HEBREW WISDOM AND PSYCHOTHEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE

by Jerry Gladson and Ron Lucas

Abstract. When understood as a potential resolution for the epis-
temological impasse between psychology and religion, Hebrew
wisdom presents a model for dialogue. Noting that wisdom exhib-
its a special interest in human dispositions and behavior, the
authors compare Viktor Frankl's logotherapy and Adlerian psy-
chology with Proverbs and uncover a biblical, empirical approach
to psychology which indirectly incorporates the religious dimen-
sion.

Keywords: Adlerian psychology; Frankl, Viktor; Hebrew wis-
dom; logotherapy; psychology and religion; science and religion.

As the scientific method "comes nearer to man himself," C. S. Lewis
remarks, its "anti-religious bias hardens" (Lewis 1970, 135). Most psy-
chologists, especially those who maintain an active role in their reli-
gious communities, have keenly felt this tension.

The tension also exists within religion. The deconstructive theol-
ogies represented by Thomas Altizer (1977) and Mark Taylor (1984)
claim the scientific approach has seriously qualified and thus rendered
meaningless the traditional metaphysical undergirding of religion.
The Western theological network has so progressively unraveled,
according to Taylor, that the death of God inevitably leads to the
disappearance of the self, the end of history, and the closure of the
book (the Bible). He argues that the inherent embodiment of the divine
logically means the death of any sort of transcendent deity. Instead,
one must now identify God with the human creative activity of writing.

Attempts to collapse transcendence into immantentist categories
must be seen as little more than theological capitulation to a prevailing

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Zeitgeist. Peter Hodgson is correct when he states that "any sheer identification of God and writing, or of God and any other human activity, is a *reductio ad absurdum*" (Hodgson 1986, 258). Despite the philosophical difficulties involved, the persistent vitality of religious phenomena require more than a complete dissolution into naturalistic categories.

SEEKING RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION

A way through this dilemma, at least partially, would be to discover an avenue for the study of humankind (a psychology, for example) which does not require the setting aside of religious presuppositions or, conversely, a way of approaching religious phenomena without depreciating or compromising the study of anthropology and psychology. Such an approach would have great value for those psychologists (or other scientists) who wish to work from within a religious perspective, and for those theologians who desire to integrate psychological data into their work (Tournier 1965, 202).

From the psychological side, such an approach seems inherent in recent interest in social psychology. All social systems, like biological ones, exhibit variation, selection, and retention. The value systems adhered to by social systems represent an accumulated selection and retention of values which elicit respect for the wisdom they contain. Donald Campbell, in his 1975 presidential address to the American Psychological Association, makes a "plea to recognize some adaptive value in tradition-perpetuating mechanisms and in the traditions they perpetuate, adaptive values probably going far beyond our present social-scientific understanding" (Campbell 1976, 175). On the basis of the incomplete nature of scientific knowing, he challenges social scientists to avoid "epistemic arrogance" when approaching traditional religious moralizing. "I would recommend that as an initial approach we assume an underlying wisdom in the recipes for living with which tradition has supplied us" (Campbell 1976, 196-98).

This shift from a mood of indifference or hostility toward religious tradition to one of informal interest in it on the part of psychology opens the door for increased attempts to relate the values of religion to those of psychology. Accordingly, William Charlesworth notes: "It just does not make sense for a discipline to cut itself off from the efforts and insights of others who have worked on the same or similar problems" (Charlesworth 1976, 209). Humankind cannot be studied in isolation from their social tradition and the religious values inherent within it (Munroe and Munroe 1976, 212).

From the biblical perspective such a bridge approach may be found in Hebrew wisdom, especially in Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, certain

psalms, the apocryphal Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon, 4 Maccabees, and the rabbinical *Pirke Aboth*. This literature and the way of thinking it displays can no longer be thought of as peripheral to the Bible or to the Judeo-Christian tradition. Some prominent scholars, it is true, have tended to see wisdom, in James Crenshaw's words, as a virtual "orphan in the biblical household" (Crenshaw 1976b, 1). Gerhard von Rad placed it at the end of the first volume of his classic *Old Testament Theology*, where he considered it as Israel's "answer" to God (von Rad 1962, 355). Walther Eichrodt's *Theology of the Old Testament* (1961; 1967) gives it short shrift, and that only in passing. Harmut Gese goes so far as to call it an "alien body in the world of the Old Testament" (Gese 1958, 2).

These scholarly assessments must be judged largely against the ascendancy at the time of a theology which searched for divine self-disclosure (revelation) within human history. A biblical theology was considered central if it had this revelatory emphasis; otherwise it belonged on the fringe. Because wisdom did not have an interest in salvation history, it suffered a benign theological neglect. G. E. Wright summarizes this viewpoint: "The difficulty of the wisdom movement was that its theological base and interest were too narrowly fixed; and in this respect Proverbs remains near the pagan source of wisdom in which society and the Divine work in history played no real role" (Wright 1952, 104).

