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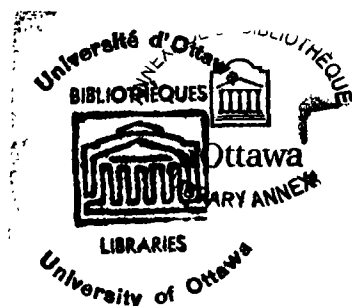
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AN ANALYSIS OF THE VIABILITY
OF FRANKL'S LOGOTHERAPEUTIC SYSTEM AS
A SECULAR THEORY

by Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka

Thesis presented to the Department
of Religious Studies of the
University of Ottawa as partial
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for the degree of Master of Arts.

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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

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1. ABSTRACT OF An Analysis of Frankl's Logotherapeutic System as Secular Theory

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Viktor E. Frankl is the father of a new approach to psychotherapy which he has termed logotherapy. Logotherapy is a unique synthesis of existential philosophy, empirical truth, and mental hygiene. Its value as a possible antidote to the universal malady of meaninglessness so prevalent today is in the process of being uncovered.

The object of this paper is to analyze the logotherapeutic system of Frankl, with special emphasis on the autonomy of the system, whether the system is complete within itself or demands an extension of concepts to make it existentially and philosophically viable.

The problem of viability revolves mainly around the secular scope of logotherapy. Logotherapy is conceived by Frankl as a secular theory. This paper will examine whether the foundations of logotherapy are secular in nature or emanate from a basic faith, as well as whether the concepts of the system extend into the realm of faith. Logotherapy as a religious system would create great implications concerning the role of religion in psychotherapy and the role of mental hygiene in religion.

The analysis of the totality of Frankl's system is divided into five component parts, each part being geared towards extracting the underlying concepts from which the

logotherapeutic applications emanate.

Firstly, Frankl's concept of man in relation to the world of values is analyzed. The focal point of this discussion is the dynamics of human existence according to logotherapy.

Using the first chapter as a foundation, the ensuing chapters discuss two necessary existentials, existentials which belong to life by the very nature of life, suffering and death, as well as two motivational existentials, realities which must be preceded by the will of man, love and work.

The second chapter offers a discussion of the meaning and role of suffering in life, with special attention given to the effect suffering may have on the dynamics of life.

The concept of death forms the focal point of the third chapter. Here the stress is on the fact of death as a potential impediment to meaningful life.

The fourth chapter is devoted to Frankl's concept of love, and centers around the role love plays in meaningful existence.

Work as an existential is the topic of the fifth chapter, with emphasis on the relation of work to man's mission in life.

In the process of this discussion, various concepts are introduced and developed, including man's natural bent towards self-transcendence, the infinite objective world of values, unconditional meaning, man's responsibility as an outgrowth of his uniqueness and singularity, love as the experience of another person in all his uniqueness and singularity, and the task of man in life.

Each chapter contains, as a final segment, an analysis of the concepts developed, with special attention given to their viability if viewed as secular concepts.

Finally, a concluding chapter summarizes briefly the underlying concepts of the main existentials in Frankl's logotherapeutic system, including a concise probing into their completeness as a secular system. An attempt is made to explain the incompleteness of Frankl's system, together with a suggestion as to how the is-ought gap may be bridged.

CHAPTER I

FRANKL'S CONCEPT OF MAN

Logotherapy, the teachings of the third Viennese School of Psychotherapy, is a psychotherapy which derives its tenets from the essence of man's spiritual dimension.

Man lives in three dimensions: the somatic, the mental, and the spiritual. The spiritual dimension cannot be ignored, for it is what makes us human.¹

As opposed to the Freudian school, which centered on the will to pleasure, and the Adlerian school, which focused on the will to power, this movement, based primarily on the teachings of Dr. Viktor E. Frankl, concentrates on the will to meaning. "According to logotherapy, the striving to find a meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man."² Rather than being a denial of its predecessors, this movement is perceived as complementing the former.³

"Every school of psychotherapy has a concept of man, although this concept is not always held consciously."⁴

1 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, New York, Bantam Books, 1967, p. ix-x.

2 -----, Man's Search For Meaning, New York, Washington Square Press, 1968, p. 154.

3 -----, The Doctor and the Soul, p. xi.

4 Ibid., p. xvi.

The concept of man which serves as the foundation of logotherapy consists of three fundamental, interrelated assumptions: 1) freedom of will, 2) will to meaning, and 3) meaning of life. This chapter will analyze these fundamentals as they form the philosophic crux of Frankl's system as well as offer a critique of these fundamentals in a separate section.

1. Freedom of Will.

According to Frankl, man possesses a positive vector, a natural bent towards an objective goal in transcendent space. Frustration of this natural inclination may lead to what Frankl has termed 'noogenic neuroses'.⁵ Freedom of will is seen as the absence of any factor which impedes man's flight into noetic space. Three forces in and around man are generally regarded as constricting in this sense; instinct, inherited disposition, and environment.

With regard to instincts, Frankl asserts:

⁵ Viktor E. Frankl, "Basic Concepts of Logotherapy", in Journal of Existential Psychiatry, New York, Libra Publishers, Vol. 3, No. 9, 1962, p. 112.

Certainly man has instincts, but these instincts do not have him. We have nothing against instincts, nor against a man's accepting them. But we hold that such acceptance must also presuppose the possibility of rejection. In other words, there must have been freedom of decision. We are concerned above all with man's freedom to accept or reject his instincts.⁶

Concerning inherited traits, Frankl counters that predisposition is an indication rather than a negation of freedom. He cites the evidence of identical twins who evolve differently from the same predisposition.

Of a pair of identical twins, one became a cunning criminal, whilst his brother became an equally cunning criminologist. Both were born with cunning, but this trait in itself implies no values, neither vice nor virtue.⁷

Accordingly, the difference between the criminal and the criminologist was basically a difference in how each twin decided to parlay his cunning.

Environmental factors, too, are not a compelling force in the individual. All depends on what man makes of his environment, on his attitude to it.

Instinct, heredity, and environment become, in Frankl's view, partial and potential determinants. They are partial determinants in that they establish the specific boundaries of human behaviour. Within these

⁶ Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. xvii.

⁷ Ibid.

limits, man is free to decide what his stand will be. These factors are potential determinants in that man can accept, reject, or manipulate these factors according to his own volition. He possesses the ability to rise above the bounded surface area of psychic and somatic determinants into a new, distinctly human dimension, the spiritual, or noological. Floating in this dimension, man can look down at the forces which tend to dehumanize him, and ultimately he alone decides the extent to which he will be steered by them. In the noological domain, man exercises the distinctly human phenomenon of self-detachment, detaching his self from himself and becoming the arbiter of his future.

Frankl is not concerned with the reality that biology may confine man's vocational choice or that sociology may dictate it. As long as man, within a given framework, remains able to ascend the heights which are indicated by his humanity, as long as he retains the ability to attain values, he is considered free. This stems from the implicit notion throughout Frankl's writings that freedom is interrupted only by factors which prevent man's natural bent to reach specific values. Frankl believes that no such factor exists, for with the potential of a determining factor is necessarily attached the ability to reject it.

Frankl goes so far as to consider man's destiny, or his conditional factors, as pre-requisites for freedom.

Freedom without destiny is impossible; freedom can only be freedom in the face of a destiny, a free stand toward destiny. Certainly man is free, but he is not floating freely in airless space. He is always surrounded by a host of restrictions. These restrictions, however, are the jumping-off points for his freedom. Freedom presupposes restrictions, is contingent upon restrictions... The ground upon which a man walks is always being transcended in the process of walking, and serves as ground only to the extent that it is transcended, that it provides a springboard. If we wanted to define man, we would have to call him that entity which has freed itself from whatever has determined it (determined it as biological-psychological-sociological type); that entity, in other words, that transcends all these determinants either by conquering them and shaping them, or by deliberately submitting to them.⁸

In a word, Frankl admits the existence, even the necessity of vertical restrictions, but denies the existence of horizontal restrictions. Man is conceived as having positive horizontal vector, to be impeded by vertical factors only as much as he allows.

Freedom, to Frankl, demands no special proof. It belongs "to the immediate data of his experience."⁹

Freud once said:

⁸ Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 61.

⁹ -----, "The Philosophical Foundations of Logotherapy", in Phenomenology: Pure and Applied, Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1964, p. 43.

Try and subject a number of very strongly differentiated human beings to the same amount of starvation. With the increase of the imperative need for food, all individual differences will be blotted out, and, in their place, we shall see the uniform expression of the one unsatisfied instinct.¹⁰

The concentration camps, in Frankl's view, proved Freud wrong. The camps proved that man cannot be reduced to a function of heredity and environment, for at the same time that some inmates degenerated into the innate camp bestiality, others exhibited the virtues of saintliness. A third variable, found only in the spiritual animal, man, is the decisive factor in human behaviour, choice or decision. "Man ultimately decides for himself."¹¹

2. The Will to Meaning.

Pleasure and power, the fulcrums of life according to Freud and Adler, are undermined by Frankl. At no time does he moralize against these principles. His outlook towards them is an outgrowth of life experience. Frankl, here and throughout his works, creates a unique form of experiential philosophy, combining his experiences as a

¹⁰ Sigmund Freud, quoted by Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. xvii.

¹¹ Viktor E. Frankl, Ibid.

doctor with his existentialist leanings. He establishes as a yardstick the properly functioning human being. Life's goals and aspirations are judged according to their utility in attaining and maintaining proper functioning. The will to pleasure, for Frankl, "is a self-defeating principle inasmuch as the more a man would really set out to strive for pleasure the less he would gain it."¹² Moreover, most cases of sexual neuroses are resultant of striving directly for pleasure. In healthy reality, pleasure is merely a by-product of fulfillment. The will to power is really the tools manipulated by man in order to achieve some goal. There is a higher principle guiding life, the will to meaning.

In the last analysis, it turns out that both the will to pleasure and the will to power are derivatives of the original will to meaning. Pleasure, as mentioned above, is an effect of meaning fulfillment; power is a means to an end. A certain amount of power, such as economic or financial power, is generally a prerequisite of meaning fulfillment. Thus we could say that the will to pleasure mistakes the effect for the end; while the will to power mistakes the means to an end for the end itself.¹³

¹² Viktor E. Frankl, "The Philosophical Foundations of Logotherapy", in Phenomenology: Pure and Applied, p. 47.

¹³ -----, Ibid., p. 48.

Frankl is not hereby denying that man aims for pleasure or power. That such striving is the underlying cause of certain neuroses leads Frankl to reject them as absolute goals in a properly functioning human being; the properly functioning human being serving as the model, or construct, of Frankl's philosophy.

The striving to find a meaning in one's life has been categorized by Frankl as 'will' to differentiate from 'drive'. Man is not driven toward meaning, for then his behaviour would be symptomatically equivalent to the homeostatic urge involved in the pleasure principle. Meaning would lose meaning, and would become a tool through which man satisfies his desire for equilibrium.

Meaning as a drive would not fit into Frankl's implicit system of man as positive horizontal vector. Satisfying drives have as their ultimate purpose the relaxation of the tension caused by them. But tensionless man is directionless man, and directionless man is bound to develop those neuroses that are born of directionlessness, or boredom, or, as Frankl calls it, the existential vacuum. It is thus rejected as drive and established as will on the grounds that as a drive it would not be conducive to the human model.

Even self-realization and self-actualization are seen as side effects of man's search for a meaning outside himself.

... the true meaning of life is to be found in the world rather than within man or his own psyche, as though it were a closed system. By the same token, the real aim of human existence cannot be found in what is called self-actualization. Human existence is essentially self-transcendence rather than self-actualization. Self-actualization is not a possible aim at all, for the simple reason that the more a man would strive for it, the more he would miss it. For only to the extent to which man commits himself to the fulfillment of his life's meaning, to this extent he also actualizes himself. In other words, self-actualization cannot be attained if it is made an end in itself, but only as a side effect of self-transcendence.¹⁴

An added component is here attached to man. He is perceived as positive horizontal vector of infinite magnitude. Self-transcendence is a never ending dynamics, just as life and meaning. Man is always striving; one accomplishment is not an excuse to relax from the responsibilities facing man, is not an end in itself. Self-actualization would perhaps set a limit to the human vector, inviting through the suspension of dynamics some form of neurosis. Accomplishment becomes the momentum for additional accomplishment, and in this perpetual process man fulfills, tangentially, his own self.

¹⁴ Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search For Meaning, p. 175.

3. The Meaning of Life.

To conceive of man as one who wills, as one who is "pulled by meaning"¹⁵, is to conceive of a world filled with objective meaning. Frankl stands in rigid opposition to the homunculist, nothing-but picture of man; man portrayed as biology-sociology-psychology; the subject, man, being reduced to object; as well as the subjectivization of all values; the reduction of meaning to mere self-expression. Man, like the decrepit arc, needs a pulling tension, a subject-object dynamics, or in Frankl's words, a noo-dynamics.

Cognition is grounded, indispensably, on a field of polar tension between the objective and the subjective, for only on this basis is the essential dynamic of the cognitive act established. I call this dynamic 'noodynamic' - in contrast to all psychodynamics.¹⁶

Man oscillates between the subjective 'I am' and the objective 'I ought', and insofar as he strives for the ought he transcends his self and actualizes his responsibility. In Frankl's view, "Existence falters unless it is lived in terms of transcendence toward something beyond itself."¹⁷

¹⁵ Viktor E. Frankl, "Self-Transcendence as a Human Phenomenon", in Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Fall 1966, p. 100.

¹⁶ -----, "The Spiritual Dimension in Existential Analysis and Logotherapy", in Journal of Individual Psychology, Vol. 15, 1959, p. 158.

¹⁷ -----, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1968, p. 12.

Frankl offers no proof that objective values exist. That these values are objective follows necessarily from Frankl's view of man. The human model, the properly functioning man, is directed towards meaning. If meaning were subjective, the dynamics of transcendence would be destroyed and existence would falter. Therefore, meaning must be objective. No circular argument, this principle as well as others in Frankl's system are derived from the premise that truth is perceived in utility. Man is at his best when indulging in self-transcendence; thus testifying to the validity of the concept of self-transcendence. Since self-transcendence demands objective values, objective values are as real as existence. It would be folly to believe that man is born without the tools of human existence, the tools needed to achieve his mission in life.

