Dear Kasey,

Thank you very much for your email.

As indicated previously, my book with the working title, ***The consciousness-meaning (CM) model: A new approach for life-meaning*** is still in the preparation stage. Below is a brief prospectus of the chapters in the proposed book. I have completed the English version of Chapter 3, which describes the main features of the CM model. This should give you a reasonable view of what the book is about. Chapter 3 and my CV are attached here.

Best wishes,

Sam Rakover

P.S. Please confirm receipt. Thanks.

**Prospectus** of the book:

**Table of contents (tentative).**

The content of each chapter is briefly described.

**Preface:**

In the preface, I present the major goal of the book and a brief summary of its chapters. The major goal is to develop theconsciousness-meaning (CM) model. One important aim of this model is to explain why most normal people manage their life meaningfully without suffering from an existential life-crisis. The CM model is based on three types of meanings: Innate Meaning; Regular-Acquired Meaning; and Extreme-Acquired Meaning. A necessary condition for all these meanings is *consciousness*. That is, in a normal person, consciousness imparts meanings to different mental states (MSs), which represent that person’s outer and the inner world. In its essence, the CM model is founded on the scientific approach and the philosophy of science and mind. The model proposes solutions to everyday observations and to several important philosophical issues raised by the literature of existentialism and meaning of life.

**Chapter 1: Introduction: Personal and general comments**

Since I believe that a book on ‘life-meaning’ is affected by the author’s worldview, and since a worldview is founded on rational and emotional components, Chapter 1 describes my emotional and intellectual infrastructure. I am an atheist, and an experimental psychologist who has a profound background in philosophy of science and mind, and basic physics. In light of these ideas, one may classify philosophical approaches as follows: (A) *The source of the philosophical issue* (personal, philosophical, theoretical) and (B) *The way of coping with the problem* (personal, philosophical, theoretical). For example, Camus’ approach is classified as: personal and philosophical for both (A) and (B). By comparison, the proposed book focuses on the theoretical component (scientific) in addition to the personal and the philosophical components.

**Chapter 2: The universe is infinite, indifferent, and independent of man and his deeds**

The major assumption of Chapter 2 is that the universe is infinite, indifferent to human deeds and values, and operates in accordance to scientific explanations (which do not take into account a person’s inner world or faith in God). The chapter also discusses the empirical generalization that every phenomenon has the same developmental structure: Birth, Blossoming, and Death (BBD). This structure may bring a human to a state of despair and feel there is no point in living. This despair is connected to Camus’s approach, according to which life is absurd because the world cannot be understood and death is certain. This approach led Camus to ponder suicide. The chapter raises several arguments against this attitude. Accordingly, it is proposed that human life is interwoven with meanings, which help people cope with life crises. Some of these life-meanings are imparted by society, namely lifestyles that a society wants individuals to adopt so that they will contribute to society and will be successfully be integrated in it (on other life-meanings see discussion in the next chapter).

**Chapter 3: The consciousness meaning (CM) Model: Conceptual infrastructure**

When a mental state is within an individual’s consciousness, that is, when the person is aware of the mental state, then meaning is imparted to it. A mental state (MS) includes, for example, a belief, intention, purpose, or thought, representing external or internal stimuli. For a normal person, consciousness is a prerequisite for an MS to have meaning. When an MS is in a person’s consciousness, it is bestowed with meaning. Meaning has various qualities and levels, which are determined by the nature of the event being represented in the consciousness. For the purposes of the current discussion, two types of meaning are identified, which are determined by the source, type, and degree of conscious experiences:

1. *Innate meaning (Meaning 1):* Determined by events constituting sensory stimuli that activate humans’ five senses, sensations of cold and heat, and emotions such as pain, pleasure, or fear (for example, a strong and sudden stimulation);
2. *Acquired meaning (Meaning 2):* Determined by abstract stimuli in one’s mind, such as thoughts, ideas, and imaginations.

Sensory stimuli elicit typical feelings and emotions. When a normal person is conscious of these, they acquire a sense of meaning, often a high-intensity meaning regarding one’s life and being alive (called Innate Meaning or Meaning 1). Abstract stimuli acquire meaning by virtue of being in consciousness, but this is often a mundane meaning with low impact (called Acquired-Regular Meaning or Regular Meaning 2). However, if thoughts and ideas are empowered and internalized by the individual, they acquire special meaning and provide guidance for the person’s life, for example religious beliefs or ideological values (called Acquired-Extreme Meaning or Extreme Meaning 2).

