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**THE PARADOX OF DEI:
HOW LOFTY IDEALS BECAME HATED**

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1. INTRODUCTION

There are numerous terms that should be seen as positive values but have been co-opted by today's culture wars. These terms include "woke," "social justice," "cancel culture," "identity politics," "politically correct," "Black Lives Matter," and DEI. Surprisingly, the term DEI, which stands for diversity, equity, and inclusion, has negative connotations today, although these are noble values that anyone with a soul should admire. This paper is an examination of what went wrong and how to fix the problem. Moreover, a biblical approach to DEI is discussed. Leaders need to understand the correct way to advocate for the ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusion in a way that brings people together and does not offend.

Workplace DEI efforts are increasingly important in today's globalized world. Diversity refers to various aspects of identity, including race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, weight, height, attractiveness, language, (dis)abilities, parental status, education, values, beliefs, and other social identities. Diversity ensures that a variety of voices, experiences, and knowledge contribute to building an organization or community. Diversity also refers to a diversity of minds, ideas, and approaches, and it allows teams to find a solution that considers multiple angles of the problem, thus making the solution better, stronger, and more optimal. Teamwork and collaboration are essential in today's globalized and information-driven workforce comprising diverse individuals.

Equity refers to fair treatment for all people, so that the practices and policies in place ensure fairness in compensation and opportunities for advancement. In many firms, historically disadvantaged groups have been underpaid and had to struggle for promotions. Inclusion ensures that diverse individuals feel

like essential parts of the team and have fair opportunities to grow and contribute. In addition to the DEI terms, some firms include accessibility, stressing their organization's emphasis on DEIA (diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility).

DEI is an integral part of a successful revenue-generating business and brings both moral and financial benefits. DEI is also essential for recruiting and retaining top talent.¹ In the workplace, DEI is vital for long-term progress, and companies committed to it can attract and retain premium talent. DEI has been found to improve financial performance, creativity, and customer and employee satisfaction.² Duarte *et al.*³ maintained, "Psychologists have demonstrated the value of diversity—particularly diversity of viewpoints—for enhancing creativity, discovery, and problem solving." There is evidence that diversity makes us brighter.⁴ For instance, immigrants were responsible for 23% of the U.S. patents granted between 1990 and 2016.⁵

There is a strong correlation between diversity and high-technology growth. Regions that scored high on composite diversity (gays, foreigners, and bohemians) also scored high on the Milken Institute's measure of high-technology growth. Creative people in technology fields are attracted to regions where people who are tolerant, open-minded, and accepting of others reside, and countries that discriminate against women have seriously hurt their economic growth rates. This should not be surprising given that these countries did not have access to the brainpower of approximately 50% of the population. Even in the United States, research has indicated that racial discrimination resulted in a 4% reduction in GDP.⁶

Edmans, Flammer, and Glossner⁷ found that the best way to determine the true DEI of a firm is to do more than simply examine traditional measures of demographic diversity. The

ideal DEI measure must also consider whether a workplace is inclusive and equitable; this requires learning about the attitudes of the firm's employees and managers. To measure the true DEI, the researchers examined proprietary data from the Trust Index used in the Great Places to Work (GPTW) scale, which is used to create the 100 Best Companies to Work for in America list. The types of questions employed in the Trust Index (e.g., "I can be myself around here," "Managers avoid playing favorites," and "This is a psychologically and emotionally healthy place to work") tap into the equity and inclusion dimensions of DEI. The authors found that their measure of DEI was positively correlated with seven out of eight measures of profitability (as well as Tobin's Q, a measure of valuation). Diversity is not the only feature associated with profitability.

It is astonishing that the term DEI has become so contentious. Several red states, including Florida and Texas, have passed legislation abolishing DEI initiatives in higher education, and many more are in the process of doing so. This paper will focus on the good, the bad, and the ugly of how DEI is being applied today and why it has become so controversial.

2. THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY OF DEI

The problem with DEI is that it focuses too much on demographic diversity and ignores many other kinds of diversity. While, there should be more ethnic minorities and women on the boards of organizations, that is not sufficient by itself. Recruiting minorities to diversify the recruitment pool or hiring people of color to check off a box does not improve DEI. As noted above, demographic diversity is only weakly correlated with DEI. An organization's culture has to be changed to create a true climate of equity and inclusion.