Current research, however, challenges this conclusion on the ground that the influence of wisdom upon the Old Testament and the Judeo-Christian heritage must now be seen on a much broader scale. Although one must question an unrestrained discovery of wisdom everywhere in the Old Testament (Crenshaw 1969), it is nonetheless true that one cannot isolate the wisdom tradition completely from other streams of thought within it (Morgan 1981). By the time of Jeremiah and Ezekiel (sixth century B.C.E.), wisdom could be identified with one of the leading classes of society: "Then they said, 'Come, let us make plots against Jeremiah, for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor *counsel from the wise*, nor the word from the prophet'" (Jer. 18:18, italics added; see Ezek. 7:26). Wisdom constitutes an important element in the pluralistic mix of Old Testament theology.

While originally wisdom may have contributed to the development of Israelite law (Gerstenberger 1965), in late Old Testament times especially it came to be associated with divine revelation and finally, in the intertestamental period, identified with the Torah itself (Sir. 24; Wisd. of Sol. 7). Thus wisdom gradually emerged from the Old Testament as one of "two great rivers" which later became decisive in the formation of both rabbinical Judaism and Christian theology (Blenkin-

sopp 1983, 130). In the New Testament, not only is Jesus represented as a sage (Matt. 11:25), but the early Christologies depend heavily upon wisdom categories for their formulation (John 1:1-18; Col. 1:15-19; 2:2-3). Q (*Quelle*), the written source behind many of the sayings of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels, is believed by many to be largely wisdom in character (Neirynck 1976, 716). Wisdom thus supplies a perspective from which to conceptualize Jesus.

In the study of the range of biblical theology, therefore, wisdom must be considered an extremely important element. We are justified in seeing it as a key point for a dialogue between Old Testament study and psychology. Since Proverbs represents the earliest[1] and in many ways the most typical of this wisdom, our study will focus upon it.

Our choice of psychologies with which to compare proverbial wisdom may seem less convincing. Since Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung seem overworked in comparisons between psychology and religious themes, and since we desire to break some new ground, we have decided to explore a less likely place: the psychologies of Viktor Frankl (1905-) and Alfred Adler (1870-1937). Adler needs little justification. A neo-Freudian, he along with Jung was one of the original members of Freud's psychoanalytic group which initially broke with Freud. Adler's optimistic estimate of human personality and its social context has influenced (often without credit) a large number of psychologists, including Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, Harry Stack Sullivan, Erik Erikson, Gordon Allport, Carl Rogers, and Abraham Maslow (Feshbach 1977, 166). His influence extends not only into modern psychoanalysis but into humanistic, phenomenological, and behavioral psychology as well (Roediger 1984, 538-52). While Adler appears somewhat indifferent toward religious faith, he does recognize in religious life themes, such as love and unselfishness, which are similar to his own conclusions (Ewen 1980, 147, 142). Adler's stress on the social environment in individual psychology offers a point of contact with the social traditions of ancient Hebrew wisdom.

Frankl's existential approach, by contrast, shares common ground with the inner attitude of religious faith itself. Frankl concerns himself with the psychology of meaning, of existence, and hence the larger meaning of life (Edwards 1967, 4:471). Generally, these are questions addressed by philosophy or religion so that, from a religious point of view, it is gratifying to see a psychiatrist struggling with them. While Frankl may not have had great influence on modern psychiatry or psychology, his existential approach to psychology seems to be in touch with the stimuli which give religion its peculiar character. Frankl may appear, on first glance, to be out of the mainstream of modern psychology. In recent years, however, some therapists, such as Vera Lieban-Kalmar (1984) in work with the learning disabled, and Thomas Bisio

and Pamela Crisan (1984) in stress management, have found Frankl's logotherapy extremely productive. The heuristic potential of his ideas as they bear upon the meaning of life makes us wonder why he has been neglected. Our choice of Frankl, therefore, is a recognition of the pioneer work he did in assessing those values which have always been of primary concern to religion, including wisdom.

While this article seeks to compare Hebrew wisdom as found in Proverbs and modern psychology, especially the work of Adler and Frankl, it must not be understood as comprehensive. Rather, we seek simply, without violating the integrity of either Old Testament studies or psychology, to open a dialogue between these diverse fields by identifying significant common ground for such an interchange. Further study may then pursue the heuristic directions indicated.

The nascence of the present study leads to an inevitable unevenness in what follows. The first part seeks to identify what may be called the epistemology of wisdom which stands behind the proverbial collection. This will then be compared to the general scientific epistemology in psychology. The length of the first section is essential because it provides the basis upon which the psychological theories of Adler and Frankl in the second part may be briefly compared to Hebrew wisdom.

