid of Alsations even though I was brought up with an Alsatian as a child. Till one day I bought myself an Alsatian because they are just animals."** Strongly in need of psychological help, there was none to be had, and she overcame her phobias and traumas through her own strength and sheer will power. **"We had to battle with these memories on our own. Now that asks a hell of a lot from a person. Memories will never, ever go away completely. Perhaps because of my strong will power, I have succeeded to live for today and tomorrow. But I shall never forget."**

"This is what I cannot forgive; that I was given the burden of such memories."

Kaddish - A Memorial Prayer for the Departed

Precious to both her mother and herself, is the memory of her father. For his sake they had vowed to rise from the ashes again. Her mother, who is now ill and bed-ridden, only want to be reminded of the life they had shared with her father. **"This can never, ever be erased. It cannot be. What we do not do anymore, is to speak about the camp because it upsets her terribly and she cries a lot."**

Against the backdrop of the horror they cannot forget, there is the sweet revenge of having outlived it and of resurrecting their lives as a monument to the indestructibility of the Jewish spirit. Instead of being robbed of all meaning, meaning has been added to the most ordinary moment of everyday life: **"I'm very happy and feel extremely secure that my freezer and fridges always have what to eat. I am still very grateful for my clean home, my bath, my clean clothing, and I am happy to see the sunshine and I enjoy every normal thing as the seasons change. I don't get sad to the extent that I cry over what happened, I don't do that. I cry for other people whose circumstances are more unfortunate, who are alone and lonely and who have lost everybody. And I think that I have readjusted quite well because when I asked my husband last year whether I could go back to Auschwitz, he said, 'why, I have never noticed that you had this need!'"**

Essential Description

The first shock after their liberation, was when they realized the extent of the damage inflicted upon European Jewry. Homes and possessions were confiscated, whole communities destroyed. In their own family of 70 to 80 members, only 4 survived. The second shock was when they received news of the death of her father. He died as he had lived: protecting and caring for the sick. They also had to cope with the tremendous psychological scarring that had resulted from their Holocaust sufferings. For two years Esther had nightmares nightly. Esther was determined, however, to re-establish her life and to establish a close-knit family of her own. She determined **to love, care for and encourage her mother**. She helped her mother to re-marry, to establish her own life again. Once she got her mother to remarry, she married and had two children of her own. She became a devoted wife, mother and homemaker.

She set out **to heal herself psychologically, to live a normal, full and healthy life**. Realizing the goal to re-adjust, is a fitting memorial to her beloved father and to all those Jews who perished in the camps.

Present Life Orientations

Unresolved Mourning

They had no ordinary grief to deal with. Two thirds of European Jewry were wiped out, their homes and possessions confiscated, their communities and cultural life destroyed, and the two, three or four surviving members of a family of 70 to 80 members were rendered refugees and foreigners in their land of birth. This was not a mourning that could be worked through, these were not psychic wounds that could heal, or memories that could fade over time. **"I know that many of the survivors are still under psychiatric treatment. I have never been. I have overcome everything with the exception that for 20 years after the war, I was not able to talk about it. It took me a long time to open up, now I can. Psychologically, I think, each and every one of us, whether we want to recognize the fact or not, have been affected. Even today, 46 years after the event, it is affecting me to the extent that every sentence I am telling you and everything that I recall, make me experience a physical pain, and a mental**

anguish. I have made every effort to adjust and I am living normally, but this is still a painful thing for me. I am not devastated anymore, but I still suffer. Your soul is rehabilitated, but mentally one is still in anguish.. Memories will never, ever go away completely. Because of my strong will power, I live for today and tomorrow. But when it comes to psychological harm, I see it in the survivors - they are harmed for the rest of their lives."

Part of the unresolved mourning is that the feelings of hatred and bitterness towards those who have perpetrated the crimes and caused the horrific death of so many millions, cannot simply be laid aside. Acts of such horror, committed so calculatedly and cold-bloodedly, without a trace of remorse or repentance afterwards, go beyond forgiveness. Also because the crime is still unavenged, the world still uncaring, the horror lingers on. "This cannot be compared to anything because we were not at war. We were innocently dragged out of our normal surroundings to be exterminated, but not immediately, it was a slow death process. I believe Hitler said (I never could bring myself to read Mein Kampf) that Jews had to be treated like geese. Feathers had to be plucked one by one. Which means that the torture must go on till people either perish because of that, or they are gassed."

A great sense of injustice is still burning inside her. Her mother's bed-ridden state is like the last of the feathers that are still being plucked. In her old age, her mother is no longer able to offer resistance. "This is what makes me so heartbroken, that a remarkable woman like she has been, should now be bed-ridden as an after-effect of the beatings she had had, of all the terrible physical and emotional trauma she had suffered." Even now she is urging her mother not to give up, especially since her mother falls into apathetic moods. "I told her that she hasn't got a right to die, that I need her, that the closeness that I have with her does not allow her just to fade out of the picture like this."

Unanswered Questions

"I often talk to God, like Fiddler on the Roof, I dare to ask Him 'why, why is this happening to my mother'? My mother says to me, 'darling, you shouldn't question, everything has a meaning, everything works out for the good in the end, you shouldn't question God'. And I tell her, 'I'm not questioning, I'm rebelling. I want to know why'. My mother never was very religious, but it seems that as she has grown older, these feelings have become real to her."

In their relationship, she and her mother seemed to have been jointly struggling, like Jacob in his wrestling with an angel, to break through into some kind of faith-answer to what they had gone through. When she questioned, her mother believed. But when her mother could no longer believe, she was the one to carry the torch of faith. "We arrived back from camp in late August 1945, and September was Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) and Mom went to a little Shul (synagogue) that the very small community of survivors had established. But I didn't go into the Shul. I was asked, 'why don't you come in and pray for all those who have perished'? I said, 'I am not going to pray anymore'. My faith was so broken that I was not sure that I would ever be able to go back to my Jewishness again and I will not say it.. or perhaps I should say it to you (she was visibly upset, then angry and said in short clipped words) **WHERE WAS GOD?** When I witnessed in six camps, three extermination camps those horrific, barbaric deeds, where was God then? My father who was such a magnificent

human being, such a good man, a good Jew, he always gave, all his life, whatever he could. And he perished. My aunts, my cousins, my uncles.. nobody came back. I would not go into the Shul." The fact, however, that this was no final stand but only a reflection of an inner struggle, can be seen in her vacillation regarding her feelings towards God. "Aunt Dora, who was a very religious person and who had lost all four her daughters in the camp and her husband, said to me, 'everybody has a lot of sorrow. Now you know what I have lost and yet, I am going back stronger than ever before'. I said to her, 'Give me time, maybe next year'. I didn't go in that year, I waited outside for Mom, but the following year I did."

In the area where her mother could no longer express her faith, in the lighting of the Sabbath candles, so much a symbol of family togetherness in faith, Esther was the one to carry on the tradition, almost on behalf of her mother who could not do so any longer. "I was brought up with so much love and so much charity that I started to light candles as a married woman, but my mother didn't. To this day she never lights a candle because she loved my father more than her life and they had had such a happy, magnificent life together. She has never returned to Judaism. I do not blame her."

To continue the practice of their Jewish faith and traditions is, in a very real sense, also a declaration of faith in the continued existence of the Jews as a people. If her mother suffered too much pain with the loss of her father to pick up all the threads of her Jewish life, Esther's continuation of the practice where her mother could not, preserves the tradition for her own children. This seems to be the reason for her taking up the practice again when she herself married, and could perpetuate her father's Jewish lineage: "I did it for my children."

Regaining Faith, Despite..

The realization that surfaced during times of greater serenity and security, was that she was not abandoned, even during the worst times. Talking about regaining her faith, she related: "I do not know whether it was Aunt Dora's pain that I identified with, a mother who lost four children, all she had in the world and her husband, yet she still prays to God. Or if it was my Mom's wondrous strength because, if it was not for her, I do not think I would have been able to come away from all those traumatic experiences the way I did.. it was her strength and her love and all the love I was brought up with, besides some other miracles, that helped me survive. I was in front of the gaschamber when the gassing was stopped.. I mean that must have been some miracle, and so my faith slowly, slowly was restored."

A point she made was that, apart from her mother's strong influence in her life, she had personally and authentically arrived at her present faith position. With a deliberate, convinced tone of voice she stated: "What I am trying to tell you is that, in spite of Mom's wondrous behavior as a human being and as a mother and as a friend and as everything.. I still did what I found that I wanted to do. Her influence has been strong on me, but not to the extent that I would not light candles because she no longer lit them.."

The Final Triumph: A Pilgrimage of her Soul

"Our soul is escaped like a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped." (Psalm 124:7)

In the very midst of the horror of Auschwitz, her thoughts were not of escape or of trying to deny what was happening to her, instead, she determined to one day return, having triumphantly outlived it all. **"My resolution was that if I ever survive, I want to return as a free person, not only to demonstrate to the world that the final solution was not completed, but that I am a witness to yesteryear. But it took me many, many years to pluck up this enormous strength and courage."**

Forty five years after being liberated, she made her way back. The only Jew in the little party that was taken there, she was asked by two Germans if it all really happened. **"I felt it my moral duty, for now I had all the courage in me to tell them, yes, this is true even though the whole world is trying to deny it, and they cannot deny it. They wanted to know if I was tattooed. I pulled up my sleeve and showed them. I said to them, 'yes, a lot of people had plastic surgery because they felt they could not live with it. I want to live with it for so long as God would grant me the years ahead of me. I don't want it to be removed'."**

Approaching the gates: "Arbeit Macht Frei", she felt that she had gone full circle. Birkenau was destroyed, only parts of Auschwitz stood and had been turned into a museum. **"I looked around for the barrack where we were. I was looking for something familiar because in my memory everything is there, it is all there."** As she entered the crematoria of Auschwitz, all her emotions came flooding back. **"I was in front of the gaschambers on a number of occasions. Now I entered there. That bare little room which had no window, only a tiny little opening at the top where the Cyclone B was dropped in, and those walls!.. When I looked at those walls I thought of all the innocent thousands and hundreds of thousands and millions who were gassed there, what they must have gone through before they were dead.. the knowledge that they were going to die, the pain, the fright, what went through their minds, their whole life was wasted in a second! I was so numb with grief that I just stood there, truly quite bewildered. I just looked and my tears just poured. And then I thought to myself: there is one thing I have to be grateful for and that is that I have my emotions.." "They were not able to destroy me! So many people have been destroyed completely and utterly. They could not destroy my finer feelings, my humanity."**

"I have Chosen Thee in the Fire of Affliction" (Isaiah 48:10).

Her soul had made its pilgrimage. In the place where everything she believed in and stood for came under the severest attack, and where she had stood the test, she now experienced the reward. She could weep for her fellow-man. She could still love, even if she had been the target of mindless hatred. There was the sweet and absolute conviction that good cannot be destroyed by evil. **"It's almost like if you had so much good and then a lot of terrible, bad things happen, that you somehow come out of it, not unhurt, very badly hurt, but not scarred completely. Scarred a little bit, but not completely."**

This has given me the basis for the belief that there are still some good human beings."

The testimony was written, the witness complete. "I will tell you what was the whole idea for me. Really and truly to be convinced that there is enough evidence for the world to see. This I owed to those who perished under the most horrific circumstances. And also, I think, to tell myself that this is a closed chapter in my life. I am going to close this chapter in as much as this is it. 45 years later, I was able to close it all up. I can still break down and I can still cry. I am very happy that I have emotions left because, after what I went through, I should be devoid of any emotion. But I have retained myself. And that is my story."

Essential Description

Great effort and will-power were required to get up out of the ashes of their tremendous trauma and loss. That trauma could only gradually be faced and worked through. Only after a whole new life was securely built, and a tremendous effort at emotional healing and mental mastery over many long years had been made, could the full situation be squarely faced, symbolized in her return to Auschwitz, 45 years after her liberation.

Only then did she feel able to testify as a witness in a criminal case that must still be tried before the world's conscience.

As she stood weeping in the gaschamber of the Auschwitz museum, feeling the agony of the last few minutes of those who were gassed there, the final, triumphant realization dawned upon her. "They could not destroy my finer feelings, my humanity.. This is my story!"

MALKE MAGDA HAIDU***Biographical information***

Age at time of interviewing:	75 years
Country of birth:	Hungary
Camp:	Dachau
Duration of internment:	Seven months
Age at internment:	29 years
Family losses:	Mother, sister and brother, extended family members. Her father and another sister died of natural causes
Surviving family:	A cousin
Post-Holocaust family:	Divorced before the war, had no children and never remarried.

Present situation:

In a Jewish Old Age Home in Johannesburg for the last 27 years.

PROTOCOL

A Fond Memory of Childhood

Her childhood was recalled with much fondness. "A lovely family.. we were lovely brought up.. We had a nice living, everything, not rich, not poor.. never suffered from hunger, good food, everything. So beautiful young days I had as a child. I had a terrible love for my Mommy, who does not? Everyone loves Mommy and Daddy.. Mommy spoil me, mommy everything!.."

"In every family there is some clever children, some not so clever. The second after me, a lovely sister, she made matric. Then there was my little brother, he also made matric. The other sister, sorry to say what happened, she was not so clever and I was not so clever. I wanted to learn, my darling Daddy wanted the children to be educated. I wanted to be a teacher. I love children but I couldn't manage it at school, my subjects were all bad, what could I do, I couldn't learn. I was willing to learn, but it did not go into my mind. But in life, I managed."

"I was born in Győr, between Budapest and Vienna. Very nice Jewish community was there, 6,000 Jews, but only a few remained alive." "When I was 18 years old I went to Budapest to a rich Hungarian family. I was the governess of the children, teaching them German. I could speak perfect German, because Mommy spoke German. Mommy couldn't even speak a proper Hungarian. When I was 7, I couldn't speak a word of Hungarian, only began to learn it at school. For 8 years I stayed with this family - they paid very well, so I had a lovely life in Budapest."

Start of the Persecutions of Jews in Germany

"Then came 1937/38, the persecution of Jews started in Germany. I could go to England as an au-pair girl. My cousin Kitty went, and my clever sister, and I went also. I could pick up English, I went with my sister to evening classes. Kitty could already speak nice English. I was looking after 4 children - oh, what lovely children they were! I was very, very happy there. In 1939 I had a month's holiday and I went back to Hungary to visit my darling Mommy. She was living in Győr with my brother and sister. My father had died in 1937 of a stroke. I was so happy to be back with my Mommy, she was also happy. When I wanted to go back to England, I couldn't - the war had broken out. That is how I was sent to Dachau." "I don't regret having left England to be with my Mommy."

"From 1939 to 1944, I was working in Budapest with a Mr and Mrs Schwarz, but all the time I went to visit my Mommy in Győr." "I worked in Budapest till the tragedy in 1944, till Hitler walked in, the devil. German soldiers marched in and started killing the Jews like in other countries. I was told by the Mr and Mrs Schwarz that the Germans had marched all the Jews from my town." (She later learnt that they were all sent to Auschwitz. Her mother and sister had been gassed upon arrival. Her brother was shot in Hungary. Only about a 100 Jews who looked Gentile, escaped from the 6,000 Jews that lived in her town.) "The family that I was with, a lovely lady and her husband and two little girls" (whom she looked after) was a rich family who had many servants, who all went away. This

family said to me, Malke, tomorrow the Nazis will collect the Jews from all the houses and we must all wait downstairs. You know, Malke, we paid a lot of money to one of the Nazis, we don't have to go down, and you don't have to go down."

A Watershed Decision, Leading to Dachau

"The whole night, even today I shiver, the whole night I never slept, I just cried. Then I said, no, I'm going down, I go, where is my Mommy? If Mommy must die, I also die." "Then I dressed myself. I never said to them a word. I went out of the door, slowly closed it and I went downstairs."

She joined the people waiting in the street, "my Jewish fellow-mates", confounded and hurt by the injustice of it all. "That you were Jewish, that was your fault."

They were rounded up and marched for "days and days..", sleeping in the freezing open at night. People died on the way. When they reached the Austrian border, they were herded onto cattle trains. "We couldn't sit, we just had to stand like herrings in a box, without food, without anything. One girl had a running stomach and got very weak. She opened the cattle truck door at a stop and the little girl asked: 'water, water!' and the bloody Nazi answered: 'drink your own wee-wee', and banged the door shut again. Some of them drank their own wee-wee - thirst is a more terrible thing than hunger. Then after 10 days we arrived in Dachau. There were plenty inmates there, plenty Hungarians, also men. There was one journalist who, when he saw us, said, he has never seen such a sight in his life. Men must go to war, but women.. and what we looked like!"

"We had nothing but our poor life."

"We slept on the wooden bunker with a bit of straw on, one blanket for a lot of people. I was so cold, frozen.. One night at about midnight, you slept restlessly, I heard from the men's barracks: '30 men out! out!'.. then later the cries, 'Help! help! blankets!' .. The men were made to stand naked in the snow and froze to death. It was terrible, terrible!. When we went out the next morning, we saw all thirty men frozen, dead." "I was thinking to myself, 'my gosh, how many children, or mommies or daddies or God knows.. were left behind!'"

Malke described many other gruesome experiences. "Every rubbish thing, every terrible thing, every devil thing in the world.. There was always war in life, in history, but this, this is the worst that happened in the world, and I hope the last."

It was the cold, and the hunger that distressed her the most, that made her feel most frightened and abandoned. "The worst of it was when our winter coats were taken away. It was January. They didn't know what to do with us to kill us, so they said: 'All winter coats, down! Take it all off!' mountains of winter coats.. and I was shivering and crying for my winter coat.. a terrible scene, the screaming and crying for our winter coats. Then, for no reason and suddenly, we were given back the coats and, in the hundreds of coats, I got mine, sopping with rain and dirty, but it was my coat."

