Man’s search for meaning

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Book Review

The book, “Man’s search for meaning” by Viktor Frankl is termed and noted as one of the books that have brought huge differences and upheavals in the lives of its readers. The book is said to be “The classic tribute to hope from the Holocaust”. In this book, Viktor writes about his survival in the death camps of Nazi by saying that life is not always about the despair and devastation that is the product of Holocaust but of hope that is the product of atrocity. The book is divided into two parts where one part is the expression of life at camp while other part explains the form of psychology that the author practices (Frankl, 1985). The author shared the story of his life when he was a slave to Dachau and Auschwitz camps representing survival. Frankl shared the example of the psychology of prisoner, how he views jail and what are his hopes for getting the freedom to live on his own (Frankl, 1985). In the other part of the book, the author shared his ideology about the therapeutic philosophy which was used from both dimensions spiritual and philosophic to address human experiences (Frankl, 1985).

As during that time, Sigmund’s approach was dominant, Frankl reviewed the Freudian approach and termed it as one of the harshest approaches that have reduced the mental life of human being to a random element that lack the vision to address existential meaning. Frankl imparts a positive motivation to his life rather than secondary rationalization of the instinctual drives. Frankl named this approach as Logotherapy, a technique that could be used to address the idea proposed by Sigmund Freud. However, the coined termed referred to the meaning of human existence accompanied by the ability and attitude of an individual to know himself (Frankl, 1985).

In the book, Frankl has identified and proposed three major human capabilities also called noological possibilities named as, self-transcendence, self-detachment, and ability to spiritually stay in touch with something and being independent on someone that is independent of spatiotemporal dimensions. In other words, the connotation refers to the idea that humans are not able to avoid suffering but they have the ability to retrieve meaning from it. Frankl has identified three primary postulates that were found to complement these capabilities each with a specific stance. The first postulate is anthropological postulate that infers human existence in terms of critical thought to past present and future. The second postulate is termed as a psychological postulate that is supposed to address the motivation of an individual while searching for the meaning.

According to Frankl, this procedure can only be fulfilled by the individual if it is to be satisfying. The third postulate is also called philosophical postulate that deciphers Frankl’s life during the time of the Holocaust. This postulate directs that there is no traditional meaning of the life for which Frankl has quoted several examples (Frankl, 1985). Moreover, Frankl made some discussion on the integration of logotherapy in some psychotherapeutic practices. He proposed several limitations and interventions of the therapy from some qualitative perspectives. Other theorists such as Abraham Maslow and Stanislav Grof are of those therapists that took his work very seriously. It would not be wrong to say that the book has itself become one of the most influential books in America that is an always available source of motivation and encouragement for people. The book not only endures the hellish conditions and the unwanted life scene of the author but it is also a unique approach to psychology that addresses the notion and passage of making meaning for life by overcoming the disparities(Frankl, 1985).

References

Frankl, V. E. (1985). *Man's search for meaning*. Simon and Schuster.