

Logotherapeutic Redemption from Trauma in Viktor Emil Frankl's Autobiography

Man's Search for Meaning

This research paper investigates how logotherapy helps to enhance the capacity to recover from stress and trauma in Frankl's *Man's Search For Meaning*.

This autobiography shows his personal experience about his suffering and millions of prisoners who suffered during the holocaust. Frankl shows his struggle to survive having positive faith and hope while he was in concentration camps. Although he was in a concentration camp, he was optimistic about being released from the camp. He shows three phases through which victims had to pass: the period following his admission, the period while he is well entrenched in camp routine, and the period following his release. He depicts holocaust not only as the darkness of inhumanity, pessimism and extreme suffering but also shows an alternative reality where hope for humanity also exists in the form of retrospection.

Frankl also brings many philosophical insights in the book. He insists that life is meaningful and we must learn to see valuable and important aspect of life despite bad and horrific condition. His book consists of two parts: the first part of his book explores his experience in concentration camp while the second part describes his theory logotherapy. He shows the basis for the understanding of the psychology of individuals who face extreme suffering in concentration camp and how their psychology has been affected. Many victims suffer from trauma, lose their hope and commit suicide but he becomes bold and comforts others not to lose hope and insists that they must challenge such difficult situation in order to survive. He represents not only his traumatic experience but shows all the communal experience of the Jews.

At the period of holocaust, during the World War II Nazis were in power. They were so cruel that they wanted to swipe up the Jews' identity. Germany goes

through economic depression after First World War and the situation was horrible. After Hitler was appointed as the chancellor of Germany, he promised to restore Germany's honor and glory so all the Germany was behind Hitler. He captures the public mind and imagination and constructed the narration that the causes of Germany's defeat were the Jews. He blamed Jews for weighing down his country and made policies to lead an intricate plan to exterminate Jews. At that time, Jews were captured and taken into concentration camps. They were extremely and brutally tortured and dehumanized. Six million Jews were killed. By the end 50,000 to 100,000 survivors were able to survive. Frankl was one of them who was able to survive defeating trauma because of his faith, love and hope during holocaust. During the holocaust many people got traumatized, suffered from anxiety and disorders so they became unable to find meaning or 'self' in life. Many prisoners live with injury not only physically but also psychologically. While in the camp human condition was badly damaged which was so difficult to imagine.

Dehumanization is like the animalistic state that each individual is like the crying dogs. Nazis treat humans like animals. The only aim of Nazis was to give pain and swipe up the existence of Jews. Many Jews were victimized and killed. They showed their inhumanity towards Jews. As a result, Jews suffered from psychological conditions and disorders. But Frankl insists one can reduce the burden of their trauma and can survive finding meaning in life even in such torturous and horrific circumstances. In this autobiography, he also provides the basis for understanding the psychology of individuals who face extreme pain. He thinks what a person chooses to be is a personal choice despite one's environmental influence. He heals his trauma within the camp through the logotherapeutic way. Logotherapy focuses on feelings and will to life of a man even in a dehumanized situation. Even in such traumatic

condition he was able to find his inner strength and hope to struggle to live a meaningful life. So he insists that others can also do the same process.

Many Jews, during and after the holocaust could not move on with their daily life. They feel the sense of guilt and shame. Prisoners lose their consciousness, reason, love, will and meaning in their life and they finds only way to escape from trauma is to commit suicide. This autobiography shows that Frankl became able to find meaning in life in the period of Holocaust. He explores how logotherapy helps in a meaningful decision making process in order to heal trauma even in such dehumanized and horrific circumstances finding meaning in life. The basic objective of this research is to analyze the struggle for his existence even in such traumatic situation by searching meaning in life where everyone is wishing for their death.

Various critics have examined *Man's Search for Meaning* in various ways. According to K.M. McCann's *Man's Search for Meaning* contains the theme of survival. Frankl is able to survive in such horrific circumstances because he find meaning in life. In this regard, he claims:

Man's Search for Meaning focuses less on his personal experiences and more on how his time under Nazi rule showed him the ability to survive and endure against all odds. He gives the examples of prisoners who found hope and will to keep going even under torturous conditions . . . all of which Frankl, demonstrates the importance of what has become known as meaning making regardless situation.

As McCann brought the idea from the writer that human beings cannot avoid suffering rather they can derive meaning from it. Frankl get meaning even in suffering and it gives him inner strength to survive.

Another critic Maurice Kinsella in "Lessons From Viktor Frankl's "*Man's*

search For Meaning” sees Frankl’s text from the perspective of autobiographical studies. It contains the elements of autobiography and his belief to find his ‘self’ even in such horrors of the camp, he states:

Frankl’s seminal *Mans Search For Meaning*, an autobiographical account of his Experiences in Nazi concentration camp... recording the journey he undertook in particularly spiritually and psychologically- he conveys how his effort to discern to meaning of this journey enabled him to preserve through it. This period of life depicts vividly the horrors of camps. (61)

Kinsella views the text as an autobiography which explores prisoner’s dreadful experiences of the camp where Frankl finally becomes able to survive with his own belief and guidelines. It shows the freedom of spirit and his belief to overcome the horrific condition.

Similarly, Erwin Friedman states that the text *Man’s Search For Meaning* deals with humanity. It appeals for the humanity as he claims:

This book addresses its message to our entire world. The author’s solution and insights to his individual crises of existence are set forth as applicable to our collective crises as well. Particularly significant are the passages about love and sudden insight into meaning of suffering that leads to solutions of the problems of love in our contemporary “unloving” society. (2)

Friedman states that love is the way to overcome inhumanity. This text shows the struggle of Frankl how he endures all his pain and suffering to establish him. It is not only his experiences but that of all the Jewish community. The only difference is how he overcomes it even in extreme suffering without giving up with love and humanity towards other. He states that love can solve the crisis.