Rowinski⁸ asserted the following:

Advancing the opportunities of women and minorities is important, but these are not the only two faces of diversity. People from different countries with varied political and economic backgrounds develop unique expectations and approaches to solving problems. Even neurodivergence and disability bring new perspectives to business discussions. And the result is often impactful business decisions that take more people into consideration so we can solve more (and bigger) problems.

There are many kinds of bigotry, and it is a mistake to focus only on discrimination based on skin color or gender. Many feel that racial categorization itself is problematic and may result in intense battles among various ethnic groups. It should be highlighted that race is a biological myth that is socially constructed. This paradigm shift is the first step in moving away from racism and bigotry. There are six arguments supporting the view that race is not biology:

1. People cannot be reliably divided into racial groups.
2. There are no relationships between traits that are used to categorize people into races (like skin color) and associated stereotypes.
3. Over time, geography and environment influence the genetic structures of human populations through natural selection.
4. There is more diversity within racial groups than between racial groups.
5. All people living today are descended from populations that originated in Africa.
6. All people living today are one biological species.⁹

Moreover, classification by race is often misleading given that ethnic groups do intermarry. Indeed, 35% of Americans have close relatives who married someone from another race, and approximately 30% of Asians marry someone from a different ethnic group.¹⁰

3. OTHER KINDS OF DISCRIMINATION

Prejudice based on skin color and gender may be common, but other biases exist, and all are morally reprehensible. Let us focus on just a few types of discrimination.

Neurodiversity in the workplace is essential, and firms should do their utmost to hire people with autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia, or ADHD.¹¹ Neurodiverse people have different neurological functioning than neurotypical people, which can benefit a firm through the way they see the world and solve problems differently, which can lead to new perspectives and solutions.

Temple Grandin¹² has called attention to the fact that diversity also includes being aware of the different kinds of minds that exist. Grandin is autistic and a visual thinker, so she processes information differently from most people. Historically, it was difficult for visual thinkers to do well in school and later get jobs. Many cannot sit still or do abstract math, yet they can be highly creative. Thomas Edison did very poorly in school — he was at the bottom of the class and had to be homeschooled. One way of increasing creativity is to put different kinds of thinkers together and allow them to use different approaches to come up with solutions.

Another type of discrimination relates to weight. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2020, 41.9% of American adults were obese.¹³ It is

morally wrong to deride overweight people; it is well known that diets do not work, and the obese are not responsible for their conditions. Yet, obesity is stigmatized in society, and people with excess weight are often discriminated against in many places, such as the workplace, school, health-care settings, and even in personal relationships. Women are more likely to experience weight discrimination than bias based on ethnicity, sexual orientation, or physical disability.¹⁴

It bears mentioning that neurological issues such as autism and obesity are considered to be disabilities. About 27% of Americans have some kind of disability (CDC, 2023) and have faced discrimination in employment, housing, or education. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is a federal law that protects the civil rights of individuals with disabilities by prohibiting discrimination against them in everyday activities.

Similarly, more than 50% of the complaints concerning discrimination in Canada deal with ableism. Only 4% of Canadian firms consider disability in their DEI efforts. There is something seriously wrong with DEI initiatives if 22% of Canadian workers with disabilities can be ignored.¹⁵

In another area of bias, there is a large body of research demonstrating that there is an attractiveness bias, also known as lookism.¹⁶ People seen as more attractive earn higher salaries and receive better treatment in schools and the workplace than plain-looking individuals. Moreover, those who are not seen as attractive (e.g., those who are short or obese) are discriminated against. There is a problem in our society with body shaming and appearance mocking, which Donald Trump is known for doing, especially when dealing with women.¹⁷

DEI is a concept that aims to create a more inclusive environment where everyone feels respected and valued. However, in recent years, DEI has been criticized for promoting hate and racism. This may result from overstressing prejudice based on race and ignoring other kinds of bias. Some believe DEI training courses reinforce stereotypes and “backfire” by increasing or renewing biases or even by fostering new sensitivities. There is evidence supporting these criticisms. Several researchers have found that DEI training has little or no positive effect.¹⁸ People of all races resent hearing about a “white supremacy culture” or that there is something insidious in stating that “America is a melting pot.” Rufo¹⁹ argued that DEI programs on college campuses have become highly ideological political programs designed to promote a specific radical political agenda; they do not make universities more tolerant and receptive to open debate.

Some bias researchers advocate for a focus on changing behavior rather than people’s attitudes. Introducing white fragility workshops into an organization probably accomplishes considerably less than finding ways to widen the net when hiring managers. Some companies are talking about “diversity and belonging” rather than “diversity and inclusion” because the latter reduces individuals to “victim or villain” and often alienates coworkers.²⁰ We must be careful not to let DEI become a tool for promoting hate and division. Instead, we should use it as an opportunity to build a more inclusive and equitable society for everyone.