WISDOM'S APPROACH TO REALITY

Wisdom is easier to identify as a literary form than as a phenomenon. In the various scholarly definitions—the art of succeeding in life; ability to cope; practical knowledge of the laws of life; an intellectual tradition—it exhibits an experiential orientation, more anthropocentric than other Old Testament traditions. If we inquire as to the fundamental premise underlying wisdom, especially that in Proverbs, it no doubt would be that the world operates according to an order established by the Creator (Zimmerli 1964, 148; Hoppe 1979, 196).

In the collection of maxims now found in Proverbs 19, this order appears implicit in the way both positive and negative deeds come back to the doer. The false witness inevitably faces punishment (v. 9); the person with compassion toward the poor finds divine favor (v. 17); the fear of the Lord leads to life (v. 23). Similarly, in making plans for the future, one should accept counsel from the wise who are in touch with the way things are (v. 20), because ultimately human plans must bend to the divine order, the *ʾēṣāh*, the "design, plan, or scheme," of the Lord:

> Many are the plans in the mind of a man,
> but it is the purpose of the Lord that
> will be established.
>
> (Prov. 19:21)

Proverbs 16 supplies an even clearer indication of the divine order assumed by the proverbial authors. While the "plans of the mind" (*ma'arkê-lēb*) belong to humankind, the Lord directs the communicative process itself (v. 1). The Lord "weights" the spirit (v. 2b), identifies with just measurement in commerce (v. 11), and guides the process of decision by lot (v. 33). Perhaps the key maxim of this collection, however, is Proverbs 16:4: "The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble."

Although some have disputed an assumption of order in wisdom (Murphy 1978, 36; White 1987, 305-6), something very near a consensus of opinion in scholarship today supports it. In a very significant study, Michael Barrè (1981, 41) examines wisdom order against the larger ancient world view. Almost every ancient culture, he points out, embraced a mythic version of a creation from chaos to order (such as the Mesopotamian "Enuma Elish"; the Egyptian "Instruction for King Meri-ka-re"; the Near Eastern Leviathan myth). The Romans spoke of it as *mundum*, from *mundus*, "neat" (well-ordered); the Greeks called it *kosmo*, "order"; in Egypt it was known as *ma'at*. This order—pervading every aspect of life—was more or less a given in the scheme of things. Although the Israelite conception of divine order in Proverbs may have been more flexible, in general the ancient world seemed to think that all human beings could do was to accept the order—and through taking part in the ordering process by naming, try to master it, so as to integrate their life into it. The moral world and the world of nature thus interfaced (Duty 1987, 263).

In addition to order, according to Alan Jenks (1983), proverbial wisdom adds two further presuppositions: the ways by which God rules the world are accessible to humanity; and those who wisely align their lives with God's order will be blessed with prosperity (Duty 1987, 263). Both are pragmatic extensions of the deeper order and stress human cooperation with it.

Cosmic order lies behind social interaction, nature, and personal conduct. Careful observation exposes it and suggests the most appropriate way of ordering one's life. This assumption of order, of course, does not differ in essence from any normal epistemology. All knowledge of the world depends upon some degree of correspondence between perception and the ability to interpret what one sees. In this respect wisdom does not significantly differ from modern science. What is unique about Proverbs, however, is how this starting point is related to a theological perspective. Wisdom is said to have been present at the divine creation—at the time, that is, when order emerged from disorder (Prov. 8:22-31).

In the prologue attached to Proverbs (1:2-7), the entire collection is said to be designed to equip a person with requisite skills for wise

thinking and living. At base, the "fear of the Lord" undergirds and reinforces this skillful search (see also Prov. 9:10). The "fear of the Lord" is a technical term in wisdom (see, for example, Prov. 1:7, 29; 9:10; 10:27) which denotes a vital knowledge of the Lord (Vriezen 1970, 155, 160-61, 179). The term here no doubt leaves room for the numen which the sage sensed in his encounter with the cosmos. According to Barrè (1981, 42), even the fundamental wisdom phrase "fear of God" (Prov. 9:10) reflects this order. Humankind is to reverence or respect the divine as a basic starting point for fitting into the divine order. The wise seek to discover the principles of order and to correlate them with human behavior (Hoppe 1979, 202). In asking, "What is the *summum bonum* for humankind?" they search for insights promoting longevity and the quality of life. The insights obtained are experiential, open to validation by further experience, and rest on the authority of the sage or the tradition he represents, as in Job 8:8-10 (Crenshaw 1976a, 955; 1987, 250-51).

In Proverbs, observations of "the events, whether lasting or passing, which make up the way of people in this world" (Nickels 1981, 171) are transferred by means of analogy from the phenomena themselves to the human realm.[2] Not only are these short, pungent sayings but the tip of the reflective iceberg (Hensell 1981, 163); behind each lies a complex social evolution, or "proverb performance" (Fontaine 1987, 95). A proverb delves "into the soil of life and gathers up a richness that is far beyond the words that are used" (O'Grady 1980, 147). This appeal to ordinary experience rather than salvation history sets these maxims apart from other Old Testament traditions and gives them a surprisingly greater parallel to a modern scientific approach.

