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In Radix

In Radix - “to the root” or simply “the root”, in Latin. Much of what humanity does to deal with problems nowadays ignores origins and sources. Whether those be origins and sources be history, philosophical concepts, genetics, the way you were raised, so on and so forth. Their importance is great, for it is from them that we, us humans, come, and from us humans come many things, both benevolent and cruel.

The Gardener started with a sense of foreboding and impending despair; his most recently planted tree, which was supposed to be the greatest bearer of fruits among all the plants in his garden, was barren. It seemed inexplicable to him that this had happened. After all, he had given it an amazing start in its life. He had set aside the plot of the best earth for it, had personally nurtured it and helped it to grow as best he could. And this season was to be the one when he would finally set about gathering all of the fruits of his and the Tree’s labors. Yet there the Tree was, twisted and sickly, looking like death incarnate. He set about searching his garden for good branches to graft onto his prize with a sigh, in the hopes that he might save it.

Sin and Virtue

Nothing can happen in life without desire playing some part. It is the origin of all drive and motivation (or perhaps the purest form of these things), and while we as human beings do some things that we feel we do not want to do, there is something that we want which justifies the action. Regardless, desire drives us to become heroes and monsters, leaders and leeches, and good or evil. The best way to illustrate this is to examine the Seven Deadly Sins and their counterparts, the Seven Heavenly Virtues, and how all of them come from and create desire.

The Seven Deadly Sins are seven states of being that all humans desire to some degree or other. Yes the Sins are harmful in nature, and yes most humans desire to not be trapped, but due to our somewhat carnal nature we desire to be lazy, to have the property of our neighbors, to control and own as much material wealth as possible, to act on and harbor our anger and resentment, so on and so forth.

Let us begin with Sloth which is the sin of laziness, or idleness taken to the extreme. It is one thing to take breaks or rests when they are not necessarily needed, and it is another to fall into the trap that Sloth presents us, where we do nothing at all, all the time. This comes about because of the innate human desire to rest and be lazy, which in itself is not evil. But when we let this desire take us over, and we begin to justify doing nothing all the time, then we are caught by the Sin of Sloth.

Put simply, Envy is the excessive desire for those things which belongs to others. When we are envious, we cannot help but think that life would be better if we had our neighbor's car, our friend's parents, or even Elon Musk's job. Instead of focusing on introspection and the betterment of ourselves, our desires for others' possessions consume and drive us. We become as Gollum did: always jealous, and never satisfied with what we have.

Greed is perhaps the most well known and talked about of the Sins, despite it being one of the simplest to explain. It is the excessive desire to possess and control material wealth. If we are caught in the throes of Greed, we manipulate anyone and everyone in order to gain and control more and more. And we do all of that because we desire it, and feel like it is a need for us.

The Sin of Wrath is more than just anger, despite what is popularly portrayed in movies and TV. It is *fury*, an absolute and utter desire that requires the destruction of whatever it is that has driven us to that point. It comes from the noble desire for justice, but becomes Wrath when we feel that what is commonly believed to be justice doesn't satisfy our desires. Other times it was a feeling of simple anger that was left to fester, grow, and become as close to an absolute as something can.

One of the most hotly debated Sins of our time is the Sin of Lust. It stems from feelings that every single human being feels or has felt at some point in their lives. Namely the desire to experience or have sexual actions. But in the end I believe Lust to be a no-brainer in terms of its status as a Sin, as it isn't simply sexual desire. It is, as all these sins are, an all consuming desire that drives people to believe they need what they desire. Lust is a belief that we are entitled to feel how we want to about whomever we want, and to do whatever we want with anyone we want. It is similar to Gluttony and Wrath in that it is more obviously destructive than the others, and it leaves nothing once the desire is satiated, if it is ever satiated.