The autobiography *Man’s Search For Meaning* is also critiqued by Daniel

Lietchty on the prospect of the religious perspective. He hints at the spiritual side of the author, but does not totally explain it. He says, “Frankl is familiar to anyone practicing in the field of pastoral and spiritual counseling. The Frankl’s school of Logotherapy , has for more than a generation been one of the leading psychotherapy that lays emphasis the primary value of religious commitment and spiritual experience” (277). Litechty, states that the text with the familiarity of the author and views that he is the one of the successful writers who endures the holocaust in religious commitment.

While commenting on Viktor Frankl’s *Mans Search for Meaning*, Jeffery Mchamahan views this as the story of his survival during the holocaust in concentration camps. He shows his struggle to survive around such horrific and dreadful circumstances. He claims:

Frankl, who survived the concentration camps, writes suffering is inevitable and that avoid suffering is futile. Rather one should be worthy of one’s suffering and make meaning of it instead of surrounding to nihilism, bitterness and despair. He uses poetic, moving anecdotes from concentration camps to illustrate those souls who find a deeper humanity from their suffering or who become animals relegated to nothing more than teeth clenched self-preservation. Though not specifically religious, this book has a religious purpose to help us to find meaning. (10)

Jeffery McMahan claims that through this autobiography, he suggest that he can find his self even in such traumatic psyche. One can find meaning of life in suffering and pain. It also suggests that committing suicide is not only an option to get rid from pain and suffering but one must take suffering as strength for existence.

Holocaust has the impact on individual and collective level. Jews psychology

is affected due to such traumatized situation and their fragmented self. Julie Oxenberg in her article quoted Bellamy's definition the Holocaust as "perhaps the major unresolved trauma lying at the core of western identity" (77). Holocaust has the impact on image of 'self' and other with the feelings of shame and guilt. The men who survived are also like dead because they do not have their soul to them and totally frustrated from life. Identity of the victimized is overlapped with traumatic memory deep insignificant and brutal marks of horrors that cannot be removed. So, Frankl insists that one can heal and cope up with trauma through "will to meaning" for their existence.

Trauma is a psychological wound which cannot be controlled by the subject who has undergone through it. A person can be traumatized by the unexpected events like rape, child abuse, accident etc. and experienced after the incident. According to Cathy Caruth, "Trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden, or catastrophic events in which the response to events occurs in often delayed and uncontrolled repetitive occurrences of hallucinations and intrusive phenomena"(8). It is the wound of the soul and for many of those who have been affected by such trauma. They can be felt long after the wounds of body have been healed and occurred to a person repetitively as flashback and nightmare. Those events can be repressed in the unconscious and triggered by it. At the period of holocaust many people went through trauma. They could not find their self. Even today people's will to meaning is frustrated in world wide scale. Prisoners in the camp were haunted by meaninglessness, often accompanied by a feeling of emptiness- which Frankl calls existential vacuum causing depression and it leads towards suicide. Being a psychiatrist, Frankl shows mental and emotional response of the prisoners in the camp; how ones psychology has been affected and they commit suicide. But he

accepts all the challenges and being able to find meaning in life, he later publishes his theory on it and establishes himself as psychiatrist and theorist. Frankl is optimistic in the camp which was surrounded by horrific circumstances in contrast with his other inmates. He also shows sympathy and encourages other to take suffering as inner strength. By doing so he also prevents other inmates from committing suicide. He shows human capacity to reduce suffering, trauma and terror through logotherapeutic process.

Logotherapy is based on the premise that human beings are capable of changing their attitudes towards the circumstances of their life. It is an analytical process that tries to make the patient realize that there is meaning in suffering, in life and even in dreadful situation. It is future oriented and it focuses on will to meaning. Frankl seems to be optimistic in such horrific circumstance in contrast with his other inmates. "Logotherapy focuses on the meaning of human existence as well as on man's search for meaning. This striving to find meaning in life is the primary motivational force in man" (104). Our life decisions are not only motivated by a search for meaning but by an inner need. It is a therapy which dares to enter the specifically human dimension. Frankl emphasizes that "Life has meaning under every circumstances" and that this meaning was available "until last breath". He also states that "human life, under any circumstances never ceases to have a meaning and that this infinite meaning of life includes suffering and dying, privation and death" (104). The core point of Logotherapy is to show how even in tragic circumstances human being can find meaning in life and turn their tragic life into an achievement. He depicts the reality of holocaust and reveals how he became able to survive and endure all pain and suffering. Even though all other freedom has been snatched from them, each prisoner could still choose an attitude towards this fate. To search for meaning is

to seek self –transcendence, which means to step out of ourselves and serve something bigger than oneself.

In *Man's Search For Meaning*, Frankl, with his own subjectivity, explores one can find meaning even in suffering situation with the one's love, hope, courage and consciousness. And one can heal trauma, anxiety, pain and depression through it. Unlike other writers like Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel who show holocaust only as a passivism and as a reflection of dark humanity, Frankl is optimistic and seeks meaning in life.

Reflecting on holocaust experience, Frankl's ideas apparently deviate from what Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel believe. Wiesel confesses his total lack of understanding of what happened in the camp, saying: "I know nothing" (180). To him Auschwitz signifies . . . the defeat of the intellect that wants to find meaning" (183). They present concentration camps as a kingdom of death and horror where prisoners do not hope for future life and commit suicide. There is no humanity at all but Frankl here explores it not only as a kingdom of horror but also an opportunity to create oneself finding meaning in the future. He shows how victims seek hope for life and survive even among the smoke of extreme torture and suffering.