Lily Zheng, DEI strategist, consultant, and author of several books on DEI, emphasizes that DEI training often does not work because of employee fatigue with these initiatives, which often accomplish nothing. To engage workers, they must feel that DEI initiatives are needed and will result in concrete, visible results. Zheng stated:

To address backlash, companies need to frame DEI efforts as resolving inequities and achieving justice. We need to frame DEI less like we are attacking people and more in a way that people can see a role for themselves in these efforts.²¹

Most organizations virtually ignore one kind of diversity: diversity of opinion. Demographic diversity alone may not be sufficient to ensure this. Today's Supreme Court is the most demographically diverse in history: four women, two Blacks, and a Latina. Despite this, it is not very diverse when it comes to opinions. Indeed, the Supreme Court is expected to question the value of diversity and reverse affirmative action.

Another kind of discrimination is workplace bullying. It has been well-documented how harmful workplace bullying can be to an organization. About 11% of workers have been victims of bullying, and many are blue-collar and unskilled workers.²² A leader must create zero tolerance for deriding or insulting by any person.

In summary, many kinds of bias should be addressed, because focusing exclusively on one type of discrimination and ignoring others can devastate an organization. The emphasis should be on removing all types of bigotry. What is at the root of all types of discrimination, whether against gay people, Asians, Jews, stutterers, dwarfs, unattractive people, people with disabilities, or intellectuals? What can be done to eliminate all of these types of bias? There is no reason for managers in charge of diversity to believe the problem will be solved only by hiring more Blacks and Latinos. First, as stated above, it is the CEO's responsibility to change the organization's culture. Second, the refrain of fictional detective Harry Bosch in Michael Connelly's novel *Everybody Counts or Nobody Counts* should be the

philosophy of every leader. It is about changing an organization into one where all people are respected.

4. PROBLEMS WITH DEI IN EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Scholars with different opinions who raise evidence-based questions about the views of the extreme left are often banned from campuses. Hooven²³ is concerned with journal guidelines such as “Science must respect the dignity and rights of all humans.” This seems like a laudable standard but can be used to suppress research demonstrating group differences. Would we want to silence research that shows that some drugs work better on women than men (or white rather than Black) because of biological differences? There is, in fact, evidence of sex differences when it comes to the body’s response to various medications.²⁴ Carole Hooven was attacked as transphobic and dangerous for stating that there are two sexes—male and female—and that “those sexes are designated by the kinds of gametes we produce.” She emphasized that “understanding the facts about biology doesn’t prevent us from treating people with respect.”²⁵ Hooven challenged those who argue that one must be ready to subvert science and deny reality to protect the rights of oppressed minorities. In this area, university administrators are part of the problem.

Another force inhibits administrators: the now-ubiquitous acceptance of vague and subjective principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the consequent investment of vast quantities of time and money in ensuring that these principles guide all the actions of the university community. While these initiatives have improved the campus environment in some respects, they have harmed it in others. Students have become

conditioned to believe that it is their right to be free from offense, whether in the classroom or even the dining hall, and they have framed ringing endorsements of academic freedom as covert defenses of bigotry and injustice.²⁶

Lukianoff and Haidt²⁷ have written about the danger of teaching students such untruths and cognitive distortions as “What doesn’t kill you makes you weaker,” “Always trust your feelings,” and “Life is a battle between good people and evil people.” These beliefs are related to three cognitive biases: overgeneralization, emotional reasoning, and black-and-white thinking. If schools teach students to listen and be receptive to new ideas, they can become critical thinkers and appreciate different perspectives. Instead, we are seeing students attacking lecturers who present ideas they consider offensive. This is increasing the polarization of society and making students less adaptable and resilient, essential attributes for thriving in the real world.