There is, according to Frankl, no general, all-encompassing meaning of life. It is comparable to the question posed to a chess player, 'What is the best move?' There is no best move just as there is no universal meaning. Instead, meaning is detected in man's confrontation with his unique situation. Every man is unique, all situations are unique, hence all confrontations are unique. Each confrontation carries its own particular meaning; man detects the objective meaning in the subjectiveness of his situation.

Frankl does categorize three species of values contained in life. They are 1) creative values, or what man gives to life; 2) experiential values, or what man takes from the world in terms of his experience; and 3) attitudinal values, or the stand man takes toward an unchangeable aspect of his existence.

4. Critical Analysis.

Concerning Frankl's argument for free will through a phenomenological approach, the experiences of the concentration camps and the conclusions elicited therefrom are questionable. Weren't those who behaved as bestially as their environment compelled by conditions? Those who achieved saintly status were the exception, or perhaps possessed saintly instincts. Why derive from the few that man is free when the actions of the many indicate he is not?

The response to this is that freedom of the will in Frankl's view is not a necessary component of behaviour, but a potential to be realized.

For in every case man retains the freedom and the possibility of deciding for or against the influence of his surroundings. Although he may seldom exert this freedom or utilize this opportunity to choose - it is open to him to do so.¹⁸

¹⁸ Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 79.

Man will be shaped by his environment as long as he does not pause and confront himself with life. Man becomes free the moment he detaches his self from himself and analyzes the meaning of his life vis-a-vis where life is carrying him, or the moment he becomes human. The prisoner of biology, sociology, or psychology is ultimately the man who has allowed these forces, by his passivity, to impede his humanness.

More questionable to the picture of man as painted by Frankl is the dynamics of self-transcendence. Frankl insists on keeping his a secular theory, open to everyone, whilst at the same time insisting on the objectivity of values. In a secularist system, values can be no more than an expression of human ideas. Value becomes the extension of the thought processes, thus becoming entirely subjective. Man ultimately actualizes those values he alone created. Noo-dynamics, or the pull between subject and object, is then an illusion, and self-transcendence, the essence of the will to meaning, an impossibility. Frankl himself points inadvertently to the subjectivity of meaning.

Time and again, an individual's conscience commands him to do something which is opposed to what is preached by the society to which the individual belongs-his tribe. Suppose his tribe consists of cannibals. An individual's creative conscience may well find out that, in a given situation, it is more meaningful to spare the life of an enemy than to kill him. This way his conscience may well start a revolution in that the unique meaning becomes a universal value.¹⁹

What may be considered as a value in a cannibal camp is natural behaviour in civilized society. Establishing meaning in a base environment which, at the same time, is a foregone conclusion of higher society, points to the relativity, or the development of meaning, or the fact that it is not objective. The natural evolution of Frankl's philosophy would point to a transcendent source of value and meaning to which man can ascribe.

Frankl contends that there is no general, universal meaning of life. By visualizing life as an assignment, with the experiencing of the authority who hands out these assignments optional, no generalities can be made. Life confronts man, but what, or who, is life? The natural extension of Frankl's theory would perhaps provide an all-encompassing objective in life. In asking the chess player which is the best move, awareness of the final objective, to win, tells us that the best move at any given moment is the one most likely to help in attaining victory. Life with an ultimate

¹⁹ Viktor E. Frankl, "What is Meant by Meaning?", in Journal of Existentialism, Vol. 7, No. 25, Fall 1966, p. 26.

objective revealed through a transcendent source would establish a hierarchy of values most conducive to the realization of the ultimate objective. Creative, experiential, and attitudinal values would adopt worth only insofar as they enhance this realization.

Frankl speaks of creative values. Exactly what criteria decide what is creative and what is meaningless is unclear, again for lack of ultimate objective.

Concerning experiential values, Frankl says:

... there are values which are realized in experience: "experiential values." These latter are realized in receptivity toward the world - for example, in surrender to the beauty of nature or art. The fullness of meaning which such values bring to human life must not be underestimated. The higher meaning of a given moment in human existence can be fulfilled by the mere intensity with which it is experienced, and independent of any action. If anyone doubts this, let him consider the following situation. Imagine a music-lover sitting in the concert hall while the most noble measures of his favorite symphony resound in his ears. He feels that shiver of emotion which we experience in the presence of the purest beauty. Suppose now that at such a moment we should ask this person whether his life has meaning. He would have to reply that it had been worth while living if only to experience this ecstatic moment. For even though only a single moment is in question - the greatness of a life can be measured by the greatness of a moment: the height of a mountain range is not given by the height of some valley, but by that of the tallest peak. In life, too, the peaks decide the meaningfulness of the life and a single moment can retroactively flood an entire life with meaning. Let us ask a mountain-climber who has beheld alpine sunset and is so moved by the splendor of nature that he feels cold shudders running down his spine - let us ask him whether after such an experience his life can ever again seem wholly meaningless.²⁰

20 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 35.

By what yardstick does life attain meaning through cold shudders running down a spine? Why is the fleeting ecstasy of an artistic experience deemed a peak meaning? And how can this meaningful experience retroactively flood an entire life with meaning? A person who, on his deathbed, testifies that his life accomplishments were that he heard beautiful music and saw beautiful landscapes would be admitting to dismal failure. Again, experience as a means toward an ultimate, transcendent objective would contain meaning. Only then can the following assertion contain validity:

Man can be "obligated" to experience joy. In this sense a person sitting in a streetcar who has the opportunity to watch a wonderful sunset, or to breathe in the rich scent of flowering acacias, and who instead goes on reading his newspaper, could at such a moment be accused of being negligent toward his obligations.²¹

Attitudes, too, would be meaningful when measured against the ultimate objective.

Frankl "aimed to bring the 'whole' house under a 'roof'"²², yet he created a structure which admits of no roof, a system that reaches for the infinity of transcendence.

21 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 36.

22 -----, "Religion and Existential Psychotherapy", in Gordon Review, Vol. 6, 1961, p. 4.

CHAPTER II

FRANKL'S CONCEPT OF SUFFERING

Dr. Frankl, in his writings, speaks of three types of suffering. They are 1) the suffering associated with an unchangeable fate, such as an inoperable cancer; 2) the suffering which comes as a result of an emotionally painful experience, such as the loss of a loved one; 3) the suffering which arises out of the existential vacuum in one's life, through the frustration of the will to meaning.

This chapter will analyze separately these three categories of suffering and offer a general critique.

1. The Suffering Caused by Pain.

Frankl's concept of suffering follows directly from his concept of man. If man is positive horizontal vector of infinite magnitude, then life is that form of existence which affords man the opportunity to actualize his essence. Man's vector magnitude receives its force and direction from the meaning of life. If any point in life lacked meaning, it would interrupt man's infinite vector and suspend the dynamics of life. Frankl, as shown previously, firmly believes the meaning and dynamics of life are never suspended short of death. Thus every situation in life has meaning in it, even the various experiences of suffering.

Frankl asserts:

But even a man who finds himself in the greatest distress, in which neither activity nor creativity can bring values to life, nor experience give meaning to it—even such a man can still give his life a meaning by the way he faces his fate, his distress. By taking his unavoidable suffering upon himself he may yet realize values.

Thus, life has a meaning to the last breath. For the possibility of realizing values by the very attitude with which we face our unchangeable suffering—this possibility exists to the very last moment... The right kind of suffering—facing your fate without flinching—is the highest achievement that has been granted to man.¹

The cause of the suffering, pain, cannot be erased, otherwise the suffering would be unnecessary, meaningless, and possibly masochistic. Attention is focused on the despair inherent in the suffering, for it is this ingredient which obstructs the positive flow of human life.

With special regard to suffering, however, I would say that patients never really despair because of any suffering in itself. Instead, their despair stems in each instance from a doubt as to whether suffering is meaningful. Man is ready and willing to shoulder any suffering as soon and as long as he can see a meaning in it.²

Frankl would not do away with suffering, rather he would erase the negative vector of despair to allow the positive vector, man, to exercise his humanness.

1 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, New York, Bantam Books, 1967, p. xii.

2 -----, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1968, p. 56.

The concentration camps are an indication, according to Frankl, of the importance of meaning in suffering. The will to live in spite of the unbearable hardships of camp life needed the added will to meaning in order for actual survival to be realized, for this magnified the 'will to survive' to an 'ought to survive'.³ Again we see Frankl emphasizing the attitudinal value in the proper approach to suffering insofar as it is a prerequisite for survival and conducive to mental well-being, or, as another component of the human model. Frankl is aware that this approach has not given meaning to the essence of suffering.

Any attempt at fighting the camp's psychopathological influence on the prisoner by psychotherapeutic or psychohygienic methods had to aim at giving him inner strength by pointing out to him a future goal to which he could look forward. Instinctively some of the prisoners attempted to find one on their own. It is a peculiarity of man that he can only live by looking to the future... And this is his salvation in the most difficult moments of his existence, although he sometimes has to force his mind to the task.⁴

The meaning alluded to here is not a meaning to the suffering itself, rather a meaning beyond the suffering, a meaning to be attained only through surviving the suffering. As such, this approach is partially reminiscent of

3 Viktor E. Frankl, "The Will To Meaning", in Journal of Pastoral Care, Vol. XII, 1958, p. 86.

4 -----, Man's Search For Meaning, New York, Washington Square Press, 1968, p. 115.

de-reflection, in that the person's thinking is reoriented towards an event or a task beyond the suffering itself.

Personally, Frankl seems to search for the actual meaning of suffering.

A bit later, I remember, it seemed to me that I would die in the near future. In this critical situation, however, my concern was different from that of most of my comrades. Their question was, 'Will we survive the camp? For, if not, all this suffering has no meaning.' The question which beset me was, 'Has all this suffering, this dying around us, a meaning? For, if not, then ultimately there is no meaning to survival; for a life whose meaning depends upon such a happenstance—whether one escapes or not—ultimately would not be worth living at all.'⁵

Frankl insists there must be a meaning to suffering if there is meaning to life at all, since suffering is an ineradicable part of life. Man's attitude to his suffering affords him the chance to endow his life with profound meaning. He may embody the virtues of braveness, dignity, and unselfishness, or he may be reduced to animal behaviour. In its positive extension, man realizes values through suffering.

The meaning of this type of suffering has not really been uncovered by Frankl, rather suffering has been made a tool through which to achieve; it has been given utility, meaning has been attached to it.

5 Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search For Meaning, p. 183.

2. Emotional Suffering.

Man knows of a suffering which is entirely devoid of physical pain, an emotional suffering which stems from the loss of what was basic to life, such as a parent, spouse, or child. Frankl insists on extracting meaning from every life experience, even suffering born of mourning. He views this suffering as a healthful component of life. "A sense of the meaning of emotional experiences is deeply rooted in human beings..."⁶ This is seen in patients who suffer from melancholia anaesthetica, or from the inability to be sad. Using the human model, this would indicate that there is nothing inherently wrong with sadness, or with being sad. Frankl gears himself towards erasing the deflating effect of suffering. He would like to transpose the 'suffering from' to a 'suffering to', to raise man above suffering, to manipulate suffering rather than being manipulated by it. A concrete example will further illustrate:

⁶ Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 89.

An old doctor consulted me in Vienna because he could not get rid of a severe depression caused by the death of his wife. I asked him, 'What would have happened, Doctor, if you had died first, and your wife would have had to survive you?' Whereupon he said: 'For her this would have been terrible; how she would have suffered!' I then added, 'You see, Doctor, such a suffering has been spared her, and it is you who have to pay for it by surviving and mourning her.' The old man suddenly saw his plight in a new light, and re-evaluated his suffering in the meaningful terms of a sacrifice for the sake of his wife.⁷

Frankl did not tranquilize away the suffering. Neither did he attempt to reincarnate in any way, the deceased. He redirected, through a change in attitude, the suffering vector from negative to positive. Suffering became a jumping-off point for meaning fulfillment rather than a life-choking experience.

3. Suffering as Frustration of the Will to Meaning.

Besides the suffering normally associated with pain or loss, there is a third type of suffering;

... a suffering beyond all sickness, a fundamental human suffering, the suffering which belongs to human life by the very nature and meaning of life.⁸

This suffering stems from a frustration of the will to meaning. Frankl sees this not as a pathological

⁷ Viktor E. Frankl, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, p. 15-16.

⁸ -----, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 91.

phenomenon, rather as a human achievement, a "positive achievement in the highest sense of the term."⁹

The person who suffers from existential frustration has, by this very suffering, exercised self-detachment. He has begun to judge his reality in terms of his capability, or what he ought to be. Frankl insists that unavoidable suffering of this type, inherent as it is in the human condition, must be faced realistically. He decries the attitude of many who would tranquilize away the pain, by repressing the metaphysical striving.

The principle of 'euphoria at any price' as a motivation for the medical approach must be refuted because 'pleasure gain at any price' and 'freedom from pain at any price,' would be tantamount to partial euthanasia.¹⁰

Frankl seems to deviate slightly from the pattern of his philosophy. He admits that "treatment of the covering-up type might be less painful but it also deprives life of much meaning."¹¹ But what about the properly functioning human model?

Indeed, we might ask, What price meaning? Frankl acknowledges that the existential analyst may sometimes be called on to decide what is and is not meaningful suffering,

⁹ Viktor E. Frankl, "Religion and Existential Psychotherapy", in Gordon Review, Vol. VI, 1961, p. 8.

¹⁰ -----, "Logos and Existence in Psychotherapy", in American Journal of Psychotherapy, Vol. VII, 1953, p. 12-13.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 12.

whether or not it is of the avoidable type. Yet there is hardly a suffering which cannot be either erased or numbed.