Life is a quest for meaning and people find only meaning in suffering. Suffering makes one stronger, wiser and compassionate human beings. "If there is meaning in life all, then there must be suffering, suffering is an ineradicable part of life, even as fate and death" (76). No person is free from suffering. If there is life there is suffering so each person will have the choice as to what to make of his or her unique suffering. Meaning and purpose are essential to attainment of happiness. Frankl reduces his traumatic self within camp with his concept of will to meaning, which represents the deepest and universal human need to reach beyond self and serve

something greater.

Frankl in his text shows his own subjective experience. He tells about brutal hegemony of Nazism and how it affects the psychology of the prisoners and beyond them how he became able to endure all pain and suffering. Logotherapy, a motivational theory developed by Viktor Frankl, is the key factor for his strength to find his self. It has been used as therapeutic intervention for individuals living with schizophrenia, mood disorders, anxiety and post traumatic disorders. Though he went through traumatic experience he became able to cope up with the situation and became able to find his self and his existence.

It examines about the meaning in life and how he became able to find his 'self' even in such existential vacuum while other perished. Logotherapy is the main tool for his strength where Frankl found meaning in suffering. It is different from other existential therapies. It focuses on meaning seeking and meaning making as a positive value. To search for meaning is to seek self-transcendence, which means to step out of something or someone bigger than oneself. "Logotherapy indeed is a meaning centered psychotherapy. It focuses rather on future that is to say on the meanings to be fulfilled in his future" (104). Actually, it is a motivational theory that seeks for their existence even in suffering. It really focuses on human existence as well as man's search for it. In Alexander Banatthy's book *Logotherapy and Existential Analyses*, Ann V. Graber noted "logotherapy attempts to help client get in touch with his reservoir of strengths within, and apply the power of human spirit to overcome the distress which follows in the wake of human suffering in any category... logotherapy focuses less on the origin of a given cause of suffering and more on overcoming it" (130). Suffering does not diminish our power, energy quest for life, but reshapes it with new understanding, goal and needs.

After Jews were captured they were hegemonies by Nazi. Nazism makes human like an animal. They were tortured, and killed brutally. In the concentrations camp frankl undergo through trauma. He did not have his own identity. It also creates trauma on him. Prisoners were recognized by their captive numbers in the camp. Frankl narrates “I was Number 119, 104” (21). These numbers were often tattooed on their skin and also were sewn to certain spot on the trousers, jacket, or Coat; any guard who wanted to make a charge against them has to glance at his number. He further states that “A man counted only because he had a prison number. One literary became a ‘number’; dead or alive” (63). Human beings became living corpse there. One could not live with their own choice but must move according as the wish of Nazis as a machine. Frankl being a Psychiatrist he has no his own identity which causes his psychological stress. He was compared with “pigs”, “dogs”. Nazis treat prisoners no more than an animal and were insulted. They could not claim their own identity. He further narrates “You pig; I have been watching you the whole time! I’ll teach you to work, yet! Wait till you dig dirt with your teeth- you’ll die like an animal! In two days I will finish you off! You’ve never done a stroke of work in your life. What were you, swine? A Business man?”(37). Nazi in the camp used to insult his and his inmates using the word pig and dogs. It gives them a psychological stress. It shows the pathetic condition of prisoners. They have become creatures for Nazis and have to move with them accordingly. They treat them as animal.

In the camp prisoners have to forget their previous lives and have to accept the challenges and a fear which is always surrounding towards them. But frankl, stood up and spoke against them for his existence. “I straightened up and looked him directly in the eye. I was a doctor – a specialist” (37). He is trying to establish his identity. He didn’t fear of them but take a stand for himself and his existence. It shows

his optimistic attitude towards such dangerous environment which is one of the principles of logotherapy. He was traumatized because of psychological and physical tortures. The death was hovering around him, every time he used to think anytime he could die because of tortures. He has to survive with a piece of bread, has to work as a labor even in the snowy fields with bare feet etc. When he and his inmates return back from the work they would thank god feeling relief. To support it he further narrates, 'well, another day is over' (40). It can be understood that the state of stress was within them to keep alive. But contrast with other inmates Frankl in order to reduce his trauma and stress he changes his attitude by not accepting the situation as it is passively but taking suffering as challenge and opportunity for better future.

Life in concentration camp brought the deformation of human soul. It affects the mental and psychological condition of prisoner and became the victim of trauma. Frankl at the first stage suffers a lot as he was insulted time and again. He has to work as a labor on railway tracks, on snowy fields with bare foot, has to live whole day without food and water which causes him about to die. It causes him traumatizes but he heals his trauma by searching the potentiality of life. So he realizes life is a task by which human being could realize his or her potential for meaningful life. A life without meaning is full of suffering, emptiness and disappointment. Logotherapy, a theory also claims that there is always a choice in each life situation.

Prisoners in the camp were suffering from meaningless life. Due to suffering and pain they lose their hope and their 'self'. They suffer from anxiety, disorders and harm themselves. For them they thought of committing suicide as the best way to get escape from such trauma. To show it he narrates: "The thought of the suicide was entertained by nearly everyone, if only for a brief time. It was born of hopelessness of the situation, the constant danger of death suffered by many of others" (32). It shows

the traumatic condition of the prisoners that they wanted to commit suicide by the regular torture of Nazism. Frankl, also for the short period of time wanted to escape from all tortures given by Nazis but suddenly he remember his future aim to lecture on his own experiences of life and death as a psychological lesson to the people which changes his perspective. The thought of suicide comes only when he feels meaninglessness of life and when he could not see better future. He sustains his suffering changing his perspective towards life making commitment to find meaning in his life.

Every individual has to design his or her own life as a project. Whether to live life passively accepting our fate as it is or challenging to challenge it to make future beautiful. We are free to create our own interpretation of ourselves in relation to the society. According to Caruth, the individual has the potentiality to become more than what she or he is since “man is nothing else but what he makes of his conflicting thoughts. Each individual has to make his own society with a meaning of his own” (vii). Caruth divides living as authentic and inauthentic. Frankl chooses authentic living stressing that one must and make commitment to make life better.