Even wisdom's reverence of tradition fits this experiential model, for what is tradition but the accumulated experience of previous generations? In Lord John Russell's famous epigram, a proverb is "the wisdom of many and the wit of one" (cited in Hensell 1981, 162). The sage approaches tradition by testing it out in his own experience and modifying or discarding it. Persons in a social system inevitably operate within a tension between retentive and adaptive mechanisms (Campbell 1976, 171-94). Such sifting clearly produces no little crisis, as Bildad's complaint about Job's ignoring of "past generations' reflects (Job 8:8-10). On a larger scale, both Job and Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes) testify to the same apprehension.

This experiential epistemology explains why direct divine revelation appears only tangentially in wisdom texts (see, for example, Job 38-41; Ps. 73:17-28). Although wisdom seems primarily secular in its orientation, it was founded on a religious basis (von Rad 1962, 1:433), indicated in the expression "fear of God" (Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 15:33; Job 28:28; Sir. 1:11-20, 27). The presence of a number of wisdom psalms in

Israel's liturgical literature (Pss. 1, 19, and 37, for example) also points to this side of wisdom. In a society like Israel, sacred and secular imperceptibly blended (Kaiser 1978, 174). Revelation, or direct knowledge of God, although less predictable, was not therefore considered inappropriate to wisdom's humanistic orientation (see Job 28:23, 28; Harrison 1969, 1008). Thus, while it may be going too far to hold that revelation is contrary to the humanistic approach in wisdom (Crenshaw 1987, 247-48), the very fact that within the wisdom corpus there is only a gradual identification of wisdom with the revelation in Torah (Rylaarsdam 1947), witnesses to the actual tension between divine revelation and more experiential forms of knowledge.

This tension is not unlike that today between religion and science. Both religion and science are essentially different ways of knowing, the one more poetic or affective, the other cognitive. Wisdom interestingly brings them together in its literary form, a kind of "marriage of science and poetry" (Jacobson 1987, 243).

One way of understanding this tension between empiricism and revelation in wisdom may be found in the philosophical concept of apperception. The connotation of this term in the history of philosophy varies, depending on the use to which it is put in any given epistemological theory. John Locke (1690), for instance, uses apperception to refer to a dim conscious awareness of an impression of some sort. In this case, it represents merely a vague, unsystematized notion or feeling, a "given" to consciousness. But already as far back as Aristotle a distinction was made between vague notions of this sort and conceptions formed by an act of willing. Thus, apperception in many philosophers includes two elements: the sense of conscious awareness and the volitional act of concentration and assimilation of that awareness (Ulich 1967, 1:138-39).

This might be illustrated by taking an ordinary baseball. When we see a baseball, certain characteristics of the ball are presented to our consciousness. A considerable number of other characteristics (such as the inner core of the ball) are also present but not directly apprehended. These are essential for explaining the unity of the baseball. We may thus speak of these hidden characteristics as *appresent* in the presence of the baseball. Apperception, in this sense, means "that which is only indirectly present, co-present to what is directly present" (Farley 1975, 197). While this analogy has shortcomings, it can immediately be seen how the apperceptive theory can be applied to God and the world of sensory impressions. God is understood to be appresent to and required for an explanation of the unity of the world (Farley 1975, 199). In Judeo-Christian tradition, the world seldom presents a direct apprehension of God. God is experienced and spoken

of only indirectly. He is "appresented," one may say, to experience and history (Hodgson 1986, 257).

Since apperception by definition arises from the margins of consciousness, it remains exceedingly difficult to explicate. In philosophy, a debate rages over whether apperceptions are a priori or a posteriori, and whether or not they point to a transcendence of some sort (Ulich 1967, 1:138-39). We cannot settle these issues here. Suffice it to say that if we accept the category of apperception as indicating the inadequacy of a purely empirical account of epistemology, as many contemporary philosophers do, we have a useful mode of understanding something of how ancient Hebrew wisdom related to the Holy.

In its approach to religion, wisdom does not distinguish between ordinary perception and apperception in the way typical of philosophy, but instead blends them. The line between the religious and non-religious remains fluid. "Wisdom had to do with the whole of life," von Rad points out, "and had to be occupied with all its departments" (1962, 1:428). For wisdom the self-disclosure of God includes all of reality (Hensell 1981, 164), not merely occasions of divine intensification. Wisdom broadens "our apprehension of the scope of Israel's awareness of the significance of Yahweh for the totality of existence" (Priest 1976, 288).

This very condition gives proverbial wisdom its special value in a psychotheological dialogue, for here is a tradition in which both theological and psychological concerns are interrelated. The sages observe natural, social, and behavioral phenomena—both animal and human—and from them develop principles for communal and individual life. In this process they *indirectly* become aware of the divine. That is, the *ap*perceive it within the reality they *perceive*. Although the sages of Israel were persons of faith, the divine in their maxims often appears on the boundary of—yet still transcendent to—human experience. Their proverbs raise to consciousness and intellectual order their apperception of the Holy.

