

### MAN'S SEARCH for MEANING - Victor Frankl

They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - *to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way* (86).

Fundamentally, therefore, any man can, even under such circumstances, decide what shall become of him - mentally and spiritually (87).

Yet, in reality, there was an opportunity and a challenge. One could make a victory of those experiences turning life into an inner triumph, or one could ignore the challenge and simply vegetate, as did a majority of the prisoners (93).

"He who has a *why* to live for can bear with almost any *how*" (97).

*...that it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead to think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life - daily and hourly. Our answer must consist, **not** in talk and meditation, but in **appropriate action and in appropriate conduct.** Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfill the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual* (98).

That which does not kill me, makes me stronger (103).

The crowning experience of all, for the homecoming man, is the wonderful feeling that, after all he has suffered, there is nothing he need fear any more - except his God (115).

What man actually needs is not a tensionless state but rather the striving and struggling for a worthwhile goal, a freely chosen task. What he needs is not the discharge of tension at any cost but the call of a potential meaning waiting to be fulfilled by him. What man needs is not homeostasis but what I call "nodynamics," i.e. the existential dynamics in a polar field of tension where one pole is represented by a meaning that is to be fulfilled and the other pole by the man who has to fulfill it (127).

Thus, logotherapy sees in *responsibleness* the very essence of human existence (131).

It is one of the basic tenets of logotherapy that man's main concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but rather to see a meaning in his life (136).

Pleasure is, and must remain, a side-effect or by-product, and is destroyed and spoiled to the degree to which it is made a goal in itself (145).

In addition to excessive intention as described above, excessive attention, or "hyper-reflection," as it is called in logotherapy, may also be pathogenic (145).

To be sure, a human being is a finite thing, and his freedom is restricted. It is not freedom from conditions, but it is freedom to take a stand toward the conditions (153).

"Pan Determinism:" by that I mean the view of man which disregards his capacity to take a stand toward any conditions whatsoever. Man is not fully conditioned and determined but rather determines himself whether he gives in to conditions or stands up to them. In other words, man is ultimately self-determining. Man does not simply exist but always decides what his existence will be, what he will become in the next moment. By the same token, every human being has the freedom to change at any instant (154).

In other words, what matters is to make the best of any given situation. "The best," however, is that which in Latin is called *optimum* - hence the reason I speak of a tragic optimism, that is, an optimism in the face of tragedy and in view of the human potential which at its best always allows for: (1) turning suffering into a human achievement and accomplishment; (2) deriving from guilt the opportunity to change oneself for the better; and (3) deriving from life's transitoriness an incentive to take responsible action (162).

"I broke my neck, it didn't break me" (172).