Human being is free to choose his own way in life what is important for him and what his choice demands for him. Frankl decides to take such graveyard circumstances as his strength to fight against it. To support this idea he narrates “I made myself a firm promise, on my first evening in the camp, that I would not ‘run into the wire’ . . . there was a little point in committing suicide, since for average inmates, life expectation, calculating objectively and counting all likely chances, was very poor” (31). Day by day, his inmates were losing their hope and found only way to escape from such traumatic circumstances is to commit suicide but protagonist, on the first day of camp, made a promise that whatever the situation will be he will not

end his life. It shows he choose optimism rather pessimism. He shows his optimistic attitude towards such horrific circumstances and decides to struggle in order to find meaning in his life. To support his idea Frankl in his theory asserts, “one can find meaning even in suffering through: (a) by creating a work or doing a deed (b) by experiencing something or encountering someone (c) the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering” (115). Instead of focusing on past, it focuses in choice and future oriented accepting the meaningfulness in life. So, applying these techniques he reduces his trauma within camp and also suggests his inmates to find meaning even in suffering rather to be coward.

Within camp many prisoners suffer from dark inhumanity and pessimism towards life losing their self. And also the survivors couldn't claim their identity. Pain and suffering always haunts them and found their fragmented self in concentration camp. All the human beings want to live with meaningful life and also want to die with meaning and purpose. Frankl respond his traumatic self by imagines his wife and his love towards her in order to avoid suffering. He narrates:

I looked at the sky, where the stars were fading and the pink light of the morning was the beginning to spread behind a dark bank of clouds. But my mind clung to my wife's imagine, imagining it with an uncanny acuteness. I heard her answering me; saw her smile, her frank and encouraging look. Real or not, her look was then more luminous than the sun which was beginning to rise. (48)

Frankl uses to imagine his wife and her smile in the camp in order to heal his pain. A very small thing can hurt you as well as a very small thing can sustain you. So here love is the best way to transits traumatic self to existence self. He imagines his wife talking and encouraging him. Love becomes the medicine and purpose to live for him

which is the basic principle of Logotherapy. It is his love towards his wife which enables him to see the essential traits and possibilities to handle the situation. Life means not only to survive but to survive with meaning. He experiences his love towards his wife. He also narrates “I was again conversing silently with my wife, or perhaps I was struggling to find the reason for my suffering my slow dying” (51). Here, in the camp he goes through traumatic pain because of tortures. So, he is expressing that he is slowly dying with the suffering but he instead search for meaning and his existence through ones love. Love gives strength to cope up with situation. While in the concentration camp he does not know about his wife either she is alive or dead but his this intention to meet his wife and family gives strength to him. He imagines his wife secretly encouraging him and to find meaning in his suffering and making him aware of his capabilities. He gets his will power because of love. Love is the ultimate and highest goal to which man can aspire. The salvation of man is through love and in love. So through love he endures the camps, rethinking constantly of his wife who has been separated from him. Even in the hardest part of the day he found salvation in love that he had for his wife. He learnt, love can conquer all and it did not matter what the SS guard do for him.

Similarly, by experiencing and encountering challenges one can get meaning in his life. David Guttman in his book viewpoint: “each situation in an individual life is unique. It cannot be substituted for by someone else’s . . . every moment that we live or every time that we encounter a unique situation requiring a decision offers us an opportunity finding meaning” (35). Life of the people is a unique task where there is full of joy and sorrow. So, in case of suffering in life one must take it as unique opportunity to find meaning in it. Frankl use to experience the art and beauty in the concentrations camp which seems an awkward while listening. They create art within

such horrific circumstances. He practices art of living within the camp. In this regard Frankl narrates, “We were carried away by nature’s beauty, which we had missed for so long” (51). In the camps, he uses everything positively. He finds joy experiencing art and beauty in the concentration camp which helps to relief his soul and became able to “gather all hope of life and liberty” (51). He in the camp “experienced the beauty of art and nature never as before” (50). Under the influence of art and beauty he forgets his frightful circumstances He was also careful to remind his fellow prisoners that, regardless of their circumstances, there remained before them a choice of responding circumstances.

Even though, his freedom has been snatched at the camp, he had a spiritual freedom to react on it either to lose hope and commit suicide to get rid from such torturous life or to struggle to preserve his ‘Self’. He endures all pain and miseries and yet asserts that it does not matter if we have nothing to expect from life. We can still find meaning. One must think, future will be bright and there is the light at the end of the tunnel. He became able to endure the horrors of the camp and he perseveres at the situation where other perished. His other inmates who do not keep hope and did not take suffering as inner strength die at sudden. But Frankl successes in changing attitude towards the unalterable fate as from that time one could at least see a meaning in his suffering. The basic tenet of Logotherapy is that the man’s concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but rather to see a meaning in his life. He narrates:

To avoid these attacks of delirium, I tried, as did many of the others, to keep awake for most of the night. For hours I composed speeches in my mind. Eventually I began to reconstruct the manuscript which I had lost in the disinfection chamber of Auschwitz, and scribbled the key words in shorthanded on tiny scraps of paper. (46)

These lines show, due to mental and physical tortures he is depressed so he uses to awake most of the time to avoid hallucination and nightmares. When he entered into the camp he has manuscript of this theory ready for publication, but it was taken and destroyed by the guards. So, by his own experience in the camps again he started to note in his mind and also in some short scraps of paper. He applies those in his real life within camp and used to imagine giving lecture on it to the individuals. So, it was his strength to be successfully survived from the camp. Frankl, seeks to reduce trauma within such dreadful circumstances through constructing his incomplete manuscript in his mind and in short scraps of paper if it found. He had to complete his work which was incomplete and to establish himself. He takes suffering as an inner strength.