In the final analysis, suffering boils down to a biological-psychological or purely psychological obstruction of the positive vector. The biological factor, in terms of irreversable fate, admits of no cure. The psychological factor, the mental torment, exists in a different sphere or dimension, the spiritual. Frankl welcomes spiritual suffering insofar as narcotic or tranquilic escapism would mean spiritual death, or partial euthanasia. It is when pain and meaning are in the same dimension that Frankl insists on sacrificing painlessness for meaning.

4. Critical Analysis.

Frankl's theory of suffering suffers from the same incompleteness as his general theory.

As much as Frankl attempts to discover the meaning of suffering, the most he accomplishes is that he makes suffering meaningful. Suffering caused by pain becomes meaningful through a future oriented faith; suffering caused by loss becomes meaningful through its being for the sake of.

Imminence of death remains an acute problem in the sphere of meaning. It is a suffering born of pain, yet cannot be approached through a future oriented faith.

Frankl sees this terminal situation as an opportunity to realize the values of heroism. At the same time, this period is also seen as one in which the past gives meaning to the present.¹²

We might admire one who braves his fate heroically, but we must still ask ourselves by what criteria is it superior to despairing one's fate? We are told how to suffer, but not why suffer?

Frankl intimates that certain suffering has an intrinsic meaning to it.

Suffering is intended to guard man from apathy, from psychic rigor mortis. As long as we suffer we remain psychologically alive. In fact, we mature in suffering, grow because of it - it makes us richer and stronger.¹³

Perhaps he is referring to the third type of suffering, that emanating from the existential vacuum. Nevertheless, this does not explain the meaning of suffering. Cannot one grow without the suffering? Cannot apathy be checked without suffering?

Ultimately, the problem of the meaning of suffering can be paraphrased as 'Why is suffering necessary?' In a secularist system this question cannot be answered; it can

¹² Viktor E. Frankl, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, p. 91-94.

¹³ -----, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 88.

only be rationalized.

Frankl cites the following view of Max Scheler:

... man has a right to be considered guilty and to be punished. Once we deal with man as the victim of circumstances and their influences, we not only cease to treat him as a human being but also lame his will to change.¹⁴

The necessity of punishment is dictated by the essence of humanity.

Suffering, when viewed from a transcendental perspective, is really a Divine sentence, a punishment again dictated by the essence of humanity. Viewed from this vantage point, the hammer blows of suffering are seen as necessary insofar as without them the sufferer shrinks into spiritual oblivion. They are seen as the intentional rude awakening to the ultimate purpose of man, to a confrontation with his reality. The suffering out of the existential vacuum, then, is not really suffering. It is merely a healthy despair which says, 'Do something about it.'

If man's purpose is self-transcendence, and his essence an infinite vector magnitude, then his striving towards the transcendent or the infinite is, at once, never complete and never suspended. Even in the face of death, or perhaps more acutely in the face of death, this reality stands out and its actualization depends on what Frankl

¹⁴ Viktor E. Frankl, The Will to Meaning, New York, The New American Library, 1968, p. 74.

calls the attitude. If man sees not only the punishment but also the punisher, the Transcendent Intervenor, he may eventually see the necessity of intervention and its implications. He will make his suffering meaningful not through utilitarian motives, rather through recognition of the meaning of his suffering, or what G-D meant by giving him this predicament. Maybe it contains the meaning of guilt of some form, whether guilt of apathy or negative affiliation, guilt which would not be uncovered independent of a cruel blow. Perhaps, then, it is more pertinent to suffer strivingly rather than heroically or triumphantly.

Frankl himself recognizes, albeit partially, the incompleteness of his system.

Is it not possible that there is still another dimension possible, a world beyond man's world; a world in which the question of an ultimate meaning of human suffering would find an answer?¹⁵

In a secularist system, this remains in the realm of the possible; in a transcendent system, which is really what the natural extension of Frankl's system is, meaning becomes synonymous with intent, the intent of G-D.

¹⁵ Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search For Meaning, p. 187.

CHAPTER III

FRANKL'S CONCEPT OF DEATH

Death, according to Dr. Frankl, belongs to the tragic triad of human existence, together with suffering and guilt. This chapter will attempt to show how Frankl's concept of death and its meaning fit into his concept of life, as well as offer a general criticism.

1. What is Death?

Before analyzing death and its bearing on life, it is necessary to understand what death is, or how Frankl conceives of death.

Death, besides being tragic, belongs to the class of unavoidable existentials. Everyone who lives must eventually die. The reality of imminent end, according to Frankl, is something man can live with. In fact,

The certainty of death terrifies only the person who has a guilty conscience toward his life. Death marking the end of a lifetime can frighten only the person who has not lived his lifetime to the full.¹

Death, then, marks the end of a lifetime. It is the paradigm of the irreversible event as well as the fixation of irreversibility.

¹ Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, New York, Bantam Books, 1967, p. 104.

Frankl vividly describes this essential of death.

In death everything becomes inflexible, nothing can be changed anymore. The person has nothing left, has no more influence over his body and his psyche. He has completely lost his psychophysical ego. What remains is the self. Man no longer has an ego, he 'has' nothing left, he only 'is'—his self.²

The view of man as infinite vector magnitude implies a constant striving.

We must never be content with what has already been achieved. Life never ceases to put new questions to us, never permits us to come to rest.³

Every moment in life poses its challenge and affords the opportunity to realize values. Ignoring the challenges of the moment means for that moment to have died. That moment is no more, it is irretrievable. There is, then, the death of man in time, and the death of time in man. This concept, as shall be developed later, forms the basis of Frankl's theory concerning the past as well as his theory of man's guilt.

Besides being the end of a lifetime, death, according to Frankl, is the culmination of life, the final stroke in the picture of man. Frankl is rigidly opposed to that process which would deny man the opportunity to round off life

² Viktor E. Frankl, "Time and Responsibility", in Existential Psychiatry, Vol. 1, 1966, p. 365.

³ -----, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 105.

in each one's unique fashion, euthanasia.

Must we not ask ourselves now whether we are ever entitled to deprive an incurably ill patient of the chance to 'die his death,' the chance to fill his existence with meaning down to its last moment, even though the only realm of action open to him is the realizing of attitudinal values -the only variable the question of what attitude the patient, the 'sufferer,' takes toward his suffering when it reaches its climax and conclusion? The way he dies, insofar as it is really his death, is an integral part of his life; it rounds that life out to a meaningful totality.⁴

Death exists in two dimensions, the physical and the spiritual. The physical dimension of death is shared by mankind equally. The passing of man in the spiritual dimension contains a personal quality peculiar to each individual. The mercy-killer cuts life off before man's essence, the spirit, has a chance to complete its natural course in conjunction with the body.

Frankl realizes that however we look at death, our perspective is a this-worldly one. What we say about the dead is relative to the living, but is hardly an absolute truth. As far as what death really is, Frankl declares, "Anyone who really believes or claims that he can grasp the death of a person is deceiving himself."⁵

Frankl senses a real possibility that our notion of death may be false.

4 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 37.

5 Ibid., p. 111.

Usually death is compared with sleep. Actually, however, dying should be compared with being wakened. At least this comparison makes it comprehensible that death is beyond comprehension.⁶

Quite possibly, it may not be the tragedy we think it to be.

Men, in general, misunderstand the meaning of death. When the alarm clock goes off in the morning and frightens us from our dreams, we regard this awakening as a terrifying intrusion upon our dream world and do not realize that the alarm arouses us to our real existence, our day world. Do we mortals not act similarly, being frightened when death comes? Do we not also misunderstand that death awakens us to the true reality of our selves?

And even if a loving hand awakens us from sleep -the motion may be ever so gentle but we do not realize its gentleness-we feel only the terrifying intrusion upon our dream world. In the same way we regard death, too, as something terrifying that happens to us, and we hardly suspect how well it is meant!⁷

It should be noted that by admitting the incomprehensibility of death, Frankl precludes uncovering the true meaning of death. The meaning of that which is beyond perception cannot be realized. As in the case of suffering, the furthest Frankl can go is to give meaning to death, to make it meaningful in life.

⁶ Viktor E. Frankl, The Will to Meaning, New York, The New American Library, 1968, p. 150.

⁷ -----, "Time and Responsibility", in Existential Psychiatry, Vol. 1, 1966, p. 365-366.

2. The Meaning of Death.

The process of death, according to Frankl, is not a severed fragment of the human biography. Death is part of life. "Without suffering and death human life cannot be complete."⁸

The meaning of life is to be elicited up to and including the point of death.

... human life, under any circumstances, never ceases to have meaning, and that this infinite meaning of life includes suffering and dying, privation and death.⁹

The thesis of logotherapy is that man is to live, and die, meaningfully.

So much for the moment of death. What bearing does the inescapability of death have on life itself?

Frankl believes the fact of death is crucial to life. "... only in the face of death is it meaningful to act."¹⁰

The meaning of this statement may be found in the following:

8 Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search For Meaning, New York, Washington Square Press, 1968, p. 106.

9 -----, Ibid., p. 131-132.

10 -----, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1968, p. 30.

Now, does death really decrease the meaningfulness of life? On the contrary. For what would our lives be like if they were not finite in time, but infinite? If we were mortal, we could legitimately postpone every action forever. It would be of no consequence whether or not we did a thing now; every act might just as well be done tomorrow or the day after or a year from now or ten years hence. But in the face of death as absolute finis to our future and boundary to our possibilities, we are under the imperative of utilizing our lifetimes to the utmost, not letting the singular opportunities - whose 'finite' sum constitutes the whole of life - pass by unused.¹¹

This concept traces its roots back to Frankl's notion of death as the fixation of irreversibility. Death of man in time signifies irreversibility of life. Death of time in man signifies irreversibility of a moment. Concurrently, proper utilization of time signifies a positive irreversibility, for that which has been accomplished remains as reality forever.

Actually, the only transitory aspects of life are the potentialities; as soon as we have succeeded in actualizing a potentiality, we have transmuted it into an actuality and, thus, salvaged and rescued it into the past. Once an actuality, it is one forever. Everything in the past is saved from being transitory. Therein it is irrevocably stored rather than irrevocably lost. Having been is still a form of being, perhaps even its most secure form.¹²

Death poses a constant imperative to man, an imperative which says that each moment, as life itself, is irrepeatable, and must be utilized. Death makes life meaningful.

¹¹ Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 52.

¹² -----, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, p. 30-31.

The challenge of life is how to use each moment, which values are to be actualized and which doomed to non-existence.

Man constantly makes his choice concerning the mass of present potentialities; which of these will be condemned to nonbeing and which will be actualized? Which choice will be made an actuality once and forever, an immortal 'footprint in the sand of time'? At any moment, man must decide, for better or for worse, what will be the monument of his existence.¹³

Frankl's concept of man's past leads to an unavoidable paradox:

This leads to the paradox that man's past is his true future. The dying man has no future, only a past. But the dead 'is' his past. He has no life, he is his life. That it is his past life does not matter; we know that the past is the safest form of existence - it cannot be taken away.¹⁴

A key notion in Frankl's logotherapy is the responsibility of man. Responsibility and irreversibility are intimately linked together. If what has been done can forever be undone, virtue and vice would disappear in uncertainty, praise and blame would be impossible, and education unmanageable. Human beings would be free from the responsibilities which underlie their humanness.

¹³ Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search For Meaning, p. 191.

¹⁴ -----, "Time and Responsibility", in Existential Psychiatry, Vol. 1, 1966, p. 365-366.

The existence of man in time Frankl calls temporality.
The existence of time in man Frankl call singularity.

The meaning of human existence is based upon its irreversible quality. An individual's responsibility in life must therefore be understood in terms of temporality and singularity.¹⁵

This leads to what Frankl calls the leading maxim of existential analysis:

... live as if you were living for the second time and had acted as wrongly the first time as you are about to act now.¹⁶

Irretrievability of a past moment, singularity, and of a past life, temporality, constitute the basis of human existence.

Frankl thus sees death as an ongoing life process, not in the pessimistic sense, but in the positive sense. Just as total death, the death of man in time, challenges man's life in its totality, so fragmentary death, the death of time in man, challenges man in each moment. The sum of these moments constitutes the existence of man.

The significance of the past, a direct derivative of Frankl's concept of death, has its therapeutic advantages. Frankl speaks of the unhealthy trend in the United States of fear of aging.

15 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 52.

16 Ibid.

Even in advanced years one should not envy a young person. Why should one? For the possibilities a young person has, or for his future? No, I should say that, instead of possibilities in the future, the older person has realities in the past - work done, love loved, and suffering suffered.¹⁷

If the fear of death abounds, according to Frankl, in he who has misused his life, then fear of aging is found in he who has misused his youth. A meaningful youth is the best medicine for old age, as a meaningful life is the best preparation for death.

This concept of the past has its application in the face of life-stopping tragedy.

Imagine what consolation the logotherapeutic attitude to the past would bring to a war widow who has only experienced, say, two weeks of marital bliss. She would feel that this experience can never be taken from her. It will remain her inviolable treasure, preserved and delivered into her past. Her life can never become meaningless even if she might remain childless.¹⁸

These are more than examples. Death becomes an existential which gives thrust to potential hazards of the human vector, tragedy and aging. Death fits into Frankl's construct, the properly functioning human being. It is mandatory for life.

¹⁷ Viktor E. Frankl, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, p. 31.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 32.

Frankl sees the fact of death as an argument against the pleasure principle.

Suppose a man condemned to death is asked, a few hours before his execution, to choose the menu for his last meal. He might then reply: Is there any sense, in the face of death, in enjoying the pleasures of the palate? Since the organism will be a cadaver two hours later, does it matter whether it did or did not have one more opportunity to experience that state of the brain cells which is called pleasure? Yet all life is confronted with death, which should cancel out this element of pleasure.¹⁹

Frankl elicits infinite meaning from death, but the true meaning of death, or what death means, has not been uncovered.

3. The Finiteness of Man.

Frankl, throughout his writings, closely associates death with guilt.

Man has to face his finiteness in its three aspects: He has to face the fact (1) that he has failed; (2) that he is suffering; and (3) that he will die.²⁰

Man is guilty because he has failed. He has failed because he is man.

¹⁹ Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 30.