DEI has not only spread across college campuses but is now a part of K–12 education in many schools.²⁸ There is a great deal of conflict over how educators indoctrinate students and teach them controversial topics sometimes linked to DEI, such as critical race theory and critical social justice. There are elementary schools where K–3 children are taught to “break the binary of gender” or to “deconstruct their racial and sexual identities” and identify themselves according to power and privilege. Terms such as “white colonizers” and “infinite gender spectrum” are used indiscriminately as facts.²⁹

Along the same lines, injecting DEI into science can create all kinds of problems. There is now a movement for citation justice, defined as “the act of citing authors based on identify [sic] to uplift marginalized voices with the knowledge

that citation is used as a form of power in a patriarchal society based on white supremacy.”³⁰ Some DEI activists have been encouraging researchers to consider the gender and race of authors when deciding which researchers to cite. Many feel that citation justice corrupts science rather than enhances it.³¹ An example is the view that the disparity in science of not enough females in STEM areas may not be problematic if there is no discrimination. Regardless of what some believe, not everything is about power. Women should be encouraged to enter STEM fields, and any discriminatory barriers should be eliminated; but is it a problem if women prefer nursing to engineering? It might be impossible to ensure that the distribution of ethnic groups in every discipline matches society’s demographics.³² Should we be concerned if there are too many Asians in the sciences?

John Staddon believes that the focus should be on the real problems in science, not topics that are popular fads:

Most dramatic is the replication crisis, which is still going on almost twenty years after it was first identified. At least fifty percent of results in social and biomedical science turn out not to be replicable. The main reason is a misapplication of statistical methods so as to get positive, publishable results, which are necessary for career advancement because of the citation/publication/grants-awarded evaluative criteria that are used. Another error is the widespread application to, say, individual psychology of data obtained from groups (we are all subject to “confirmation bias”; well, no we’re not, but you wouldn’t know it from most reports). Fraud is also skyrocketing; papers with fake data, imaginary clinical trials, and the like grow in number every year. Correlations (easily obtained

by appropriate statistical tests) are almost always presented as causes; just look for the phrase “linked to.”³³

5. CRITICAL THINKING AS AN ANTIDOTE TO DUALISTIC THINKING

Dualistic thinking, also known as black-and-white or polarized thinking, is a general tendency to see things as good or bad, right or wrong, and us or them, without room for compromise and shades of gray. This all-or-nothing cognitive approach leads to poor decision-making. It also creates polarized groups (think of today’s Democrats and Republicans) and encourages discrimination and prejudice by creating the “us vs. them” approach to life. It interferes with one’s ability to be an innovator, which requires one to be open-minded.

This type of dualistic thinking is known in the mental health field as “splitting,” which is a “defense mechanism in which people unconsciously frame ideas, individuals, or groups in all-or-nothing terms (e.g., . . . all-powerful vs. 100% powerless).”³⁴ It is often seen in people who have borderline personality disorder.³⁵ Splitting is a severe problem when dealing with people with different opinions or interacting with those from other races or religions.

Splitting is also emotionally dysregulating, fostering behavioral problems like aggression and leading to psychic pain and mental illness. It also makes it hard for people to have productive dialogue, and it works against our shared ideals as a society, like love, peace, justice, and unity.³⁶

Ironically, some strong advocates of DEI would employ a kind of binary thinking that harms values such as “love, peace, justice, and unity.”

Brooks³⁷ demonstrated the dangers and challenges of extreme wokeness. Wokeness combines perceiving and proposing, so one must see any injustice in maximalist terms. One can be canceled for not considering a problem in the most pessimistic way and as having absolutely no solution. It is almost as if the goal is to get everyone to give up hope, become cynical and aggressive, and be filled with rage and negativity. Brooks concluded, “But in its extreme form, whether on left or right, wokeness leads to a one-sided depiction of the present and an unsophisticated strategy for a future offensive.”³⁸

Former President Obama warned of the dangers of a “purist” approach by some progressives that he compared to a circular firing squad. For example, he asserted that it is wrong to characterize every individual concerned about immigration as a racist. The all-or-nothing approach does not work and can cause more harm than good.

One of the things I do worry about sometimes among progressives in the United States—maybe it’s true here as well—is a certain kind of rigidity where we say, “Oh, I’m sorry, this is how it’s going to be.” . . . And then we start sometimes creating what’s called a “circular firing squad” where you start shooting at your allies because one of them is straying from purity on the issues.³⁹

Facione⁴⁰ provided good reason for the encouragement of learning critical thinking rather than dualistic thinking:

Education which includes a good measure of critical thinking skills and dispositions like truth-seeking and open-mindedness, is a problem for terrorists and extremists of every stripe because terrorists and extremists want to control what people think. They are ideologists of the worst kind. Their methods include indoctrination, intimidation, and the strictest authoritarian orthodoxy. In the “black-and-white” world of “us vs. them” a good education would mean that the people might begin to think for themselves. And that is something these extremists do not want.⁴¹

6. NO SECOND CHANCE?

President George W. Bush declared, “America is the land of the second chance, and when the gates of the prison open, the path ahead should lead to a better life.” This is consistent with the value of inclusion in DEI. Rinderle⁴² underscored that “cancelling has no place in creating a more equitable and inclusive environment.” She asserted, “To cancel is to expose your own fragility and intolerance, and to reveal your commitment to victimhood.”⁴³ We all make mistakes, and if one shows remorse, why should that person be ostracized or destroyed? Creating an environment where everyone walks on thin ice and is terrified of saying the wrong thing is the enemy of equity and inclusiveness.