The Hezekian collection of proverbs (Prov. 25:1-29; 27) makes this point. Plumbing the depths of a monarch's mind (Prov. 25:3) is deliberately contrasted with the boundary between God and humankind: "It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out" (Prov. 25:2). In the enigmatic "words of Agur," found in one of the closing appendices of Proverbs (30:1-9), we discover this boundary placed over against the human quest:

> I have not learned wisdom,
>   nor have I knowledge of the Holy One.
> Who has ascended to heaven and come down?
>   Who has gathered the wind in his fists?
>   (Prov. 30:3-4a)

The divine is thus often *assumed* more than expressed. The wisdom epistemology in Proverbs is not therefore strictly secular, but rather takes into account—indirectly—the divine. In this respect it resembles certain other Old Testament materials, such as the Joseph saga (Gen. 37, 39-50) or the Court History of David (2 Sam. 9-20; 1 Kings 1-2) more than those in which the divine presence appears especially vivacious. In this epistemological approach Hebrew wisdom therefore presents a possible model for religiously-oriented psychologists who must continually work with data apparently devoid of the religious. This model would concur with some humanistic psychologies that the full explanation of what is uniquely human involves taking account of forces "greater than the self" centered not in humanity, but in the cosmos itself (Rolston 1987, 193).

With this conclusion in mind, we now turn to a consideration of the methodology prevalent in modern psychology, and then to two contemporary psychological theories.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO REALITY

In contrast to the assumptions governing wisdom, psychology follows an empirical, naturalistic approach. It accounts for human emotions, behavior, and attitudes on the basis of carefully controlled observation, case study, experimentation, and statistical analysis. Reference to a "wider environment than that of the spatio-temporal physical world" (Thouless 1971, 12), even when analyzing religious phenomena, is simply not essential to the normal pursuit of psychological research. Empiricism is accepted as the only valid means for arriving at knowledge (Carter & Narramore 1979, 73).

It is at this empirical level, however, that the epistemologies of wisdom and psychology may be fruitfully compared. Both approaches are extremely interested in motivation, social interaction, emotional disturbance, personal disposition, and related phenomena. Both come at these empirically and—when one makes allowance for the antiquity and prescientific nature of wisdom—arrive at remarkably similar preliminary results.

Relating Hebrew wisdom and models of psychology in this fashion should be done within a comprehensive view of integration and with some attention to the diversity of psychological theory available. John Carter and Bruce Narramore (1979) have classified attempts at integration under four approaches: the *Against*, *Of*, *Parallels*, and *Integrates* models. The Against model leaves no room for any dialogue between psychology and theology. The Of model allows for a great deal of common ground, but does so under the rubric of psychology *of*

religion: the real meaning of religion is to be found in its psychology, not in any supernatural elements.

In the Parallels model both psychology and religion contain truth. Psychology and religion represent different approaches to truth, however, with psychology being more scientific and religion more poetic or affective. By correlating psychological and religious data, the Parallels model explores areas of overlap and conciliation between the two (Robertson 1988, 34). This common ground is a starting point for further, deeper integration. According to this classification, the present study belongs to the Parallels model.

At a still deeper level of integration is the *Integrates* model in which psychology and theology are not viewed as wholly distinct fields, so that the work of integration seeks conceptually to unify in a manner which does not violate the methods or integrity of either discipline.

It must also be realized that modern psychology encompasses a wide range of presuppositions and beliefs which result in a myriad of theories upon which psychologists base their methodologies. An attempt to cover even a majority of these theories could fill volumes. We will briefly refer, therefore, to two psychological theories and show where these share common ground with the Hebrew wisdom literature.

These two theories may be placed under the following general theoretical categories. Frankl's existential theory of logotherapy fits into the category of experiential and relationship-oriented therapies. This type of therapy emphasizes a subjective understanding by which one fits into the world. Meaning, anxiety, guilt, and the importance of freedom and responsibility are all important themes. The second model, Adlerian therapy, fits into the cognitive and behaviorally oriented category of therapies. Cognitive therapists believe that changing one's beliefs about an event or condition will result in the desired behavioral change. Behaviorally oriented therapists focus directly on external, observable behaviors and largely ignore internal dynamics. Adlerian therapy incorporates facets of both cognitive and behavioral viewpoints (Corey 1986).

Viktor Frankl and Logotherapy. In contrast to the Freudian psychoanalytic view that humanity's motivation is the pleasure principle, Viktor Frankl understood the primary motivational force to be the search for a meaningful existence. By striving after meaning, he concluded, persons increase their ability to overcome neurosis. Indeed, it is precisely the patient's attitude toward his or her neurosis which must be changed if improvement is to be realized (Frankl 1960).