“Suffering is an ineradicable part of life, even as fate and death. Without suffering and death human life cannot be complete” (76). Suffering in the part of our everyday life.

No human beings can exist without suffering and pain. It is the part of our life. So, he thought life is challenging and must overcome such challenge. The prisoners in the camp could not tolerate suffering and many prisoners commit suicide being traumatized. They cannot respond to their fate. Suffering often consists of violence, destruction and cruelty. This combination of the subjective experience often results in the traumatic shock and they lost all reason of living. And they turn into ‘moslem’ and usually go to gas chambers. He further narrates that due to unbearable tortures and traumatic experiences in the camp he and his inmates felt themselves as a dead man who could not response to anything “We felt more dead than alive” (45). Prisoners are like living corpse. They feel no more like human beings because thought they had no any reason and purpose to be alive. They feel themselves as dead people due to such humiliation. Supporting this idea Chris N van der Merwe and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela put forward his ideas “Trauma has been described as the ‘undoing of self’,

and loss: loss of control, loss of one's identity, loss of ability to remember . . . disempower victims, and intensify the feeling of shame and humiliation" (vii). They are traumatized in the sense that they do not have control over them. Even they could not claim their identity and must stay in camp as a number.

Prisoners in the camp are totally faded up with the traumatic experience. When people are traumatized they became powerless, could not recognize them and go on the state of who you are. Supporting this idea, another critics Miranda Alcock, a trauma theorist puts forward his words as, "The meaning in life can seem to disappear with loss of home, culture, family and status. This can lead to a sense of confusion and purposefulness in which inner resources becomes dislocated or seem lost" (291). After Frankl was compelled to live in concentration camp he loses his home family and everything he possesses. He was separated from his wife and family which cause depression on him but also he does not lose hope and take suffering as an inner strength beyond such circumstances. He decides his purpose of living.

The life of Frankl was dismantled within camp because he finds meaning in bearing unavoidable conditions. Though he is living in such traumatic circumstances he is focusing in healing through finding meaning in life. He changes his attitude and takes this suffering as strength to make an achievement. According to Mokslebus "Logotherapy is oriented to future and focuses on enhancing and discovering personal strength and make the person responsible for his attitudes and change . . . remember the details of stressor event , self – transcend to transform their suffering into human accomplishment, and guilt into meaningful contribution to the world" (252). Frankl does not regret on his fate being Jews but focus and challenge the existence circumstances. He himself discover personal strength take it as opportunity to create oneself. He transforms his pain into strength and hope to revisit his family and dream

to give psychological lesson to students. Supporting him Paul Pruyser a theorist forward his ideas “hoping based on belief that there is some benevolent disposition toward oneself somewhere in the universe, conveyed by a caring person” (467). Being hopeful means to sustain life reducing stress and prepared psychologically to tackle with difficulties ahead. Hope helps person reducing traumatic stress and build strength on person to cope up with situation. Logotherapy does not focus on past but it is future oriented to make our life better with full of meaning. So does the Frankl. He takes suffering as his strength. Though he has to undergo with severe pain he do not lose his hope for survive.

His hope, to meet his family again and to give psychological lesson to his students about his life and death experiences helps to endure his pain. Condition of the prisoners is so worst which is unimaginable. They blame on their fate. They feel the sense of guilt which results losing their reason to live. But Frankl did not allow the miserable circumstances to take away his capacity for compassion and love. He finds spiritual life beyond such graveyard circumstances. If a man in concentration camp did not struggle against the suffering they would lose the feeling of being an individual, a being with mind, inner freedom and personal value. They would lose their self-respect. To endure pain, he also uses to crack jokes, recite poems and create humor in the work place with his inmates. Creating humor is also one of the techniques of Logotherapy to endure suffering in order to find meaning in life.

Humor is one of the means, to use in actively fighting tension as well as coping with the problems and stresses. It is also one of the principles of logotherapy. Prisoners in the camp developed humor and used it to survive all the horrors and terrors in their lives. Guttman views “Humor and laughter are seen today as therapeutic, relaxing, and enjoyable values that helps to face difficulties, hardship,

distress, stressful life situations and even calamities and traumas” (113). It helps to reduce the traumatic pain within difficulties by giving a sense of relief. It is also creativity. Franks emphasizes that humor was one of the most important means for survival in camp. By the means of humor fear can be reduced. Humor is one of the soul’s weapons in the fight for self-preservation. Supporting this idea, he explains:

While we were waiting for our shower, our nakedness was brought home to us: we really had nothing now except our bare bodies-even minus hair: all we possessed, literally, was our necked existence... we knew that we had nothing to lose except our so ridiculously naked lives. When the showers started to run, we all tried very hard to make fun, both about ourselves and about each other. (28-29)

Is it possible to make fun and create laughter in such condition? But yes, it was all the situation of time. Prisoners in the camp do not have anything of their own except their necked existence. To endure painful experiences he used to crack jokes and laugh at each other. They do not make fun of each other in order to enjoy but to reduce their pain and fear. Laughter helps them even in the hardest and cruelest hours to ease suffering and torture. It gives self-confidence and reduces fear. P.R Bulka in his article *The Proceedings of the Seventh world congress of Logotherapy*, states that “When one is mired in a situation, which taken seriously would lead one to becoming depressed or almost suicidal, then laughing at fate becomes a survival tool par excellence” (51). Humor becomes an integral part of life in the camps. The unique capacity of human beings to laugh at themselves has been found to be of great importance for survival. Logotherapy advocates the active approaches to deal with challenges in life. Frankl wrote, “Logotherapy teaches that pain must be avoided as long as it is possible to avoid it. But as soon as a painful fate cannot be changed it not

only must accepted but may be transmuted into something meaningful, into an achievement” (72). If the tragic situation cannot be changed then we must change the tragedy and transcendence our self and transmit it into meaning to an achievement.