²⁰ -----, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, p. 24.

There is no conceivable human condition in which man may be relieved of the tension between what he has done and, on the other hand, what he should have done or must yet do. As a finite being, man never perfectly completes his life task. When he is willing and able to shoulder the burden of this incompleteness, he is acknowledging this finiteness.²¹

Man must always strive; the magnitude of the positive horizontal vector is an infinite one. Just as the accomplishments of the past are no excuse for lackadaisicality, being that man is perpetually faced with an infinite, necessarily unfinished task, so the failures of the past constantly gnaw at man, prodding him to remember the past by changing the present.

Death, besides indicating the outer finiteness of man, in time, also signifies the inner finiteness of man, man as mortal internally, subject to error, or imperfect. Every individual possesses some internal flaw, which constitutes his uniqueness as a personal being. This is vital to personal existence.

... personal being (human existence) means absolute being different, absolute otherness. For the uniqueness of every individual human being means that he is different from all other human beings.²²

Being different, and hence necessary, makes each life meaningful.

21 Viktor E. Frankl, Ibid., p. 47.

22 -----, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 58.

The correlate to the singularity of human existence is the uniqueness of every human being. But just as death as a temporal, outward limitation does not cancel the meaning of life but rather is the very factor that constitutes its meaning, so the inner limits only add to the meaning of man's life. If all men were perfect, then every individual would be replaceable by anyone else. From the very imperfection of men follows the indispensability and inexchangeability of each individual; for each is imperfect in his own fashion. No man is universally gifted; but the bias of the individual makes for his uniqueness.²³

It becomes a paradox of life that man strives for that very reality which, were it achieved, would make him replaceable, perhaps redundant. Man's finiteness not only includes his being imperfect, but also precludes the possibility of attaining perfection. Perfection would not fit into the Frankl model of man as positive horizontal vector of infinite magnitude, for perfection would leave nothing more to achieve, creating the existential vacuum so harmful to human existence. Perfection is an infinite, that which we strain to but will never reach.

A human being, it is true, is a finite being. However, to the extent to which he understands his finiteness, he also overcomes it.²⁴

It is a prerequisite of the properly functioning human being to fully understand the import of his finiteness.

23 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 56.

24 -----, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, p. 86.

Thus, Frankl asserts,

This acceptance of finiteness is the precondition to mental health and human progress, while the inability to accept it is characteristic of the neurotic personality.²⁵

Singularity and uniqueness are the two essentials which provide the imperative of man, his responsibility.

Human responsibility, which existential analysis strives to make men aware of, is a responsibility springing from the singularity and uniqueness of each man's existence. Man's existence is a responsibility springing from man's finiteness.²⁶

Both singularity and uniqueness evolve directly from Frankl's concept of death.

The finiteness of man, and his guilt through abuse of time, establish different criteria for judging life. The meaningful question is not 'what' but 'how', not what was accomplished, but how was life lived, how were the singular opportunities that total man's existence used?

It is not from the length of its span that we can ever draw conclusions as to a life's meaningfulness. We cannot, after all, judge a biography by its length, by the number of pages in it; we must judge by the richness of the contents. The heroic life of one who has died young certainly has more content and meaning than the existence of some long-lived dullard. Sometimes the 'unfinished' are among the most beautiful symphonies.²⁷

25 Viktor E. Frankl, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, p. 47.

26 -----, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 60.

27 Ibid., p. 53.

Meaningful existence is a qualitative value.

Not only is man a finite creature, but he can also, unlike any other creature, control the extent of his finite existence by terminating it. He kills his past through lethargy, and his future through suicide.

Man, on the other hand - having 'Dasein' - is always free to decide on the nature of his being. The range of his power to decide extends even to the possibility of self-destruction; man can 'extinguish himself.' We will go so far as to say that this most radical challenging of oneself, to the extent not only of doubting the meaning of life, but of taking action against that life - this fundamental possibility of choosing suicide, this liberty of man to decide whether he shall be at all, distinguishes his being from all other kinds of being and marks its contrast with the mode of being of animals.²⁸

The tendency to commit suicide is present in one whose positive horizontal vector has been suspended, who lives in an existential vacuum. The man who cannot see the challenges that life pose, who sees a future of emptiness, is a candidate for suicide.

For it is a well-known empirical fact that in times of war and crises the number of suicides decreases. If you asked me for my explanation I should quote what an architect once said to me: The best way to buttress and strengthen a dilapidated structure is to increase the load it has to carry.²⁹

28 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 62-63.

29 -----, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, p. 116.

Frankl believes suicide can be averted by opening up to man the dynamics of self-transcendence, by pointing to a task to be fulfilled.

A man who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately waits for him, or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life. He knows the 'why' for his existence, and will be able to bear almost any 'how.'³⁰

Frankl carefully examines the possibility of justifiable suicide. One potentially justified suicide is balance suicide, in which a person draws a balance sheet of life's credits and debits and decides, objectively, to take his life. Frankl rejects this as unjustified.

In the first place we are inclined to doubt whether any man is able to draw up a balance of his life with sufficient objectivity. This is especially true when the conclusion he arrives at is that his problems are insoluble, or that suicide is the only solution for them. No matter how strong a conviction that conclusion may be, the conviction remains subjective. If, of the many persons who have attempted suicide out of the conviction that their situation is hopeless, only one should prove wrong, if in a sole case there should turn out to be an alternative solution after all - then every attempt at suicide would be ipso facto unjustified. For all who resolve on suicide have the same firm subjective conviction that this is the right course for them, and none of them can know in advance whether he is judging the situation objectively and correctly, or whether events of the very next hour may not show him to be mistaken - an hour he may not live to see.³¹

30 Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search For Meaning, p. 127.

31 -----, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 40.

The other two possibilities are suicide as sacrifice and suicide as atonement. These are also dismissed as unjustifiable.

It is certainly conceivable, theoretically, that suicide may sometimes be justified as a consciously offered sacrifice, that in such a case it may amount to a genuinely ethical act. We know empirically, however, that the motives of even such suicide arise in reality all too often from some resentment, or that at the end some other solution to the apparently hopeless situation would have turned up. We can therefore risk the generalization that suicide is never ethically justified. Not as atonement either. For suicide not only makes it impossible for a person to grow and to mature as a result of his own suffering (thus realizing attitudinal values), but it also makes it impossible for him ever to make up for the suffering he may have inflicted on someone else. Thus the suicide cannot expiate the past. Instead of wiping the slate clean of a past misfortune or injustice -he simply wipes out his own ego.³²

Frankl compares the suicide to a chess-player who, faced with a difficult problem, sweeps the pieces off the board. The problem has not been solved, it has been removed. The chess-player has violated the rules of chess. The suicide has violated the rules of life.

Man, because of his unique ability to commit suicide, says yes to life every moment he lives meaningfully. The suicide is guilty, in a more magnitudinous way, of the same crime as one who squanders time. Both look to life for something, failing to recognize that life confronts them.

32 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 40-41.

4. The Afterlife.

Frankl recognizes the importance of future orientation in the life process.

But man cannot really exist without a fixed point in the future. Under normal conditions his entire present is shaped around that future point, directed toward it like iron filings toward the pole of a magnet. Lacking that, inward time, lived time forfeits its entire structure.³³

Death, however, poses a different problem, for if life must eventually stop, what sense is there to all the strivings and sufferings of life? Frankl recognizes this problem.

The question is often asked: how can responsibility be a basic feature of our existence in view of the transient nature of our lives? For if we accept the view that everything is transient, we eventually come to the point where we can see only that the future does not (yet) exist, and the past does not (any more) exist; thus all that really exists is the present. In this view, man is a creature coming from nothing and going into nothing; born out of nothingness and threatened by nothingness. How, in the face of this situation, can he find meaning in his existence, and the strength to make responsible choices?³⁴

Frankl is thus led to the theory that man's past is his true future. What has happened is and cannot be erased.

33 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 80.

34 -----, "Time and Responsibility", in Existential Psychiatry, Vol. 1, 1966, p. 361.

Frankl, in further reference to the war widow who is sustained by past memories, poses the following question;

But, one may ask, is this memory not also transitory? Who, for instance, will keep it 'alive' after the widow dies? To this one may answer, that it is irrelevant whether anyone remembers or not; just as it is irrelevant whether we look at something, or think about something, that still exists and is with us. For it exists regardless of whether we look at it or think about. While it is true that we can't take anything with us when we die, the totality of our life, which we have lived to completion and death, remains outside the grave, and outside the grave it remains. And it remains not although, but because, it has slipped into the past and has been preserved there. Even what we have forgotten, what has escaped from our consciousness, remains preserved in the past; it cannot be eliminated, it 'is' and remains part of the world.

And even if it has never reached our consciousness, it still exists, it has come into the world and has become reality. To identify what is part of the past with what is remembered would mean a subjectivistic and psychologistic re-interpretation of our concept of the existential character of the past.³⁵

This approach of Frankl presents a twofold problem. It cannot be denied that what has happened becomes reality, but in the vacuum of total ignorance of past reality, the question is what value such reality has? It cannot affect the meaning of life or give it direction, for it remains a dead reality. It exists, but it does not exist meaningfully.

³⁵ Viktor E. Frankl, "Time and Responsibility", in Existential Psychiatry, Vol. 1, 1966, p. 363.

The second difficulty is that humanity is faced not only with the death of individuals and generations, but also with the end of the world. Even conscious reality is terminal by the very nature of the world. The problem is a universal one; if the world and life on earth will ultimately cease entirely, of what worth is the life of each individual? Frankl's personal approach will satisfy only one who does not see the ultimate emptiness of the universe.

Frankl admits that trust in an ultimate meaning is basic to life.

Now it is my contention that man really could not move a limb unless deep down to the foundations of existence, and out of the depths of being, he is imbued by a basic trust in the ultimate meaning. Without it he would have to stop breathing. Even a person who commits suicide must be convinced that suicide makes sense.³⁶

The fact of death is an existential which undermines the possibility of ultimate meaning. In death, what was possessed of life is robbed of life. That life has disappeared into nothingness. Projected over the whole of life, the fact of death is translated into the eventual disappearance of humanity. This dilemma is founded on the view that death is disappearance, that what is comprehended of death is what death really is. Frankl, as previously indicated, rejects the common idea of death as being true. Death is incomprehensible and

36 Viktor E. Frankl, The Will to Meaning, p. 150-151.

cannot be viewed as disappearance. Frankl says:

Anyone who really believes or claims that he can grasp the death of a person is deceiving himself. For what he would have us believe is ultimately incomprehensible: that a personal entity is removed from the world simply because the organism which is its vehicle has become a cadaver, and that thereafter no form of being pertains to it. Scheler in a posthumously published essay on the survival of personality after the death of the body has pointed out that even in a person's lifetime we apprehend far more of the person - as soon as we really 'intend' him - than 'the few scraps of sensuous data' his physical appearance gives us. The latter is all we miss after death! When that is gone, it is far from the same as saying that the person himself no longer exists. The most we can say is that he can no longer manifest himself, for manifestation requires physical forms of expression (speech, etc.).³⁷

And what if no one manifests himself anymore, or when nobody is around to appreciate past memories?

The problem expresses itself not only in ultimate oblivion but also in existential oblivion. The man who is alone, whose virtue or vice will be known to him only, what drives him positively?

To someone who is not religious, it must seem senseless to be heroic if no one gets anything out of it, and not even a single person ever knows anything about it.³⁸

³⁷ Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 111-112.

³⁸ -----, The Will to Meaning, p. 153, quoting Joost A.M. Meerloo, "Pavlovian Strategy as a Weapon of Menticide," in American Journal of Psychiatry, 1954, Vol. 110, p. 809.

For the religious person this problem is almost non-existent.

The religious man experiences his existence not only as a concrete task but as a personal mission which is given to him by a personal Being. Thus he sees his task transparently, namely, in the light of Transcendence; he alone can "in spite of all say 'yes' to life" under all conditions and circumstances - in spite of all: in spite of distress and death.³⁹

The religious man is never alone. Life is a perpetual dialogue. Death is not the end, hopefully only the end of the beginning.

Frankl, trying to grab the best of both worlds, suggests a rational approach to eternity.

For all that man may occupy an exceptional position, for all that he may be unusually receptive to the world, and that the world itself may be his environment - still, who can say that beyond this world a super-world does not exist? Just as the animal can scarcely reach out of his environment to understand the superior world of man so perhaps man can scarcely ever grasp the super-world, though he can reach out toward it in religion - or perhaps encounter it in revelation. A domestic animal does not understand the purposes for which man employs it. How then could man know what 'final' purpose his life has, what 'super-meaning' the universe has?⁴⁰

Frankl admits the possibility that a super-meaning, a meaning beyond the confines of this world, may or may not

39 Viktor E. Frankl, "The Will to Meaning", in Journal of Pastoral Care, Vol. XII, 1958, p. 87.

40 -----, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 25-26.

exist. Man can never really know, he can hope or have faith in the meaningfulness of life.

This ultimate meaning necessarily exceeds and surpasses the finite intellectual capacities of man; in logotherapy, we speak in this context of a supra-meaning. What is demanded of man is not, as some existential philosophers teach, to endure the meaninglessness of life; but rather to bear his incapacity to grasp its unconditional meaningfulness in rational terms.⁴¹

Man, then, is to complement his physical finiteness with rational finiteness. He must admit there is more to the world than what he perceives. On this intangible rests the impetus for human endeavour.

5. Critical Analysis.

Frankl's concept of death and its application to life give rise to a few questions.

A key point of concern is the premium Frankl puts on dying courageously.

I once read a letter written by a young invalid, in which he told a friend that he had just found out he would not live for long, that even an operation would be of no help. He wrote further that he remembered a film he had seen in which a man was portrayed who waited for death in a courageous and dignified way. The boy had thought it a great accomplishment to meet death so well. Now - he wrote - fate was offering him a similar chance.⁴²

⁴¹ Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search For Meaning, p. 187-188.

⁴² Ibid., p. 107-108.

He who accepts his fate without flinching is lauded by Frankl as being a hero.