Since humankind's main concern centers in actualizing meaning, the logotherapist assists the client in finding it. Techniques such as *paradoxical intention*, the deliberate ironizing of anxiety, and *de-reflection*, the focusing away from neuroses toward potential meanings, provide the tools the logotherapist needs to attack the attitudinal level of a neurotic problem and direct the client toward meaning. According to Frankl, meaning is unique and special to each individual and must be carved out of an existential vacuum which is initially measured by one's experience of boredom. This striving for meaning results in an unavoidable yet necessary tension which is a component of the process Frankl describes as the reorientation "toward the meaning of [one's] life" (Frankl [1959] 1963, 153). Many people, unfortunately, attempt to compensate for their lack of a will to meaning with the will to money or pleasure, both of which prove eventually ineffective in satisfying their larger search for meaning.

This existential quest does not result in an abstract, once-and-for-all decision. Meaning is found in one's response to life as one encounters it. According to Frankl, this meaning can be found in three ways: By creating a work or doing a deed; by experiencing something or encountering someone; and by the attitude one takes toward unavoidable suffering. Instead of questioning meaning, people should respond to life by deciding to what or to whom to be responsible and by fulfilling this responsibility day by day to the best of their ability. "Being human always points, and is directed, to something, or someone, other than oneself—be it a meaning to fulfill or another human being to encounter," Frankl writes. "The more one forgets himself—by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love—the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself" (Frankl [1959] 1963, 115). Thus, to be completely healthy, people must discover a meaning in life. They must fill the existential vacuum in their lives with concrete personal meaning and value (Frankl 1960).

What Frankl calls the "will to meaning" (Frankl [1959] 1963, 154) bears close resemblance to the valuation of life found in religion. In its Israelite form, this valuation provides an essential ingredient of those proverbs which attempt to respond to cognitive dissonance caused by inappropriate or contradictory retribution. With the dissolution of the Judaean state at the beginning of the Babylonian exile (587/6 B.C.E.), the wisdom tradition especially experienced an upheaval over the failure of its rather dogmatic expectations of retribution. Long before the exile, these had been expressed clearly in Proverbs 22:4, the thesis of which many within the wisdom tradition appear to have taken quite literally: "The reward for humility and fear of the Lord is riches and honor and life."

Out of this crisis period and beyond came Job and Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes). Job, if we assume an exilic or post-exilic provenance for the final form, tells of the breakdown on an individual level of precisely the dogmatic expectations of retribution reflected in the maxim just cited. The author of Job, however, finally resolves the cognitive dissonance his story creates by resort to the ambiguity of divine mystery (Job 38:1-42:6). In contrast, Qoheleth advances a much more negative thesis: the hiddenness of God in the order of things predisposes humanity to a pervasive, demoralizing uncertainty (Eccles. 3:10-11). All people can do is try to act discretely because they do not know the outcome of their ventures (Eccles. 3:12; 11:6).

It is important for our purposes to recognize, however, that the cognitive dissonance we later find in Job and Ecclesiastes may be detected in an earlier and more subtle form in Proverbs 10-29 (Gladson 1978, 141-297). In one case—the section containing a teacher's admonitions to his students (Proverbs 22:17-24:22)—there appears a blatant warning against envy of the apparent success of the wicked. The savant appeals to what would not doubt correspond to Frankl's "will to meaning":

> Let not your heart envy sinners,
>   but continue in the fear of the Lord all the day.
> Surely there is a future,
>   and your hope will not be cut off.
> <div align="right">(Prov. 23:17, 18)</div>

Over against the problem of the prosperity of the wicked, this admonition sets an even more compensatory hope: the "fear of the Lord." Similar expressions in Proverbs 19:23a ("the fear of the Lord [leads] to life") and 11:19a ("righteousness [leads] to life") suggest that this proverb has in mind an ordering of life which tends toward wholeness and fulfillment.

The second line in the passage above (Prov. 23:18) projects or extends this meaning into the future. The Hebrew term *'aḥᵃrît* ("future," "some future time," "end" [Sebass 1977, 210-11]) has occasioned a great deal of debate. On the basis of an Ugaritic text from the Canaanite city of Ras Shamra (2 Aqhat 6:35), Mitchell Dahood (1963, 48-49) takes it as a reference to a future life. It seems best, however, in view of the absence of an unequivocal statement of future life in Proverbs, to accept the term instead as a more general reference to an unspecified or vaguely defined future, possibly co-terminous with the present life. It is more a reframing of hope toward the future than the affirmation of an absolute fulfillment in the next life.

We have here a notion comparable to Frankl's will to meaning. Faced with disconfirmatory experience, the sages did not assert a Sartrean

self-generated meaning but instead pinned their hopes on God and the triumph of a just order. They would have concurred with Frankl's own trenchant criticism of Sartre: "I think the meaning of our existence is not invented by ourselves [Sartre], but rather detected" (Frankl [1959] 1963, 157). The sages professed to detect this meaning in their own experience of the world.