**Chapter 4: Explanation of consciousness has yet to be discovered**

There is not yet a mechanistic explanation for consciousness (in the sense of the term prevalent in the natural sciences). There is no explanation that describes how consciousness emerges from the neurophysiology of the brain. That is, there is no explanation for consciousness that is parallel to the explanation for the connection between temperature and the movements of atomic particles in a material, or the connection between energy and mass. In the first part of the chapter, several bizarre conclusions are derived from the hypothesis that the theory that explains the connection between consciousness and brain has been discovered. In the second part of the chapter, the literature dealing with the consciousness-brain connection is briefly reviewed. Based on this, it is concluded that no theory explaining the consciousness-brain connection has yet been revealed. The main features of consciousness as a primary explanatory factor are listed.

**Chapter 5: Explanations of life-meaning, absurdity and suicide**

The basic terms in existentialism: life-meaning, absurdity, and suicide, can be viewed as behavioral constructs (e.g., cognitive, emotional, mental). As such, one may attempt to explain them. Chapter 5 describes how the CM model handles theses constructs. It explores the conditions under which Innate Meaning is weakened. It also looks at when Innate Meaning supports an individual undergoing a severe life crisis , which often harms Acquired Meanings. To illustrate, the chapter analyzes the life crisis and loss of life-meaning of the great Russian author Tolstoy.

**Chapter 6: The philosophical and explanatory status of the terms: life-meaning, absurdity, and suicide**

Chapter 6 discusses these terms from the philosophical and methodological viewpoints. For example, how can one justify them? After considering various approaches to this question, a conclusion is reached that the best treatment for this problem is provided by the CM model. As examples that support this model, the chapter discuss two real attempts to commit suicide (one unsuccessful and one unfortunately successful). Finally, the chapter analyzes the relations between life-meaning, free will, and relativism.

**Chapter 7:**  **Life-meaning as an explained and explanatory theoretical structure**

In Chapter 7 I examine the central concept of life-meaning from two viewpoints. The first is how life-meaning can be explained; the second concerns how one can use it to explain human conduct. An analysis based on the life of Paul Gaugin, who experienced a profound life crisis, yields a “three-stage” model. When a life crisis causes someone to replace his/her previous lifestyle with a new one, the behavior is explained by appealing to the previous life-meaning, the factors that caused life crisis, and the new lifestyle. One crucial factor often triggering a life crisis and loss of life-meaning is death. People aspire to immortality and having a significant, lasting impact on the world. This yearning leads to a sense of futility, since each person’s life is confined to a “bubble” (the time-space in which an individual lives). One possible response to this aspiration is the human capacity for creating unrealistic and imaginary models (when a model is based on reality and empirical observations, may one talk of scientific models). Finally, the chapter discusses explanatory models that are appropriate for dealing with life-meaning.

**Chapter 8: Discussion: a comparison between the CM model and other approaches to life-meaning**

During the development of the ideas presented in this book, the CM model was compared with other approaches to life-meaning such as those of Camus, Nagel, and Tolstoy. In Chapter 8, the CM model is compared to several general views of life-meaning. The *God-faith approach* suggests that life-meaning is rooted in the faith in God and eternal life. The *subjective approach* proposes that life meaning depends on the individual who determines his own path in life. The *objective approach* proposes that life-meaning is dependent on the individual and it exists in the world. The *hybrid approach* suggests that life-meaning is based on both the subjective and objective approaches. The *nihilistic approach* assumes that life has no meaning. Comparison of the CM model to these five approaches clarifies that the CM model is a special case of the hybrid approach. It is based on an Innate Meaning (Meaning 1) as well as Acquired Meaning (Meaning 2: regular, extreme). The comparisons emphasize the advantages of the CM model: it is established using scientific methodology, integrated with influences of the philosophy of science and mind, and considers the philosophy of existentialism and life-meaning. One major factor in the present approach is the attempt to establish life-meaning based on consciousness, which is evaluated as a primary natural factor. Since the CM model is not based on the God-faith approach, this chapter addresses the relations between religion and nationality.