You may wonder why I left Gluttony for near the end of this rather dark list. That is a part of Gluttony's trap as many believe it to be a minor sin, without note simply because it is most commonly attached to alcoholism and drug addiction. But there is more to Gluttony than that,

and it is naive to think that there isn't. Gluttony is to consume, and to consume, and to consume. Without end, and with no satiation. It is, I would argue, one of the most deadly of the Seven Deadly because if we are caught by it, it will never let us go. The raw hunger and desire to take and consume will always be there. And it doesn't matter what it is that we consume; whether it be food, drink, knowledge, time, or anything else that can be consumed in some way. To top it all off, there will never be satisfaction, no satiation. It is an all consuming desire that leads us to obsessively consume and take what we desire. It plays a part in all the other sins by allowing us to act on our desires, but it is subtle until we experience full blown Gluttony. Then it becomes a storm of desires, driving us to take what we want. But it is Gluttony that has sunk its teeth in us and is consuming us, if it is left unchecked.

And this of course brings us to what is popularly considered to be the root sin of the Sins, Pride. Pride is the belief that we are entitled to whatever we desire, and that we deserve those things no matter what. If we are prideful, we believe that we are better, and if we are better, doesn't it stand to reason that we, as the better person, should have that car that your neighbor has? Don't we deserve it? And what of your abusive neighbor's husband/wife? We would treat them better, and they could satisfy our lustful hungers in bed, so shouldn't we take them and save them from their horrible situation while also benefiting ourselves? It is no wonder that Thomas Aquinas called this sin the "worst sin", it drives us to feel a sense of hatred and disdain towards others and entitlement for anything and everything towards ourselves. In *Doctrine and Covenants* section 23 the Lord says to Oliver Cowdery "Behold, I speak unto you, Oliver, a few words. Behold, thou art blessed, and art under no condemnation. But beware of pride, lest thou shouldst enter into temptation." The committal of this sin can stem from two things; inherent

belief, namely that for whatever reason, we've always believed ourselves to be better. Or excessive desires, which drive us to feel that we need, and because we need we are entitled, and because we become entitled we deserve to satiate our desires. From these two lines of thought, the core of Pride is built. Pride's core according to Ezra Taft Benson (a late prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) is "enmity—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen. Enmity means 'hatred toward, hostility to, or a state of opposition.' It is the power by which Satan wishes to reign over us."¹

Because of our human shortcomings, Pride and each of these Sins are unavoidable in the long run of life. Luckily, however these methods came about, we can combat these pitfalls and traps using the Seven Heavenly Virtues. For Pride, there is Humility. Humility is the putting of others before yourself, but understanding when it becomes too much for you. It is prideful to insist on helping others alone, it is humble to ask for aid when we need it. Humility requires effort and awareness, and to put in said effort and maintain the awareness there must be something driving us to be humble. Whether the desire is to no longer be prideful or to become a humble human being, it doesn't matter. To put in the effort we must want the end goal.

To counter Gluttony we have to employ self-restraint, namely Temperance. While a gluttonous person devours without hesitation and regard for how it may affect others, a temperate person will be mindful of how much they take, avoiding any amounts that may have an adverse effect on both others and themselves. To be temperate is to recognize our insatiable desires, but to instead feed and cultivate those desires which seem to be good and moral to us.

¹ Benson, *Beware of Pride* 1989

If we can exercise temperance, then the paths we need to take to bring the other Virtues into our lives become much more apparent. To overcome Lust, we must be willing to forgo our sexual desires no matter how intense they may feel. We must exercise Chastity through Temperance, but that doesn't mean we need to forgo all sexual activity. To be Chaste is to only be sexually active within a loving and romantic relationship. I'm not going to delve too deep into the specifics that religions provide, as I believe they are irrelevant to my argument. Just know that what a "loving romantic relationship" will be, changes based on what beliefs one might subscribe to.

The Virtue required to overcome Wrath is Forgiveness, due to the nature of anger, and how it only comes when we feel we have been wronged. Now just because we've forgiven someone doesn't mean we need to let them get off without punishment. We can forgive someone and let go of all your feelings of anger and bitterness towards them, while understanding that what they did may indeed warrant a punishment. But there are times where it will be nearly impossible to let those feelings go, and in those circumstances we have to be willing to set aside our personal wants and consider that they may not be what is best for not only ourselves, but everyone else as well. While Wrath often comes from justice, it drives us to go beyond justice, and that is why it must be tempered.