Moreover, people should be allowed to express different opinions without fear of being scorned. Diversity is almost meaningless if everyone is expected to have the same viewpoint. Diversity of thought is the essence of what diversity is all about. The following summarizes what is needed:

Cancelling, consensus, and perfection have no place in true DEI work. The seven Cs of commitment, consciousness, curiosity, courage, compassion, choice, and changeability are what's needed to create a world that works better for more of us. They're what's needed to ensure we don't replicate the dynamics of oppression and inhumanity that got us here.⁴⁴

Friedman and Lipman⁴⁵ contend that we should cancel the cancel culture because it results in people losing sight of the outstanding accomplishments of many historical figures, including Thomas Jefferson (a slave owner, famously of Sally Hemmings, who putatively bore some of his children), Abraham Lincoln (early in his career he favored a gradual freeing of the slaves), Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. (several extramarital affairs), as well as great biblical personalities such as Abraham, Judah, Moses, and David. No human being is perfect, and much can be learned from flawed individuals. There are several websites dedicated to demonstrating that great people we idolize have ugly, dark sides to their personalities.⁴⁶

Should we cancel the United States, one of the greatest countries in the history of the world, because of its horrific misdeeds? These wrongs include committing genocide against Native Americans; the Dred Scott decision by the Supreme Court; being among the last countries to abolish slavery; placing Japanese Americans and Italian Americans in internment camps during the Second World War; sending back the St. Louis, a ship filled with Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany; and much more.

Friedman and Lipman spotlighted the danger of being too quick to cancel people.

In 1822, Heinrich Heine, a Jewish-born poet who converted to Christianity to advance in German society, wrote the prophetic words, “Where they burn books, they will, in the end, burn human beings, too.” Today, one might say, “Where they cancel people, they will, in the end burn them.”⁴⁷

7. A BIBLICAL APPROACH TO DEI

Many terms related to DEI have been co-opted by today’s culture wars, including “woke,” “social justice,” “cancel culture,” “identity politics,” “politically correct,” “Black Lives Matter,” and DEI. These words and phrases are used in widely varying contexts, and their implications are different depending on the speaker’s perspective. Thus, right-wing politicians use many of the above phrases as symptoms of a dangerous philosophy that can destroy the country. Ron DeSantis, Governor of Florida, asserted: “We fight the woke in the legislature. We fight the woke in the schools. We fight the woke in the corporations. We will never, ever surrender to the woke mob. Florida is where woke goes to die.” Interestingly, because the term has been weaponized, very few people even use the expression today.⁴⁸

The majestic ideas behind these phrases have their roots in the Bible. Thus, the idea of not oppressing the stranger is mentioned dozens of times in Scripture.⁴⁹ The “stranger” is anyone who is different and includes everything from racism to xenophobia. A crucial message of Scripture and all the prophets is the importance of repentance (*teshuvah*). The purpose of punishment was to get people to repent of their evil ways. This was the primary reason for sending prophets to the people. They were preachers whose job was to get the people to repent and who were told of the consequences of not heeding the word of God. Leaders understood that their job was to lead with justice

and compassion, especially for the indigent members of society.⁵⁰

All humankind was created in the image of God (*Tzelem Elohim*) (Genesis 9:6) and deserving of dignity and respect. This is why human dignity is a crucial belief in all theistic religions and is emphasized in Islamic theology.⁵¹ Human dignity is based on the idea that we were all created in God's image, a core value of the Abrahamic religions. Malachi said (2:10), "Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?" This philosophy "invests all human life with intrinsic sanctity and immeasurable value."⁵²

The great prophets Isaiah, Amos, and Micah envisioned a world of full employment, tolerance, and love. In this utopian Messianic world, the lamb and lion could lie down together, and exploitation, bias, and racism would vanish. It would be a world of true diversity, equity, and inclusivity. A spiritual world where those who want jobs will find them, and those unable to work will receive assistance. Problems such as racism, poverty, pollution, warfare, and oppression would be drastically reduced or even eliminated. Their vision was of a beautiful, peaceful, idyllic, spiritual world where humanity lives in harmony with tolerance for others.