The existence of Job and Ecclesiastes also points to the necessity of this sense of meaning for an optimum human experience. While such hope is characteristic of most religions, the Hebrew sapiential tradition developed a particularly resilient version of the "will to meaning."

Adlerian Theory. The theory of Individual Psychology, developed by Alfred Adler (1870-1937), builds on the uniqueness and indivisibility of every human personality. In this theory three themes make up the psychical character of each person. Since every human being becomes an individual only in a social context, the social context and the individual must always be viewed together (Adler [1929] 1969, 95). Adler accordingly called this first theme "social interest" or "community feeling" (*Gemeinschaftsgefühl*). Normal individuals learn to cooperate with and contribute to their communities; neurotics and psychotics do not (Adler [1927] 1957, 35-36). In this social context the goal of belonging is fundamental to human behavior. A large percentage of human problems relate to fear about not belonging, resulting in high levels of anxiety, low self-esteem, and feelings of inferiority. This sense of belonging, however, must be preceded by, and analogous to, one's level of self-acceptance. In order to develop satisfying interpersonal relationships, each person must develop a satisfying relationship with the self.

This leads Adler to a second theme. From infancy and childhood each individual forms a basic "style of life," a secret goal toward which his or her life is oriented. Just as we develop physically and mentally, also residing within is a stimulus toward conquest, increase, and security. "The impetus from minus to plus is never-ending. The urge from 'below' to 'above' never ceases" (Adler 1930, 398). A style of life does not have to be authentic to be functional. People often behave "as if" something were actually true, and benefit accordingly. A child who uses sickness to obtain parental sympathy, for example, is likely to act in a similar fashion as an adult (Ewen 1980, 120). One's style of life provides a goal by means of which one actively selects life experiences.

Adler's third theme, closely related to both the social interest and style of life, concerns the place of feelings of inferiority in the individual. When people fail to obtain the goals indicated by their style of life, their drive toward superiority or perfection gets thwarted, produc-

ing frustration and inferiority. When distorted, their style of life leads to a neurotic sense of superiority and power. While feelings of inferiority largely make up the private world of an individual, they may be shared with society or intensified by it. They actually begin in infancy and childhood, when a person feels especially weak over against social environment (Roediger 1984, 476). This is why Adler felt Freud overestimated the role of sexuality in the development of a child's inferiority and correspondingly underestimated the effect of social environment (Sarason 1966, 60).

In Adler's view, then, all human behavior is purposeful and can be comprehended only by understanding the individual's goals. Clients are viewed phenomenologically from their own frame of reference so that goals, self-determination, and personal responsibility constitute indicators of a healthy lifestyle. Human beings are not passive victims of historical events but active beings who make choices and decisions for which they must take responsibility (Adler 1924).

The prominent theme of social interest and cooperation in Adlerian theory makes it a psychology which can be fruitfully compared to Hebrew wisdom. Like Adler the proverbial sages sensed that individual/communal symbiosis is fundamental. A typical situation in the wisdom perspective is the teacher ("father"), who represents the society attempting to inculcate its values into the coming generation, addressing his pupils as "sons" (Prov. 4:1, 10). Consequently, the themes of the importance of belonging and social responsibility dominate many of the proverb collections. Perhaps most instructive in this regard is the social responsibility Hebrew wisdom requires of the wise or prudent person. As we would expect, such a wise person is trustworthy, diligent, patient, self-controlled (Prov. 13:17; 14:29; 15:18), and the like, in complete contrast to the "fool," who is stupid, passionate, headstrong, and debased (Prov. 1:22; 27:3; 14:16; 6:12-15; see Scott 1971, 9-10). This contrast is born, not out of abstract moral reflection, but out of the world of experience in which a person exists in social relationship and has a corresponding responsibility toward that relationship. Thus the fool receives condemnation because he disrupts normal human relationships, while the wise facilitate the life of the community. The difference lies in contrasting styles of life.

In a section juxtaposing the wicked and the righteous, generally considered the first part of Collection II (10:1-22:16), we hear something of the psychology of the two classes, especially the righteous. The prudent man acts responsibly because he possesses a calm, inner disposition ("heart of calmness" [14:30]). His life goals diverge from the wicked person. This inner control, reminiscent of the Egyptian "cool" man (von Rad 1972, 86), manifests itself outwardly toward society.