The best way to let go of our worldly possessions is to of course give them to those who actually need them. Charity is how we overcome Greed, we must be willing to set aside our personal desire to have and control material wealth by giving it to those who would benefit from it more than we will. We need to do it because we desire to become a better person, and we need to try and care for others and their situations. Now this doesn't mean that we need to give

everything away, or even that we need to keep only those things that we technically need. It means that we must realize when we are being driven by Greed to do horrible things, and instead of following through on those desires, try to follow a desire that benefits someone other than yourself.

Envy and Pride are perhaps the hardest sins to overcome, due to the very nature of the Sins. Letting go of our jealousy and instead admiring and appreciating what others have and what they have done. We must exercise extreme self-restraint in overcoming Envy, as it is a feeling of jealousy taken to an unhealthy point. To overcome Envy and exercise Admiration, we have to forgo one desire for one that we believe to be better.

Now we have demonstrated the effects of these sins through basic argument and general examples, but to truly understand just how much desire can drive a person to do evil, I will now give you a specific example which actually happened. Lloyd Clark Fletcher was first charged with “aggravated assault on a female” at the age of 13, with the episode happening on a bridge hindering the chances of escape. He was charged with the same later at age 15, and went to Juvenile Detention at 16 for shooting female cows with a rifle. At 19 years old, he raped, choked, and beat a 20 year old woman before knotting her bra around her throat and setting her afloat in a crocodile infested river. Somehow the victim made it safely to the riverbank, and Lloyd was later apprehended. Five months after he was released from doing his time, he raped and killed a 15 year old girl before proceeding to mutilate her body with a knife, and filling her body with mud to get rid of any evidence. Two years after these events, he tried to rape a 13 year old girl, but was caught and served four years in prison. In 1997 he forcefully took a 16 year old girl to his car, molested her, beat her, and choked her until she was unconscious. Three teenage boys

stopped anything else from happening, and they took down Lloyd's registration for his vehicle. By this time, DNA forensics had evolved considerably, so he was finally connected to the rape and murder of the 15 year old girl. My reason for telling you all of this is that from Lloyd's perspective, he doesn't remember doing much of any of these things, his desires literally drove him to an animal like state. Yes his personality was distorted, yes he was partially schizophrenic, and yes, he was a true blue sociopath. But in the end, he acted on his desires. However twisted those desires may have been, they were what he wanted. This man wanted things that were beyond disgusting and wrong, and yet they were attractive to him in some way, so is it any surprise that he acted on them: especially considering how hard it is for many of us to handle our desires? The only difference between an individual like Lloyd and an individual like me or you, is our willingness to resist and feed different desires within ourselves.

And Lloyd's example isn't even a tenth of what desire can drive a human being to do. Some individuals or small groups of people manipulate entire countries and cultures to feed their dark desires. They turn entire groups of people into fanatics, perfect for getting what they want through force. They lie, cheat, and steal their ways to the top of the proverbial pecking order of humanity, and it is partially our fault that they do so.

The gardener stared sadly at his still barren Tree. The branches which he had grafted on had also become sickly and twisted along with the rest of the Tree. He began to study the trunk wondering if there were perhaps parasites buried in the tree stealing all the nutrients and killing his beloved tree. If there were, he would do all that he could to remove them and help save his

tree. He believed the fruits that this Tree seemed to promise him were better than all other fruits that his other trees had given him in the past.

Fanaticism

The results of allowing ourselves to fall in the traps of the sins are made apparent in factions and factious thinking. Factions are chaotic and insensitive. They state their beliefs as if they were fact, not caring if they hurt those both outside and inside their groups. Soviet Russia for instance, with the way that people not only believed what the faction was preaching, but actively forced others into the faction. And then if those who actually believed slipped in some way, even on accident, they were punished and could even be sent to the Gulag. And the people who slipped up could even have been the people doing the punishing a week earlier.²

Factions use a dangerous and chaotic, if easily understandable, system and logic. It is the simplest and most basic form of logic, that of an animal. Do what makes us feel good, and avoid or put down those things that do not. Pretty prevalent nowadays, isn't it? Perhaps the extremism that is inherent in factions seems attractive to us, the way that life is viewed through either a black or white lens. It's a simple way to look at life, it's easy and doesn't take much effort to just go where your group tells we to go.