"We had very little food, black coffee in the morning, no sugar, the cheapest coffee that you can find.. the food was not enough to live, and not enough to die, and the bread was sometimes green. Lunch was only watery soup and in the evening a little slice of bread with jam on it, we called it

Hitler jam, it was rubbish jam and with black coffee, and that was our supper. After six months of this, we were skeletons."

"We were taken for a shower maybe once a month. And one day, we women were standing, skeletons, under the shower naked, and there was this man. He was not even a Jew.. he was a German that was against Hitler and they caught him and sent him to Dachau concentration camp. So he was sent in by the SS to watch us, so that we don't escape. The rest of my life I will not forget what this man said. He sat with us, a sorry sight we were, and he said. 'I am young, 25 years old, never ever will I get married'.. he was so shocked by what we looked like. He said he will never be able to look at other Germans and not remember us. All of his life he will hate the Germans for what they did to us."

"There were all types there. I met a Jewish Pole, a Kapo, he was brutal, he did what the SS told him, because he got good food from them. This Kapo came and told me that he had to burn his own Mommy and four sisters in the Auschwitz gaschambers, so you see, he was not a human being any more, but he was saving his life." "I myself, I could save my life" (act self-preservingly, at cost to others), "but God saved my life."

"God gave me the energy to say: 'I want to live'."

"I was there always helping, just like here. Here when someone is sick, I will go and feed them. God gave me the energy and I am grateful, I've got my two legs, my mouth, my brain, everything is in place."

"There was a lovely Greek boy, he was in Auschwitz. He had a darling Mommy and beautiful two little sisters. He was only 20. He told me, he himself, that he had to push his own Mommy and two little sisters in the gaschambers. After the liberation, this little darling done a terrible thing. How he got a gun, that I can't tell you.. and when he saw a Mommy walking in the street, it was an innocent German Mommy with a little, about 4 year old, daughter, the age of his little sister, then he shot them. Of course the Americans straight away arrested him. I went to see him at the prison. He said, 'Malke, help me'. I went to the authorities. I said, 'look what this boy did'. They said, 'look, he is not allowed to take the law into his own hands'. I went back to try and cheer him up by saying I spoke to the authorities and maybe they will do something and that God will help him. He gave me a silver bracelet. What happened to that Greek boy I don't know."

Malke related countless acts of helping her fellow-prisoners during her internment, always in a caring, motherly way, and always in the context of a trusting, dependent attitude towards God. "One woman next to me in the barrack, her name was Gertie, got typhoid; mind you, she was an outstanding little girl and I looked after her. From the terrible suffering we had, we talked nonsense. I was told by some of the non-German Jews, not everybody was like this, not to look after Gertie, because she was a German Jew. I said: 'don't talk nonsense, my Mommy was also a German Jew, that does not make her a Nazi'. I had a small basin with water and used to wash her all over, I helped her. Gertie cried because she heard what they said, 'why do I help her? I must leave her'. But I said, 'look, don't talk nonsense', and I helped till she was taken to hospital and died. Then the typhus also got in me. I got a high fever and I thought, 'my gosh, the next day they will take me also..' but God kept me. The fever in the morning was gone. They didn't take me! A wonderful

thing, what happened to me."

"There was also a Mommy, she had a daughter of 30, I was 29, and she was 60. Her husband was a Gentile, she was Jewish. She could have gone to a ghetto in Budapest because she was old, but just like me, she said no, she will go with her daughter. If she is to die, she will die too. I was very friendly with this woman. What will you say is life, because she survived but her daughter, she was a very calm girl, very quiet, she died. One morning she got up the old lady, and she wanted to wake her daughter but the daughter had died at night in her sleep. The old lady shouted: 'You Germans, you bastard Germans! You killed my daughter!' She screamed and she cried. She survived, this Mommy, with me. I went to visit her after the war, she mourned her daughter, she was always dressed in black. She sacrificed her life, the Mommy for the child, and she survived and the child died."

"All my life I was a cheerful girl, a naughty girl, but cheerful, even in the laager." "I was never like that; that I will commit suicide. Some people in the laager said: 'if I can't take it, I commit suicide..' I never saw it like this.. this kind of people die." "I wanted to cheer people up. For example, there was a lady, she was just lying. She never took her shoes off, she just kept on her one dress and broekies" (panties) ".. she never tried to wash herself. I went to talk to her and said to her, 'come I help you'. You couldn't get her shoes off any more, it stuck to her legs, and she cried and cried and said, 'You know, I had three bathrooms, three toilets at home. I had a beautiful house and now I'm lying here in the gutter, I'm full of lice and I suffer from hunger'. I said to her, 'Look darling, don't cry, you'll survive, don't cry, take your shoes off. I'll bring you water and you wash yourself and take off your dress and shake it, let the lice come off'. But she did do nothing, she didn't care, she wanted to die, and she also died, on that spot."

"The bunkers were made of wood. Many people couldn't hold back and would wet themselves. Their bunkers would begin to stink. And I would come and scrub it. The bloody bastard, the Blockälteste even said to me, 'oh you are lovely', he praised me, the bastard, for trying to keep the place clean. I was active there, I didn't let me down. I could also do that, give up, but I didn't."

"Then there was another girl, a lovely, lovely girl. She was only 19. She had ginger hair and she too, was just lying. And I wondered, what is it with this girl? I was always walking around. I told jokes, that made them laugh, I told them about England and how I couldn't speak English.. and they laughed. And this girl pleaded with me: 'Malke, don't make me laugh, everything is painful in my body'. And I said, 'alright darling, I only wanted to cheer you up but I will shut up now', and then the next day on that spot, she died."

Very hard to bear was the news of the death of her mother. "One day I was told by the Hungarians that came from Auschwitz that my Mommy was gassed there. Then I was thinking, 'oh! my darling Mommy, how could I live without my darling Mommy, no husband'.. but Mommy is always the first in the world, Mommy, Mommy, Mommy. Then I talked to myself. I said, 'look Malke, I'm alive, Mommy is gone, my sisters are gone, my Daddy is gone'.. do you know, I talked to myself and said, 'if I die I will meet them'.. and this gave me a little courage to carry on. I will meet them. You see I believe in this." "I was depressed but I was alive, and life must go on. I

always prayed to God, please help me. But after six months we were all like musselmen, skeletons, all very thin. I was also finished and went outside to the yard and said, 'God, I can't take it any more'. I was feeling that I will also just lie down and do nothing because I'm finished." "That was six months and in the seventh month, rumors began to spread that the Allies were moving closer. That helped us stay alive. Others also said to me: 'Malke, we will survive, hold on, we will survive'."

As the Allies drew nearer, the SS guards gave orders that the camp was to be evacuated. The inmates were rounded up and marched out of the camp. The guards tried to push them ahead of the approaching armies, beating them to urge them on, shooting them if they could not. Men were marched in long miserable columns, the women were packed into cattle trains. American planes bombed and shot at the train, not realizing what a pitiful cargo it was carrying. Malke stumbled out of the train, waved her arms in the air, screaming: "'No! Don't shoot at us! We are Jews! We are innocent'!..", then crawled under a bush, "I prayed to God to stop this terrible thing. Around me were women, some dead, some without an arm or a leg." When it was all over, they were marched back to Dachau.

"A bloody German bastard was standing in the farmhouse. So I said to him, please give me a drink of water.. he said he hasn't got. For his horses he had water, but not for me, a human being." At last, they arrived back at the camp.

The Liberation

"Then, two weeks later, it was April, the 29th of April, for the rest of my life I won't forget it, the Americans came and we survived."

"You don't know this feeling: 'You're alive! you're alive!' I shouted: 'We Jews rule the world'!.." "'The bandits are finished'."

"If the Americans came only two days later, we would all have been killed because, later I was told, Himmler gave the order that all the inmates of that camp must be gassed - there was a gaschamber there." "Hitler wanted to kill all of us, that there should be no one left to tell the story that I am now telling you."

"The people pushed me to the American captain and said, 'Malke, speak!' I could understand the captain. I could speak a kitchen-English. Most of the Hungarian Jews there could only speak Hungarian, not English and not German, and I did speak to him, Mr. Auerbach was his name. I showed him the gaschamber - some bodies were still burning there, sorry to say, terrible to see what I saw. Sometimes I've got nightmares about it. Mr. Auerbach had this nice coat, leather outside and fur inside, he put it on my shoulders.. he said, 'it is a memory from me'. He wrote down everything I said, he also took photos. All of this was shown on television in America."

The Charge

"It is for some reason, for me to tell the story, that I was kept alive.. that I can tell the next generation. That is what you must learn in life, sweetie, you young people, never give in, not in trouble, in bad or in good, never give in. Because I saw thousands and thousands of people give in.

Then your life is finished. You must always think, God will help you. You've got children and you got darling husband. Never give in and say, 'Oh, I can't take it', that you can't do. There were those in the camp who just wanted to die and did. They didn't care any more, they became apathetic. I was more excited, more speaking and everything, I didn't do nothing. I didn't give in. I never thought of suicide. If you don't give courage to yourself, and say to yourself, 'I must survive', then you're finished. I always said, 'Malke, carry on, carry on, and God will help'".

Picking up the Threads of her Life

"My life after the liberation was good because Mr Auerbach took me into their office as an interpreter. I had a separate room. People were still quarantined, and arrangements for their leaving had to be made. I loved this job. I was sitting in an office and told the captain what this one and what that one wanted. I got my food from the American kitchen, always good, first class food and that was a lovely, lovely life for me. How many food we had! They all came with their problems to me and that I liked bloody much."

"We were six months there, and then we went back home to Hungary. I didn't want to go but I thought, maybe my little brother is alive, and go and see what's happened. Now I know it was right, I'm settled now in my old age, I know what happened. I learnt for certain that my mother and older sister died in the gaschamber and that my brother was killed by the Hungarian Nazis, he was only twenty. He was shot on the border. He was found among hundreds and hundreds of others who were shot dead there. They put them all in a grave."

A Triumphant Ending

"Their plan was that we should all perish, but they did not succeed. God gave me that I can tell about it. These things you carry with you all your life till you die. It's a burden to never ever to forgot it.. your parents, the six million Jews, that you can't forgot. It is always in you. I pray every day in my inside, that is for sure. You don't have to go to the Shul (synagogue) to pray, because some go and pray and are very had, sorry to say. So I, every day, I see them and I pray for my family, and I think, I will meet them."

"After 70, I thank God that I am still alive. I've got a peaceful old-age home, beautiful room, you can see, every comfort, after that suffering God gave me every comfort here, that I can tell you. Rest of my life, till I die, I've got everything. I don't pay rent, I get food, everything, free of charge. And I get R250 every month for the work I do here. One day a Hungarian Rabbi, Rabbi Vogel, came to visit. I can cry when I remember this. He said to me, 'do you know what a good name you have here in the Jewish Old Age Home, that you are a hard working woman, you never touch nothing here, you are wonderful'. Then I cried and I said to him, 'do you know Mr Vogel, my darling parents were teaching me, don't touch nothing, behave yourself, work in your life, lead an honest life', and I'm proud of it. I have worked all in my life hard and I have succeeded now. I have saved money, nothing short. All right, I'm not a millionaire, I've got a few bob in the bank, if I'm

short, I can draw. So my old age is beautifully done."

A Reflective Afterthought

Malke had all but related her story when she had this to tell:

"It struck my head last night, what is the fate in life. I wouldn't be alive today if I stayed with Mr and Mrs Schwarz who said, 'stay with us, we have paid a Nazi lots of money, you will be safe'. That was one Nazi. Another Nazi reported them: 'there are Jews living in that house'. The bloody Nazis swept them out of the house, the two darling daughters, the Mommy and Daddy and thousands of others that they found like this, because there were also spies all over. And they took them to the side of the Danube river and they shot them, or tied them together, and shoved them all in the Danube. When I was liberated I wanted to go to them, and then I heard how they were shot and thrown in the Danube. If I had stayed with them, my life would have been in the Danube. I was thinking of this last night, how I decided I must go to find my darling Mommy and I survived in Dachau. God was with me."

SARAH LEAH LEIBOVITZ*Biographical information*

Age at time of interviewing:	76 years
Country of birth:	Lithuania
Ghetto and camps:	Kovno Vaivara Ereda Lagedy Stutthof Ammunition factory camp, Hamburg Bergen Belsen
Duration of Internment:	4 years
Age at internment:	29 years
Family losses:	Husband, baby boy, mother and father, sister and brother, mother-in-law and many other extended family members
Surviving family:	Relatives who had emigrated to South Africa from Lithuania at the turn of the century, and her eldest brother who came to South Africa in 1929
Post-Holocaust family:	2nd husband and two daughters from this marriage, their spouses and children

Present situation:

Living in Sydney, Australia, where her daughters and their families had settled. Working at the Sydney Holocaust Memorial Museum.

PROTOCOL

Memories from her Early Childhood

"I was born in 1914 on an estate that belonged to a Russian Tzar, Nicolai II. My father was the manager of that estate. Thinking back on the years that I spent there, I am sorry today that I didn't make more of it. If you were born in a place like that, you just take it for granted that that's what the world looks like and that is how it is. I did not understand. It was so beautiful. It had a long white building called the palace, there were about 20 rooms, I suppose. It was surrounded by a beautiful orchard with all sorts of fruits. There were masses of flowers. On the other side was a big lake, surrounded by oak trees and pine trees which was very, very beautiful. We used to go boating on the lake, catching fish. I was too young to realize how beautiful this all was, what a luxury it was to live there."

"We were four children in the family. The oldest was a brother, then myself, my sister and a little brother and my father and mother. My father's brother-in-law and his two children also lived with us since my father's sister died. My father brought a teacher from Vilna to teach my brother and the older children, my cousins. I learnt from them; whatever they were studying, I knew. They were taught Russian, English and Hebrew. We spoke Polish."

Learning to Deal with Difficulties and Hardships

In the years 1918 to 1920, a civil war between Communists and anti-Communists raged in Russia. "We lived close to the border where the Poles, the Russians and the Lithuanians were fighting and we suffered a lot from those fights. So we went to live in the nearest little town which was called Malat. I went for an interview with the teacher of the primary school, he put me in the Std 2 class which I found very difficult because I did not know Hebrew well enough, and that was a Hebrew school. After I had private tuition in Hebrew, I became tops of the class and finished with top marks."

"Then I was sent to a bigger town to high school. I was young and away from home and I was missing my family, so much so, that I got sick there and I had to come back home. When during the holidays my friends came back with their new uniforms and in a class higher than myself, I did not like it. I struggled not to feel left out. So I told my parents that I wanted to go back and start again, but not in the same standard. So they got a private teacher that taught me for six weeks. So I wrote the exams of the year I had missed and passed it, and went into the same standard as my friends. From then on I was a perfect student that passed with distinctions in all subjects."

Graduating at the Kovno university with a degree in the natural sciences, she became a teacher in botany and zoology. She got married in 1937 and gave birth to a baby boy one year later.

Hitler had signed a non-aggression pact with Russia, agreeing to split Poland between them. The occupation of Eastern Poland allowed the Russian Armed Forces to invade the Baltic States, including Lithuania, in the summer of 1940. However, apart from losing her job as a teacher (Zionists were

forbidden to teach), life went on as usual for Sarah and her family.

"The Beginning of the End"

"The beginning of the end for Lithuanian Jewry occurred on the 22nd June, 1941. At dawn of that fateful day, the German war machine marched across the Russian front in what would come to be known as Operation Barbarossa. Lithuania was caught right in the middle of the fighting, and as the Russian troops retreated, so the German troops advanced. Within ten days, Lithuania was in German hands."

"I want you to imagine that you are sitting with your family around the table and having lunch on a sunny Sunday, on the 22nd June, 1941. Suddenly, a terrible storm breaks out, the roof begins to cave in, debris are falling from the ceiling, and the window panes are shattered. What is your first reaction? You grab your child and run outside. In the street you are met by a hail of bullets, so you run for shelter. Many other people like yourself are killed in the street, but you are lucky, you manage to find shelter. You sit in your hideout and listen to the radio. You hear accusations of sabotage levelled against the Jews, and heavy punishment is meted out to them on all sorts of trumped up charges. For every German killed, sixty Jews are executed in reprisal, etc. After about ten days, you suddenly hear an announcement by the High German Occupation Command which states: all excesses against Jews will officially stop. (The Lithuanians themselves used to take Jews in the streets, torture them, take them to the main fort and kill them). By order of the authorities, all Jews should leave their hiding places, leave their homes, and move to an appointed place, called the ghetto, within 14 days. You are allowed to take with you only what you can carry." "We went back home, but our house was plundered, there was nothing left. So we just went to the ghetto."