But the patient has become a hero who is meeting his fate and holding his own by accepting it in tranquil suffering. That is, upon a metaphysical plane, a true achievement...⁴³

The point of death, in Frankl's system, would seem the least likely time for a patient to hold his own. What purpose is there in being heroic at this time? Heroism at this juncture is tantamount to spiritual stagnation, as if to say fate will not break me. Would it not be far more meaningful to use these last moments to transcend one's self by analyzing the totality of life, attitudinally rejecting the meaningless strivings of life whilst acknowledging honestly the meaningful essences of life? Would not death be filled with more meaning if the patient met death in trepidation, tormented by his failings to the extent that, were he to recover miraculously, his life would be a more meaningful one? In this way he becomes, even in death, a different person than he was in life, scaling the heights of transcendence in a purposeful encounter.

Frankl, to be sure, acknowledges the great potential death has, retroactively, on a heretofore meaningless life.

⁴³ Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 93.

Great artists, in particular, have understood and described this phenomenon of inner fulfillment in spite of outward failure. An example that comes readily to mind is Tolstoy's story of The Death of Ivan Ilyich. The story concerns a respectable government official the abysmal meaninglessness of whose life only dawns upon him when he is faced with unexpected death. But with insight into this meaninglessness the man grows far beyond himself in the last hours of his life; he attains an inner greatness which retroactively hallows all of his previous life - in spite of its apparent futility - and makes it meaningful. Life, that is, can receive its ultimate meaning not only as the result of death (the man who is a hero), but in the very process of death. Not only the sacrifice of one's life can give life meaning; life can reach nobility even as it founders on the rocks.⁴⁴

It becomes more difficult to comprehend why Frankl does not put a greater stress on the meaning aspect of dying. Man, according to Frankl, is guilty because he has failed, and has failed because he is a finite creature. No man can be sure he has found the right meaning and lived meaningfully. Frankl should thus be expected to emphasize how meaningful dying can be, but instead he seems to emphasize the value of courage.

In speaking of the incomprehensibility of death, Frankl asserts that death should not be compared with sleep but with being wakened. If death is being wakened, this implies a waker, or a being transcending our own world who

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 85.

controls the fate of the living and the dead.

Frankl deplures suicide. He insists there is no legitimate excuse for it. Man is obligated to obey the rules of life. "The rules of the game do not require us to win at all costs, but they do demand that we never give up the fight."⁴⁵

However, the question still remains, Why not suicide? If a person is living a miserable existence, why should he not terminate it? Who set up these rules of life to which the unfortunate must adhere? If man is ruler of his self, and possesses the power to commit suicide, why can he not make use of it?

Frankl admits the advantage of a religious man in certain situations. He can function confidently even in apparent oblivion. There is no oblivion for the religious man. The religious man proceeds on the course of life through all contingencies, in tragedy and despair. Does this not establish belief in G-D as necessary for human existence? Meaning is hallowed by Frankl for it gives thrust to the human vector through all conditions and circumstances. But we have seen, and Frankl admits, that certain situations, lacking faith, suspend the meaningfulness of life.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 26-27.

Perhaps the most acute problem in Frankl's system is the concept of afterlife. Recognizing that a transient world threatens the basis of life, but unwilling to make logotherapy a purely religious system, Frankl proposes two alternatives. For the religious man he offers a providential afterlife, for the non-religious he offers super-meaning.

It is self-evident that belief in a super-meaning - whether a metaphysical concept or in the religious sense of Providence - is of the foremost psychotherapeutic and psychohygienic importance. As a genuine faith springing from inner strength, such a belief adds immeasurably to human vitality. To such a faith there is, ultimately, nothing that is meaningless. Nothing appears 'in vain'; 'no act remains unaccounted for' (Wildgans). The world appears to manifest something akin to a law of the conservation of spiritual energy. No great idea can vanish, even if it never reaches public circulation, even if it has been 'taken to the grave'. In the light of such a law, the drama and tragedy of a man's inner life never have unfolded in vain, even when played out in secret, unrecorded, uncelebrated by any novelist. The 'novel' which each individual has lived remains an incomparably greater composition than any that has ever been written down. Every one of us knows somehow that the content of his life is somewhere preserved and saved.⁴⁶

Frankl thus admits that the logotherapeutic system stands or falls depending on its concept of afterlife. However, speaking of afterlife as a metaphysical concept is an inadequate approach. It is quite logical to assume that an evolutionary world born by accident should end just as

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 26-27.

haphazardly. In fact, it is illogical to assume otherwise. Ultimate meaning can contain substance only in terms of original design, or purposeful creation, by a Creator.

Frankl's concept of super-meaning may even be self-defeating.

The question was whether an ape that was being used to develop poliomyelitis serum, and for this reason punctured again and again, would ever be able to grasp the meaning of its suffering. Unanimously, the group replied that of course it would not; for with its limited intelligence it could not enter into the world of man, i.e., the only world in which its suffering would be understandable. Then I pushed forward with the following question: "And what about man? Are you sure that the human world is a terminal point in the evolution of the cosmos? Is it not conceivable that there is still another dimension possible, a world beyond man's world; a world in which the question of an ultimate meaning of human suffering would find an answer?"⁴⁷

In carrying this argument to its conclusion, man, like the animal, will never know the meaning of his life, for it exists in a higher sphere. Also, a higher developmental stage would put man on relative par with present day beasts. Man would be reduced to a tool of the next order, an entity destined to serve a higher species. If this is super-meaning, it destroys whatever trust man has in his existence.

The weight of the above arguments would indicate that G-D belongs to life by the very nature of life. In this

⁴⁷ Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search For Meaning, p. 187.

way, one can see death as being wakened, for one can conceive of a waker. The existence of the past forever becomes a substantial concept truly irrespective of who remembers, just as the act performed in secret, for G-D always sees. Suicide in this context adopts an entirely different perspective. The fragmentary suicide, the death of time in man, is the waste of precious moments entrusted to man by G-D. Total suicide, self destruction, is the murder of G-D's life by its trustee. Afterlife becomes a reality implanted in life at the very moment of its creation. The entire logotherapeutic system of Frankl begs for a firm belief in G-D as the vital firmament of meaningful existence.

CHAPTER IV

FRANKL'S CONCEPT OF LOVE

Love, in the logotherapeutic system of Frankl, is an essential, though not a necessary component of the transcending human model. This chapter offers an analysis of the essence and meaning of love and its role in sex and marriage, as well as a general criticism.

1. What is Love?

Man, according to Frankl, lives in three dimensions, the somatic, the mental, and the spiritual. Frankl stresses the spiritual dimension as being the distinctly human dimension, or the area in which man involves himself in the dynamics of self-transcendence. Man as infinite positive horizontal vector is a distinctly spiritual being.

Frankl admits that love, in its crude form, can be restricted to physical or psychic phenomena. "For just as there are the three layers of the human person, so there are three possible attitudes toward it."¹

The first, most primitive form of love concerns itself with the physical aspects of the partner, which Frankl terms the sexual attitude. The second attitude

¹ Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, New York, Bantam Books, 1967, p. 107.

in love Frankl calls eroticism.

If we think of the partner's physical being as his or her outermost layer, it can be said that the erotically disposed person penetrates deeper than the one who is only sexually disposed. Eroticism penetrates into the next deeper layer, enters into the psychic structure of the other person. This attitude toward the partner, considered as one phase of the relationship, is identical with what is commonly called 'infatuation.' The physical traits of the partner stir us sexually, but we are also 'infatuated' with the other's psychic characteristics. The infatuated person, then, is no longer in a state of mere physical excitation; rather, his psychic emotionality is stirred - stirred by the peculiar (but not unique) psyche of the partner; let us say, by particular character traits of the partner.²

The third attitude, true love, penetrates into the innermost core of the individual, into his spiritual essence.

Loving (in the narrowest sense of the word) represents the end stage of eroticism (in the broadest sense of the word), since it alone penetrates as deeply as possible into the personal structure of the partner. Loving represents a coming to relationship with another as a spiritual being. The close connection with spiritual aspects of the partner is the ultimate attainable form of partnership.³

The truly human love, as the truly human essence, exists in the spiritual dimension of man, and is a spiritual relationship between individuals.

Frankl bases the responsibility of man upon his uniqueness and singularity. Uniqueness is a spiritual

2 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 108.

3 Ibid.

attribute for both physical and psychic or character traits may be shared. In the spiritual dimension each man is unique, his essence different from any other being. From man's humanness flows his uniqueness. At the same time, the existence of each unique being is singular. Each moment can be lived once, can never be retrieved.

Uniqueness and singularity are the determinants in Frankl's concept of love.

Love is living the experience of another person in all his uniqueness and singularity... In love the beloved person is comprehended in his very essence, as the unique and singular being that he is; he is comprehended as a Thou, and as such is taken into the self.⁴

Universal love, for Frankl, is recognition and appreciation of the uniqueness and singularity of all citizens of mankind. Personal love is living the experience of one such individual, acknowledging his otherness and infinite potential, and effecting its evolution.

Uniqueness as crucial to love has great bearing on its duration. Appreciation of a partner as unique establishes him as irreplaceable.

Frankl uses projected life experience to indicate the role uniqueness plays in true love.

⁴ Ibid., p. 106-107.

Let us ask the skeptic to imagine that the one he loves is lost to him forever, either through death or departure and permanent separation. He is then offered a double of the beloved person - someone who in body and temperament perfectly resembles her. We then ask whether the lover can transfer his love to this other person - and he will have to admit that he would be unable to do so. Such a 'transfer' of true love is inconceivable. For the true lover does not 'care about' particular psychic or physical characteristics 'of' the beloved person, he does not care about some trait that she 'has,' but about what she 'is' in her uniqueness. As a unique person, she can never be replaced by any double, no matter how perfect a duplicate.⁵

Frankl asserts that were love restricted to mere physical and psychic union, such transfer could be arranged.

The partner as unique establishes the eternity of the love relationship.

Love is more than an emotional condition; love is an intentional act. What it intends is the essence of the other person. This essence is ultimately independent of existence;... That is why love can outlast the death of the beloved; in that sense we can understand why love is 'stronger' than death. The existence of the beloved may be annihilated by death, but his essence cannot be touched by death. His unique being is, like all true essences, something timeless and thus imperishable.⁶

Frankl's own life provides an indication of the eternity of the true love relationship.

5 Ibid., p. 109.

6 Ibid., p. 110.

I did not know whether my wife was alive, and I had no means of finding out (during all my prison life there was no outgoing or incoming mail); but at that moment it ceased to matter. There was no need for me to know; nothing could touch the strength of my love, my thoughts, and the image of my beloved. Had I known then that my wife was dead, I think that I would still have given myself, undisturbed by that knowledge, to the contemplation of her image, and that my mental conversation with her would have been just as vivid and just as satisfying.⁷

True love is its own assurance of eternality, both in its existential and metaphysical context. Uniqueness as a component of love is the source of this assurance.

Frankl believes that love is undeserved.

As a human person he becomes for the one who loves him indispensable and irreplaceable without having done anything to bring this about. The person who is loved 'can't help' having the uniqueness and singularity of his self - that is, the value of his personality - realized. Love is not deserved, is unmerited - it is simply grace.⁸

If love could be defined concretely, that is, as something partners have together, it would then follow that this concrete entity called love is caused by what each partner has apart. Love would be deserved through the concrete causal qualities possessed by each partner. By insisting that love is undeserved Frankl has made love

⁷ Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search For Meaning, New York, Washington Square Press, 1968, p. 60-61.

⁸ -----, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 107.

undefinable; it is something that just is. Immersion in the personality of the other is a manifestation of this undefinable. Living the uniqueness and singularity of the other is the overriding feature of true love. It is how love asserts itself, but is not what love really is.

2. The Meaning of Love.

Man, according to Frankl, is positive horizontal vector of infinite magnitude. Frankl's perfectly functioning human model is constantly transcending his own self, striving to realize the infinite values of the world.

Frankl calls love "the ultimate and the highest goal to which man can aspire."⁹

Love as immersion in the other presupposes man's detachment from his own self.

Man is never concerned primarily with himself but, by virtue of his self-transcendent quality, he endeavors to serve a cause higher than himself, or to love another person. Loving and serving a cause on the command of one's conscience are the principal manifestations of this self-transcendent quality of human existence that has been totally neglected by closed-system concepts such as the homeostasis principle.¹⁰

⁹ Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search For Meaning, p. 58-59.

¹⁰ -----, "The Task of Education in an Age of Meaninglessness," in New Prospects for the Small Liberal Arts College, New York, Teachers College Press, 1968, p. 44.

Love is an existential which presupposes the self-detachment of both partners to facilitate the mutual climb of the lovers into the sphere of transcendence. Love opens up an entirely unique world of values.

But love is not only grace; it is also enchantment. For the lover, it casts a spell upon the world, envelops the world in added worth. Love enormously increases receptivity to the fullness of values. The gates to the whole universe of values are, as it were, thrown open. Thus, in his surrender to the Thou the lover experiences an inner enrichment which goes beyond that Thou; for him the whole cosmos broadens and deepens in worth, glows in the radiance of those values which only the lover sees. For it is well known that love does not make one blind but seeing - able to see values.¹¹

The objective world of values, for the lovers, is brought into sharper focus and actualization of these infinite values is thus facilitated. In this process the personalities of the lovers themselves are developed.

In the mutual surrender of love, in the giving and taking between two people, each one's own personality comes into its own.¹²

Self-fulfillment, in Frankl's view, is a self-defeating process when inner oriented. Self-fulfillment is the automatic outgrowth of man's orientation towards transcendence. Love contains its greatest meaning in this context.

11 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 107.

12 Ibid., p. 117.

The uniqueness inherent in love implies not only eternality and intransferability, but also the infinity of possibility. "The uniqueness envisaged by love refers to the unique possibilities the loved person may have."¹³ The meaning of the love relationship is to be found in the actualization of the possibilities.