This ease allows these factions to form in the first place. When we join one, we surrender our ability to think for ourselves and say to the leaders, "Tell me what to do, tell me what to think. This is where I belong now, and I am willing to do what it takes to stay here." Joining a faction is the laziest way to find a group where we are accepted, but the moment we begin to

²Solženicyn, *Arrest*.

doubt is the moment we are no longer accepted. We social animals can't take the thought of being rejected by those whom we called friends or lovers a short time ago, so we continue to do things that we may not truly believe in.

Factions are often created to take advantage of people. Many times it is just people joining together to demonstrate their beliefs, however extreme those demonstrations and beliefs are. But there are some of us who are aware that people will do crazy, insane things to feel a sense of belonging, and that some people who would prefer the ease of looking at the world in an 'Us and them' mindset, and they take advantage of that. And so factions are created, used, and discarded, just as the faction itself uses and discards people.

Many of us are in factious forms of thinking, and we don't even realize it. I have said it before, and I will say it again, *it is easy*. It is what happens when we fall into the Sin of Sloth. We begin to hurt those around us and hurt ourselves without even thinking of the consequences, and we block all of that out. Look at Boxer in *Animal Farm*, he is portrayed as this innocent (if very ignorant) horse who is taken advantage of. Yet if he (and admittedly, if the rest of the animals) had taken the time to look around and think back to their lives prior to the pigs taking over, they would have realized that the only reason they were still following the pigs is that it was the "easy" thing to do!³ The only way to escape this cycle is to of course do the opposite of what slothfulness would have you do, be active, *think*. An active mind is the most powerful form of mind, as it is the mind that solves problems, adapts, and grows. We *must* accept whatever pain may come with being active, or we will find ourselves right back where we started. We are probably worse off as well, as now we are aware of the Hell we have put ourselves in, and

³Orwell, *Animal Farm*, 1945a

continue to stay in, through our Slothfulness. Ignorance is bliss, and ignorance comes with Sloth. But awareness of one's ignorance and an unwillingness to change? That is a Hell unto itself.

The entire social climate around factions is one of cutthroat, and extreme Darwinistic survival. It is animal instincts used in excess, simply because it is easy. It is people being manipulated and taken advantage of, so that only a select few receive the benefits. It is us, hurting those we love and who love us, only because they are against the way we have chosen to think. I wish to live my life with a real sense of purpose, with me being in charge of my decisions and where I go. Not a life where I am ruled and dominated by few people who I don't really know beyond their names and supposed beliefs. That is why I wrote *The Embrace*⁴, that is why I wrote on the Seven Sins, and more specifically Sloth⁵. I wrote those, and I write this so that I can break free from ignorance and find my true place in this world, among a group that truly understands, or become alone in my understanding. But I refuse to be in some half-assed group that only hurts those in and without, which may have been created to further someone's agenda and will be discarded once it has fulfilled its usefulness.

But I also refuse to stand by and do nothing. Yes our desires are what allow us to fall in the trap of sin and factions, but it is our desires that also allow us to escape them and become better. It is through desire that we will be able to overcome those who puppet humanity for their desires. If we forgo desire, there will be nothing left to drive us to become better and help everyone around us become better.

⁴ *The Embrace*, 7 March 2018

⁵ *Sloth*, Fall 2018

There. The Gardener peeled back another layer of bark to reveal a nest of parasites near the crown of the Tree, where the branches began to form. He stared with a mix of horror and fascination, watching the parasites crawl inside of his Tree in a desperate attempt to escape the light which had just been suddenly shone upon them and their existence. The Gardener wondered how he would go about removing this nest of decay, and began to walk away. Perhaps his blowtorch would be the best tool for this situation.

The Importance of Desire

It is for the earlier mentioned reasons that many try their best to forgo desire, and try to “ascend beyond the trappings of mortality” as it were. They seek out something that is different from wanting, a gray area where there is no desire. To put it simply, they desire to not desire, so they can avoid the parts of desire that are dark, carnal, and evil. Yet there is a problem with this line of thinking. The “gray area” is not gray because of the lack of light and good, but because of the presence of light and good. Think about this; light cannot exist without casting a shadow, but darkness can exist without the presence of light. Dark is after all, the lack of light. It is where there is not, while where there is light, there is. So in the removal of desire, what is there left except darkness? The gray area is gray because it is an average between deep darks and bright lights, it is gray because of the very presence of light, and not because of the presence of dark.

