

Afterword



THE TIME HAS NOW FINALLY ARRIVED, after years of rather desultory writing, for introspection, for a review, an analysis, a kind of human balance sheet. Let me hasten to add that I refer to this only for this autobiography. At 79 – which I absolutely do not feel – I plan on many more active years. There will still be chapters to write!

Regrets? We all have them. From the early carefree years, perhaps the most painful is the thought that I could have been more understanding and careful and companionable to my *Yeshiva-bocher* father and to my mother, particularly in their declining years.

Regret that I was – and am – a stutterer – and the restriction that this has placed both practically and psychologically on career choice, on friendships, on personality.

Regrets that I did not return to academia a little earlier, and that my initial formal education was narrow and did not embrace business and cultural disciplines.

Regrets that I have sometimes deliberately, sometimes unthinkingly, sometimes inadvertently caused distress to others.

Regrets that I did not devote more time and understanding to Hedda, and to my sons in their baby and formative years and that today I have only a dim memory of them as babies, this being heightened by my intense interest in my grandchildren.

There is nostalgia too – for the close, affectionate, secure, ghetto-like community life of the Jewish community in Durban; for the daily tram ride to and from school; for the uncomplicatedness of that life and its (to me) very small worries and concerns.

And analysis? Not a deep psycho job, but a practical look; a sort of SWOT analysis of oneself. I am certainly a dilettante. From the time that the adult world invaded my youthful psyche, concentration was not my strongpoint. There have of course been achievements which the record shows, but close examination might show these to be somewhat superficial. I know that I am well-regarded, for honesty, ability, understanding. I have

no enemies among former colleagues, customers, suppliers. I nevertheless have a sneaking, uncomfortable feeling that there is a façade which hides abilities somewhat less than they appear to be. I certainly have always had either protectors, or very strong colleagues – Sol Moshal, Charlie Engelhard, Irvine Brittan. I wonder what I would have been without them.

I suppose that in the end, one should accept the happiness and contentment that is mine, without too much looking back. It has been a fantastic, fascinating, mostly satisfying career in an industry where I believe I have made a strong mark, and in which, until very recently, I played an active and important part.

It opened up the world to me, in travel, in contacts, in life-style, and in wealth, which, whilst small in international comparison, is far above what I could have envisioned. It brought me, at a mature age, to a loving and superb life companion in Hedda who is more than I deserve, and who provided us with Mark, Antony, John and Peter – warm, intelligent, caring loving people who, together with their partners and children, are a great joy to us.

It is all more and more and more than enough.

And the future still beckons.

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