No one can be fully aware of the very essence of another human being unless he loves him. By the spiritual act of love he is enabled to see the essential traits and features in the beloved person; and even more, he sees that which is potential in him, that which is not yet actualized but yet ought to be actualized. Furthermore, by his love, the loving person enables the beloved person to actualize these potentialities. By making him aware of what he can be and of what he should become, he makes these potentialities come true.¹⁴

Frankl describes the dynamics involved in the realization of potentialities.

Love helps the beloved to become as the lover sees him. For the loved one wants to be worthier of the lover, a worthier recipient of such love, by growing to be more like the lover's image, and so he becomes more and more the image of 'what G-D conceived and wanted him to be.'... In mutual love, in which each wishes to be worthy of the other, to become like the other's vision of him, a kind of dialectical process takes place in which each outbids the other and so elevates the other.¹⁵

¹³ Viktor E. Frankl, The Will to Meaning, New York, The New American Library, 1968, p. 19.

¹⁴ -----, Man's Search For Meaning, p. 176-177.

¹⁵ -----, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 121.

There is an upward spiral in love which causes both partners to ascend heights otherwise unattainable. Love is thus the existential accelerator and actualizer of man's search for meaningful existence.

Love contains meaning even if it stretches into the realm of spiritual suffering.

Even when our experiences in love turn out unhappily, we are not only enriched, but also given a deeper sense of life; such experiences are the chief things which foster inner growth and maturity.¹⁶

Frankl believes that the worth of unhappy experiences in love is an empirical reality.

Let anyone honestly ask himself whether he would be prepared to strike his unhappy love affairs, with all their self-doubt and suffering, out of the record of his life. Almost certainly he would not. The fullness of suffering did not seem to him lack of fulfillment. On the contrary, the suffering matured him; he grew as a result of it; his ill-fated love gave him more than many an erotic success might have given him.¹⁷

The failure of a love experience almost certainly causes man to think in terms of personal failure. It thus generates the self-detachment preliminary to self-investigation. Man must confront himself if he is to muster the resources to initiate another love experience. He thus suffers himself into making his essence worthy of being loved.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 121.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 85-86.

The importance of love in meaningful existence does not imply its necessity.

In fact love is only one of the possible ways to fill life with meaning, and is not even the best way. Our existence would have come to a sad pass and our lives would be poor indeed if their meaning depended upon whether or not we experienced happiness in love. Life is infinitely rich in chances to realize values. We need only remember the primacy of creative realization of values. But the individual who neither loves nor is loved can still shape his life in a highly meaningful manner.¹⁸

Man, according to Frankl, is given the tools with which to achieve meaning fulfillment. Love is just one of the tools. It is essential to Frankl's system that no tool is absolutely necessary, for then meaning would become conditional. At the same time, no situation in life is devoid of the tools necessary for meaning fulfillment. Certain existentials open up the world of values, but the ultimate worth of these existentials is realized retroactively. Love falls into this category.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 113.

3. Sex and Love.

Frankl's theory on the role of sex in the love relationship follows from his contention concerning man's pursuit of pleasure.

Actually, man does not care for pleasure and happiness as such but rather for that which causes these effects, be it the fulfillment of a personal meaning, or the encounter with a human being.¹⁹

For ideal man, pleasure and happiness are side benefits of meaning fulfillment. If sex is considered the pleasure aspect of the love relationship, then man's primary concern is the love itself, the spiritual core of the other. All else revolves around this.

A person's body expresses his character and his character expresses the person as spiritual being. The spirit attains to expression - and demands expression - in the body and the psyche. Thus the bodily appearance of the beloved person becomes for a lover a symbol, a mere token for something behind it which manifests itself in the external appearance but is not fully contained in that. True love in and for itself needs the body neither for arousal nor for fulfillment, though it makes use of the body for both. Arousal in a man of healthy instincts is stimulated by the partner's body - although his love is not directed toward the partner's body.²⁰

¹⁹ Viktor E. Frankl, "Self-Transcendence As a Human Phenomenon", in Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Fall 1966, p. 101.

²⁰ -----, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 112.

In true love sex is not an end in itself but follows naturally from the essence of the relationship.

But for the real lover the physical, sexual relationship remains a mode of expression for the spiritual relationship which his love really is, and as a mode of expression it is love, the spiritual act, which gives it human dignity. We can therefore say: as the body is for the lover the expression of the partner's spiritual being, the sexual act is for the lover the expression of a spiritual intention.²¹

The sexual act is the symbolic immersion in the totality of the partner, of a spiritual togetherness which opens up their unique value world.

For Frankl sex is justified only when it is the expression of love, only when it is a distinctly human act.

In logotherapy, love is not interpreted as a mere epiphenomenon of sexual drives and instincts in the sense of a so-called sublimation. Love is as primary a phenomenon as sex. Normally, sex is a mode of expression for love. Sex is justified, even sanctified, as soon as, but only as long as, it is a vehicle of love. Thus love is not understood as a mere side effect of sex but sex as a way of expressing the experience of that ultimate togetherness that is called love.²²

Were sex anything less than expression of a deeply rooted relationship, man would reduce his partner to the

²¹ Ibid., p. 112-113.

²² Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search For Meaning, p. 177.

mechanistic source of satiation of his sex appetite. The partner would become the means toward an end, and all physical communication a desecration of man's dignity.

Frankl cautions against the possible psychological repercussions of such an attitude.

But when man has been accustomed to sex not as a means of expression but as an end in itself, he divides women sharply into two classes - the class of the madonna and that of the whore - with consequent psychological difficulties.²³

This, plus the fact that when sex is intended it fails, indicates, in line with Frankl's experiential philosophy, that sex, as all pleasure, cannot be willed but must come naturally.

Pleasure, as a rule, ensues automatically and simultaneously with the reaching of a goal. Pleasure is a sequel, not an aim in itself; it must occur, but cannot be endeavored. It is effect, but not intention; it can be effectuated, but not intended. Whenever it is intended, it will always fail. This becomes particularly evident in sexual neuroses; there, man fails just at the moment when he is trying consciously to attain pleasure as a goal, a pleasure which is the natural and automatic outcome of instinctual gratification.²⁴

Sex is valid, not only morally, but also realistically, only as the expression of a more primary phenomenon,

23 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 126.

24 -----, "Logos and Existence in Psychotherapy", in American Journal of Psychotherapy, Vol. VII, 1953, p. 13-14.

that of true love.

Something goes wrong when the consciousness attempts to regulate acts which normally take place, so to speak, without thought.²⁵

In true love, sex is a language of its own, as natural and automatic as speech.

Frankl's approach to sex has its application in the cure of sexual impotency.

A young woman came to me complaining of being frigid. The case history showed that in her childhood she had been sexually abused by her father. However, it was not this traumatic experience in itself that had eventuated in her sexual neurosis, as could easily be evidenced. For it turned out that, through reading popular psychoanalytic literature, the patient had lived all the time in the fearful expectation of the toll that her traumatic experience would some day take. This anticipatory anxiety resulted in both excessive intention to confirm her femininity and excessive attention centered upon herself rather than upon her partner. This was enough to incapacitate the patient for the peak experience of sexual pleasure, since the orgasm is made an object of intention and an object of attention as well, instead of remaining an unintended effect of unreflected commitment to the partner. After undergoing short-term logotherapy, the patient's excessive attention and intention of her ability to experience orgasm was 'de-reflected,' to introduce another logotherapeutic term. When her attention was re-focused toward the proper object, i.e., the partner, orgasm established itself spontaneously.²⁶

25 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 127.

26 -----, Man's Search For Meaning, p. 194-195.

Sex as expression insures that a relationship does not disintegrate when sex is impossible.

Even in love between the sexes the body, the sexual element, is not primary; it is not an end in itself, but a means of expression. Love as such can exist without it. Where sexuality is possible, love will desire and seek it; but where renunciation is called for, love will not necessarily cool or die.²⁷

Sex, then, is possible without love, and love is possible without sex. Sex attains its proper form only when true love exists. As a forced action, it results in complications, even neuroses. The primariness of love and sex as its expression in philosophical terms are thus indicated by the existential realities concerning their functioning.

4. Love and Marriage.

Marriage, according to Frankl, does not follow necessarily from the presence of love, even if it be love in its spiritual sense.

Marriage is more than a matter of personal experience. It is a complex structure, an institution of social life legalized by the state or, as the case may be, sanctioned by the church. That is, it reaches deep into the societal realm, and certain societal conditions ought to be met before a marriage is sealed.²⁸

27 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 112.

28 Ibid., p. 118.

At the same time, love, in Frankl's view, is the most important precondition for marriage. Marriage becomes a possibility only when true love exists.

Frankl stresses the importance of the marriage being monogamous, of the union being an exclusive bond.

Love means a sense of inward union; the monogamous relationship, in the form of marriage, is the outward tie. Being faithful means maintaining this tie in all its definitiveness. The exclusiveness of the tie, however, makes it the more imperative that a person form the 'right' tie; not only must he be prepared to bind himself, but also he must know whom he is binding himself to. It becomes supremely important that he decide in favor of the right partner. Erotic maturity in the sense of being inwardly mature enough for a monogamous relationship thus involves a dual requirement: the ability to select a partner; and the ability to remain definitively faithful to that partner.²⁹

Marriage is monogamous by the very nature of the love underlying it. How, though, does this follow? What, in the sphere of spiritual union, makes exclusiveness a necessity? Surely man can live the experience of two women at the same time, and vice versa. After all, even in a monogamous relationship, husband and wife are not always together.

Frankl, as previously explained, indicates love is manifested in experiencing the other in all his uniqueness and singularity. Singularity, as developed in the

²⁹ Ibid., p. 119.

concept of death, refers to the irretrievability of each moment. Where singularity is a factor, it is the imperative to realize the value of each moment and actualize it. In marriage, it is the imperative to the spouses to transcend their selves together and ascend the infinite heights of objective value. Any action by either spouse which suspends this horizontal movement is infidelity. In this context, infidelity refers not only to the ultimate in faithlessness, another affair, but to any endeavor which might stagnate or obstruct the couple's striving to attain values. A monogamous union is just one of the external conditions which must be satisfied for marriage to prosper.

If love is the recognition by each partner of the unique potentialities of the other, then marriage is the agreement by both to mutually meet the world of values as a committed whole, and to complement each other in the actualizing of these values. Any partner trespasses the agreement of marriage when he indulges in any diversionary act which neglects the other. Since marriage is commitment to infinite possibility, there is no moment in the union which does not afford the opportunity to realize values.

Willful disregard of the singularity of the union manifests itself in many forms, each destroying the exclusiveness of the tie. In this respect, man must be guilty, in

marriage, of the same iniquities that abound in the everyday confrontation with reality, the failure to realize all possible values. The finiteness of man as opposed to the infinity of life dictate this guilt. Man must therefore be all the more careful to avoid unnecessary diversions from the path of mutual transcendence.

In a true love relationship, fidelity in its all encompassing sense is automatic. Jealousy is impossible.

There is no room for jealousy within a real love relationship. It is ruled out by very definition, since real love presupposes a mutual feeling of the uniqueness and singularity of the partners. The rivalry so feared by the jealous lover assumes the possibility that he can be replaced by a competitor, assumes that love can be transferred to another. But that is impossible in real love, for the beloved one cannot be compared with any other person.³⁰

Frankl thus asserts that either true love exists, in which case jealousy is impossible, or the relationship is not one of true love, in which case there is nothing to be jealous about.

An interesting aspect of the marriage relationship is the dynamics of the spiritual as well as physical commitment.

Certainly fidelity is one of love's tasks; but it is always a task only for the lover and can never be a demand directed at the partner.³¹

30 Ibid., p. 122.

31 Ibid., p. 123.

Taking fidelity in its all encompassing context, the task of each partner is to acknowledge that he is faced with values to be fulfilled and that he must fulfill these values with the other. It is not the task of either to confront the other; each must visualize this confrontation independently. The union of ultimate togetherness demands a degree of spiritual independence by the partners in order to attain the value world opened up by marriage.

Frankl stands rigidly opposed to any marriage which does not contain true love, where the partners are directed not by the essence of the other but by what each one has. Marriage as spiritual commitment is valid only when the spiritual commitment exists. Where marriage is merely sexual or erotic expression the results can be staggering.

On the other hand, if motives themselves extraneous to real love determine a marriage, the marriage can at most partake of the nature of 'eroticism' - eroticism as we have defined it: as being directed toward 'having,' toward possession. In particular, where economic motives play a major part in the decision, the materialistic desire to 'have' is preponderant. ... The degradation of human relationships that this entails is visited, as it were, upon the next generation.³²

31 Ibid., p. 123.

32 Ibid., p. 118.

The miracle of a child may become the debacle of a child in an insincere partnership, pointing experientially to the true nature of love and marriage.

Frankl discusses at length the all too common approach to marriage symbolized by marriage of a type. As in the case of the chorus-girl type, man binds himself to an erotic ideal, a typically beautiful woman, an easily replaceable type. Why?

Today's average man takes this type of woman for his erotic ideal because she cannot, in her impersonality, burden him with responsibility. The type is ubiquitous. Just as one chorus-girl in the revue can be replaced by any other, so in life this type of woman is easily replaceable. The chorus-girl type is impersonal woman with whom a man need have no personal relationship, no obligations; a woman he can 'have' and therefore need not love. She is property, without personal traits, without personal value.³³

The very nature of the erotic relationship invites its breakdown.

Only the human person can be loved; the impersonality of the chorus-girl type cannot be loved. With her, no question of faithfulness is involved; infidelity follows from impersonality. Not only is infidelity in such relationships feasible; it is necessary. For where the quality of happiness in love is lacking, the lack must be compensated by quantity of sexual pleasure.³⁴

The infidelity need not manifest itself in the extreme, but in any diversionary involvement which would compensate for what man really seeks but has eluded him.

33 Ibid., p. 115.

34 Ibid.

The abundant problems in marriage result because man disregards the essence of the relationship in favour of the more inviting, and more temporary superficialities.

Marriage as an existential retains its meaning, in Frankl's view, even if it is not biologically fruitful.