**Additional information**

1. **Qualifications:** I believe that I am qualified to write this particular book for the following reasons. First, I am well versed in the philosophy of science, mind, and psychology. In recent years, I began to be interested in the philosophy of *existentialism* and of *meaning of life.* As a result, I have read and pondered numerous books and papers on these topics, some of which I discuss in the proposed book. Second, as can be seen from my CV, I have published many papers and several books in the philosophy of science and mind (my last book was published by Lexington in 2018). Hence, I am well acquainted with the process of writing books in the fields of philosophy and psychology.
2. **Target audience**: This is not an introduction to psychology or social psychology. However, it could be referred to in courses in psychology or philosophy in which students learn about *existentialism* and of *meaning of life*. This book is appropriate for professionals, scholars, and other educated people who are interested in the issues raised in this book.
3. **Competing or similar books**:In the proposed book, I discuss several books related to the topic of life-meaning. I consider first two important philosophical books by Camus, *The myth of Sisyphus* and *The rebel.* In these books, Camus develops his approach regarding the meaningless of life, absurdity, rebellion, and social integration. Secondly, I consider Sartre’s *Existentialism is a humanism*. This book received much criticism. In it, Sartre suggests, among other things, that the individual defines his own essence – an approach I do not accept. My book differs from these books in the following major ways. First, the three life-meanings (Innate; Acquired: regular and extreme) protect the individual from meaningless and absurdity. Secondly, the creation of life-meanings is largely removed from the responsibility of the individual and is attributed to the society to which the individual belongs.

In addition to these outstanding books, I mention the following books, which were written in Hebrew. (To the best of my knowledge they have not been translated into English. See in the book’s references): Lurie, *Tracking the meaning of life: A philosophical journey*; Sigard, *Studies in existentialism;* Sagi, *Albert Camus and the philosophy of the absurd.* These three books summarized critically topics regarding life-meaning and existentialism. However, they do not present a theory or a model for life-meaning, as has been developed in the proposed book. Finally, I discuss two books that deal with relevant topics. Belshaw, C. *10 good questions about life and death,* is a popular book that reviews the main issues regarding life-meaning. He reviews the approaches of several important philosophers (Camus, Sartre) and makes several suggestions to be considered by the reader. Landau, I. *Finding meaning in an imperfect world,* reviews the appropriate literature and proposes many suggestions and arguments against certain pessimistic approaches to life. He bases his optimistic approach on the premise that the overall values of various aspects of life are positive. While Landau’s approach and mine are optimistic, they differ in the theory that supports this optimism. His approach is founded on the idea that a meaningful life depends on values. In contrast, my approach is based on various types of life-meanings: Innate and Acquired. Another difference is that Landau’s approach is more practical (by proposing advice) than the present approach, which is theoretically oriented.

1. **Courses**: The book might be used as a supplementary text in the courses that teach philosophy of life-meaning, existentialism, and consciousness at the level of B.A, M.A and PhD. The book will be valuable for professionals who are interested in understanding the book’s topics and its new approach (philosophers, psychologists, etc.).
2. **Published previously**: The book has not been published previously and it is not based on my PhD thesis (which is about rats’ behavioral responses to fear). Except for part of Chapter 4, which is based on my previous publications, the whole book is based on new ideas and writing.
3. **Length of the MS**: My goal is approximately 250 pages, including figures and tables. Since the book is still in process, this is only a rough estimate.
4. **When will the MS be completed**: Based on my experience in writing books on philosophy, psychology, many papers, and part of the proposed book, which is written in Hebrew and will be translated into English, my rough estimate of completion of the MS is about two years.
5. **Reviewers**: Below is a list of several eminent scholars who can read the attached chapter, make fair evaluations, and contribute philosophical and psychological comments:

Colin Allen. [colallen@indiana.edu](mailto:colallen@indiana.edu)

Harnad, S. [harnad@ecs.soton.ac.uk](mailto:harnad@ecs.soton.ac.uk)

Hemmo, M. [meir@research.haifa.ac.il](mailto:meir@research.haifa.ac.il)

Hon, G. [hon@research.haifa.ac.il](mailto:hon@research.haifa.ac.il)

Psillos, S [psillos@phs.uoa.gr](mailto:psillos@phs.uoa.gr)

Stanovich, K. [kstanovich@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:kstanovich@oise.utoronto.ca)

Josef Tzelgov. [Tzelgov@bgu.ac.il](mailto:Tzelgov@bgu.ac.il)

Velmans, M. [m.velmans@gold.ac.uk](mailto:m.velmans@gold.ac.uk)

1. **Other publishers**: I have not contacted any other publisher. When the manuscript is completed, I may consider publishing a Hebrew version. (I have not contacted any Hebrew publisher yet.) Since Israel is a small country and the number of its academic institutions is small, a Hebrew version should not pose any economic competition with the English version.