The ghetto had been hurriedly set up in an outlying suburb of Kovno, a suburb mainly occupied by Jews. The Gentiles who lived there, had to evacuate their homes and move into the homes outside the ghetto that had belonged to the Jews who were evicted from them. The ghetto area was cordoned off by barbed wire, and watchtowers were constructed. This area was to become home to the about 30,000 Jews that were left from the about 50,000, before the Germans occupied Lithuania. A week before it had been declared a ghetto, a pogrom by the Lithuanians (with some German help) had virtually killed all the Jews living there. **"So when we went into the ghetto, we found in the houses, tables with food still half-eaten. Some of the murdered people were still in the houses."**

Life in the Kovno Ghetto

Inside the ghetto, absolute chaos ruled. Thousands of people were milling about, looking for accommodation. Sarah's family came into the ghetto with her mother-in-law. Finding no place to live (everything was occupied) they had to sleep on the street in the rain and the cold until someone they knew took them in. To bring a semblance of order in the ghetto, a Judenrat (a Jewish council) was formed. People were packed five to six in a room. A workers' office was established where people had to be

registered for work. Some places surrounding the ghetto, like big factories, needed Jews for work. Sarah and her husband were assigned to work at the aerodrome (which had been bombed and needed to be rebuilt) as forced laborers. Food rations began to run out. "There was no food, and you could not buy any, it was not allowed. Bartering started. Valuables were exchanged for food outside the ghetto, but at the aerodrome there was nothing. My husband went to the Judenrat to tell them of our plight. I was then assigned to work in a brick factory where I myself, could barter and bring some food to my family."

"There were selections with the slogan that the ghetto was overcrowded and that more room had to be made for the workers. They used to just close off a street, keep only the men and young women who could work, and sent the rest away. There was much anxiety. When I was at work I would worry about what was happening in the ghetto to my baby and mother-in-law - will I find them when I return? One was punished and shot for anything the German guards regarded as wrong. So you didn't even know if you would be going back. You came back late at night, and had to get up at four in the morning. So you had about two or three hours to see to your child, sleep or whatever. You could make no plans whatsoever. Nothing was in your hands."

"If one street of the ghetto was emptied after a selection, other people just moved into the empty houses. The people did not realize the big tragedy of it all. We were four, five in a room, strangers, not family. So if some of them could move out into an empty room, they were quite happy about it. If you think about it now, that they were going into a house where people had just been taken out and killed! At the work places the clothes of the murdered people were sorted out and sent to Germany or to the front. People didn't think about it. You were in such tension, your life was so precious to you perhaps, or had no meaning, but you just did not think of what was happening. You did not know what tomorrow will bring. There were selections and selections and selections."

The Big Selection

"We seemed to miss the selections until 1942, they called it the Big Selection. Then the whole ghetto had to get out, even the sick people, the babies.. all had to gather together in the big Platz." (open place) "It was 28th October, 1942. The night shift had not come back yet, and my husband was on night shift. When they came back, they had to go straight to the Platz. My husband joined us, tired, white, full of cement and all that. They said that if they found anyone in the houses hiding, they would shoot them. We had to move forward in families. In the front was standing the selector with a little black stick in his hand facing the approaching families and with his stick, left, right, left, right, dividing the families. My mother-in-law put her doek" (scarf) "over her grey hair. In front of us were our neighbors, a husband and wife and three small children. He had also been on the night shift with my husband, and she was begging him in Yiddish. This I will never forget. It always keeps ringing in my ears. 'Lift up your chin, make a smile a little bit, look more happy, be a father to your children..', and she was also trying to clean his face. I was holding my baby in my arms. Next to me was my husband. He was holding his mother. This family in front of us were sent to the left. We did not know what it meant, which was the right side to go. By late afternoon

we realized that to the left, families with small children were sent. If the family was bigger, half went to the right, the other to the left. I don't know what happened to us, I don't remember that. We were just pulled to the right. I don't remember whether the captain with the stick even saw us or not. All four of us were on the right side. If it was instinctively or automatically, I don't remember what happened. You can imagine what a state we were all in, especially seeing how this family was taken away; also seeing two old ladies, friends of my mother-in-law, both on sticks and sent to the left. I watched them limping away.. At that time I was so finished I did not care about anything."

"The whole day the sorting went on. And later, when it became dark, they just surrounded the rest and took them all way. There were ten thousand people who were taken to the fort to be shot. About a week before, in the part that was known as the small ghetto where the hospital and the orphanage were, the hospital was burnt with the nurses and doctors and patients inside. All the children from the orphanage, all the other people living there, were taken away to be shot. We were told that the Big Selection took place so was that this small ghetto could be filled with other people. The workers would be left in the big ghetto where they would have rest, peace and comfort."

"Now to show you how people are, when you don't know what tomorrow will bring. The people who were sorted out, the ten thousand, were taken to the small ghetto. When they came in there, they already started fighting amongst themselves for better houses, for better places with more things left in them, because all the belongings of the people who were taken, were left behind. They were fighting till late at night. But at four o'clock in the morning, they were all rounded up. From the bigger ghetto, we could observe all this, and could see how masses of people were driven up the hill to the fort. For two days the killing continued. On the third day their clothes were brought to the workstadt" (working place). "When we passed the fort on our way to work, rivers of blood were still running down the hill."

"This was the ghetto. Somehow I and my family were left."

A Watershed Choice

"In September/October 1943 came the order that they wanted 2,000 men to work in Estonia. My husband's name was put on the list by someone who had been selected but who wanted to save himself and his family, so he put my husband's name there instead. They said that the family of the men selected could join them. Because they never told the truth, one did not know whether the selection was for killing, to be sent to Auschwitz or to the fort, or whether it really was for work in Estonia. Because I did not want to be parted from my husband, and after much consideration, it was decided that we would join my husband. If we stayed alive, fine, we will struggle on just as we had done until now, and if they kill us, we will die together."

"As soon as we came to the railway station, they separated us. They took away the old women and children. When we started to object, they said it was for the good of the old people and the children. It was crowded in those cattle wagons. They would be taken in better transport." "Then the men and women were separated. My little boy was left with my mother-in-law and I never saw either of them again. Later, I found out that they were sent to Auschwitz, and my

husband to a labor camp somewhere in Estonia."

A Journey into Suffering

"We were chased into the cattle wagons under a hail of rifle blows. Some people tried to escape and were shot on the spot. The wagons were locked from the outside and the train moved off. For three days we were standing crowded together, 85 to a 100 people in one of those cattle carriages. There was no place to sit or to lie or to do anything, what you had to do you had to do standing like that. For three days were just like cattle, travelling. At night sometimes they stopped and we heard a lot of shooting. We never knew what was happening, if some people were shot because they tried to escape or what. We also thought that maybe they were taking one truck at a time and shooting the people, and that they were getting nearer and nearer, that they were going to kill us all."

"But after endless hours the train would move on again until we came to a place called Valvara in Estonia. We stopped about 5 kilometers from the camp. The carriages were opened and those who were dead - a lot had died of suffocation and other causes - were pulled out. It was so crowded that when the doors opened, we just fell out, one on top of the other. Those who could get up, got up. We were lined up in rows of four. We were very, very thirsty. There were little puddles of water along the road, we wanted to take water but they would not let us. Eventually we came to the camp. We never saw the men, we never saw the older women and children. We started to cry. But if you asked where they were, you got hit."

"Before they let us into the barracks, we had the experience that our hair had to be shorn off, and not only the hair on the head but all over the whole body, by men. Can you image that feeling of humiliation? You are a young woman, there were young girls. You have to undress - there were any amount of German soldiers and Jewish men, and they were cleaning up our bodies. It was a terrible experience. We were left like animals. We had no more brains, no more thoughts, feelings. We just were numb. That is how our life started for us, without family, without anything. And without your clothes. They gave us a dress, and wooden clogs, not anything else. That is how our life in the camp started."

"The next day we were sent to fell trees in the wood and had to stand up to our knees in snow, in wooden clogs, without stockings, without anything, freezing cold, in one little dress. Later on, they sent some of our old clothing back. I got back my coat. Only my feet were cold now. The pain was unbelievable from the clogs. I had to have an operation, four years ago I had it. The clogs were small and very pointy. You had to push your foot in and stay in it. Eventually it broke the bones. I had to have an operation to put in new bones because, over the years, the bones moved down."

A Call to Action

"One day the gong goes and it is an Appel" (roll call). "We had to all line up before the camp leader. It was customary for him to choose 60 to 65 people and to then send them away. You

never saw them again. He started to sort us with his little stick. He pointed to me. 'Well', I said to my nearest friend, 'this is the day. Good bye and that's it'. He counted to 24 and then stopped. He sent the others to the barracks and we were left outside. Then the work inspector came. .. I was going to be the cleaner lady of our barrack! The 24 were given work in the camp itself, which was a very nice thing. I didn't have to go to the woods again! The trees used to fall. Two women had to push the tree away from you while you felled it. The bottom branches always cut you so that I used to come back full of blood. I needn't go walking miles and miles in the cold with the clogs that froze! You got warm water from the kitchen to wash yourself and you were indoors most of the time after you had cleaned up. This was a good job, a good break!"

Presented with this incredulously fortunate opportunity, Sarah set about her task zealously. "My barrack had a 100 women. They had diarrhea and was locked up the whole night, so you can imagine what the barrack looked like in the morning. By ten o'clock it had to be clean." "Every day 60/65 women were taken out to work. There were some old women, and some very young girls. The Kapos came in the morning and broke arms and ribs with sticks in chasing the women, because they didn't want to go to work. So there was disorder. I discussed this with the girls. I said, 'let us make a list. The younger and stronger ones can go, and let the others stay and work in and around the barracks - there was always something to do. And after two days, I promise you, those who had worked two days, can have one day of rest on the third day, and then we'll change. I will rotate it in such a way that every one had rest in between two days of work'. They agreed. So I had the names and every morning at seven o'clock, my group was outside without any screams and without any cries and without any damage done to people."

The faithful performance of her duty as a Stubenalteste (barrack cleaning lady), led to an enlargement of responsibility: being appointed a Blockalteste (a person in charge of a block of barracks). Three barracks of a 100 women each, were placed in Sarah's care. These 300 women became Sarah's charge throughout the suffering years to follow. "Apparently the captain, through the work inspector, got to know about this, that my barrack was nicely clean, and that there was order, and the people were well-behaved. So one day, when the Blockalteste was sent away or killed, I don't know what happened to her, the captain and work inspector came and said that I would be the Blockalteste." "In this job, a very cosy job, I could of course help a lot of people. The old and very young ones I organized to have a little bit more food. If in the kitchen cauldron there was any food left, I came with a bucket to give them a little bit more."

"But it did not last for me. I got typhus. The camp leader was a terrible German. He was a murderer, but he was very good to me. I don't think for any other reason but that Germans liked order, and with me there was always order. He was told that I had typhus. He said I should be brought to the sick bay and not sent away. If you got sick you were sent away and never came back again. He himself stood outside and was watching that I should be taken to the sick bay." For twenty-four days, Sarah lay in a semi-conscious, fevered state. Then her temperature suddenly dropped and she became fully conscious. She was, however, very weak, able only to sit up.

The Russian counter-offensive against the German armies had in the meantime begun. Vaivara was only five kilometers from the battlezone. An order was sent out saying that all the inmates were to

be lined up, to be marched to the trains and then transferred to another concentration camp, away from the battlefields. Those who were sick, were thrown outside in the snow, and left to fend for themselves. **"We were just wrapped in a grey blanket. We were rolled out of the blanket onto the snow outside the barrack. So we were all lying in the snow. Some of my friends that knew that I was sick, came to look for me, found me, brought me clothes, dressed me and took me under my arms and pulled me away to where the healthy people stood. Eventually we were pushed and packed into the train."** After a protracted train journey, Sarah arrived at Ereda concentration camp which consisted of two separate camps - one in which sick people from surrounding camps were housed, and one in which healthy people lived and worked. Every six weeks, all the people in the "sick camp" were rounded up and sent to Auschwitz. Sarah was placed in this camp. After she got better she went to the camp leader and asked him to give her work again - it was the same camp leader, and eventually he gave her work in the kitchen. Sarah got acquainted with one of the male nurses who visited all the surrounding camps. She asked him to look for her husband, whom he eventually found, and at Sarah's plea, brought to the camp where she was. He was very sick. **"I hardly recognized him. His face and all that was just black, you couldn't see skin or anything. (The men couldn't survive because they didn't know how to keep themselves clean. When I didn't have water, I rubbed myself with snow.) I prepared plenty of hot water and went to wash and clean him. After a week or so of having enough food, he became human again. And when I saw that he was alright, I spoke to the captain and said, You know my husband is here, he was in the sick bay but he has got well. He speaks German and all that, couldn't you give him some work? He agreed to see him the next morning. When he came the next morning, I had my husband dressed and cleaned and all. He spoke to him, then agreed that he could do some work in the other camp and get out of the sick bay."**

Sarah still had to pass inspection to get out of the camp for the sick herself. She passed the test and was chosen for work in the barracks. She again became the leader of the women she had had under her care before. **"I was their leader, I do not know for what reason, but because I could help or tried to, I always had a lot of girls around me that came to me for help, for advice, for things. One of them ran up to me and told me that an elderly woman doctor and a young girl from Kovno, who were with us in the other camp in Estonia, had been selected to be sent away. We had to do something to save these two people whom we knew. We still had some things hidden - I had a little chain from my mother-in-law that was very dear to me, another had a watch, or a ring whatever."** They bribed the woman in charge and succeeded in getting the elderly doctor and young girl smuggled out of the selected group. The next morning they found that the elderly doctor had committed suicide during the night. Because of her age, the elderly doctor was sure to be selected again. Sarah adopted the young girl (about 14, but she looked like a 10 year old). **"I kept her with me and never let her out of my sight. All the rest of the year she was with me and that is my adopted daughter."**

From Ereda, Sarah and her group, along with others, were transferred to Lagedu and then to Stuthoff. Here Sarah registered for work. With her group, she was sent to work in an Ammunition factory near Hamburg, a factory which employed only women. Before they left, Sarah and her husband, who stayed behind in Stuthoff, arranged to meet in Königsburg after the war, should they survive. **"That was the last time I saw him and heard from him".**

Life at the ammunition factory was good to them. The German commander was a kind man. "He was good to us, he was like a father to us." Appointed to a supervisory position, Sarah soon put her organizational skills to work.

She spoke to the commander. "'Look'", she said to him, "'there are only 40 women required to do this job, why must the other sit around? Send them to the barracks to rest, let's rotate the people'. He allowed it. So there we really could recover well. We had simple hut good food, could rest 6 to 7 hours a day on a bed with a blanket. There were showers. The work was hard, but not too hard. We manufactured bullets, but not one of our bullets were used for shooting, I promise you. It was sent to the front in crates, and these same crates kept coming back from the front with the instructions to redo the bullets. The German factory management just wanted to be kept busy, and not to be sent to the front. They were not interested in the war. Our camp leader, as I told you, was a very nice man. He was not concerned with how well we were making the bullets, only that we were kept busy."

However, the SS women in charge of them wrote a letter to the Central Office to complain that the camp commander was "a sympathizer with the Jews" and he was sent away and put into a camp. "The second camp leader was a very bad man. He overworked, us and never let us rest."

The Last Stretch: Bergen Belsen

With the approach of the Allies, the factory and camp were evacuated and Sarah and her group of women were sent to Bergen Belsen in February of 1945. "We could not believe what was happening there. You could not live there for more than three months. There was typhus, death, no food, no work, nothing."

"In the barracks during the night a lot of people used to die. There was no place, it was so crowded; one on top of the other, the sick, the dead, the healthy, all together lying on the floor - there were no beds. You couldn't get out of a door if you had to go outside. You had to climb over people to climb through a window. There was nothing to eat, nothing to do." "People were brought there just to die." (In Bergen Belsen inmates were deliberately starved to death). "Hundreds, perhaps thousands were dying every night. So what could you do with the dead? We used to pull them out and throw them outside. And overnight the snow used to cover the bodies, and there were nice, round, beautiful little snow covered mountains before every barrack. But what happened at the end of March, the beginning of April, when the sun started to melt the snow? The stench in the camp was terrible. There were mountains of dead bodies that were lying there, half rotten.. it was terrible."

The Liberation

"On the 10th or 11th of April (we were liberated on the 15th), when the Germans knew that Hamburg was already in Russian hands, the camp was mined, and the instruction was that if the German guards who fled (they left Hungarian SS in charge), did not return in two and a half days,

the camp must be destroyed with all the people in it. We knew about it - the Hungarian inmates spoke to the Hungarian guards; the Polish inmates spoke to the Polish guards, and news like that spread quickly. So we knew that in two days we were going to die, all of us. There was nothing we could do. We couldn't get out, the fences around the camp were electrified. But after two days, I think it was Monday, because we were liberated on the Wednesday, we saw all the Germans coming back with white bands on their arms. They could not get through, so they decided to hang out placards with yellow skullcaps to show that there was typhus in the camp, and they are all the 'nursing staff', looking after the sick people."

"Then at twelve o'clock on the 15th of April, the first British motorbike with two people on it rode through the fence. We jumped through the windows. When the guards saw us jumping through the windows, they hit us with batons to force us back. So one of the Americans or British, I don't remember, came and hit him and said to us, 'don't go away, don't be afraid, you are free, you can come out'. Straight away, all the SS were rounded up, their epaulets torn off from them. They were all arrested. We weren't quite in our minds to appreciate what was happening. Some fell down and kissed the wheels of the tank and the tires of the motorbikes and all that. I don't much remember now because my mind was so numb at the time."

"All that I remember is going back to the barracks and getting my girls, all of them."

Post-liberation Tasks and Challenges

"Later on in the afternoon, the Allies came and brought us everything they had, some food, some hullybeef. It didn't do us any good at all."

"I asked them to take me to the men's camp, I wanted to go and look for my husband, maybe I'll find him. One of the Americans took me. What we found there! there are no words to express it. They were all lying on the floor, there were no hunks. Some of them with open insides, dead, next to them will be a sick man who wouldn't be able to speak, he will just nod his head to show that he was alive. It was a terrible sight. Even if my husband was there, I wouldn't recognize him and I wasn't in a state to recognize him. The American put his hands on his face, and I pulled his hands off his face and I said, 'Look at it, remember it! Tell about it, just what you see here!'"