Instinctual gratification and biological reproduction are, after all, only two aspects of marriage - and not even the most important ones. The spiritual factor of love is more essential.³⁵

Thus, Frankl believes, even if eugenic considerations make child bearing an impossibility, the marriage is not contraindicated. The parties of the union will just have to be satisfied with a marriage which stops short of reproduction.

In general, life does not gain meaning through its being perpetuated.

Either life has a meaning and retains this meaning whether it is long or short, whether or not it reproduces itself; or life has no meaning, in which case it takes on none, no matter how long it lasts or can go on reproducing itself. If the life of a childless woman were really meaningless solely because she had no children, then humanity lives only for its children, and the sole meaning of existence is to be found in the next generation. But that is only a postponement of the problem. For every generation hands the problem on to the next generation unsolved. The only meaning in the life of one generation consists in raising the next. But to perpetuate something in itself meaningless is meaningless. If the thing is meaningless, it does not acquire meaning by being immortalized.³⁶

35 Ibid., p. 56.

36 Ibid., p. 54-55.

Child bearing is only one of the possible creative values in marriage.

5. Critical Analysis.

The ultimate success of a love relationship, in Frankl's view, hinges on its nature. As spiritual commitment, it insures the duration of marriage in its multiple facets. As spiritual commitment, the union of two partners exists beyond death and cannot falter in life. The sexual expression of the union is a meaningful, natural part of the dialogue, though not a necessary part. The union is meaningful irrespective of whether it is extended into the next generation. The meaning of love, as life itself, is not contingent on any external conditions.

Spiritually, it is not enough for the partners to transcend their own selves by involving themselves with the other.

Frankl, in speaking of human existence as a dialogue between I and thou, declares;

... we must recognize that this dialogue defeats itself unless I and Thou transcend themselves to refer to a meaning outside themselves.³⁷

Marriage is the fusion of two unique individuals into a dual person in relation to life. Together the

37 Viktor E. Frankl, The Will to Meaning, p. 8.

partners are accelerated in their quest for meaning. Just as the individual is fulfilled tangentially through the actualization of values, so the dual individuality which is the married couple fulfill their selves through that which is outside them, the objective value world. The partners must see themselves, individually, as confronted by life, and must then respond mutually to life's demands.

Ultimately, the value of love, as of life itself, depends on the value system in objective space. It demands the infinity of transcendence to guarantee the responsibility of the partners to the infinite fulfillment they must strive to realize. This leads to an objective source of infinite values as the basis of the world of love, to a Transcendent Being who has endowed the world with meaning.

CHAPTER V

FRANKL'S CONCEPT OF WORK

The nature of society dictates that man indulge in some form of work to acquire the means of sustenance. This chapter will analyze Frankl's concept of work in relation to man's mission in life, as well as offer a general criticism.

1. Man's Task in Life.

According to Frankl, "Life is a task".¹ Something or Someone outside him confronts man, demanding the performance of certain tasks. Man must dedicate himself to this call.

Man's struggle for his self and his identity is doomed to failure unless it is enacted as dedication and devotion to something beyond his self, to something above his self.²

Man is constantly faced by the objective value world, and through the subject-object tension, is called upon to translate the values out there in the world into actuality. Man's task in life is a never-ending process.

1 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, New York, Bantam Books, 1967, p. xiv.

2 -----, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1968, p. 82.

We must never be content with what has already been achieved. Life never ceases to put new questions to us, never permits us to come to rest.³

Man's response to the challenge of life is an active process.

The meaning of life, we have said, is not to be questioned but to be responded to, for we are responsible to life. It follows from this that the response should be given not in words, but in acting, by doing.⁴

No two responses are alike. The uniqueness of each person and the singularity of each situation indicate the peculiar nature of the response. Man's approach to his mission in life may thus be interpreted as;

... to find his way to his own proper task; to advance toward the uniqueness and singularity of his own meaning in life.⁵

Frankl believes that man's understanding of his uniqueness and singularity, or his responsibility to life, is a retroactive process.

As for this matter of each man's inner potentialities - in other words, how a man is to go about learning what he ought to be from what he is - there is no better answer than that given by Goethe. 'How can we learn to know ourselves? Never by reflection, but by action. Try to do your duty and you will soon find out what you are. But what is your duty? The demands of each day.'⁶

3 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 105.

4 Ibid., p. 94.

5 Ibid., p. 44-45.

6 Ibid., p. 45.

Man thus involves himself in a trial and error process in seeking his proper place in the cosmos. In any direction which he turns, man must be prepared for the possibility that his approach is not the correct one.

It sometimes happens that one task will not yield to man's efforts, while another, with its complement of values, presents itself as an alternative. Man must cultivate the flexibility to swing over to another value-group if that group and that alone offers the possibility of actualizing values. Life requires of man spiritual elasticity, so that he may temper his efforts to the chances that are offered.⁷

The ultimate justification for each man's personal existence depends not on man's reaching the goal of his existence, but on the intensity with which he strives to reach it.

That he must aim at the best is imperative; otherwise his efforts would come to nought. But at the same time he must be able to content himself with nothing more than approaching nearer and nearer, without ever quite attaining his goal.⁸

Man's task in life, his perpetual approach to the infinitive value world, is conducive to his own well-being.

There is nothing in the world, I dare say, which helps man so efficiently to survive and keep healthy as the knowledge of a life task.⁹

⁷ Ibid., p. 34.

⁸ Ibid., p. 49.

⁹ Viktor E. Frankl, "The Search for Meaning", in Saturday Review, Sept. 13, 1958, p. 20.

That knowledge of a task in life helps in the fight for survival is attested to by the following;

In the Nazi concentration camps, one could have witnessed (and this was later confirmed by American psychiatrists both in Japan and Korea) that those who knew that there was a task waiting for them to fulfill were most apt to survive.¹⁰

Frankl explains the bearing knowledge of a task has on health as follows;

The conviction that one has a task before him has enormous psychotherapeutic and psychohygienic value. We venture to say that nothing is more likely to help a person overcome or endure objective difficulties or subjective troubles than the consciousness of having a task in life.¹¹

Frankl goes on to say that when man sees this task as suited for him, the value is greater.

That is all the more so when the task seems to be personally cut to suit, as it were; when it constitutes what may be called a mission. Having such a task makes the person irreplaceable and gives his life the value of uniqueness.¹²

That man is called upon by life to achieve his task and that he is to respond to that call in his own uniqueness and singularity and in the uniqueness and singularity of each life situation is thus indicated in the human model of Frankl, in line with his experiential philosophy.

¹⁰ Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search For Meaning, New York, Washington Square Press, 1968, p. 165.

¹¹ -----, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 43.

¹² Ibid.

2. The Meaning of Work.

Work, or man's calling, should not be interpreted as being the life task of the individual. "There is a false identification of one's calling with the life task to which one is called."¹³ Man may achieve his life task through work, but not necessarily through work.

Frankl conceives of work in a sociological framework.

Work usually represents the area in which the individual's uniqueness stands in relation to society and thus acquires meaning and value. This meaning and value, however, is attached to the person's work as a contribution to society, not to the actual occupation as such.¹⁴

This, though, is really Frankl's conception of what society means by work. In Frankl's philosophy meaning must be elicited from all life experience, work included. Man is called upon to choose a calling which will contain meaning and to reject a perhaps more financially rewarding calling which does not offer the same opportunity for meaning fulfillment. The criteria for choosing work, in Frankl's view, contain a sociological factor, but must contain other factors which do not reduce man to being merely a source of production.

¹³ Ibid., p. 99.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 95.

Frankl illustrates the meaning quality of work with a pointed example.

... let us imagine a young person who has grown up in poverty-stricken circumstances. Instead of being content with the narrowness and deprivations of these circumstances, and adjusting to them, let us assume that he imposes his personal will upon the outer world and so 'reshapes' his life that he can, say, further his education and enter a profession. Assume further that he follows his aptitudes and inclinations, studies medicine and becomes a physician. A tempting offer is made to him of a lucrative post which will also provide him with a fashionable private practice. Here is the way to secure mastery over his life and win an outwardly rich existence. But suppose also that this young man's talent lies in a special branch of his profession, which branch he will have to give up if he takes the good post that is being offered to him. Such a choice would ensure him a successful life, but would deny him inner fulfillment. He might be prosperous and indeed enviable - might own a substantial home, drive an expensive car, and afford all kinds of luxuries. But when he devoted some thought to the question, this person would know that somehow his life had gone awry. Encountering another man who, renouncing wealth and all its pleasures, had remained faithful to his true vocation, our young man would have to confess to himself, in Hebbel's words: 'The man I am greets mournfully the man I might have been.'¹⁵

Frankl goes on to say that were this man to dedicate himself to his specialty, he would, through his vocation, find meaning in his life. Frankl stresses the importance of what one gives to his position rather than what one receives from it.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 8-9.

Judging from the emphasis on what man gives to his position, Frankl says;

... a humble country doctor who is firmly rooted in his locality may seem a greater man than many of his successful metropolitan colleagues. Similarly, the theoretician in a remote outpost of science may nevertheless be doing more heroic service than many of the more active figures who stand 'in the midst of life,' allegedly carrying on the battle against death. For on the battle fronts where science carries on the struggle against the unknown, the theoretician may be performing a unique and irreplaceable service, small though his sector of the front may be. And in the uniqueness of this personal achievement no one can supplant him. He has found his place and filled it - and thereby he has fulfilled himself.¹⁶

Even given the same outward circumstances, for instance two people with the same calling, one may translate his role into a meaningful endeavor while the other may go about in listless automation.

The meaning of the doctor's work lies in what he does beyond his purely medical duties; it is what he brings to his work as a personality, as a human being, which gives the doctor his peculiar role. For it would come to the same thing whether he or a colleague gave injections, etc., if he were merely practicing the arts of medicine, merely using the tricks of the trade. Only when he goes beyond the limits of purely professional service, beyond the tricks of the trade, does he begin that truly personal work which alone is fulfilling.¹⁷

16 Ibid., p. 9.

17 Ibid., p. 96.

Generally, work can be meaningful if it is raised above the level of rote behaviour into the human sphere, if man injects of his own essence into the calling.

... the job at which one works is not what counts, but rather the manner in which one does the work. It does not lie with the occupation, but always with us, whether those elements of the personal and the specific which constitute the uniqueness of our existence are expressed in the work and thus make life meaningful.¹⁸

Frankl recognizes that work may sometimes retard man's search for meaning. He cites the case of a diplomat who had been undergoing psychoanalysis for a number of years because he was unhappy in his position. He came to Frankl to continue treatment. Frankl relates;

After a few interviews, it was clear that his will to meaning was frustrated by his vocation, and he actually longed to be engaged in some other kind of work. As there was no reason for not giving up his profession and embarking on a different one, he did so, with most gratifying results.¹⁹

Frankl admits that there remains a type of occupation which is, by its very nature, a meaningless exercise. In such an instance man is forced into a different approach, gearing his preoccupation with meaning fulfillment to the after work hours.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 95.

¹⁹ Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search For Meaning, p. 162.

Frankl describes this predicament;

There are, for example, those who complain that they work eight or more hours a day for an employer, and in his interest alone, doing nothing but add interminable columns of figures or stand at an assembly line and perform the same movement, pull the same lever on a machine - and the more that the job is reduced to impersonal and standardized movements, the more pleasing it is to the employer. In such circumstances, it is true, work can be conceived only as a mere means to an end, the end of earning money - that is, earning the necessary means for real life. In this case real life begins only with the person's leisure time, and the meaning of that life consists in giving form to that leisure.²⁰

There are people who, after the everyday routine, are too enervated for any meaningful endeavor. Even for these Frankl finds a meaning.

To be sure, we must never forget that there are people whose work is of such exhausting quality that afterward they are good for nothing but falling into bed. The only form they can give to their leisure is to use it as a period for recovering their strength; they can do nothing more sensible with it than sleep.²¹

Frankl insists that there is no situation in life which is meaningless. The meaning of life is unconditional, independent of circumstance. He thus extracts meaning from the very meaninglessness of a situation, such as the worker who oscillates between meaningless work and sleep.

²⁰ Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 96-97.

²¹ Ibid., p. 97.

The material gains from man's vocational endeavors are important for meaning fulfillment, and inhuman if made the object of man's striving.

... power is a means to an end. A certain amount of power, such as economic or financial power, is generally a prerequisite for meaning fulfillment.²²

The man who pursues money for its own sake leads a meaningless existence.

We all know the type of factory manager or financial magnate who is entirely devoted to earning money, who is so busy earning the means for living that he forgets life itself. The pursuit of wealth has become an end in itself. That kind of person has a great deal of money; and his money still has a use, but his life no longer has a direction.²³

An example from Frankl's personal life provides an illustration of the role money should play in life.

The president of an American university once offered me nine thousand dollars to join his faculty for a few weeks. He could not understand my refusal. 'You want more?' he asked. 'Not at all,' I answered, 'but if I pondered how to invest the nine thousand dollars I should say that there is one worthwhile way only in which to invest it, and that is to buy time for work. But I now have time for work, so why should I sell it for nine thousand dollars?'²⁴

22 Viktor E. Frankl, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, p. 6.

23 -----, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 97.

24 -----, The Will to Meaning, New York, The New American Library, 1968, p. 96-97.

The pursuit of money as anything but a means for human fulfillment is a denial of man's essence as well as his ultimate purpose in life.

3. Life Without Work.

Frankl believes man can live meaningfully even without any occupation.

The capacity to work is not everything; it is neither a sufficient nor essential basis for a meaningful life. A man can be capable of working and nevertheless not lead a meaningful life; and another can be incapable of working and nevertheless give his life meaning.²⁵

Man's response to life is possible without work, for the meaning of life is unconditional.

However, Frankl admits, it is understandable that an unemployed individual should feel a vacuum within himself.

The jobless man experiences the emptiness of his time as inner emptiness, as an emptiness of consciousness. He feels useless because he is unoccupied. Having no work, he thinks life has no meaning.²⁶

Such an approach to employment and its absence is bound to lead to what Frankl calls unemployment neurosis.