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat; the calf, the lion cub, and the fatling [will feed] together, and a small child will lead them. A cow and bear will graze together, and their young will lie down together. The lion will eat straw like the cattle. An infant will play over a viper's hole, and a newly weaned child will stretch forth his hand over an adder's den. They will do no harm or damage anywhere

in all of My sacred mountain; for the earth will be filled with knowledge of God, as water covers the sea (Isaiah 11:6–9).

He will judge between many peoples and will settle the disputes of mighty nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, nor will they learn war anymore (Micah 4:3).

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of the grapes the one who sows the seed; The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it (Amos 9: 13).

A foundational value of the Bible is helping the needy and powerless (the proverbial “widows, orphans, strangers, and the poor”; see, for example, Zechariah 7:10). The above prophets use the metaphor of people working the soil, meaning that everyone capable will be employed.⁵³ Humankind’s role is to improve the world and make it better for all. Rae points out that God put Adam in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15) “to work it and protect it” even before sin entered the world. Work was always part of God’s plan for humankind. The Messianic world is one where “the Lord will be king” (Obadiah 1:21). Obadiah sees the saviors on Mount Zion judging the Mountain of Esau (Obadiah 1:21). In the end, “the kingdom will belong to the Lord” (Obadiah 1:21). Empires, such as Esau, that are built on plunder, exploitation, discrimination, and robbery will not last. Zechariah (2:14–15) proclaims: “Rejoice and sing, O daughter of Zion! For I am coming to live among you, says the

Lord. And many nations will join themselves to the Lord on that day, and they will be my people, and I will live among you.”

The most important word in the Hebrew Bible is *chesed* which appears 248 times.⁵⁴ It is not easy to translate (it has been translated as mercy, kindness, steadfast love, unfailing love, and more). The best definition of *chesed* is probably lovingkindness, a principal value in most religions. It includes ideals such as love, compassion, tolerance, and forgiveness. A person filled with *chesed* is one with compassion for the weakest members of society and who does everything possible to elevate them and restore their dignity. Political and corporate leaders must ensure that their countries and organizations are based on *chesed*. Organizational compassion is a litmus test of whether one’s organization has a soul.⁵⁵ To be spiritually woke is to be filled with *chesed* and love for all people. The foundation of all DEI initiatives has to be *chesed*.

The social justice advocated by the ancient prophets did not blame everyone for the oppression of society’s vulnerable and powerless members. They indicated who was responsible (often the rulers) and rebuked them. Today’s so-called social justice warriors have no problem admonishing innocent people who did not participate in or contribute to the problem. An alleged characteristic of today’s social justice movement is the right to defame and demonize everyone, whether innocent or guilty. Tarring everyone with the same brush is wrong from a justice or social justice point of view, such as by assuming that everyone from a particular group (e.g., white, Jewish, male, heterosexual, etc.) is automatically “privileged,” unteachable, irredeemable, and guilty of all kinds of misbehaviors, as well as that they go against everything the prophets preached. The prophets showed that people could be penitent and turn over a new leaf. This may be a key reason many leaders have repudiated critical race theory. Provocative terms such as “white

privilege,” “gaslighting,” “cancel culture,” “systemic racism,” “decolonizing the curriculum,” “critical race theory,” “abolitionist pedagogy,” and many others do not help bring people together.

8. CONCLUSION

Sacks⁵⁶ underscored that the solution to the problem of intolerance is not universalism. The idea that there is one truth, and you must accept it (or we will kill you!) has caused as much harm to society as tribalism. If the overarching values underlying DEI are to be accepted by the public, those advocating it must reject dualistic thinking, an approach that can only have dire consequences and further polarize society. They should stress that everybody counts or nobody counts. The idea of “no second chance” and rejection of the “one strike and you’re out” philosophy must be discarded; demanding perfection from people is not realistic. People should be critical thinkers who recognize that the world consists of many gray areas. For organizations to thrive, their leaders must realize that the foundations of DEI initiatives must be compassion, empathy, and humility rather than anger and victimization.

¹ Hershey H. Friedman & Taiwo Amoo, *Workplace Diversity: The Key to Survival and Growth*, BUS. QUEST, 2002, <http://www.westga.edu/~bquest/2002/diversity.htm>;

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