Frankl deals with the terrible situation for existence. In this text he brings many philosophical quotes among them in Nietzsche’s word “he who has a *why* to live for can bear almost any *how*” (84). It could be the guiding motto for all psychotherapeutic efforts regarding prisoners. If the person does not see their bright future and purpose of living then they lose their life soon. Frankl wants to create meaningful life and his existence so he endures all the pain and suffering though he looked weak. Frankl states that prisoners in the camp has to work twenty hours each day, digging and laying railroads, they had to survive on a piece of bread, and had to sleep nine man in each bed which were constructed on tires. Two blankets were shared by each nine man. They were treated no more than animal. The corpses of the prisoners who committed suicide and also who died of disease were drop and piled into the small corridor by their legs. But, he does not move by those circumstances rather seeing and tolerating all these circumstances he struggle for his self-esteem.

People with low self-esteem are confronted with the possibility of death and are more prone to psychological stress, trauma and disorders. People who live in the past forgetting their future their life will be meaningless. So, the prisoners in the camp, who lived in the past, could not get any strength to struggle and they compelled to lose their will power which result into end their life. They do not see their value of existence in their life. Florez, states “For terror Management Theory” defines self-esteem refers to a sense of personal significance and value” (114). The sense of self-worth living help to reduce one’s anxiety, stress trauma and disorders. It helps to discover meaning even in the worst conditions. It gives the worth sense to live for

future goal. It helps to perceive meaning to cope up with the existential horror circumstances. Frankl also states meaning as the core concept of his existence and the essence of human being lies in the searching for meaning and purpose. It gives him will power to discover meaning in life.

Frederick Buechner in his autobiography *Listen to your life* writes: “Listen to your life/see it for the fathomless mystery that it is. In the boredom and pain of it no less than excitement and gladness: Touch, taste, smell your way to holy and hidden heart of it, for in the last analysis, all moments are key moments, and life itself is a grace” (2). We must see life as the precious and fragile gift so we must live our life meaningfully taking every pain as the gladness and opportunity to create one self. So within such miseries Frankl take his suffering as an opportunity to create himself by discovering meaning in his life and depicting life is beautiful. He takes everything positively within such frightful surrounding as suggested in his theory Logotherapy.

He in this autobiography also shows camps as not only the existence of dark inhumanity and passivism as other writer like Primo Levi and Elie Wisel describes in their text but humanity and hope for life was also there. Human kindness can also be found in the camps. “It must be stated that even among the guards there were some who took pity on us... I remember how one day a foreman secretly gave me a piece of bread which I knew he must have saved from his breakfast ration” (92-93). He shows, in the camp there exist two kinds of man. Not all the guards were cruel and evil but there were also some who shows sympathy on them which gives courage to the prisoners to survive and not all the prisoners shows inhumanity with each other. Prisoners also use to show love and humanity with each other. In the camp, Frankl used to give psychological preaches to his inmates. He showers humanity to all his inmates. At the time of disease typhus spreading, he serves them and encourages

finding meaning in their life and fighting against the situation with their spirit. By doing so he prevents some inmates from committing suicide realizing their future purpose.

In the concentration camp there were unbearable tortures. Prisoners do not have their own choice and freedom. They get many pain and suffering from the torturous activity of Nazism. Frankl narrates:

The unpleasant feeling that had gripped me soon as I had told my friend I would escape with him became more intense. Suddenly I decided to take fate into my own hands for once. I ran out of the hut and told my friend I could not go with him. As soon as I had told him with finality that I had made up my minds to stay with my patients, the unhappy feeling left me. I did not know what the following days would bring, but I gained an inward piece that I had never experienced before. (68)

From these lines, it is clear, being depressed Frankl also made a thought to get rid from all those suffering by escaping with his friend from the camp but he found it worthless he does not find his happiness in it. He wants to live his life worthy but not with the traumatic pain. If he had escaped from the camp at that time maybe he would not be able to establish himself as a psychiatrist and theorist and would not be able to complete his manuscript of his theory which was incomplete. He does not want to live with meaningless and passive life by escaping from camp. He finds his life beautiful serving his patient in the camp and saving their life. He changes his attitude towards fate and thought that fate does not only bring disaster but also an opportunity to discover new meaning to his life. He wants to see his life challenging the fate by continuing his life by his new meaning of his existence. And the human capacity saying “yes” to life.

He was scared but he found an only way to endure his pain with the help of will to meaning. His quest for self-help gives him to resist from such pain. His hope for meeting his wife and his dream of giving psychological lesson after the war to the people that he had learned from the camp makes him able to survive. His basic strength was his hope which gives him will power to resist against them. His decision of being mental preparation to eventually to write and lecture about his experience is an example of apposition chooses in the face of unchangeable situation.

Life is full of miracles, wonders and surprises. Death is unpredictable, anytime anything could be happen in our life. He faces many ups and downs during his camp life. Within camp he move where the fate takes but in many situations he challenge fate and move according to his choices. Many of the greatest creations in these human endeavors were devoted to fate's intervention in human life and affairs. Fate is directed by some purpose which is difficult to understand by an individual. Human beings have no power to control fate. The psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung in his book *On the paths of our Depth* referred fate as "what is decreed of man is an irrational factor like the power of fate that press on us to detach ourselves from the crowd, to be independent and not to follow the path known to the herd. For a man with real personality always has a mission; he believes in it."(29). At the period of holocaust, Jews were compelled to be in camps and ghettos by Nazi because at that time Nazis were in power so they dominate Jews. They think themselves superior and treat them as animal and they think themselves as they are in the earth to wipe out the Nazis identity. So in front of Nazism they were nothing and they blamed it as their forced fate to tolerate it until they could resist.