Just as idle organs in the body may become the hosts for rampant growths, so idleness in the psychological realm leads to morbid inner developments. Unemployment becomes a culture medium for proliferation of neuroses.²⁷

25 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 101.

26 Ibid., p. 97.

27 Ibid.

The retired person is also prone to the vacuum created by lack of employment. Even the employed person is not necessarily exempt from the symptoms of unemployment neurosis. He often suffers from what Frankl calls Sunday neurosis.

The spiritual crisis of retirement constitutes, so to speak, a permanent unemployment neurosis. But there is also a temporary, periodical one, the Sunday neurosis: a depression which afflicts people who become conscious of the lack of content in their lives - the existential vacuum - when the rush of the busy week stops on Sunday and the void within them suddenly becomes manifest.²⁸

Frankl believes that the problems which arise from the jobless situation are based on a false notion.

What actually reduces the neurotic unemployed to apathy, what ultimately underlies the unemployment neurosis, is the erroneous view that working is the only meaning of life. There is a false identification of one's calling with the life task to which one is called. This incorrect equating of the two necessarily makes the unemployed person suffer from the sense of being useless and superfluous.²⁹

Frankl sees the role of logotherapy as vital to the elimination of the vacuum created by unemployment. Man must be made aware that his attitude of hopelessness is unwarranted, that in spite of all, life still affords him

²⁸ Viktor E. Frankl, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, p. 124-125.

²⁹ -----, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 99.

the chance to live meaningfully.

There are plenty of examples to prove that the state of mind accompanying unemployment is not unequivocally shaped and determined by fate. For in addition to the neurotic type noted above, there is another sort of unemployed person who, forced to live under the same adverse economic conditions as the neurotics, nevertheless remains free of unemployment neurosis. He seems to be neither apathetic nor depressed, seems in fact to retain a certain cheerful serenity. Why should this be? If we examine the matter, we discover that such persons have put themselves to work elsewhere when they do not have their regular jobs. For example, they are busy as voluntary assistants in various organizations and adult education courses, serving as unpaid helpers in public libraries... Often they have to tighten their belts just as much as that other group of unemployed who become neurotic, but nevertheless they take an affirmative attitude toward life and are far from hopeless. They know how to lend interest to life and wrest meaning from it. They have grasped the fact that the meaning of human life is not completely contained within paid work, that unemployment need not compel one to live meaninglessly.³⁰

Frankl repeatedly emphasizes that the role of the logotherapist in his encounter with people suffering from the meaninglessness of their lives is not to impose some value or give direction to a specific form of meaning, but rather to open up the value world, to set into motion the wheels of discovery. The rest is up to the patient. He alone must set the course of his self transcendence.

30 Ibid.

Thus, Frankl says:

It goes without saying that meaning and purpose in life are no matter of prescription. It is not the job of a doctor to give meaning to the patient's life. But it may well be his task through an existential analysis to enable the patient to find meaning in life. And in my opinion meaning is something to be found rather than to be given.³¹

In his work, the logotherapist must approach his patient as a human being. By insisting on a specific value direction the patient's humanity is submerged in the mechanistic approach to the world of values.

Employer and employee, doctor and patient, are called upon to appreciate the delicate balance in their respective callings. Acknowledging work as only a potential source of meaning, but not a necessary one, the human vector can travel uninterrupted in noetic space. That such an attitude destroys the culture medium for neuroses is a vindication of Frankl's theory of work in relation to life and forms part of his experiential philosophy.

³¹ Viktor E. Frankl, "The Concept of Man in Logotherapy", in Journal of Existentialism, Vol. 6, 1965, p. 57.

4. Critical Analysis.

Work, in its sociological context, is one of the ways man answers the call of life. Life as the source of the human imperative is a hazy notion. Man is given a directive without a director, is called upon to realize values yet there is no caller.

... existential analysis teaches people to see life as an assignment. But the following addendum must be made: There are people who go a step further, who, as it were, experience life in a further dimension. They also experience the authority from which the task comes. They experience the taskmaster who has assigned the task to them.³²

Frankl believes that experiencing the taskmaster is a basic manifestation of the religious person.

In our opinion we have here an essential characteristic of the religious man: he is a man who interprets his existence not only in terms of being responsible for fulfilling his life tasks, but also as being responsible to the taskmaster.³³

Is it possible for man to feel responsible in life without feeling responsible to someone? That life poses the challenge to man implies that life is some form of entity. What sort of entity is this poser of challenge to man?

³² Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, p. 47.

³³ Ibid.

How can man interpret his existence as a mission if his presence on earth is the result of accident? Man may conceive of some purpose in life with the reality that his being placed on earth was purposeful. Again, man could hardly be expected to acknowledge the unconditional meaning of life if life is the result of some cosmological happenstance. Ultimately, Frankl's theory concerning the meaning of man's existence and the meaning of life demand not only a design, but also a designer. Meaning of life would be faith in the ultimate purpose of the design. The meaning of each personal existence would accrue from recognition that each individual is part of the design.

CHAPTER VI

LOGOTHERAPY AND RELIGION

This chapter offers an attempt to explain the dichotomy between the role religion plays in Frankl's logotherapeutic system and the role it ought to play.

Frankl's writings, most specifically those pertaining to his personal experiences, betray a profound religious feeling. For example;

One day, a few days after the liberation, I walked through the country past flowering meadows, for miles and miles, toward the market town near the camp. Larks rose to the sky and I could hear their joyous song. There was no one to be seen for miles around; there was nothing but the wide earth and sky and the larks' jubilation and the freedom of space. I stopped, looked around, and up to the sky - and then I went down on my knees. At that moment there was very little I knew of myself or of the world - I had but one sentence in mind - always the same: 'I called to the Lord from my narrow prison and He answered me in the freedom of space.'

How long I knelt there and repeated this sentence memory can no longer recall. But I know that on that day, in that hour, my new life started. Step for step I progressed, until I again became a human being.¹

Frankl himself, as evidenced in his writings, is thoroughly convinced of the unconditional meaning of life. This, in effect, is the basic thesis of logotherapy.

¹ Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search For Meaning, New York, Washington Square Press, 1968, p. 141-142.

That meaning is unconditional implies that meaning is objective. Unconditional meaning says that life is meaningful in spite of any situation, be it the fact of suffering, the threat of death, the absence of love, or the lack of work.

However, objective meaning demands a transcendent source for this meaning, pointing to transcendent emanation of values.

Suffering can be explained ultimately only through super-meaning.

The threat of death, in terms of eventual termination of life on earth, seriously impedes the meaning of life unless the concept of afterlife is accepted. Frankl attempts a metaphysical approach to afterlife, but this approach is inconsistent with an evolutionary universe.

Love assumes spiritual dimensions only through transcendence toward the objective value world, the world of the infinite.

Man's mission in life, his responsibility, can hardly be appreciated without acknowledging a purposeful design by a transcendent designer.

The entire logotherapeutic system of Frankl emanates from, and points toward, faith in ultimate meaning. Ultimate

meaning is by definition beyond the grasp of finite man.

Actually, our interrogation must be confined to the meaning of a part. We cannot begin to question the 'purpose' of the universe. Purpose is transcendent to the extent that it is always external to whatever 'possesses' it. We can therefore at best grasp the meaning of the universe in the form of a super-meaning, using the word to convey the idea that the meaning of the whole is no longer comprehensible and goes beyond the comprehensible.²

What, then, becomes of the meaning of the whole?

It belongs to the realm of faith.

I would say that the ultimate meaning, or as I prefer to call it, the supra-meaning is no longer a matter of thinking but rather a matter of believing. We do not catch hold of it on intellectual grounds but on existential grounds, out of our whole being, i.e., through faith.³

Frankl admits that this faith is not a metaphysical faith but a religious faith.

But it is my contention that faith in the ultimate meaning is preceded by trust in an ultimate being, by trust in G-D.⁴

Only a man with deeply imbedded faith could conceive of the faith imbued system which is logotherapy. Frankl the man is a man of faith.

2 Viktor E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, New York, Bantam Books, 1967, p. 25.

3 -----, The Will to Meaning, New York, The New American Library, 1968, p. 145.

4 Ibid.

But Frankl is also a doctor, and thus bound by the Hippocratic oath.

Logotherapy, as a secular theory and medical practice, must restrict itself to factual statements, leaving to the patient the decision as to how to understand his own being-responsible: whether along the lines of religious beliefs or agnostic convictions. Logotherapy must remain available for everyone; I would be obliged to adhere to this by my Hippocratic oath, if for no other reason. Logotherapy is applicable in cases of atheistic patients and usable in the hands of atheistic doctors.⁵

Herein lies the dichotomy between the role religion plays in logotherapy and the role it ought to play. It is the dichotomy between Frankl the man and Frankl the doctor.

Frankl's insistence that he must keep logotherapy open to everyone is only partially valid. It is valid in that no doctor has the right to close his door to a potential patient because of theological differences. But if the logotherapist sees his role as introducing the patient to the world of meaning and responsibility, this by necessity means opening up the patient to the world of faith, for meaning without faith is untenable. Perhaps, then, the logotherapist is bound by the Hippocratic oath to introduce religion to his patients. Perhaps the logotherapist doctor, who practices what he recommends in his

⁵ Viktor E. Frankl, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1968, p. 10.

practice, is by logical necessity a theist.

Frankl is fond of alluding to Pindar's imperative, "Become what you are".⁶ Applied to logotherapy, it is the imperative for logotherapy to become what it really is, a system which recognizes the existential and therapeutic demand for religion as necessary for human existence, a system which is born of faith and relies on faith for its ultimate expression.

⁶ Ibid.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of Frankl's logotherapeutic system indicates that logotherapy, by its nature and direction, is a religious system.

The dynamics of life crucial to the properly functioning human being demand an objective set of values. This was shown to be possible only through a transcendent source for these objective values.

Suffering as a source of despair for the human being poses a threat to the meaning orientation of life unless the suffering itself can be made meaningful. This is accomplished through faith in an ultimate meaning. Death, too, is an existential which implies the temporary nature of the world in general and of individual lives in particular. Meaningful existence can be maintained in the face of death only through faith in ultimate meaning. Ultimate meaning was shown to be dependent on original design by a Creator if suffering is to be meaningful and death acceptable.

The love man manifests for a partner in life was proven self defeating unless lived through orientation towards the objective world of values, which is itself possible only in terms of a source for these objective values.

Work as a basic component of human existence contains meaning if viewed in terms of man's task in life. Man's task

was shown to be valid only as part of a universal design, which obtains validity in terms of a Transcendent designer.

Meaningful life and meaningful existence, essentials for the human being to function properly, are based on a faith in G-D and are directed towards that faith. Logotherapy as healing through meaning thus becomes a fundamentally religious system.

Frankl, to be sure, concerns himself with the realities of life, not with theology. No theology, however, can be divorced from the realities of life, so that Frankl unintentionally invites theological problems.

Frankl's goal is to establish the apparatus for the human being to live properly. His main sustaining force is the unconditional meaning of life and his main thrust is towards making all situations meaningful by making them truly human actions, not mechanical exercises or expression of base instincts.

Religion, too, must be concerned with the problem of how to live properly. Its main sustaining force is the meaningfulness of life. It must be concerned with the human aspect in man's functioning.

Taking into account the conclusions of this paper, a number of important avenues for further research are opened. One such avenue is a comparison of the concept of

free will as underlying the humanness of behaviour in logotherapy and the religious concept of grace. Man's responsibility in Frankl's system and the doctrine of original sin are two concepts which bear greater study as to whether they are contradictory. Another area for development is the ascetic ideal and its effect on the will to meaning.

Of great significance is the bearing logotherapy as a religious system may have on the beliefs of the psychotherapist. The tenets of logotherapy have universal application, for all psychotherapists must be interested in the meaningful existence of their patients. Must a psychotherapist by definition be religious?

Finally, logotherapy may provide, inadvertently, what generations of intellectual endeavor have not been able to produce, a proof, or indication, of the existence of a Divine being. The nature of life with and without faith in G-D, the problems that intrude on life without a firm faith, may establish religion as part of life by the very nature of life, a possibility that theology students of all denominations might explore.

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This book, an up to date statement of the logotherapeutic thesis, offers many applications to the present day ubiquity of meaninglessness. It is particularly valuable for its presentation of the role of religion in logotherapy.

APPENDIX 1

ABSTRACT OF

An Analysis of the Viability of Frankl's Logotherapeutic System as a Secular Theory¹

The logotherapeutic system of Viktor E. Frankl was conceived as a secular theory. This paper analyzes whether logotherapy can remain a secular theory or is fundamentally a religious theory.

The method of approach used is to find the roots and implications of the underlying concepts in Frankl's system through analysis of the following; man's existence, suffering, death, love, and work.

Man's existence, predicated on a never ending dynamics of life, is contingent on an objective set of values, which is shown to point to a Transcendent Source for these values.

Suffering impedes the dynamics of meaningful life unless the suffering is made meaningful. The fact of death signifies the futility of existence unless man can be made to look beyond death. Suffering becomes meaningful and death acceptable only in terms of ultimate meaning. Ultimate meaning is shown to hinge on purposeful creation by a Creator.

¹ Reuven P. Bulka, Masters thesis presented to the Department of Religious Studies of the University of Ottawa, Ontario, July 1969, vii-105 p.

Love is meaningful only if lived in mutual transcendence towards the objective value world, a world conceivable if seen in terms of the Transcendent source of these values.

Work is divested of meaning unless conceived as part of man's task in life. Man's task is shown to be a valid concept only in terms of original design by a Transcendent Designer.

The concepts underlying logotherapy are thus proven to be rooted in faith and directed towards faith, indicating that logotherapy is, by its very nature, a religious theory.

Some areas for further research are the idea of free will in logotherapy and its relation to the concept of grace, man's responsibility in logotherapy and its bearing on the doctrine of original sin, and the ascetic ideal and its effect on the will to meaning.

The religious nature of logotherapy may necessitate a religious orientation in psychotherapy. It also may provide a proof or indication of the existence of a Divine being. Both possibilities are potential areas for further development.