"Now the German SS women had a very nice camp away from our camp, and they were already taken away, arrested, all of them. So their barracks were left empty. So I went up to this Jewish major of the Jewish Brigade who had come to look for Jewish women, and I spoke to him in Hebrew and said, look, I have about three hundred girls that came from an ammunition factory near Hamburg. We are all still healthy. Take us from among the sick and put us in those clean barracks, so that we can get strong and then we can also work as helpers. He said yes, he will do it the next day."

"The arrested Germans were brought to clean out the camp from the dead bodies. These were loaded into trucks and taken to the pits that the Germans were made to dig. What they looked like! They always had such clean, shining boots, but now they looked worse than we did after 4 years. They were also treated not too well! They used to pull the dead by the legs but they were not

allowed to do that now. They had to carry these half-rotten bodies over their shoulders! We saw one German jumping into the lake outside the barracks, trying to drown himself, and this gave us pleasure, no matter how numb our minds were, how sick we were, but these things gave us pleasure. We shouted abuse at them but they didn't even hear us, the British would not allow us near them. But at least we got rid of our feelings in some way."

"The next day some lorries and trucks came and moved us to the empty German camp. But I got sick. I had diarrhea during the last days.. we had no food, no nothing. Then one of our liberators gave me a piece of bread and bullybeef and this upset me more. But my girls were all in the clean barracks, and the Allies had organized some food for us. They took me to the hospital and then I fell unconscious. I was unconscious for three weeks."

"When I got well, I got a job as the private secretary of the commanding officer of the Bergen Belsen camp. Things started to get sorted out. He was a Britisher and the Liberator of that camp. I was with him for a couple of months. I actually got a greeting card from him. He treated me very, very well. He was a lovely old man."

Through one of the officials, Sarah sent a telegram and letter to her brother in South Africa to tell him that she was alive. Eventually they got a permit for her to go as a tourist to South Africa for six months. Sarah wanted very much to go to Israel, but was advised against it. "To go to Israel I had to be strong and healthy, but I wasn't healthy. I had been kicked by a German guard shortly before the liberation, and hurt my back. I was in terrible pain after that. Although I had recovered from the coma I fell into after the liberation, I never got altogether well. So it was decided that I must go to my brother in South Africa. My adopted daughter would be taken to Israel, she was 18 by then."

Before she eventually left for South Africa, Sarah worked for and travelled with the Jewish officialdom called Bricha (meaning: to flee), an organization helping Jews to return to Israel. Traveling throughout Europe, she was also looking for her husband. "I knew that my mother-in-law and my little boy were sent to the gaschambers in Auschwitz. But I thought that my husband may have survived. So I went with the Bricha all through Europe to Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Greece, Rumania, Austria and back to Munchen and Bergen Belsen. What we saw!.."

She eventually made her way to South Africa where her mother's side of the family had settled since the turn of the century. She was taken by her brother to look up all her family. She was also taken to visit the cemetery of her mother's grandparents who lived in Dordrecht. Her grandfather was a Rabbi. When the family came to South Africa, they all lived in Dordrecht. Many family members were buried there. "I don't know what happened to me there. When I came from the cemetery and sat down, I couldn't get up. I was paralyzed." Taken back to Johannesburg, it was diagnosed as a physical nervous breakdown connected to her back injury. "I don't think there was one specialist in Johannesburg that did not come and try to help me, because my story had appeared in the newspapers. I was one of the first survivors to come to South Africa. So every Jewish professor or doctor or specialist was trying to help me."

"When I could walk again, I was discharged. I was crying a lot. I just cried and cried, and that is why I went to see the psychiatrist, who had seen me in the hospital a few times. I couldn't tell him the story like I am telling you now. He could not get much out of me. All he told me was that

I must get together with other survivors, that we must talk about things and cry it all out, together. There weren't any other survivors in the beginning, but they started to come, probably a year later."

"The principal of the United Hebrew schools heard about me and came to see me and he offered me a job, 3 times a week, 2 hours in the afternoon as a Hebrew teacher. I took the job, but I couldn't sleep and had too much time and had nothing to do in the morning. So I decided to go back to the university. I applied at the Witwatersrand university, and they accepted me. I majored with German and Hebrew. The involvement with the young students allowed me to recover. So in the morning I would attend university, teach Hebrew in the afternoon, come home, rest a little bit, make supper, and start with my homework and fall asleep at the table, and wake up with a nightmare. For years I never slept in a bed but would fall asleep over my work. Only when the nightmares stopped, at least I didn't get them so frequently, did I sleep in a bed."

She met her second husband, who was a story writer, stories which particularly chronicled the early arrival and settlement of Jews in South Africa. She gave me an Afrikaans magazine with one of his translated stories in it. They got married and had two daughters. Her first grandson was named after her son who had perished in the Holocaust.

Sarah never stopped studying and she attained the further degrees of B.Ed, B.A. Honors, and was granted permission to enroll for doctorate studies which was delayed for some years because of her grief over and financial hardship after her second husband passed away. Over the years, Sarah had also become very active in Jewish communal work and was a member of several Jewish organizations, one being the She'erith Hapletah, of which she was the Chairlady for several years.

It was particularly during the 1970's when many noted scholars began to publish accusations that the Holocaust was a propaganda hoax, that Sarah strove to disseminate the real facts about the Holocaust through public talks and lectures.

Her past is described by her as an active mission of the present.

"I do not live in the past, but the past continues to live in me."

Reflections

"I have a very clear conscience. I like myself. I have not failed myself. I can live with my own conscience. If I could do something, I did. I put myself out to help others. I saved my girls, and my adopted daughter. Being a Stubenalteste and Blockalteste had its own temptations and choices, but I did what I knew was the right thing to do."

"I had these breaks. In every camp, after some weeks, I was chosen for some position without my doing anything about it. I don't know why, maybe it was Providence, God's will, I don't know, but this happened in every camp. In all the 4 years that I was in camps, I was always given a chance of some leading job."

Having something productive to do, especially since what she was doing proved helpful to her girls, had strong survival value. **"We always had our inner selves. This was our one and only possession. It was to guide us and sustain us spiritually, throughout the camp period." "We were all Hebrew speaking - we spoke Hebrew all the time. We had very little time together, but the little**

time we did have, we would get together and discuss literature and whatever else we remembered."

"The girls were my family. They are today also my family. When I go to Israel, I meet them, I meet my daughter, with their children and grandchildren. It is a reunion."

"When I read Katzetnik's House of Dolls, a book about the camp prostitutes, I remembered seeing these girls in a separate section of the camp. Then I felt: how could they give their bodies for a piece of bread? But now, looking back, I can better understand how they must have felt. I felt Katzetnik described what I had experienced and what I myself had wanted to write about."

"I feel my survival was not for nothing, that I have an obligation. I have dedicated my life in the remembrance and for the sake of those who died. I will continue to do this kind of work in Australia. I am happy when I am working at something meaningful and constructive, something that makes a demand on my creativity."

"The Holocaust is not to be forgotten, not because of hatred, but, for example, I feel that the new generation of Germans have not learnt the lesson. The world has not learnt the lesson. The killing of innocent people is in fact still happening all over the world. Anti-semitism is still continuing. I cannot understand this. I am a Jewess and I am such a kind person, I cannot understand that people do not like me only because I am Jewish.

Why?.."

DEBORAH DINAH BENEDIKT*Biographical information*

Age at time of interviewing:	60 years
Country of birth:	Lithuania
Ghetto and Camp:	Kovno Auschwitz
Duration of internment:	4 years
Age at internment:	14 years
Family losses:	Mother, father, sister, brother, sister-in-law and their two children, extended family members
Surviving family:	2 brothers (who emigrated to South Africa before the 2nd World War) (brothers have since passed away)
Post-Holocaust family:	Divorced from survivor husband, one son

Present situation:

Lives on her own in an average, but beautifully furnished home in Johannesburg. Her son, a Professor in Architecture at a university in the United States, is regarded as a world expert in his field. He has published several books and articles on his work. In Deborah's home are lots of books, original paintings, antique vases, clocks and furniture and Persian carpets. She had her own antique shops, but sold them. Now, semi-retired, she works part-time in a jewelry shop. She is an active and ardent Zionist.

PROTOCOL

The Burden of Memory

"It is such a painful and long history. I wouldn't even know how to start. It took years.. and shall I tell you something? I am still not rid of it, it remains with you. It is perhaps not in the front of your life, not in the straightforward mind, but in the back of your mind, your subconscious life, it's there. It's something you can never get rid of, it rests there, it lies there. As survivors we control it, but if you should give us a good shake, or if something should happen to cross our path which throw us back, right away, just like that, it will be there. It is forever there. If I can describe it to you today, what I felt and what I went through, isn't it a testimony to you that it is still alive, and that it is still in me? It's not a dim memory at all, it's as fresh as anything."

To live normally, she stated, survivors have to tuck away the memories of their sufferings within the protective folds of the subconscious mind. She therefore has to prepare herself for our meetings in much the same way as she prepares herself to remember on that one occasion each year, officially set aside for the purpose: Yom Hashoah (the Holocaust Remembrance Day, celebrated by Jewry all over the world).

"It starts days ahead. It comes back from the subconscious mind to the straightforward mind, things which I suppress, which I tuck away there where I keep my memories. I let it well up in me, come back to me."

Having related incidents from her Holocaust experiences, she was always the one to end our sessions, sometimes rather abruptly. Going to make tea, I could hear her let out a cry every now and again, like an agonizing sigh.

"It takes me days to recover. I go into a deep depression that I can't get rid of. I am torn away from my daily life into the past, I cannot shake it off. Whatever I do, I do mechanically.. my present, the work, whatever needs to be done, even talking and laughing, but it is not me. I am in my past."

"When I get out of it, I ask myself the question: Do I have to do it? But my conscience makes me feel that I have no moral right to pass from this world without saying a few words on my part. Survivors must talk, they should not leave this earth without the outcry of the past."

The First Shocks: A Severe Disruption of an Ordered and Civilized Lifestyle

Deborah started her Holocaust story with an account of her stay with her uncle, an elderly bachelor, **"he was an eye surgeon of high standing, a famous doctor"** who lived in Riga, Latvia - where she was sent to further her education.

"He was my guardian and brought me up in actual fact, and what I learnt from that household! That was in fact most of my background. He lived in an old huge flat of 10 enormous rooms. He was a collector of paintings and a great admirer of Russian antiques in crystal and gold and silver. His library and collection of paintings was known as one of the biggest in Europe. On Sundays he would take me along to the Russian fleamarket which had a display of old Russian pieces which were confiscated and stolen during the Revolution and which were brought to Latvia. His knowledge, and what he bought!.. He had season tickets to the Opera. Whenever he took me out to a restaurant and then to the Opera, he never, never came without a posy of flowers for my dress. He used to say to me, whenever we were to go anywhere, 'Let me see, now, what are you going to wear?..'"

"He was gone with the first 500" (when the Germans armies invaded Latvia). "In Riga they did exactly the same as in Kovno: the intellectuals and prominent were taken right away to be shot. That was the first shock."

Deborah was not there to witness this tragedy. The Russians had invaded Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania a year before the German invasion. Just before the Russian invasion, Deborah, carrying a Lithuanian passport, along with all holders of foreign passports, had to leave Latvia and went to Kovno.

Deborah was in Kovno for only 5 days when the Russians invaded Lithuania, as they had invaded Latvia.

"They were, exactly at the same time, on the same day, all over.."

Deborah described what her year in Kovno (under Russian occupation) was like before the German invasion suddenly cut everything short.

"I went to libraries, met up with young people my age and we were discussing politics and books and music. As young as I was, I had a fairly good knowledge of the Russian classics and spent much time in the library. There I met up with an elderly man with snow white hair, a fantastic figure of a person, who was a writer himself. He was a fourth generation banker. The bank at that time had a quite different image than the bank of today, today it is like a bazaar. It was very different in Europe then, you dressed up to go to the bank. He had a magnificent collection of Russian literature, jewelry and antiques. He was fascinated that a little slip of a girl like me should be found reading the classics. We became very friendly." "At the time that the Germans came into Kovno, his wife and two daughters were away for a trip to America."

"I was living with a friend in Kovno. I will never forget it, it was a Sunday, a beautiful spring day and people were promenading. The Opera was in the main street of Kovno. At two o'clock we were going to the first performance of an opera by the Russians in the Opera House. We were walking around, laughing and meeting up with friends. The Russians liked to play their accordions and there was singing. Then, all of a sudden, the sky was pitch black with aeroplanes and the Russians looked up forlorn and said: 'Who are they? What is it? Is it ours? No! it's not ours! They're the Germans!' And the Germans started throwing bombs and the Russians were running in the thousands, not knowing where their units were, not having their guns with them, and from every building - it was an unforgettable sight - from every window were Lithuanians with big guns shooting at the running Russians..'" "The Lithuanians had sold out the Russians to the

Germans."

"What we suffered before the Germans really took over! When the Germans marched in, they gave the Latvians and the Lithuanians three days freedom to do to the Jews whatever they wanted to, as a compensation for betraying the Russians. The pogroms and the killings which went on!.. the pillage, taking Jews to petrol stations and pumping petrol in their throat, cutting their ears off, anything! You could hear the screaming for miles. And after those three days, cars with huge loudspeakers, driving slowly through all the streets, announcing that all the Jews must come here and here and there. And they made ghettos in every town: Kovno ghetto, Riga ghetto."

"That's how it started. To hide away didn't help. They were breaking into the doors, dragging you out of the houses or flats, slicing you, cutting you, shooting you, taking your possessions.. pogroms in the full sense of the word."

"The initial shock when they were taking me to the ghetto was greater than arriving and living in the concentration camps. We had already a two year experience of the ghetto when we were taken to the concentration camps." "Can you imagine the turn from a civilized, well-to-do and organized life of a civilian, overnight being converted to an animal - no rights to walk on the pavement, the yellow stars, surrounded by guards, spat at, stared at by the passers-by; marched in the street in columns and if you would step out of it, you were beaten; being put in a ghetto with high fenced electric wires and taken away whatever you possessed. This all overnight."

"That particular shock of the first three days especially, was a shock to your emotional and mental state, greater than the shock to your physical. You could live from a parsnip found in the ground and chew on it, but that shock mentally and emotionally.."

Kovno: A World of Sorrow and Turmoil

"I went to Kovno ghetto a single girl. I didn't see my parents. My parents went to their death without me. I had a brother, a district surgeon, his wife was a doctor and they had two little children. I also had a sister.. they're all gone. I was all by myself in Kovno, without my own family."

They were allowed to take with them into the ghetto, only what they could carry.

"What could you take with you if you could take only a little bundle?.. The first thought when I had to go into the ghetto - I was a single girl, a youngster - I thought about my friend.. He was a magnificent personality, and he was so rich! When you walked into their place.. if you can think of how the rich aristocrats used to live once upon a time, that was their place."

"It was already forbidden to go into the streets, but I took the risk. I never looked Jewish, I looked Aryan. And I collected for him a bundle. And in that bundle was diamonds of all sizes, jewelry, you haven't seen jewelry like that! He had, for example, a little box smitten out of pure gold and it had different compartments for different Russian gold rubles, half rubles and less and less and less. You couldn't even lift it, it was so heavy. And then we took three fur coats along, and that is how we entered the ghetto." "I stayed with him in a shed, that is where we got ourselves a little place." "And then two days later there was an Aktion (action, selection) and they took whatever you possessed. Whatever you possessed you had to bring along and give it to the Germans. When I

handed over the possessions of that man, even the Germans sitting there receiving it gasped, they have never seen anything like that in their life."

"We remained with the three furs. We exchanged a fur for a loaf of bread through the wires from the outside. Lithuanians used to come with a little butter or bread and they took along with them the possessions of the Jews." "I used to collect grass and cook it for us in a bit of water."

"My Russian friend died of shock. He didn't survive at all. He had brought with him the manuscripts he was busy with. He hung onto these more than to the gold or whatever.."

"So little has been written of the ghettos.. but the initial shock of the first two months has done the damage beyond repair. And the liquidation of, for example, the Kovno ghetto!.. and during those two years, one Aktion after the next, you were facing death every day, 24 hours, asleep or not asleep.. This took out of me, practically, the lot."

A Physical and Spiritual Fight for Survival

Deborah continued her battle alone. Without family, and losing her Russian friend, she now had only herself.

"The Kovno ghetto was surrounded with a high barbed wire fence. In the morning Jews will be marched out flanked by Nazi guards to go and work. In the evening they will be marched back. Everyone in the camp already knew that we were all destined for concentration camps and for the gaschambers. I don't know how it happened, someone must have told the nuns at a nearby monastery about me. I was young, moved fast and did not look Jewish. Maybe they thought I could be saved. But one day someone called me and said there were two nuns at the fence wanting to talk to me. I went to them. They told me that they could help me. I had to wear nun's clothing, I had to do everything they do. I had to pray to Mary and Jesus as if I meant it, and I had, of course, to make the sign of the cross. But I told them that I could never do that, to pray to a strange god, to make the sign of the cross, even if I pretended. I was Jewish. I would rather stay and share the fate of my brothers and sisters."

"At that time someone from the underground contacted me and asked me to get involved. Because I did not look Jewish, they would get me a false passport with a Gentile name. I was to work as a servant in the household of a Catholic family. Behind this front, I would at night carry errands, even bring weapons from the one place to another for the underground. I grabbed the chance."