This applies to desire in a drastic way, because if one of us forsakes desire, there is nothing left where desire was. Where there was once the potential for light, there is now a pocket of darkness, which if left unattended (as a pocket like that almost always is), it could become the seeding ground for those things that are dark. So by forsaking all desire, you are denying the

desires for those things which add to your growth and light, therefore allowing those things which are dark and harmful to grow. Even if a part of your desire to forsake desire was to avoid those things which are dark and evil, it is better to work towards good desires and experience the darker ones than to not desire at all. The very best we can hope for in this life is a balance between the dark and the light because even if we ourselves become wholly luminescent beings with no darkness, the people around us would still cast shadows. The dark and carnal parts of humanity are an unfortunate reality that will never go away. But instead of seeking that balance by avoiding the fight, we should be doing everything we possibly can to further that which is good and bright; thus, even if our lives aren't improved, the next generation can try to change life for the better.

Let us take the example of someone who has chosen to forgo desire. Tell me, do you know what that sort of person looks like? If someone were to be a being without desire, would they do anything? Desire is, after all, the most basic form of motivation that exists. We wish for both good and evil things, and it depends on what desires we give up, and what desires we cultivate, that determines what sort of person we become. But if we were to eliminate all of one's desire, or at least eliminate one's willingness to follow through on all desire, we would be left with an empty husk of something. Someone like that does and becomes nothing. And while the justification may seem good to them, their contribution of *nothing* hinders more than it helps. We wish to progress and become more as both individuals and a race, and if we do nothing we don't contribute to the great pool of human knowledge and understanding. It is like someone who is lazy and does nothing productive at their day at work. By forgoing all productive activity, it may seem like they aren't hurting whatever projects and teams they work with, but by doing nothing

they also hurt their projects and teams. It makes it so the team needs to pick up this individual's slack, putting more work and unnecessary pain on the team that they didn't need to experience and doesn't add to their knowledge or benefit them in any way. But in Buddhist teachings, the final stage of nirvana includes a release from desire. *All desire* mind you, both the good and the bad. As is said in the *Buddhanīti Saṅgaho*, a collection of Buddhist sayings and teachings, "From craving there arises grief, from craving there arises fear, for one who is free from craving there is no grief, how is there fear?"⁶ And "Just as the cobbler cuts the skin (so it fits) the shoe, with the giving up of desires (true) happiness can be obtained. If he wishes to complete happiness, he should give up desire completely."⁷ While this may indeed be the true face of transcendence, it is the end goal, it is something to desire and strive after. We cannot obtain nirvana through forsaking desire, we have to cultivate good desires. We have to seek to become a being who controls their passions, is willing to go through hardship and pain, and seeks knowledge so we can leave ignorance behind. In the Bible, specifically the Book of Matthew, Christ declares "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."⁸ Considering this temporal existence we are now in, forgoing desire is foolish and only avoids the problems life presents for only a little while. To become something, you need to act, and to act, you need to want the end result. Just look at the second quote from the *Buddhanīti Saṅgaho*, "If he", in reference to the cobbler, "wishes to complete happiness, he should give up desire completely." *If he wishes*. There is desire in Buddhism, and it is a tool they use to obtain their transcendence.

⁶ Mahanāhimi page 149

⁷ Mahanāhimi page 151

⁸ Matthew 5:6 page 1,192

As I said in one of my previous papers, *The Embrace*⁹, about accepting and learning from pain, “it can become an aid to you, instead of a hindrance.” I believe that the same goes for desire. If we cultivate good desires, and acknowledge and do what we can to control our evil desires, we can make the world a better place instead of stagnating in some false gray area, or making it a worse place by giving into all of our dark desires. The *only* reason that anything happens in life is because someone wanted something, so they sought after it. We examined evils that happen because of desire, but we must acknowledge the other side of the argument. It is time we examined the good that comes from desire.