Logotherapy helps to reduce traumatic pain by turning forced fate into a freely selected fate by the stand people take toward the difficult situation. According to

Logotherapy, “It is possible to overcome fate by the specifically human ability of self-transcendence. This ability is part of the spiritual dimension that is unique to human beings” (88). During the long life, one must deal with these fate forced fate and selected fate. By the forced fate we can get pain and suffering but through selected fate we can get meaning in meaningless life. So, one can find destiny even in unpleasant situation. Here, forced fate is when Frankl was sent to Auschwitz and when he lost his parents, wife and everything he had except his life. He also lost his manuscript which was ready to publish but he took stand on such forced fate and moves himself on selected fate. He could have accepted his own fate and move could move accordingly but he uses his freely selected fate courageously to live with some purpose in life. He wanted to live for some purpose and finally succeed to reconstruct his book by noting key on scraps of paper and remembering on his mind, which later published as his own theory. Frankl in his book *The Doctor and the Soul* writes “The density a person suffers has a twofold meaning: to be shaped where possible and to be endured where necessary” (11). One must move towards destiny where life takes us but meaningfully at ever situation. So, frankl shapes himself according to the situation.

Each situation in life gives us a challenge. If we became able to face such challenge we can get our final destiny or can get our purpose of life but if we cannot face the challenge we could not overcome the suffering and pain. As, we can see Frankl as a big example who became able to face such notorious hegemony of Nazism without being pessimistic in order to find his lost self. Within the camp many of his inmates committed suicide being faded up with their struggle and life but despite such hell like circumstances he takes concentration camps as the opportunity to create oneself. He challenges Nazis that he will not surrender with them and end his life until

last breath. Frankl writes:

The prisoners who had lost faith in the future – his future – was doomed. With his loss of belief in the future, he also lost his spiritual hold; he let himself decline and became subject to mental and physical decay... we all feared this moment – not for ourselves, which would have been pointless, but for our friends. Usually it began with the prisoner refusing one morning to get dressed and wash or to go out on the parade grounds. No entreaties, no blows, no threats had any effect. He just lay there, hardly moving. If this crisis was brought about by an illness, he refused to be taken to the sick-bay or to do anything to help himself. He simply gave up. (82-83)

Life is unpredictable, one never knows what is coming next. In the camp prisoners were confronted with horrific injustice and inhumanity. Their psychology was repeatedly haunted by the inevitable death. So, prisoners lose their hope and spiritual self. Prisoners went at the stage of living corpse that they do not give any response others. They better want to end their life. But Frankl, rather looking at trauma as regretting his life he responds to trauma through transforming tragedy into a life-enriching experience. He searches for reasons for his suffering and gives creative response to his traumatic self through a logotherapeutic way. He even in his traumatic life struggles for something meaningful in his life. In his text mentions “one of the main features of human existence is the capacity to rise above such conditions to grow beyond them” (133). Frankl became able to rise above even in the situation of death. He has the capacity to endure the pain and suffering through struggle for his existence.

Frankl, is optimistic despite being in the surroundings of a hell-like environment. It is the case of saying ‘yes to life in spite of everything’. He has suffered many

tortures within camp but doesn't lose his hope. Will to meaning is the strength for him to give meaning to his life during such holocaust trauma. The concentration camps during world war can be labeled as one of the most grotesque example of cruelty in the entire world. In this autobiography he explains how his worldly possessions were snatched from him. Literally, in the sense that his family was put to death and he himself was marked naked and assigned a prisoner number ruining his identity. He endures suffering every hours and minutes for several years and also he shows the high level of humanity to others. He uses to help others and inspire other to have courage and survive for their future purpose. But in the camp prisoners used to have horrible nightmares, and to survive from their ultimate destination in gas chamber they have to struggle. But Frankl used to give them a psychological lesson in the camp to struggle. He used to preach them that camps are endurable and it is their unique to create oneself around suffering. Logotherapy seeks to know not to believe and it will try to enable patient to make decision of their own. It deviates from psychoanalysis insofar as it considers man a being whose main concern consists in fulfilling a meaning. Everyone has his own specific mission in life to carry out a concrete assignment which demands fulfillment. Everyone task is unique as is his specific opportunity to implement it.

Frankl describes a moment when he overcomes meaninglessness and began to rise above his inconceivable suffering in the death camp. He has been watching his inmates running into wire camps and ending their life quickly due to misery and unbearable trauma. So he chooses self-healing process through logotherapeutic process from such traumatized life. He further narrates:

In spite of strict orders not to leave our 'blocks' a college of mine who had arrived in Auschwitz several weeks previously, smuggled himself into our hut.

How wanted to calm and comfort us and tell us a few things. He had become so thin that at first we did not recognize him. With a show of good humor and Devil-may-care attitude he gave us a few hurried tips: “Don’t be afraid! Don’t fear the selections! Dr. M (the SS medical chief) has a soft spot for doctors” (this was wrong; my friend’s kindly words were misleading. One prisoner, the doctor of the block of huts and a man of some sixty years, told me how he had entreated Dr. M to let off his son, who was destined for gas. Dr. M refused). (31-32)

It shows the pathetic condition of prisoners. Due to pain and suffering they have loss of sense. He is not comforting others but comforting himself. He is suffering from trauma because of losing his son and is ironically talking the cruel behavior of the Nazism. The pain of losing his son in front of his eyes comes again and again to him. He shows his abnormal reaction. He even suggests Frankl and other inmates that in order to survive you must shave, stand and work smartly. “And then he pointed to me and said, ‘I hope you don’t mind my telling you frankly.’” To the others he repeated, “Of all of you he is the only one who must fear the next selection. So don’t worry! And I smiled “(32). Though his colleague give him advice he simply ignored it. He did not fear by his words.