"I was smuggled to this Catholic family. I had to work very hard, scrub the floors, do the washing and ironing and the cooking. I had to sleep in the attic where the washing was hung.."
(Tears sprung to her eyes). "As a child with my own parents, I slept on a soft elderdown filled with ducks' down.. you know the kind?.. I had one under and one on top of me. I thought of that as I lay on that hard wooden bed at night. At the threat of my life, I would slip out at night to meet contacts; to relay messages about weapons that were hidden in the forest, etc. I carried a false passport. I had to practice the signature of my new name a hundred times till it was always the same."

"One day there was loud banging on the door. Outside were two men from the Gestapo (German security police) and some soldiers. They spoke to me in German. I pretended not to

understand and called the madam of the house. They informed her that the house was to be occupied by the Gestapo. When they left, she urged me to leave immediately. 'How could I', I said. 'I only had my contacts at night. It was day and I had nowhere to go and it was dangerous to be out walking in the streets. People were being pulled off the street all the time by the Nazis and interrogated as to their identity. They were looking for Jews. Couldn't I wait till nighttime?' But she insisted. So I made a bundle in which were the money and jewels that the underground had entrusted to me, and some matches, and a few books by my favorite author, Stefan Zweig." "I thought of joining the ranks of the ghetto-workers, I still had my ghetto card. But I also had the false passport just in case I would be stopped."

"In the street, two Lithuanian guards passed me and stopped. 'Hey you!..' they called out to me. 'We know you, you come from the ghetto..' They looked at me suspiciously and intently. In my one pocket was my ghetto card and in the other my false passport. I clutched both tightly and said protestingly: 'I'm a Christian, what are you talking about? Here's my papers, look!..' I showed them the passport, still clutching the ghetto card in my other pocket. I told them that both my parents were involved in the war on the side of the Germans. They did not look convinced, however, and said I had to come with them to the Gestapo headquarters for questioning."

"I had crumpled up my ghetto card and, when they were not looking, I just dropped it in the bushes next to the road. At the headquarters they shoved me into the office of the Commander. The two guards had opened my bundle on the way and had taken the money and the jewels. I told this to the Commander. He was furious. He hit them through their faces several times. Everything belonged to the Reich, he shouted, as he hit them again and again." "To describe what kind of a man this Commander was.. He used to kill a Jew every day. Every day a Jew was brought from the ghetto to shave the Commander. When he was all nicely cleaned up, he would offer the Jew a cigarette from his gold case, light his cigarette, then take out his revolver and shoot him in the mouth."

"He looked at my papers and made me sign the name given in the passport several times and compared the two. He too, did not seem convinced with my story and ordered that I be locked up."

"I was thrown into a dark cell, the lighting was extremely poor. I still had my bundle with me and took out the matches. I lit a match and looked around me. There were writings on the walls of people awaiting death. I too, was facing death. I was in that death cell four days and four nights." "I did not eat any of the food they gave me. I was in a kind of a trance, praying, crying out to my mother and father to help me, to save me."

"After four days, I was brought to the Commander again. 'Why did you not eat anything,' he wanted to know. 'Why should I eat if I am going to die anyway', I said. I could hear the sound of people crying and begging in the cells. 'You hear that,' he asked. 'They are begging for their lives'."

"I just stood in front of him, saying nothing. I felt very weak but I was not going to show it. He had opened my bundle. 'Books? You carried books?..' He looked at them and it was clear that he recognized the author. The author was a famous German Jew, Stephen Zweig, whose books

had been burned by the Nazis because he was a Jew. He studied me, then asked: 'Don't you realize that I have authority over life and death? Why don't you kiss my boots like the others and beg for your life?'.."

"I answered him: 'Whether I live or die, is your decision. But that I do not beg for my life, is mine'."

"I stood, just looking back at him. A few moments passed, then he called the guards. 'Take this Jewish girl to the ghetto.' He must have found out who I really was. I was taken to a car and got in."

"We came to a crossing. To the left was the place where they shot Jews and threw them into this mass grave. To the right was the ghetto. Would the guards obey the Commander's orders? My heart pounded. They turned to the right and I was brought to the ghetto."

"I discovered that the Germans had uncovered the activities of the underground for which I worked and that I was its only survivor."

"It is not only the desire, the main desire to remain alive, that helped us survive, that kept us. I wasn't busy with that, because my instinct told me what to do, how to behave or what to avoid as does the instinct of an animal." "We all have, like the animal, a certain inborn instinct for protecting us and for running away from death. So without any control, without thinking about it, instinctively, I turned this way or that. That has to do with having survived, perhaps."

"And then, if we believe in fate, perhaps that was fate too, that we survived."

"There was an Aktion where they surrounded the ghetto and they took 500 tradesmen into a certain area. It had high walls around the five, six little houses where the tradesmen were sitting, making beautiful suits for the SS; bootmakers were making boots. An ordinary person from the ghetto couldn't walk in there, you had to have a certain pass that you belonged to that group. There were jewellers and all sorts of excellent tradesmen. What those Germans did not get out of them!.. These tradesmen were priceless to them and they therefore protected them behind those walls, whereas the rest of the ghetto were subjected to Aktions and taken away to the gaschambers."

"A friend of mine, a youngster, belonged to that group and made ladies' hats. She said to me: 'God knows if I will see you again, I bless you. But since you are so young and agile, if you can find a way to scale those walls, to get over the high fences, I will find you a place to hide'."

"So I took the courage even though there were German guards outside in case someone would try and get over the fences. The fences were of barbed wire. I climbed that wall and they saw me and fired at me, four, five of them, and not one bullet hit me, and I climbed over the wall. My skin was torn in many, many places and I was bleeding and I lost my breath out of anxiety and effort. The policemen inside were Jewish policemen, and they saw me and came up. They could not believe that somebody could climb over that barbed fence, being shot at so many times.."

"If that is not fate, I don't know."

"I asked for my friend and they called her and she came running and took me and hid me in a little dark attic and threw over me old rags and things, and I would lie there covered up during the day and that is how I avoided the Aktions."

"Isn't that fate?"

"The story was told afterwards in the ghetto of the little girl who scaled the fence, who was shot at, and was torn and bleeding." "What was it? Instinct, courage or fate?.."

The Liquidation of the Kovno Ghetto

This is the experience which Deborah had shut up in herself for over 45 years. I was the first to hear of it.

"There is a chapter that I dare not. I don't know if I will have the strength of descriptiveness to describe that particular episode, that is, the liquidation of the Kovno ghetto, the last three days of the liquidation."

"During the past weeks I have tried to think about it. I now have it complete in my memory, as fresh as if it would have happened yesterday. I haven't got the strength nor the descriptive vocabulary to form it for you, I'll try.."

"I wouldn't even know how to start, and there is a certain element that would be of very great interest to you, from a psychological point of view. I don't know how to tackle it. You have to be above the normal strength of imagination to really give a complete picture of what took place. The burning houses, the bunkers under the ground.. we were going to be liquidated, they were burning down the ghetto, and they commanded all of us to come to a certain place from where they will take us away in trucks and trains, either to the gaschambers, or to the concentration camps for work, it all depended on what you looked like, if you would be selected for work or to be sent to your death immediately." "The panic of knowing the ghetto was going to be burnt down and that you were going to be taken away.. the desperation!.. I was just a girl, 15 maybe, I don't remember."

"I lived with a family in a little house from which Lithuanian peasants had been evicted. That little house was very near to the fence. Five families lived there. I had a very narrow little place in the kitchen behind the stove. That was my little place."

"And seeing that particular house was the last house close to the fence, a certain group of people inside the ghetto decided that we will try and build a tunnel through that house, and that tunnel will take us beyond the fence as an escape route before the liquidation. The building of that tunnel was history on its own. Nearly at the end, the tunnel collapsed and all our hearts with it."

"From that idea came the idea of having bunkers. Each little household managed to lift the floors of the houses, and sheds and bunkers were dug to hide ourselves when the liquidation would start so that we should remain alive in places where the Germans can't find us. Those bunkers were built in the hundreds."

"I joined a family in a bunker. They had a little child. As we closed ourselves in, you could already hear the Germans in the next street, shouting and shooting and screaming: 'Out! Out!' to the Jews in the little houses and collecting them, screaming and crying.. and in that bunker the child started to cry, and no matter what we tried to do to calm it down, the child didn't stop crying. I decided to leave the bunker along with another young boy. We started running."

"The Germans were very systematic in their work. in their butchery work. They went street after street; taking out the people, putting them on trucks to be taken away, then they burnt

the house. We were running from street to street to street ahead of them. We were of the very last to be put on the trucks to be taken away."

"As we kept just a street ahead, and were hiding ourselves in the left behind empty houses where people had fled from, I came across terrible, terrible things, in a way terrible.. and that is where the picture comes in for you."

"I didn't give you the complete description at all.. only on the surface.. but in many a place, and it was twelve o'clock in the middle of a summers day.. women and men were having sex openly."

".. What do you say to that?.."

"I have the answer. You do come from it, you are born from sex, and it is a symbol, having for the last time sex with each other, knowing you are going to your death.. the last experience of life. It was a last act of life."

"I cannot tell you what it has done to me. That memory.. At a later stage, of course, much later, my approach differed, my understanding grew, and this is how I understand it today. I couldn't understand it at the time.." (weeping) "I couldn't. I couldn't make it out.." (a questioning cry in her voice which, at that moment, sounded like a cry of a child).

"You won't read it, you won't find it in the Holocaust literature nowhere! except for me knowing it." "I was forever on the alert to see if I would ever, ever find a description of the destruction of Kovno ghetto.. the last 3 days of its existence, and I never found it anywhere. And forever it stood before me."

"At that time to me, the shock was unbearable. I went through very deep depressions 3 times in my life and had to crawl out of it.."

After a sudden silence: "I must rest a bit.."

Deborah was visibly upset for almost an hour afterwards.

She has never referred to the incident again.

The Battle Intensifies

"In Auschwitz physical resistance was impossible. If you will chain a man's arms and legs, no matter how much of a fighter he is, he can do nothing. They put us in such a state that there was not any way of fighting back."

"They tried to break our spirit - that was where our fight was. To remain human beings, to retain our dignity, to remain Jews, and to remain alive - that was the battle."

"Their system was not only to attack you physically. Their aim was to attack you morally. They wanted to break you into pieces. They wanted to convert you into an animal. They wanted to prove to themselves that they could break the Jewish nation, that they could break our spirit, our values, to break anything which is human. To convert us to the level of nothingness, that is what their aim was."

"Shall I tell you something? They did not achieve it!"

"No matter what they were doing to us, I will speak for myself: no matter what they were doing to me, I was still above them. They could not kill my romanticism, they could not kill my

personal thoughts, they could not kill my life in me, my own world. I used to work physically till four o'clock in the morning in the frosty nights, helping to build the airports, digging trenches. But my thoughts were with whatever life gave to me before." "I used to speak to authors of books that I had read. I used to fill myself with food which used to warm me, which used to keep me alive as a human being. I used to hear music, without having music, but in my mind's ear. I heard all of Beethoven's symphonies. I was reading in my mind the books which I adore, the classics of German, Jewish and Russian authors. I used to take up debates with myself, or if I found somebody with whom I could debate, we used to elevate ourselves out of the dirt of everything around us, much higher up, much more above."

"They could not do a thing to me inwardly. All that they could do to me was physically, but they could not get me there. They could not kill my way of thinking, seeing, hearing."

"I was accumulating information. I was having a sort of analytical approach about what I went through, what I saw, about other people, the impressions of the behavior of my mates around me, how the Germans behaved from the psychological point of view. It was more complicated to think about their psychology, their behavior, than ours. I think right throughout the war and afterwards, I was busier thinking about the Germans than about us!.."

"One day I even had an opportunity of killing a German. I had his gun in my hand. He was drunk. But I didn't do it.. because that would have meant murder. I can't murder."

"There was no crime between us. Among the other nations there was crime after crime after crime. This fact aggravated the Germans - they could get to the other nations, but they could not really get at us."

"We were heaps of skin and bone, heaps of dead bodies, but they could not somehow get at us."

"I used to say at that time: Come and get me.. In me I have got all my values, in me I am above you.. You are the nothing! You've got the gun, but you are the nothing!"

"What kept some of us, I would not say all.. the more we were depressed, the more we were converted into nothing, the more were our higher thoughts. I think I never ever thought so nobly and so high emotionally and intellectually as then in hunger, degradation and in cold and in sufferings."

The Basic Aim: The Death of the Human Spirit

Deborah recalled the following incidents which to her, highlighted the fact that not so much physical survival, but spiritual survival was at stake. The assault was not so much physical, but aimed at destroying their dignity as human beings.

Harnessed, like a horse. "I was considered lucky, when I came to Auschwitz, to be taken to cut trees in the forest. Hungry, half naked, exhausted groups of women, we had to do the work of cutting trees, carry it on our shoulders, huge heavy trees, load the big wagons with place for six horses to pull it. We used to load it up to high and forever with their rifles pointing at us, the whole

time, wherever we were, whatever we were doing, always with their rifles, ready to shoot."

"They didn't have any horses. Who were the horses? We were the horses! We were tied with straps. We used to be a group of 20 women, tied together with leather straps. And we were the horses, pulling those wagons for miles, in winter."

"Wasn't that enough degradation?.."

"I can see it before my eyes, as if it happened yesterday. If you will take me to the place, I will take you to the forest, and I will show you where twenty of us were harnessed like horses." "What we looked like! What we looked like, not like human beings any more!"

"If there was a God, my outcry to Him was, often, saying in Yiddish: 'God in heaven, have a look! What are You doing?..'"

The shame of nakedness. "On the pretense that we were to have a shower, they pushed 400/500 women into a hut. We were squeezed in like herrings in a barrel, and women crying and lamenting, trying to hide their private parts. There were windows all around, with guards standing at every window and open doors laughing themselves sick at the emaciated bodies of the wailing women. That gave them a tremendous satisfaction. Isn't that perversion of mind?.."

The humiliation of hunger. "The biggest tragedy was not the hunger part, it was the degrading part. I feel thousands felt the same way without knowing how to express themselves, to sort out what hurt them more. I was starving every day, to me that part was not so hurtful as the hurtfulness of degradation. When I saw a piece of bread I used to shake, saliva used to flow. But that is a physical reaction to hunger. That is a natural reaction. It does not abrogate the spiritual battle that was uppermost."

The death march. "The death march was the peak, the highest concentrated sufferings of the lot, in winter, terrible, terrible winter. The Russians were chasing the Germans from the back and the Germans were running, taking their victims along. We had to run in columns and if you remained behind a bit, you were shot on the spot, left there bleeding.. So as you walked you saw corpses and corpses, frozen corpses. We were dressed in nothing practically. The women, especially, in their summer little dresses.. filled out with hard straw, taken from barns as we passed by and putting it in to keep our own bodies warm a little bit. We looked that size, like balloons, blue, with hardly any shoes on our feet and we were chased the whole time with the guards around us. During the night we were taken into cow and horse barns and in the dung of the animals. On that terrible straw, we used to lie up against each other, body to body, so that our own bodies should get some warmth and not get frozen during the night. The two ends used to get the bit of clothing we had on for they did not have another body to press against, to get a bit of warmth from."

"Those winter nights in that cold, wet, stinking dung of the cows and the horses, lying there.. It is not only a nightmare, I don't know how to call it. I can't express it. I don't think there is a person who would be able to describe it. The state of your mind.. terrible.." She was crying.

"The degradation was too great and too deep to swallow, the physical sufferings, the

degradation that you lay in the dung of a cow, naked practically, seeking for a bit of warmth from the next one.. It was the last of the last. No matter how much I suffered in the concentration camp, that was really the last. I don't think we were any longer in our right minds. This came after about three and a half, nearly four years in the camps. We were so bewildered, so degraded and so crushed that I think none of us were able to think straight. We were half in this world and half in the other world, the world of the dead ones."

Camps in which survivors were dumped and left to die. "We came to a place known to very few. It was in Praust, on the border between Poland and Germany. That was the last concentration camp for the marchers. From all sides were coming columns of survivors. It was a death camp, the last where you went to. This camp was worse than Auschwitz. This was the place where people said good-bye to their lives. The dirtiest, filthiest, most shocking conditions, so that typhus broke out. Only a handful remained alive. They used to come at night and load up truck-loads with half alive people and take them away. I was of the last to get typhus; one got it from lice and all of us had lice. We were eaten up by lice and I was sick, lying in the straw, half unconscious already, and then one of the survivors was screaming: 'Deborah! Deborah! We are liberated! The Russians are here!..'"

Post-Holocaust pathos of the displaced person. "When I recovered from the typhus, I got a little room with Christian farmers, near Praust. That is when I met my husband. I was chosen to be a translator to the Russian authorities to help them determine which one came from where.. and my husband came along as a liberated person and he begged the Commander not to be sent back to Czechoslovakia because that was still under the Germans and they were still fighting there."

"What is more to say about it? that we fell in love, or that I liked him, that the two of us knew that our families had gone, and that we were all alone in the world, and that there are no place to go to.. what will we do, where shall we go? I should go back to Latvia? out of the question. I should go back to Lithuania? out of the question. I knew that nobody is there alive. I would just be a lost, forlorn soul, and he felt exactly the same way. We were absolutely afraid to face the world.."

"We got married there after we got a little bit better, we were shockingly ill, we couldn't keep in food. The superintendent of the hospital married us with a coin, no rings, no clothes, hardly anything on us. And that's how we got married. We both cried, and went together back into that tiny little room at the farmers little place where I stayed. We found on the table a tiny little cake that the farmer's wife had baked with a bit of dark flour she had scratched together. She got field flowers and she made a little kranz (wreath) around and around the little cake. The two of us became hysterical. We cried for a solid fifteen minutes, no father, no mother, no wedding, no nothing.. two lonely, lost young people.. hardly recovered from typhus. Where will we go? What will we do?.."