Tell me, what do you think drove the great innovators of recent history to take pieces of metal, plastic, and glass, and turn them into this machine that I write to you on? A computer is a wonderful work of science and art, which only came about because many people saw an opportunity for more knowledge and utility, and wanted it. They wanted to take and follow that opportunity, wherever it led. Enough desire to pour over math and electrical science for days on end, and the math and electrical science they used? Those also came about because of desire. At math’s beginning, it was mostly used as a tool to aid in daily transactions, allowing farmers and merchants to trade goods with much more ease and satisfaction. But then due to the natural curiosity that all humans feel (although only a relatively few cultivate this curiosity, this raw desire to simply *know*), people expanded on and learned what some of the limits of this tool were, and what seemed to be the impossibilities. And then the next generation of mathematicians, and the generation after that, and every single following generation, expanded on our understanding of math, all of that came about because of desire. Regardless of whether

⁹ *The Embrace*, 7 March 2018

the desire was simple curiosity, the want for better tools, to seem smart, or a combination of all three. All of our knowledge about the realm of mathematics came about because of the desires of many individuals in different times and places.

And because of their expansive desire and works, science has progressed as well. Euclidean Geometry is the basis that has led to much of modern logical reasoning. Meaning that logical reasoning is an offshoot of mathematics. Because of humanity's desire to know more about math, it opened up new possibilities in the realm of knowledge. We became able to understand the biology of a plant, the material structure of a diamond, and the behaviors of both animals and humans.

Because of desire we are able to sleep soundly at night, with the warmth of a blanket, a system that heats and cools air, and a house to hold all of it. Because of desire we can travel to the other side of the world in a day, instead of the weeks it used to take to travel a few hundred miles. Because humans desired to understand life around them, we created things like science, philosophy, religion, and so forth. All art comes from desire, and the fact that I am able to write this paper and share it with you is the result of thousands of years of desires and the pursuits of those desires. The fact that you and I now exist is a direct result of the desire to continue the existence of the human race and/or build a family. If this world were to not have desire, it wouldn't progress, and ignorance would abound allowing those who would puppet us to rise to power.

The Gardener looked sadly at his Tree. He had burnt out the parasites as best he could, but it seemed that the Tree was too weak to keep others out. More had set up shop, and he could

see them boldly eating away at the Tree's life. He knelt on the ground and began to dig towards the roots. Perhaps his efforts would be too late, but he might as well dig and see what had become of the source of his Tree's life.

A Priori

Desire too, has a source, and its importance cannot be overstated. This thing that desire derives from is what ultimately leads to action. From this thing comes desire, and from desire comes action, and action is what impacts the world around us. This thing, it could then be argued, is the source of action. But that would be glossing over a step that I have just painstakingly proclaimed and shown to be important. However it is the root of drive in our psyches, and must therefore be explored.

Knowledge is powerful, as it is what ultimately drives you and I to action. Tell me, if you didn't know what warmth was would you desire it? If you didn't know about the existence of comfort and joy, would you desire them? If you don't know about something, you cannot desire it, and therefore you cannot act towards it. That is the nature of roots and causes.

However, there are things us humans do without having any apparent knowledge, like an infant smacking its lips in search of its mother's milk, or it moving its eyes, or crying. All of these are actions, so there must be desires and knowledge behind them. But an infant has no knowledge when it enters into this world, correct? Well what if there were pieces of knowledge that an infant inherited in some way (whether the knowledge was inherited genetically, from a collective unconscious, or from a being we call God, or something else)? And what if there are inherent desires that then arise from the inherited knowledge?

A Priori, the Latin words meaning “first” or “from the prior”. Immanuel Kant proposed the concept of knowledge that existed before and outside of experience that humans are able to perceive, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*.¹⁰ Knowledge that came from somewhere that existed prior to the human. I was first introduced to this concept in Pirsig’s *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*,¹¹ where he was discussing certain concepts and how they exist regardless of human perception and learning. Now let us apply this concept of A Priori to knowledge that an infant has seemingly from nowhere.