Frankl shows man has the capacity to take stand toward any condition whatsoever. “Man is ultimately self-determining. Man does not simply exist but always decides what his existence will be, what he will become in the next moment” (133). He shows man is capable of defying even in the worst condition through his own experiences. Though, he had to tolerate the torturous life he did not move backward and did not thought of committing suicide, a means to escape from pain but rather he take his suffering as his inner strength and prove despite the critical situation

one must not lose his hope for better future. He became able to cope up with traumatic experiences. One must make his worth full existence in life even in hell like circumstances. He shows when one losses the means to look the future and see possibilities that it holds, one loses the capacity to survive because that individual no longer understand the meaning in suffering. In other words, he suffers from trauma and gives up and also explains that the means for the suffering or the hope must be worthy throughout his life.

He believes concentration camp as an opportunity and a challenge at the same time. One can make a victory over those traumatic experiences by turning traumatic life into a successful achievement in the same way one could ignore the challenge and simply end their life as many prisoners did in the camp did. Frankl argues for the central role of meaning in life with the capacity of individuals to survive horrific acts of evil. Finally he became able to transform his traumatic self into his existential self.

Similarly, Frankl in the concentration camp uses to give psychological lessons to his inmates to cope up with the situation courageously. It also helps him to tolerate and forget the painful suffering. It gives him pleasure that he became able to save some life too. He shows humanity towards his inmates. He also uses to treat typhus patient in the camps. He regards suffering as an opportunity to make meaning out of life. Even if the days are not normal as used to be before in camps life, people can find deep meaning in their lives through bravery, dignity, selfishness and morality, rather than becoming more than animals. He states that people must look future goal rather than escaping from suffering.

No humanbeings is immortal. Death is inevitable to everyone. Till we survive we must live our life worth full with some purpose. So, Frankl also wants to live worth full life until he survives. Frankl in his theory asserts:

“Logotherapy tries to make people fully aware of his own responsibly; therefore it must leave to him the option for what, to what, or to whom he understands himself to be responsible . . . to decide whether he should interpret his life task as being responsible to society or to his own conscience . . . man is responsible and must actualize the potential meaning of his life” (114-15).

Within the camp Frankl remembers his main purpose of existence. He heals his pain despite being in torturous life. He never became passive but successfully handled his traumatic self. In the camp he saw most prisoners only think only about their food, clothes to survive but he goes beyond them and does not only concentrate about the trivial thing in the camp but about his better future. He further narrates:

I became disgusted with the state of affairs which compelled me, daily and hourly, to think of only trivial things. I forced my thought to turn another subject. Suddenly I saw myself standing on the platform of well lit, warm and pleasant lecture room. In front of me sat an attentive audience on comfortable upholstered seats. I was giving a lecture on psychology of the concentration camp! All that oppressed me at that moment became objective, seen described from the remote viewpoint of science. By this method, I succeeded somehow in rising above the situation, above suffering of the moment. (82)

These lines shows that he was depressed about thinking a trival matter like food, water, medicine clothes in order to survive. So, he uses the method of will to meaning to get rid of the frightful circumstances. When his manuscript was lost in the camp, he was worried about it but through his personal experiences of the camp with his courage to face such catastrophic situation gives him meaning in his life and finally he became able to publish book and his theory. Later after liberated from the camp he did

not lose self but became able to establish his identity as psychiatrist and a theorist.

To sum up, the protagonist of the autobiography becomes able to transform his traumatic self into the existential self within camp through logotherapeutic process. The condition of the camp was physically and mentally harsh. Many inmates in the camp were traumatized because of the dead like circumstances and they thought only way to escape from it is end of life (death). But Frankl, with contrast with the other prisoners became able to cope up with the torturous life by finding hope, love, consciousness and his future work to deliver his experiences of life and death and to construct his self-identity make him alive. Within the camp though his freedom has been snatched he finds his spiritual freedom to choose an action against such horrific circumstances. He finds suffering as an inner strength from ones love and hope for future. On the camp, there was not only the passivism and dark inhumanity but also there exists humanity and hope for life. He present holocaust not only for destruction but an ample opportunity to create oneself. Suffering is the part of our life and life is challenging. Man is capable of overcoming and tolerating the traumatized situation by their self-dedication their life.

Frankl's autobiography, *Man's Search For Meaning* provides an insight that the strong weapon to endure trauma is to search meaning life with faith, hope and future aim. Life ultimately means the responsibility to find right decision in the time of difficulties to fulfill the purpose of an individual existence. It helps to see life beautiful even in the worst situation. Frankl takes everything with positive attitude in camps. The central role of meaning in life is the capacity of individuals to survive horrific acts and evil. Meaning in life is the important source of inspiration. During the period of holocaust, many prisoners suffered physically and mentally. They were tortured and killed brutally like animals. So they did not see their aim and purpose in

life and chose the best way to end their life. But Frankl remained optimistic and struggled for his existence. Through this research it is clear that many prisoners committed suicide because of losing their hope and they do not struggle to find meaning in their life. And, at the period of holocaust prisoners who survived could not find their self because they lose their soul and lives in the past with their traumatic self. So, Frankl with the will to meaning does not only save his life and his existence, but also of his inmates too. He encourages his inmates not to give up their life in order to escape from trauma but must face the challenges with strong faith and hope. He shows his humanity and love for all. Through this autobiography, he wants to show that prisoners' do not only commit suicide to escape from such catastrophic situation, but they can also love their life. They struggle and take suffering as an opportunity to cope up from their trauma by finding meaning in life. Even, in today's world many people becomes the victim of trauma due to accident, child abuse, rape etc. and they end their life committing suicide rather than finding meaning in life. So, this research depicts one cope up with the traumatized life through logotherapeutic process. One who become able to find meaning even in traumatized life can spend life happily.

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