"That was the first chapter of how I got married. The rest was a battle for many a year.."

Going to her husband's hometown in Czechoslovakia when it was liberated, and after a miserable stay there, they eventually made their way to Australia. When, through the Red Cross, contact was made with her two brothers who had been living in South Africa since before the war, they decided to emigrate

to South Africa. The marriage did not last; staying together only until their son was grown up, they got divorced at last. Her husband returned to Australia; her son made his way to America and Deborah stayed on in South Africa, even after her two brothers had passed away.

"My husband used to say to me when we were sitting around a little stove in the badly bombarded flat in Czechoslovakia, where we lived while the Red Cross was trying to locate family of his, living in Australia - he used to say to me:

'You wait, my little dreamer and romantic, we will live in a little house and have a little garden with fruit-trees.. you will stretch out your hand and you will have your own fruit.' I used to give him mental pictures, my imaginations about paradise. What is paradise? As a child, my picture was that it was peace.. there is forever a magnificent sunshine and magnificent moonlight; the moonlight didn't change the atmosphere. There is warmth in the air, enough to be absolutely free of cold, of wind.. Each one has a garden where fruit trees are growing, with low branches.. You could lie on the thick grass and stretch out your hand whenever you wished to touch a fruit.."

Facing the hard facts and coming to grips with it. "There are people who travel the world to look for inspiration. But you can have it in the space of one room."

"There was a time when I was looking for a family.. when I was looking to others to help me. I can fill a river with the tears I cried because of the losses I suffered. Till one day that I realized that inspiration must come from inside myself, from my own strength and determination."

"Let me tell you what Judaism teaches. It teaches that God has given us free will and a mind. We must exercise responsibility. We do not just passively wait around for things we pray God would do for us. God helps us as we help ourselves. It was our famous sage, Hillel, who said: 'If I am not for myself, then who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?..'"

The inner strength and determination that allowed her to rebuild her life, to create a home of rich culture for her child, "to work hard to be able to buy beautiful things, paintings, antiques, books, cutlery and jewelry", was the same inner strength, the same inner richness, that carried her through her sufferings.

Reflections

The necessity of having a rich inner life to be able to triumph in suffering. Deborah stressed the necessity of having a rich inner life, a sound and inspiring value system, in order to be sustained through difficulties and to be able to bounce back, to triumphantly get through and on top of life's problems.

"Many people came out of the camps remaining very weak, empty. Many remained very bitter for life, hard, with a tremendous grudge in their heart, and intent on getting out of life as much as they can for what they didn't have. It is more than just sheer will-power that helped me come out of it with a certain amount of compensation. Of course, if you break a person's will power, you will break him to practically nothing. Will power plays a very big part but apart from willpower, you have to have a world of your own. If you haven't, then you've had it."

"I stepped into the concentration camp full with life, romanticism, devotion, love for humanity, love for the next man, looking for great friendships, romances, ideologies. I was such an ideologist. Without an -ism, your youth was worth nothing. If you wanted to be considered as an intelligent youth, belonging to a certain class, a certain circle, you had to know your literature. You had to know your music. You had to know of the world affairs. You had to belong to an -ism: socialism, communism, Zionism, Revisionism, any -ism. But without it you were a nothing."

"I still remember how my mother loved to tell me of Herzl" (the father of Zionism). "My mother was a Zionist from her youngest days, not my father, my father was a good Jew, but my mother was something very special, very special. My mother was a very moral person with a high ethical standard. She lived for her family."

"She told me later, I was only a tot, how one day, my father scolded her when she came back from a Zionist meeting. The meeting had been addressed by a Jew from Palestine who urged us to come to Palestine. He stressed the importance of that land to world Jewry. On the stage were a few hats turned over and he cried in Yiddish: 'Jews, give what you have!' My mother jumped up, she went on the stage and took off whatever she had, including her wedding ring, and she threw it in the hat. After her, people were coming up to the stage and whoever could, whatever they had, were thrown into the hats. She was the first person to open that fund. Her name is recorded and kept in the archives of the society in Jerusalem to commemorate the occasion. So Zionism in our house was something very close and very hot."

"When Zionism took over the leading role for the younger Jew instead of the Torah, (the Hebrew Scriptures, the books of Moses containing the Law) it burned in our hearts.."

The indestructible Jew. "We Jews have been sufferers from the word go. To be a sufferer, with thousands of years of experience, gives you a certain strength which nobody has. Nations that suffered as much as we did, went under, they do not exist, they're wiped out. Their names no longer appear in history. We remain. We have the Torah. What kept us despite the fact of forever being a persecuted nation, and what was like a flame burning in us that never became extinguished, was the Torah, the learning."

"This religious flame changed when Herzl came along and Zionism spread like a house on fire. When Zionism was born and the idea was sold that we have to get Palestine, our land back and be a nation with a country, it took the Jewish world by storm. From then on our surviving was not so much based on religion and Torah as it was based on our national feeling of being Jews, and having a country, Israel."

"I am not religious, but I am extremely, extremely nationalistic. I paid for the right of being Jewish. I spent four years in the camps. It is a privilege to be a Jew. We are the chosen ones, we are the living ones."

"As a youngster of twelve, thirteen, I used to love to go the Jewish tradesmen, be it a saddlemaker, a plumber, a locksmith, a goldsmith, a coppersmith, a tailor or the bootmaker.. I loved to talk to them, not about what they were making, which was always of the very best, but about ideas. I learnt from these honest, fine people more than from books. Their children were already

doctors, engineers, bookkeepers.. such fine people! Poverty didn't do anything to them in the sense of their becoming corrupt and resorting to stealing or to disloyalty or whatever.. no. I think it has much to do with the Jewish religion. They were all obeying the Torah. Even if they were not very religious, they were traditional."

"Shabbat (the Sabbath) was Shabbat, for example. On Friday, no matter how poor you were, but a white loaf of bread had to be on the table, not dark bread. And a piece of fish, no matter how poor the fish was, and candles were lit. And wine was on the table to make Kiddush (a prayer of blessing over the wine)."

"The Jews are different because we have a much higher moral standard. In actual fact, we are the people who gave the world whatever there is. We do come from the chosen ones. We gave the Torah, the Ten Commandments.. we gave the world whatever it has got. Whatever branched off, branched off, like Christianity, the Muslim faith.. but we are the originals, and as Jews, we are set up with much higher morals than some other nations. And as morality goes, we are moral people, with all our shortcomings and where we do go a bit crooked. But no murder, no mass killings. Even the non-believers among us have the moral standards of the Bible somewhere hidden at the back of our minds. It is in us."

Suffering exposes the norms people choose to live by. "When we were in the camps, we could be distinguished from the other nationalities. Morally, spiritually, no matter how much we were skeletons, we were nothing, and still we had the human touch in us more than any other nation under those circumstances. In the camps, the behavior of the war prisoners, the Russians, the Hungarians, the Poles, amounted to being crushed completely. They became empty, completely empty, and behaved like animals. They could kill for a drink of water. There was no killing between the Jews for a crumb of bread. Stealing among us was not the norm. But there were plenty of such incidents among them. They permitted themselves to become that degraded. There were the exceptions, of course."

"The Hitler youth were the worst, they were even worse than their parents. They were drunk with power, possessed.. they were driven as if they were under hypnosis. They were under such a tremendous influence, somehow, that you could not even speak to them. You could perhaps appeal to an SS man. You could perhaps sometimes, somewhere touch a little bit of a human heart. He would turn around and say: 'that is forbidden', but you felt that somewhere, somehow, you could touch him, but not with the Hitler Jugend, you couldn't."

"There was a German, a worker, that passed by just as we went on the death march. He came up, passed me by and gave me a little brown bag and he whispered: 'that will give you another few days of life'."

"There definitely were such exceptions, but what difference did that make?.."

A final perspective: The high calling of righteous living. "The Jews have a high calling. They were entrusted with God's holy Laws. God's standards for them are high, and if they do not live up to them, they suffer so that they can learn His ways."

"What is the difference between a high and mighty, upright tree with big branches spreading all over, and a young tender sapling when it comes to a strong wind, the wind of life? .. The sapling tree represents the Jewish people, who through the ages, with the storms of life, with the persecutions of the nations, had learnt the ability to sway with the wind, to move where the wind blows, to be supple, to survive. Whereas the big, powerful, arrogant tree, with the storms of life, comes crashing down because it doesn't know how to bend."

DAVID DONKRAUSZ*Biographical information*

Age at time of interviewing:	59 years
Country of birth:	Holland
Camps:	Westerbork Ravensbruck Sachsenhausen
Duration of internment:	2 years and 7 months
Age at internment:	12 years
Family losses:	Father, extended family members
Surviving family:	Mother and sister, uncle and aunt
Post-Holocaust family:	Wife

Present situation:

Lives with his wife in a garden flat in an upper middle class flat area in Johannesburg. They have no children. David has been Chairman of the She'erith Hapleah for many years. He is an active speaker on the Holocaust. He is managing director of a printing firm.

PROTOCOL

A Liberal and Broad-minded Upbringing

"My friends were both Jewish and non-Jewish. Our neighbors were non-Jewish and I grew up with their children. On Jewish and religious holidays they used to come to us, and on Christian holidays like Christmas, we used to go to them. It gave me quite a broad-minded outlook."

"We were not religious in the sense that we were not particularly observant. Friday night was observed but we did not keep Kashrut (observed kosher rules). Not that we had pork or anything like that, but there were no separate dishes and cutlery. I would go to the synagogue approximately twice a year on the main holidays. I went to Cheder (Jewish religious lessons) for one year and I won a prize and the next year I was expelled from the school, I think maybe for bunking. That was the sumtotal of my religious schooling in Holland. I had my Barmitzvah (coming-of-religious-age of twelve year old Jewish boys) in Westerbork, which was a camp for Jews only, a transit camp. The lie that one was being moved to labor camps was being promulgated there and, in order to make people feel safe and to keep us as quiet as possible, we had normal schooling there, we had our religious observances there, we had theatre and concerts there. We could participate in any activity. The only difference to our normal lives was that men and women were separated, there was hunger, and at least once a week a transport of anything between a 1,000 and 2,000 people were sent off to a place called Auschwitz. That was also where, for the first time in my life, I came under religious influence. I had to be taught for my Barmitzvah and had a very fine teacher, a very fine man, and I became religious during that period."

"I went to Shul (synagogue) three time a day, put on tallis (prayer shawl) and tefillin (prayer phylacteries) and that lasted for a period until I found myself clashing with some of the more fundamentalists and I'm afraid, that was strictly the beginning and end of my religious experience."

The Influence of Living in an open Society

"I went to various government schools, there were Jews, but they were not Jewish schools. I never experienced anti-semitism of any kind, either from neighbors, teachers, people in the street. As such, our experiences were totally different from those of Jews in other countries. My first friends were Christian and I still correspond with them to this day. I had Jewish friends as well of course."

"In our family gatherings or when we met with friends, I never remember anti-semitism ever being discussed, not Dutch anti-semitism. There was of course discussions of what was happening in Germany across the border. There was a lot of fear about what was happening in Germany."

"To give you an idea of the prevailing mood in Holland among the Jews: My mother came from England. England entered the war in September 1939. Holland was only invaded in May 1940. There was a period there of approximately eight months where, although a state of war existed

between England and Germany, Holland was still at peace. One of my mother's sisters in England who was a woman of means, did her best to persuade my father to come to England. My father had to think about it very carefully, for various reasons. One was that my father had come to Holland from Hungary after the First World War as a penniless eighteen year old. He struggled rather badly economically. There was the Depression, and unemployment in Holland. He eventually opened a carpet shop on his own, and for the first seven years of his married life - my father got married to my mother round about 1929 - he struggled very badly. Round about 1935, 1936, after the Depression was lifting, he began to see some fruit for his labors. To forsake all this, and start all over in England, was rather a big decision to make. I'm sure my father did not want to be dependent on anybody, possibly, least of all, his in-laws."

"The question was, was it necessary? Was staying in Holland a threat? My father had customers who were members of Parliament and at least one Cabinet Minister. He spoke to these people to try and get as much information as he could. It was pointed out to him that throughout the First World War, Holland had remained neutral. Holland was not a threat to Germany. It would show Hitler to be a blatant aggressor if he should try and occupy Holland. Even if it came to the worst, and Holland was invaded by the Germans, my father lived in Rotterdam which was the biggest port in Europe and no country in its right mind would go and damage the port which is absolutely vital for their war efforts."

"As we know, four days after Holland was invaded, the heart of Rotterdam was bombed out, we were bombed out."

The Defenselessness of a Society Unprepared to Withstand the Nazi Foe

"I am not implying that there were no anti-Semites in Holland. Proportionally speaking, one of the largest Nazi parties in any non-German country or fascist country, was Holland. Holland had a population of 10 million and at its height, the Nazi party was said to have had between 70,000 to 100,000 adherents who used to openly march in the streets with their black uniforms, who used to attack Jews on sight. But that was during the war, not before."

"There were rallies, but we never saw them, I never heard of them and nobody felt that they were any threat to us". "Once the Germans were there, these people became very, very brave."

"Holland during the war and especially at the end of the war, was a country living under very severe hardships. In the winter of 1944-45, 50,000 people in Holland died of hunger. If you belonged to a Nazi party you were entitled to protection, extra rations.. you were most likely also exempt from the transports of forced labor that were being sent to Germany. These consisted of Germans coming, closing off a square by trucks, picking up anybody, any man in that street, whether he was a provider for his family or not, putting him onto the trucks and driving him off. There were thus very definite advantages to be gained by being a Nazi".

David's entire family was captured and brought to Westerbork in September of 1942. Westerbork was a transit camp to the death camps. His uncles, aunts and cousins were all sent away, with the exception of his father's two brothers. He and his immediate family spent about a year and a half in

Westerbork before they too, in February 1944, were sent to the camps. His father and his father's two brothers were sent to Buchenwald concentration camp. His father and one of his father's brothers did not survive Buchenwald. His mother, his sister and David were sent to the Ravensbruck concentration camp.

Ravensbruck

"Ravensbruck is one of the most notorious camps in Germany - 92,000 people are said to have died there, and that is without gaschambers, they were either beaten or starved to death." They were sent to the main camp, which was a women's camp. There was also a smaller men's camp.

"Who were the people there? There were very few Jews, perhaps 80, including the children who were about 20. So who did you find there? You found a German criminal element, you found political prisoners, those who were incarcerated because of their opposition to the Nazi regime, and you found people whom the Germans called anti-social: homosexuals, prostitutes, Gypsies and Jehovah's Witnesses, strangely enough."

"My survival was precisely because I was in a mixed camp. If I had been in a Jewish camp, we would have been gassed long ago because Jewish children were not suppose to survive. When we got the statistics after the war, it was clear all my relations and friends my age were gassed within hours of arrival at the camps."

"Jewish children did not survive the gaschambers, they did not survive the death camps. Jewish camps meant death, per se. Despite the treatment we were subjected to in Ravensbruck, we still had a bit of a chance to survive, because it was not a deathcamp. It was a camp with terrible conditions, a concentration camp, but there were no gaschambers waiting for us. And also, because there were very few of us Jews there, it led to us not being recognized as a unit. In Buchenwald where my father was and where he died, if a Jewish transport arrived, they could be locked in a barrack and just left there to starve to death. This happened."

Survival as a Mission

"Our attitude as Jews was this: We knew that the German aim was to wipe us out. We knew that we were earmarked for death. There was not meant to be any Jewish survivors. We didn't have to suffer. We could commit suicide. And there were many ways in which you could do it. We felt that our best resistance was to defeat the German objective and, as far as we were concerned, that was by surviving. And by surviving you did not commit suicide. And any act of resistance against the Germans was not only suicide for yourself, but for the group. I know of one man in a workparty who escaped and when the workparty returned and they were counted and one was missing, 70 of them were executed."

A Calculated Effort to Survive

Viewing every situation in which he found himself in a detached and objective way, his cool reasoning made him come up with practical solutions to the problem of staying alive.

The need to keep clean. "We were housed in wooden barracks. We slept in beds which were three tier. The place was absolutely riddled with vermin. There were those of us who tried to keep ourselves clean - there was no hot water there, other than when you had to shower which happened once in six months when they put us boys and women all naked under the shower and you would try and make the best of it." "Every Sunday when we didn't work, we used to delouse ourselves. But even though we tried to keep ourselves clean, washing with snow if there was no water, I would still kill at least a 100 of these insects from off my clothes, and that was even by doing it on a regular basis - the mattresses were riddled. We slept five people to two beds, so you had body contact all the time. In fact, if it wasn't for that body contact we would have frozen even more."

"I used to insist that those I shared my bed with would wash at least every day, summer or winter, using snow if there was no water. (Incidentally, I found that this inured me for quite a degree against the cold. I found that when we were made to stand outside in those terribly cold winters that, as cold as I was, I did not seem to suffer as much as the others standing around me). If a person did not wash himself, he just didn't get into my bed. It was as simple as that - I kicked him out."

"We felt it was a matter of necessity, we felt it had a survival value. There was typhoid and typhus in the camp and we felt there was a link between keeping clean and not contracting these diseases. I never had these diseases; a lot of people I had contact with, did. Once there was a typhoid-epidemic and of the five children I shared the bed with, four caught typhoid, but I didn't. Whether it had anything to do with cleanliness, I don't know."