An infant knows how to move its eyes, how to cry, and how to search for a source of food, these are A Priori. The desires, or drives, that leads to the infant acting out the known things, are instincts. We all have the instinct to cry out when we feel pain, or laugh when we find something funny or are extremely happy. From our earliest ages these drives exists. Babies cry from the moment they are born, begin smiling at around six weeks, and begin to laugh between three to four months.¹²

For the sake of organizational purposes and easier understanding, allow me to more clearly define drive and knowledge. Knowledge is facts that are stored in our minds, and is separated into two categories: Learned and A Priori. Drive, according to modern psychology, is an excitatory state produced by a homeostatic disturbance which produces some level of mental distress until the action the drive is directed towards is completed. Drive is also separated into two categories: Desire (drive originating from Learned) and Instinct (drive originating from A Priori).

¹⁰ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 1781

¹¹ Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, 2005

¹² Addyman, *The Science of Baby Laughter*, 2013

However, be wary of your drives, even when they are directed toward a good goal. While the desired result may be a good and moral result, the limited understanding of human beings allows for mistakes to happen even in the pursuit of goodness. Burning away sickness is a temporary solution if there is something sick deeper within, and there is always another better option to desire and act toward.

As the Gardener dug, he began to realize just how much he may have harmed and destroyed the Tree in his desperateness to save it. He had cut off and grafted branches, he had torn off bark and dug through the trunk, and he had burned away the parasites within it with fire. He slowed down, for just a moment, as he realized he had acted too quickly, and in the wrong direction, and that his beloved Tree was probably beyond saving. Yet he still continued to dig, for there was a lesson to learn from the roots and he *needed* to learn it so he didn't make the same mistakes again.

Puppeteers

While we are responsible to some degree, for the reality of manipulators in power, we cannot simply blame ourselves entirely for it. It is a given that people are generally foolish, prone to follow their instincts, and will take the easy path. The individuals who know and understand the existence of puppeteers, and the puppeteers themselves, are the ones who the responsibility inevitably falls on, and rightfully so.

Tell me which is responsible for a rockslide: the rocks who are arranged in such a way as to have a domino effect, The person who throws a rock at the top of the mountain, causing all of

the other rocks to fall, or the person who lets the person throw the rock without doing anything to stop them? Without those people who are willing to discard the value of a human life, there would be no despotism, and those people who have a high potential to be used are not entirely at fault. They may not know that some of their beliefs are irrational, or they may not realize that they are prone to jump headfirst into groups without thinking things through. The people who are to blame besides the manipulators, are those who know and do nothing to help those who don't. If there is no knowledge of good and evil, how can one say what is good or evil? And if a person who is ignorant then does something heinous, then who is to blame? No it is not them. It is individuals like you or I who have knowledge of good and evil, but didn't take the time to educate and help this person who so obviously needed it.

But we are oh so fond of blaming the "people" and their ignorance, aren't we? We look down on them imperiously saying "Look at the fools, they continue to hurt themselves and those around them. Why don't they learn?" without taking it upon ourselves to help and teach them better. How are we any less to blame than one who manipulates? We are the ones who allow it happen in the first place! We can see when someone is manipulating and using a group of people, but we either attack the manipulator without thinking about the fact that the people will be used by someone else at a later date, or we sit back in our Pride saying it is not our fault and therefore not our problem.

Those who follow their darker desires are many, and the ways in which they use other people are an even greater number. We cannot expect "fools" to help themselves; they are fools after all. Therefore, the responsibility to help them falls on us, individuals who have taken the time to grow our knowledge of the world, and those who use others. If we don't, then *we* are the

fools for assuming that they are even able to help themselves. We must do our best to work against the Puppeteers, by taking their puppets away from them, and putting them far beyond their reach. If we leave the puppets to their own desires, then we are only waiting for the next Puppeteer to take the puppets, and make them dance their terrible dance of manipulation and despotism.

The roots were twisted, short, sickly, and weak. The soil which they had been planted in had apparently been *too* good, and the Gardener's involvement with watering the Tree had only furthered this problem. The roots had not needed to dig deep in the early stages of the Tree's life to receive lifegiving water, and so had grown only a little way into the soil. It was a miracle that the Tree had not fallen over long ago, the roots were so short. But now in the later stages of its life, the Tree had to find and drink water on its own, but was unable to. The Gardener's sadness deepened further as he realized that his Tree may be beyond saving, and his involvement had led to this.