> He who is slow to anger has great understanding,
>   but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.
> A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh,
>   but passion makes the bones rot.
>   (Prov. 14:29-30)

What may not be so obvious throughout Proverbs is that the wise are evaluated, not by an appeal to an ethical code of some kind, but by whether or not they fulfil the claims laid upon them by their community. Social responsibility determines where they are *ṣaddîq*, or "righteous" (Prov. 12:3-13). "The behavior and activity of the individual," observes von Rad, "are always viewed both with regard to their consequences and with regard to their effect on society" (1972, 78). This is clearly expressed in the following maxim: "When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; and when the wicked perish there are shouts of gladness" (Prov. 11:10). Adler follows his theme of social interest to a conclusion remarkably similar to this proverb: "The degree to which [social interest] has developed in any individual is the sole criterion of human values. . . . When we speak of virtue we mean that a person plays his part; when we speak of vice we mean that he interferes with cooperation. . . . Society has no place for deserters" (Adler [1927] 1957, 137, 194; [1933] 1964, 283).

The idea that social responsibility is a force which enhances both the community and individual life is, of course, an idea common to the entire ancient world (von Rad 1972, 80), but it is interesting that Adlerian and other cognitive psychologies have employed this notion as an index to psychological well-being. One might be tempted to say that Adlerians and the Hebrew sages were, in some quaint way, looking at the same social phenomenon, despite the fact that they called it by different names. While it is tempting here to point to Adler's Jewish background and to the possible formative influence on him of Jewish proverbs, this source for Adler's theory appears unlikely. Adler never developed a strong loyalty to his Jewish heritage and at age thirty-four converted to Protestantism (Ewen 1980, 125).

Adlerian psychology and Hebrew wisdom have different orientations. There is very little in Proverbs, aside from appeals to fools to turn from their course of action (see Prov. 1:22-33), for instance, which explores the relationship of attitude to behavior change, so in this respect Adlerian and cognitive psychology represent an advance on Hebrew wisdom. Nevertheless we see that the wisdom literature of ancient Israel may be favorably compared to certain modern psychological insights.

CONCLUSION

These brief samples from Hebrew wisdom indicate that it shares at least some common ground with logotherapy and Adlerian psychologies. When one has clarified the respective "grammars" of Hebrew wisdom and these psychological systems, it is evident that they overlap because they have a common object of study: humankind. Despite time and distance, ancient and modern peoples share a common humanity, and thus modern psychological study and wisdom often exhibit striking similarities.

But is this common ground more than mere coincidence? Is it really sufficient to speak of a dialogue between wisdom and contemporary psychology? Once we have concluded that the Hebrew sages were interested in and baffled by the irrational in humankind, how does this move us beyond awareness of what must have been a common interest in antiquity? How does the recognition that these same sages looked to a future vindication demonstrate more than that they were informed by a religious, future-oriented perspective? How does a preoccupation with social implications of behavior mean more than merely the legacy of the belief that the community mattered more than the individual?

The answer to these questions lies in a conclusion which points in two directions. From the side of psychology we discover that ancient sages had a keen interest in matters psychological and anthropological which set them apart from the other biblical literature. Would it be too presumptuous to suggest that future histories of psychology should include them—and their ancient Near Eastern counterparts—alongside the Greek philosophers, where such histories usually begin? John McDermott (1985) has already set a pattern for this in the history of philosophy by discussing Hebrew wisdom along with other ancient Near Eastern writings before going on to the pre-Socratic Greek philosophers. Further psychological study of wisdom, in fact, will accent and clarify this psychological interest.

From the standpoint of wisdom, an anthropocentric focus was considered quite in keeping with a religious view of the world. God, active at least at the margins of perception, was also mysteriously involved in the inner workings of reality. Thus, while wisdom scholarship may sharpen its anthropocentric focus with psychological analysis, behavioral scientists in turn may find a potential model for recognizing the paradoxical relationship of their discipline to a religious worldview. What Hebrew wisdom suggests is that it is possible to be an astute observer of human disposition and activity and hold to a religious faith at the same time. Perhaps this paradoxical relationship of religious faith and human psychology is the best lesson a dialogue between Hebrew wisdom and psychology can teach us.

In the domain of biblical studies, too, psychological interest in social development, individual psychology, and the etiology of value systems will no doubt cast new light on old texts. Already new approaches to scriptural texts utilizing social psychology and deep structures promise a fresh trend in the somewhat pedantic world of biblical scholarship. Perhaps psychology itself can provide new hermeneutical keys—new ways of reading—useful in recovering many of the enduring values imbedded in the ancient texts. Since the history of the philosophical notion of apperception calls attention to the problem of accounting for human cognition solely in terms of empirical categories, it is at least possible that a serious dialogue with religion in general—and with the biblical study of wisdom in particular—might aid both psychology and Judeo-Christian religion to achieve a more accurate, multi-dimensional picture of humankind.

NOTES

1. The material in Proverbs comes from various periods within the history of Israel. Although portions date from the post-exilic era (sixth century B.C.E. and later), the bulk of chapters 10 through 29 is no doubt prior to the sixth century. An even longer prehistory lies behind that.

2. For example: the sluggard is like a door swinging on its hinges; a contentious person resembles hot coals on dry wood (Prov. 26:14, 21).

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