"We had one towel - a barrack towel - between 600 people. I would see to it that I got to use that towel, drying myself down completely. On one occasion, an adult found me drying my backside with the community towel and I got one of the worst hidings I have ever had in my life."

"There were toilet facilities, but they were either totally inadequate or were in a condition that they couldn't be used. There was a time when I became very ill. I developed heavy diarrhea. I couldn't eat and I was sent to the hospital. Everyone there had more or less the same complaint, which meant that a river of sewerage ran from the bed to where the toilets were. You couldn't sit on those toilets and yet you couldn't avoid those toilets. You didn't have the strength to stand or crouch or anything like that, you were too weak. I remember feeling my way along the walls of the barrack to get to the toilet. And I made myself a loop from cloth which I could loop through the handle of the door and put my two hands through the loop and twist it so that I could hang, because I couldn't stand and I couldn't crouch. I used to hang from the loop, and that is how I used the toilet."

The techniques and schemes used in the battle for survival. "There was a whole science in getting your turnip soup. There was no fat in it, there was no meat in it, it had very little food value, but it was warm, and a turnip in an empty stomach was better than nothing in an empty stomach. The turnip soup used to be delivered in 76 liter canisters which used to be carried by four women. The art of getting the soup was to judge where to stand in the queue. The reason was simple. If the person who dished out the soup was a decent human being, she would mix that soup all the time as she went along so that you wouldn't get just boiled water, but boiled water with turnip."

"If she was the usual type of barrack leader, then she would open the canisters, dish out the soup from the top and, when the soup was down to about six inches from the bottom, she would put that canister aside for herself and for her friends and open the next canister. But before she put that canister aside you still had a chance of getting something. The canister held about 76 liters, each person got a liter. So the idea would be to try and get yourself a place in the queue where you would be somewhere between 60 and upwards. Then you had a chance of getting something to eat. And so, when the soup used to arrive, those who had no self-discipline, or who were too far gone with hunger, used to rush for the soup and others of us used to do a careful calculation and place ourselves in a strategic position. And if we had miscalculated, there was always the possibility, as we were children, that a group of adults would force themselves between you and the canister so that they get the benefit of this sort of thicker soup."

"I don't remember ever getting lunch in Ravensbruck. In the morning you would get a slice of bread, possibly weighing about 80 grams. That piece of bread had to last you for the whole day. What did you do with that bread? You knew that the hunger would increase as the day went on, so you either ate it all as soon as you got it, or you ate a little piece and you kept some of it. But if you kept some of it, and you were observed keeping some of it, there was a very good chance that you would be forcibly robbed of that piece of bread, someone would hit you over the head to get it. I didn't fancy living under that type of tension, so I used to take my bread and eat it, then I did not have to worry about it any more."

"Sometimes we got bread in the evening. I remember some of the children coming to me in the morning, very upset, because the piece of bread they had hid in their clothing or under their heads, had been stolen during the night."

"After the daily roll-call, we children would run ahead. why? Because after roll-call, we would get our food. There would be wooden tables and three-legged chairs. People would have been standing for an hour and a half to two hours. They would have stood in terrible cold, or in pouring rain. They were exhausted but there were not enough chairs to go round. So we children would run back to try and grab a chair for our mothers. The other women would try and take those chairs from us and a battle royal would develop around those little three legged stools. I remember hitting women over the head with three legged stools to preserve a chair for my mother."

"If anybody acted in any way that I felt was harmful to my mother, I fought for my mother. My mother was appointed in care of the children because she was a teacher. There was a boy there who was bigger and older than I was, who gave her a hard time. I made sure that he didn't do anything to her. I gave him hiding after hiding."

A Protective Attitude Towards and Efforts to Help Each Other

"We tried not to steal from each other, we tried to help where we could, lots of people didn't. I remember finding a man who had collapsed on the toilet and he was sitting there unconscious, with his arms and his head hanging down between his legs, and it was time to be evacuated. The rumor was that the camp had been mined and that those who were not evacuated, would be blown up, and this was a man from our barrack. My Dutch friend and I went back to the barrack and we tried to get help. We went to our fellow Dutchmen, and they laughed at us! What I'm saying is that we tried, but the others were not even prepared to try."

Among the group of Jewish children, David took a leading and protective role. "There were children there that were still in nappies. I remember changing nappies on them." "I was one of the older children in Ravensbruck and was often placed in a supervisory capacity over them. When I was transferred to the men's camp with a boy who was about two or three years younger than I was, we, with another boy that was later sent from Ravensbruck, stuck together as a little nucleus. Our mothers were in the women's camp, and because I was the oldest, I looked after them."

"There were a very few in the camp who took a stand, there were very few who tried to interfere" (when someone got ill-treated or brutalized or beaten). "There were very few prepared to help, who tried to better our conditions, and I was not the eldest one there. There were boys there of 16 and 17, and I was 14. If anybody should have taken a lead, it should have been them, and they didn't. I was the one who took the lead there, strangely enough."

Observing the Behavior of a Cross-section of Humanity

"People wore different triangles, the color denoting who they were: Jews, deviants, criminals, Jehovah's witnesses, underground workers. There was not a race or nationality that you did not find there. We had the lowest of the low, also the nobility, of various occupied countries.

The criminal and anti-social element. "The influence that the criminals had, who were usually in positions of authority, was rather severe. They walked around with pick-handles and they were free to use them."

"There was no such thing as a person not being allowed to beat you, to starve you or to abuse you in any way that they felt like. There was no such thing as appeal. They were there to run the camp according to the wishes of the Germans, and the wishes of the Germans were not based on survival but on non-survival. You could be beaten for a petty reason or for no reason. If you were a Jew, you could be beaten for being a Jew. If you spoke too loudly you were beaten; if you spoke too softly, you were beaten. If you looked a person in the eye, you were arrogant; if you didn't, you were evasive. You were completely at their mercy. It was a reign of terror."

"So we were living under conditions of terrible tension, great animosity. There was no such thing as all for one, one for all, everyone against the common enemy. We never saw the German, the German was someone at the gates; the German was someone in the watchtower. We were our

own worst enemies. We were abused, day and night, by the anti-social elements amongst us."

The Jews as scapegoats. "It did not matter whether a person had been put into that camp for political reasons, for ideological reasons, or if you came from Poland or from the Ukraine, or from Rumania, you still felt that any Jew there was your naturally selected victim, and the treatment that we had from those people, fellow prisoners, was absolutely abysmal. We were abused, and tortured, with any possible method they could think of. A favorite method would be to wait until there was a bout of dysentery, which happened quite often, and then to take all the Jewish children and not allow them to go to the toilets for a day or so, and if you dirtied yourself, the other prisoners would beat you up and you will be called a dirty Jew."

"We found that anti-semites who opposed the Nazi regime did not become less anti-semitic by being in the camps. We suffered more from them than from the Germans. When they saw what they were in for, they were no longer the people who stood up against the German regime, they were there for themselves and for themselves alone. In Sachsenhausen I had the opportunity to ask Dutch resistance workers, people who tried to assist Jews, if they knew what they were in for whether they would have resisted in the way they did. They said: 'Never!'"

Those with a kindly nature. "It did happen that one could make friends within those barracks, with people who were more kindly disposed towards us. One couldn't get protection from them - they would be risking their own lives. But when the powers that be were not in evidence, you could at least sit with these people and talk to them and you could get certain help from them."

"I was given the job of having to search for valuables in shoes. The Dutch boy and I who were working together at the job made a pact that if we found gold, it would never reach the Germans, and it never did. We sold that gold to other prisoners for food. In order to justify our existence we gave them notes that we found. As children we felt that a piece of paper did not have so much value as a golden coin."

"I became friendly with some Norwegians in Ravensbruck. Because of the job I had of cutting up shoes, I was given extra food. I used to bring some of the food back to the barracks and give it to those Norwegians. When we were sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp, the roles were reversed. I was starving and they had jobs for which they got extra food and they came to share their food with me."

"There were people who tried to do what they could to alleviate suffering. There were those who had access to food and who were prepared to share it and not just keep it to themselves, they tried to use the food to help others. By their examples they set a certain standard, but they were very, very few and far between."

Those who stood out as exceptional. "Those who stood out in the camps were, strangely enough, mostly communists. Why should it be that it was the communists in those camps that stood out? I am no communist. But whether they were right or they were wrong, they were idealists, they believed that communism was the answer to the world's problems."

"This contingent of Czech and Russian women, all communists, went out of their way to help. I must say, that we as a group of children in that camp, owed our survival to those people. They were the only ones, and there were people from every nationality, that took an interest in us as children. When they knew a child had a birthday, they arranged a birthday party for that child, even if the birthday party consisted of taking a piece of bread, cutting it into a cube, buttering it with margarine and putting a little bit of decoration on it with jam, pretending that it was a birthday cake. They went out of their way to do this. Nobody else did."

"During air raids towards the end of the war, we were confined to our harracks. We were not even allowed to look out of the windows. But those communist women ignored the orders and would charge out of the barracks, cheering and dancing, pointing to the planes flying overhead. None of us had the courage to do so. They used to sing their red army songs any time they felt like it, even though they were not allowed to do so. I remember the French resistance fighters who would sometimes at night arrange to sing songs. But they would sing softly, posting guards to make sure nobody was coming. They were dead scared. The communist women did not give a damn."

"They were a cohesive group, the only ones who stood up for one another. If one of the German prisoner camp police guards would lay a hand on one of these communist women, all the others would attack her. The other prisoners knew that if you laid a hand on one of these communist women, you had the whole lot to deal with."

"If you found yourself in a barrack with a Czech in charge, you knew you had a decent person over you. There was one woman who befriended my mother, one of these Czech-communists. She helped my mother and myself and my sister in very many ways, and I can say that we probably owe our lives to that woman in the ways that she was able to provide us with extra food. Without extra food you did not survive in a concentration camp. She warned us when there was danger. When we were sick and sent to the hospital, and there was a rumor that there would be a selection in the hospital, that woman was instrumental in having us smuggled out through the windows at night. It had become known that a new factory was opening somewhere near Ravensbruck and that the conditions were going to be better. She arranged not only for my mother to go as a worker to that camp but even my sister, who at the time was only 9 years old. Somehow my sister's name appeared on the workers' list. This could only have been done with the connivance of several people working on the administration." (Those who were selected from the hospital were sent to Bergen Belsen where most of them died either from starvation or from typhus; or were sent to other camps to be gassed.)

"These Czech women, for some or other reason, were prepared to do this type of thing. Selections happened in concentration camps but not nearly as frequently as in death camps where they had the gas chambers conveniently at their doorstep. Selections in the concentration camps happened in the hospitals mainly, and at certain other times. There was a case where a Czechish overseer succeeded in persuading the SS woman in charge to release the daughter of a mother from a selection. The woman was so filled with gratitude that she fell on her knees and kissed the SS woman's hand. Afterwards that Czechish overseer got all the women in this precinct together and said, 'now look, let's get our priorities straight. Let's not forget what is happening over here. We are in this situation because of the Germans, because of the SS, and we are suffering because of the

utter inhumanity of the SS. Because a certain SS has an aberration and suddenly decides to show a spark of humanity, don't lower yourself."

"If what she said had been reported by any of the women to the SS, that overseer would have been hanged."

Paradoxical behavior on the part of the perpetrators of evil. David vividly recalls the behavior of a Barrack Leader, a most paradoxical and perplexing figure. "She was a German woman, very beautiful, very statuesque. People who got food in the camps retained their looks, retained their figures, even though they were surrounded by skeletons. She was there as a political prisoner. She said she was the daughter of a German general. She took quite a fancy to the group of children I was with and to me in particular. She said I reminded her of her brother. We were a group of about 80 Hungarian Jews, many were children. Some were babies. She saw to it that we were not harmed while we were in her barrack, that we were adequately clothed, adequately fed, and tried to protect us in every way. She even tried to create a certain atmosphere of normality for us children by arranging a party occasionally, when somebody had a birthday. I remember her upbraiding one of the mothers because that mother did not mention that her child had a birthday so that she could have done something about it. You didn't celebrate birthdays in the concentration camp! There were no such things, there were no pastries, there were no cold drinks, and yet she" (like the Czech women) "went out of her way to do whatever she could with the limited means at her disposal."

"There was at least one occasion that this woman, Kate Peters was her name, saved my life. I developed some illness or other, it was never diagnosed, it was never treated, although I was put in the hospital for three weeks. For about three weeks I didn't eat, I couldn't eat. I had dysentery. And by the time I got out of that hospital, I was a skeleton. When I went back to join my group in the barrack, the first person who saw me walk into that barrack, screamed and covered her face with her hands. I was terribly weak. Now I had turned 14 in the meantime, and the main Ravensbruck camp was a camp for women. Nearby was a smaller camp for men. And it didn't take long before I was told that I was going to be transferred to the men's camp, where I would have been with strangers except for two boys - one had been transferred a few months before me, and another one was to be transferred with me. So we would have gone into a completely strange and hostile environment and an environment where I would have been expected to perform the duty of a man. That meant joining a workparty and to put in a full day's work on minimal rations. The concentration camp being what it was, with the condition I was in, there was a very fair chance that I would not survive." "I remember Kate Peters taking me by the hand and taking me to the Camp Commander of the women's camp of Ravensbruck. As I say, she was a beautiful woman. She had some influence. And she was German."

"I was given a 3 month extension to stay in the women's camp during which time she, and other people who were in a position to do so, tried to get as much food into me as they could. When three months later I left, I was able to do a day's work. So instead of leaving in July of 1944, I left round about September."

"I heard no more about Kate Peters until after the war when I met people who had been with her virtually up to the end. One of them was an aunt of mine. So here was a person I knew well, and whose word I could rely on. She told me how, in the remaining nine months of the war, Kate Peters underwent virtually a change in personality. She lost her looks, maybe she became ill, her manner changed. She was sent a group of Hungarian Jews straight from Auschwitz. We were a group of young Hungarian Jews that came from Holland. She was given a somewhat older group from Auschwitz. According to my aunt, she beat many of them to death. She was absolutely horrible to them, she was a monster to these people."

"It was the same person!" "I was left with a question. If one day I met Kate Peters, what must my attitude be? What is this person? Is this my savior? or is this one of the murderers?..."

"In Sachsenhausen concentration camp there was a German who was an inmate but who was in a very favored position. He had his own room to himself. We lived in dormitories. You could see from the way he was dressed, from the flesh on him, that this man wasn't just an inmate. I discovered to my cost that he virtually represented the Gestapo and that he used their methods whenever he was called upon to do so. He came across a scene where I was being beaten up by about six Gypsy boys my age. And they were making a thorough job of it. He took me to his room and calmed me down." "Thereafter, he used to call me back, telling me to come and see him at a certain time of the day. And he used to talk to me, first about my background, who I was. And gradually I became aware that what he wanted from me, was knowledge. I should tell him what I knew about the Gypsies, about their possessions of diamonds and gold. I had lived with those Gypsies for the last six months, and was obviously not overfriendly with them." "Anyone found with anything valuable in the camp such as diamonds and gold, had it taken from them and got hung for it." "And as much as I was no friend of the Gypsies, I was not prepared to see anyone hang for it. And so he didn't get the information from me. And then he started using other methods. Even though he never laid a finger on me, he cross-examined me in such a way that I came from one of those sessions with my pants full."

"I never betrayed anybody. What I would have done under pressure, I don't know. I had no reason to protect the Gypsies, I hated them. I haven't a kind word to say about them up to this day. But I did not betray them." "But the reason I mention this man is this: during the conversations I had with him, I asked him one day: what are you trying to achieve, what are you trying to do? What is it to you? In what way are you going to benefit?" "I did have the odd opportunity to get a Nazi apart and to actually discuss this with them. It sounds very bizarre to have this conversation between a Jew and a Nazi in a concentration camp. I was given a plausible explanation from their point of view. It was given by this German, with whom I have had fairly long discussions."

"Look, he said, I like you, you're a nice kid, but you're a Jew and if we don't do something about it, from a little Jew you're going to become a big Jew, and that's no good, that we cannot allow."

"I've never forgotten this. To this day, when I'm with a non-Jewish person, the thought is at the back of my mind, no matter how friendly I am with them: what is their attitude to me as a

Jew? How much of an anti-semite are they? To what extent do they hold me responsible for a crucifixion that happened two thousand years ago, and for God knows what else, which, I'm afraid, has a somewhat inhibiting influence on the relationship."

David once witnessed a German guard beating up a nine year old Jewish boy from his group, with a truncheon. "He didn't kill him, but he hurt him. I afterwards watched that guard walk out of the camp, walk through the camp gate along the path towards the SS quarters, walk through the gates in front of his house, and his own children came running to meet him. And he picked up one child, threw him up in the air and caught him. He behaved like any normal father would with his children."

"I was left with a question: What is this? What does all this add up to? This man was obviously able to demonstrate affection to children. What are we?.."

"At the time I was 14 years old. I came to the conclusion that for this man to act in such an ambiguous way, is that he has been taught that we, being Jewish, were not human. And even though we might have looked like children, we were not children. We were a sub-species, some kind of an animal, so he did not have to exercise the normal behavior that an adult was supposed to show towards children."

"In my mind a normal person does not go and beat a nine year old with a truncheon. If a nine year old has done something wrong, I do not say he is not to be punished, but once a man goes to the extent of using a truncheon, then there's something wrong here. It's overstepping the mark."

Being presented with the Question: "What is Man?"

"What is my conclusion? Are we good, are we evil? Are we both? Are we saints, are we sinners, what are we? And what am I?"