To the Roots

If we truly desire to destroy the efforts of evil and further the efforts of good, we must spread the light and pain of knowledge to everyone else. While some wish to continue to let others make their decisions, the vast majority of humanity wishes to rule their own lives, they only don't know how to. It is up to those with the knowledge to overcome their own Sins and teach others about the wonders of the world and free them from the ignorance the Puppeteers have built up and circulated, creating a false normality.

And look around you! The Puppeteers have created this society that is based on going to an institution of “learning” to only get a piece of paper, to go and waste tens of thousands of dollars on another slip of paper from yet another institution of “learning”, to go and find some “stable” job so we can live our lives in “comfort“. No matter the age, living cannot be built upon comfort. It’s the pain, suffering, and the things we do to become more than we were before that allow us to progress and live a life that we find fulfilling.

A majority of people believe that a life of fulfillment is only a dream, and that the only option is to live to survive, so they allow themselves to be guided by those who only use them. They pass on their pessimistic reality to their children, and the children to their children. It is a vicious but genius cycle that the Puppeteers have created which allows them to rule and continue to rule. But a Skinner box only works so long as those trapped are unaware of its nature, so it is up to those who have the knowledge and realization of the world as it really is to give a ray of hope to those who are trapped in their ignorance.

We must cultivate and help the roots of our country before we can ever hope to focus on fixing or creating a new and better form of our government and its branches. As was said in *Laddie*¹³, the power of the government comes first from the individual and the aid they give to their local area, and then to the county, and so on until it reaches all of the states. And we cannot expect the people in their ignorance to help themselves, they don’t know any better. We must take responsibility and help our fellow man. The process will be long, and full of disappointment and pain. But we can use these, accept the reality they present and use it to fuel our drive to see a better country, and perhaps even a better world. Even if the process is hellish and full of pain and

¹³ Porter 2017, page

failure, even if it becomes a multi-generational process, it can be done. We cannot give up on our desire to see a better world just because it seems impossible, and we cannot assume that everyone will desire the easier choice of despotism.

Knowledge has a weight to it that nothing else does: when we gain more of it, the stark and painful desparateness of reality becomes more and more clear, and as we see things more and more clearly we begin to desire easier ways out. But with that clear understanding we are able to escape from reality in the way that Einstein described¹⁴, finding more and more knowledge in the hopes that we can finally understand what it is we must do, and make reality something more than what it was before we came into this world by passing on our knowledge to each other and those trapped in ignorance. We cannot just gain knowledge and do nothing with it, that is not the purpose of gaining knowledge. Whatever other reasons for learning we may have, there is always that distinct desire to better everything around us, and we must pass our knowledge on to everyone who will accept it, to do so. We humans have arrived at this point in our evolution because of our collective desire to better our world, and the taking of past knowledge and building on and changing what we know. To become better and overcome the Puppeteers, we must share our knowledge and efforts. We must cultivate the knowledge for the next generation so their roots may become strong and able to stand against the storm of life.

It is from roots that all power is derived, their importance cannot be overstated or even stated too much. Christ himself is referred to as a “a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people”¹⁵. Our roots determine who we are, so they must be given the respect they are due, and it is the roots (or our perception of them) that must be fixed for us to truly change and grow,

¹⁴ Einstein, Principles of Research

¹⁵ 2 Nephi 21:10, page 93

as individuals, families, communities, towns, cities, counties, states, countries, and as a whole race.

The Gardener dug into some of the harsher soil in his garden, there were more rocks and clay here, and it would be harder for the roots to reach the aquifers. He reached down and placed a single seed into his newly dug hole. He had learned his lesson from his last failure, and he would do better this time. He must give some aid to ensure that this new tree would grow, but he must also introduce it to the harsher side of reality and allow it to struggle. The roots needed to be good and strong in order for the rest of the tree to grow and become a bearer of good fruit. He covered the seed in the freshly dug soil, thinking that perhaps it would succeed, perhaps it wouldn't, but an attempt must be made.

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