A journey of self-discovery. "When I came out of the camp as a 15 year old boy, I asked myself, well, what is this all about? I'm Jewish and I can't show anything for it except three years in the concentration camp. That's not good enough."

When his mother settled in South Africa and brought him and his sister with her, he went to school again, this time in Johannesburg. In this particular non-Jewish school, there was a strong Jewish contingent of children whose parents had been South Africans for two to three generations.

"I had no friendship with them whatsoever. When on odd occasions a teacher would make an anti-semitic remark, I found that I was the only one in a class about one third Jewish, to take on that teacher and to remonstrate with that teacher, and give them an argument. I found myself sometimes being shouted down by the other Jewish boys. The Jewish boys tried to be good sportsmen, they tried to be as inconspicuous as possible - remember this was in 1946 to 1948, before the State of Israel, and before the State of Israel, we Jews had a very strong inferiority complex. We were surrounded by anti-semitism, not only in this country, but in all countries, everywhere."

"There were also some German boys who were in Germany during the war, and although the other boys tried to create confrontations between me and them, they steered away from me and

I steered away from them. I wanted nothing to do with them."

"One day, a Greek boy arrived who knew no English. He was about my age. He was in Greece during the war. I became friendly with him. We used to visit each other's homes and used to go out together. Although he spoke very little English, he knew German, so we had some form of communication. And what was our common interest? the war. That's all. He wasn't Jewish. His father was chief of police and must have had fascist connections, which did not much endear me to the family. But the point is, we were two loners, with a somewhat common background, and we stuck together."

"And then one day we were walking on the playground and I saw a lizard on the ground, and he tried to kill it. I tried to stop him. And he was most amazed that I should even bother. He was much bigger and much stronger than I was. I said to him: 'if you kill that thing, I will have nothing more to do with you'."

"I don't remember now if he did or didn't kill it, but I know that he tried. And from that moment on I had nothing more to do with the only friend I had at school."

"In my adulthood I joined a shooting club as a hobby, but I never used a gun to kill. I spent a lot of time in the hush tracking animals. At times I was so close to buck that I could reach out and touch them, but I never shot them. I prevented others on a number of occasions from shooting animals. I am a vegetarian for that reason. I hate killing."

"With these ideas, I went to Israel and worked there from 1954 to 1958. I joined a rifle club. I was the only civilian in that rifle club, the only man who had not been in uniform before. Every one of the boys there had fought in the War of Independence. I met these boys socially, I met their wives and children, I went to their homes. I did not consider them to be any better or worse than I was. But I was probing, I was looking for something."

"And I started asking those boys what their war-time experiences were and, almost without exception, each one told me of atrocities that he had committed during the war, atrocities because, in the environment in which they found themselves, what they did was acceptable, even though morally, it was absolutely not acceptable. Remember that these men were snipers, except that now they were no longer being tested on a paper target. Their shooting skills were being tested on human beings, and because there was a war, they were justified in testing it on human beings, in fact, they could even be decorated for their skill as snipers. What are the examples I am referring to? One of them told me how he saw in the distance a woman walking towards a well. She was an Arab peasant woman, carrying her jug on her head to fill it with water. He told me how he first shot that jug off her head. Then he shot her. There was no provocation there, she was no threat to him, he didn't have to do it. The other man was on a very difficult part of the front, between Jaffa and Tel Aviv where there were Arab snipers shooting all day at Jewish civilians and causing untold casualties, and there were far more Arab snipers than there were Jewish snipers. It is possible that the Jewish sniper felt that it was for him to avenge the civilians that were being shot. The man that I spoke to told me that from where he was stationed, he could see an old Arab man sitting in a rocking chair. He must have considered himself well away and out of danger and he was sitting there rocking and, because of the motion of the rocking, his head would appear out of his doorway

and hack again, come out, go back.. This sniper told me how he managed to hit this man in the head. He said that as a spot on the part of a sniper, it was a very remarkable hit of shooting. It was still the murder of an old man." "And when I asked both these chaps, as I did ask them, I said, 'Tell me, having told me these stories, what is the difference between you and the Nazis?..'", they looked at me in amazement, not at the impudence, the impertinence of me to have asked that question, but because the thought has never occurred to them, and they said as much to me, they said, 'you know, we have never thought of it that way'."

"To me this answered certain questions. It meant to me that the German who acted the way he did, might not have been a complete psychopath. He might have been an ordinary human being, a weak human being, that had no very pronounced views on right and wrong or morality and found himself acting according to the examples set by his peers and demanded of him by his environment."

"It also explained that you did not have to be a Nazi or a German, but that if you could allow any form of racialism to creep into your thinking, what the Germans did, could be repeated as it was in Biafra, as it is in South Africa.. as it happens in other parts of the world."

"If the circumstances are as negative as they were in Germany between the First World War and 1933, then you have a lot of tinder lying around. And all it needs is one match and Hitler was that match. I also accept that this is not something that is peculiar to Germany. This is something I have investigated for the last 40 years through studying history, through speaking to people, looking for similar tinderboxes in various scenes around the world, where there is economic catastrophe, where there is great social insecurity. Where there is a lack of homogeneity in the population, scapegoats are available, and it is only too easy for a politician to point out a scapegoat and to divert attention away from himself. I feel it can happen anywhere and that Nazism is not peculiar to Germans."

"There are people in Israel who, in their predicament, in their economic and social insecurity after having fought five wars, after seeing no security, after seeing no end to those wars who are thinking of desperate measures." The views of some extreme right-wingers in Israel "haven't taken fire, it probably never will."

"But what I'm saying is that something like Nazism and the murder of innocent people is a social manifestation, it can happen anywhere."

"I've given this much thought, whether one could educate away from a Holocaust. A Holocaust is the action of people who have been indoctrinated with hatred, with fear, with greed."

"In the Holocaust millions and millions of people were systematically done to death. There were about 1,250 concentration camps. Let us say that every concentration camp must have had - there were big and small concentration camps - but let us say they had a 100 personnel, executioners, call it what you like.. So you're looking at tens of thousands of people; you're looking at 125,000 people. Then there was an army that had to make it possible. Then there had to be a railway, a civil administration.. supplies had to be sent, gas chambers had to be manufactured and built, electrical equipment had to be put up and around everyone of these 1,250 concentration camps. This was done by civilians. Everyone of those concentration camps had factories around it, staffed by civilians."

"What I'm driving at is this: although it is said by the Germans after the war that they did

not know what was going on, the 125,000 who ran the camps knew what was going on, the soldiers of the SS and the Wehrmacht (army) knew exactly what was going on. Those civilians that were running those factories around the concentration camps (in some cases the death rate in those factories were as high as in the concentration camps), they must have known what was going on. So we are talking about a great many people who knew about this, besides the towns and villages through which these starving people were being transported, sometimes being left on siding for days, sometimes a week without food and water, and where they screamed and shouted and cried for water, and where any civilian that tried to give this water, was threatened with being shot by the German guards keeping watch. These people knew what was going on. When we were being marched through the German villages during the last two to three weeks of the war and the whole population turned out to look at us, sometimes to accuse us and throw stones at us.. they knew what was going on."

"It was more a case of a minority that did not want it, rather than a majority that did not know. The majority was with Hitler." "I'm prepared to say that the majority of that German nation could not have been born evil. I would be a racist to say that 80% to 90% of a population are evil. So I am prepared to say that they must have been indoctrinated. They were taught to hate, or they were in fear."

But do insecurity, threat, clever and deceitful propaganda, allow us to plead ignorance, to claim that we were unable to do anything about the powerful force of circumstances? Are people merely taken haplessly along by their circumstances without being able to resist it? Is something like the Holocaust, therefore, nothing but a historical "accident"?

David argued that the most atrocious things can be motivated by fear and by its fruits: hatred and greed. A whole nation can be swept along with it, all of mankind, anywhere in the world, can be swayed in the direction of evil by powerful propaganda. It is possible to rationalize atrocities that are being committed in the name of this, that or the other ideology. It is also possible to turn a blind eye to evil; to remain passive in the face of it. But, does this excuse us?

Can we contend that evil was "necessary" and had to be committed; that there was no other option? Or, if we were not perpetrators but passive bystanders, can we plead innocence, excuse our own passivity in the face of the perpetration of atrocities by saying: "We were afraid..?" and lie to ourselves and to the world by saying: "We did not know?.."

The sophistication of such justifications for evil can be broken down, its deceitfulness exposed, by the simple and straightforward reasonings and actions of a child who has no great difficulty in discerning right from wrong. Truth, David believes, is a simple matter. It needs no argument. Right is right and wrong is wrong, even a child can see that.

"I did certain things long before the war, because I felt they were right. Where that comes from, I don't know. I don't want to give myself out as a saint because, believe me, I'm not. I know my reactions under provocation, and I know I'm not a saint. It was easy for me to identify with the victim, because I was a victim. It was easy for me to condemn the perpetrator, because I was hurt. How I would have behaved if the roles had been reversed, I don't know. But I do know this: that as a six-year old I put a stop to certain things which I saw were wrong. I know that in the camp I

managed, even as a 14 year old, to put a stop to certain things which I felt to be wrong and which, strangely enough, I succeeded in doing, even though the wrong things were carried out by adults."

"I thought about it afterwards, that all that was required was for somebody to say: STOP, this is wrong, that anybody would have been able to put a halt to it, before it went too far."

"The strange thing is that among adults, a child took that stand."

"I don't think that that was a product of teaching. I don't remember anybody telling me that if you find yourself under certain circumstances, this you do and this you don't. I did not go to Bible classes, maybe just for one year of my life. I did not go to synagogue. I therefore do not think that whatever prompted me was something that was taught. I think it was something that was part of my nature."

Arriving at the conclusions of the search into the question of choice: is man able to resist evil?

"I do believe that the individual has a choice and must choose. I do not believe that there are too many individuals that make a right choice."

"My observations have led me to the conclusion that there are very, very few people, not only during the war, but also long after the war, even in the streets, even in the workplace.. there are very, very few people who would act out of a feeling of right or wrong."

"Yet we have a system of jurisprudence, a system of courts. This means it is expected of us to know the difference between right and wrong and to be responsible. It means that society expects us to act out of conscience, that it is incumbent upon us to do so. If you are put in the dock, you are expected to know the difference between right and wrong. You are held responsible for your actions, whether you act out of your conscience or you don't."

Can we, can anyone, plead innocence in the face of our own wrongdoing? Can we say: I cannot be held accountable since I do not know right from wrong?

Man has a conscience. This our system of law, the foundation upon which human society rests, attests to.

"Based on my experiences, my conclusion, rightly or wrongly therefore is, that it should be possible for an individual, to say: This I do not do! I will not do this! It is wrong."

The remaining question: the role of God in the Holocaust. "There would appear to be on the part of religion a very definite system that, if you behave yourself, good things will happen to you and, if you do not behave yourself, bad things will happen to you, or conversely, if bad things happen to you, you have not behaved yourself."

"Then you suddenly find yourself confronted to the Holocaust, which appears to strike young and old, wealthy and poor, religious and non-religious, thieves and saints, babies in the cradle, and it poses a great problem to the Rabbinate to show how all this connects, where is cause and effect. Have we been as bad as all that to have deserved a Holocaust? and if so, were we really worse than preceding generations that did not have a Holocaust?"

"Quite frankly, to the best of my knowledge, and I have gone into it as well as I could, the Rabbinate has never been able to answer that question, in fact, they've sometimes gotten themselves

into considerable trouble trying to answer that question. The Holocaust has been described as the cutting off of a diseased limb which, of course, is highly unacceptable to Holocaust survivors. Perished in the Holocaust was the root and seat of all that Judaism ever had to show and to teach - the religious seminars of Poland, of Lithuania, which were of a very, very high order, the people there were regarded almost as saints; that they should be cast under those who are described as a diseased limb, is rather questionable. It seems more a reflection of the person who makes such a remark than on those who died in the Holocaust."

"God is regarded as omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, that nothing happens, not a sparrow falls from the heavens unless God wants it so. After the loss of almost all my family and after three years in a concentration camp I feel I am entitled to ask: Why?.. Why did God want it?.."

"In my prayer book God is described as the merciful God, the compassionate. I have experienced in the Holocaust that God is not merciful, not compassionate, even though there were the odd survivors such as ourselves. I do not class my own survival as a sign of the mercifulness of a compassionate God. I do not feel I was any better than those who did not survive. I cannot see any reason why I should have been specially selected to survive. And I therefore remained with a question: If there was any reason and logic behind it all, a) why did I survive? or b) if I survived, why did the others not survive? These I feel are valid questions. I do not see these questions as being blasphemy, even though I do question God."

"I was told of a Rabbi in Israel who himself is a Holocaust survivor. It was suggested that I write to him and see what he says. He, being a Holocaust survivor, must have worked out some kind of answer to justify the fact that he can carry on to have faith and to be a Rabbi. I sent him a letter in which I stated all my doubts and why I have these doubts. I feel that I was not derogatory in any possible way. The answer I received was an understanding, a compassionate answer, except that it wasn't an answer."

"He started off from the premise that there was a God, that God being God, had to know about the Holocaust, in fact, He must have been almost instrumental in the Holocaust. Man, to be man, as he is, had to have a choice between good and evil. If he did not have a choice between good and evil, he would have been a robot. The purpose of man being on this earth is to use his life, his lifetime, his time here on earth as a means to evolve, where he has the choice in either evolving upwards, or devolving downwards. He can choose good. He can choose evil. That is the purpose of his existence on earth. And in order to give him that choice, God will not, it does not say cannot, but will not interfere with man's exercise of his choice between good and evil. So a Hitler is allowed to run his course, but he is not allowed to go too far. He is allowed to have a role to play in the death of an estimated 55 million people, but he is not allowed to wipe out, say, the Jews altogether. Judaism as such has survived. Jewry as such has survived. That is the explanation as to why evil manifests itself on this earth."

"Now, a lot of righteous people are caught up in this caldron of man exercising his right to practice good or evil. Why aren't the righteous rescued? And the answer I got from this Rabbi in Tel Aviv was that God can or does rescue the righteous, but then the righteous have to be perfectly

righteous. Like the story of Sodom in the Bible, there were not sufficient perfectly righteous people among the six million Jews of Europe - even though they included one and a half million children, and they included the Rabbinate, and they must have included some extremely fine people - for the Jews to have been saved. I've actually got the answer in black and white that, had there been more righteous, we would have been saved, but we were not righteous enough."

But, concluded David, the best among them died, and also the not so righteous survived. He told of one survivor who told him how she survived. "Had I not been the Chairman of She'erith Hapletah, I would never have spoken to that woman again. With her, it was a question of stealing from others, cheating, lying, anything just in order to survive. I once gave her a lift home along with some other survivors, and she told us how she stole from others in order to keep alive. She told us that she went so far as organizing a group to waylay some prisoners, knocking them over the head and taking their food. There was a shocked silence, and she said with some surprise: 'but didn't everybody steal? I just did what everybody else did. Surely everybody stole?' The only remark to that was from one of the group who said a simple: 'No.' She never dared to raise that kind of topic again."

David was left with no illusions. He has no romantic or religiously ethereal view about things. He is also ruthlessly honest with himself: "The concentration camp did not necessarily bring about the best. In fact, anybody who tells you that suffering has an ennobling quality - you can forget about it. Suffering brings you down to the basics and the basics are: I for myself. Those were the conditions. So much so that, even though I am a survivor myself, I came out with a conviction, with the knowledge that I was very, very suspicious of any other survivor. Why? Not that I resent them surviving, but I knew how I had survived, I knew that my hands were fairly clean, I do not say clean, I said fairly clean, but I know that a lot of people survived at the expense of others."

The Holocaust confounds efforts to neatly explain it. "I do not expect any more, to get any answers for the Holocaust, or reasons and explanations, even acceptable justifications from Rabbis."

Not being able to arrive at final answers, and rejecting the traditional notion of a punitive God, and a God who shows favoritism, David nonetheless keeps searching for a deeper understanding of what he had suffered and observed during the time of his incarceration.

"I cannot leave it alone. Most of the books I read are devoted to the Holocaust. It's an ongoing thing. I feel that I must know as much as I possibly can. I've been called upon to speak before various people, television, radio, schools. And if you're asked questions, you must have answers, even though I find that from time to time I reach saturation point where I just cannot read anymore, like the book by Martin Gilbert on the Holocaust. I can't read that book. I would look up details in that book, that's the way I read it. It is not a book I could read. I would be able to read books by Viktor Frankl and Primo Levi where they try to explain, they do not just recount. I'm looking for the how and the wherefore."

"I still go twice a week to Bible classes. I am still very, very interested in Judaism as such from what I have read and studied - I've read the New Testament, I spent about seven years studying Hinduism and Yoga - I feel that Judaism has a lot to offer. Judaism is a religion I can identify with as a religion. In other words, if I had to say, right, religion is necessary, whether I believe in it or not, then of the religions I would choose, I would choose Judaism, possibly because it is part of my

background. I have an emotional affinity for it."

"I have read and re-read the story of Job. It is the closest thing to an answer. In the story, Job virtually begs God, I consider myself a righteous man, show me where I went wrong. God does not answer Job, but God very convincingly points out to Job that he does not have the wherewithal to be able to access these things. That I am prepared to accept with one proviso. God made me. And if I do not have the wherewithal, who is to blame?"

"Today, I do not view the Holocaust in a religious light. I do not hold God accountable, basically because I have taken God out of the picture. I do not say there is no Creator, but the God that we understand, sitting in judgement on us, I do not accept anymore."

"What I do accept is that there is man."