

Self-Transcendence through Logotherapy: A Selective Literary Study

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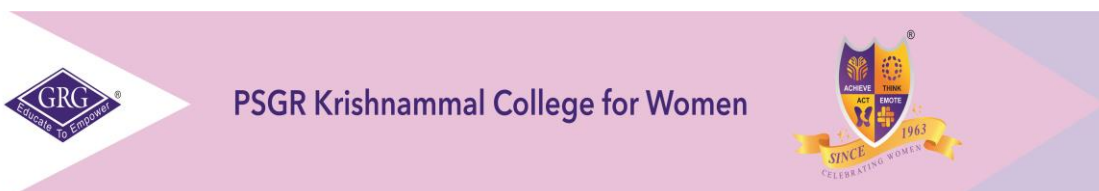
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Chapter VI

Summation

Viktor Frankl has assured that life has a meaning and the responsibility of discovering it rests on the shoulders of the individual. He has emphasized on the fact that meaning is not something to be invented; instead, it has to be discovered. However, contemplation or meditation is not the medium through which meaning can be realized. Instead, the individual should actively participate in the activities of life and should maintain the right attitude while doing so. Frankl has delineated the methods by which an individual can participate in life.

He suggests every individual to engage in a work that he finds meaningful or create something of value. Secondly, he explains the value of experiencing love, truth and beauty as he believed and experienced for himself that these noble emotions possessed the power to heal, nurture and uplift mankind. He also added that fostering good relations with fellow beings is quintessential. Thirdly, he asserted that the individual should maintain an attitude that is conducive to his well-being if he is keen on deducing the meaning behind his sufferings and life in general. Mitch Albom has stated his views that are akin to that of Frankl's in his book *Tuesdays with Morrie* (1997):

So many people walk around with a meaningless life. They seem half-asleep, even when they're busy doing things they think are important. This is because they're chasing the wrong things. The way to get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community

around you, and devote yourself to create something that gives you purpose and meaning. (43)

Frankl has emphasized on the fact that the right way to obtain something is not to be obsessed with it. He uses the term hyper-reflection to explain this phenomenon of being abnormally obsessed with a goal or a specific outcome. He has cited examples of people suffering from insomnia who tried very hard to sleep. Nevertheless, the more efforts they happened to take in that direction, the more it evaded them. He thereby suggested the technique termed as 'paradoxical intention', wherein the individual wishes the exact opposite of his desire, that is, he tries to avoid the very goal he had hitherto been seeking ("Man's" 126).

The second technique suggested by Frankl is dereflection which is a technique that enables a person to shift the focal point of his reflection. It thereby, neither allows the individual to obsess over the issue at hand, nor does it encourage the individual to wish the opposite of his desires to take place. Instead, the individual is expected to engage in something worthwhile, during which, his attention gets diverted from himself to an activity. Meaning can also be achieved by tracing a similar path. Instead of searching for it high and low, man should come to terms with the fact that meaning cannot be obtained by chasing it incessantly, as the more he thinks about it, the more abstruse it tends to get which eventually culminates in frustration.

The technique of dereflection prevents the individual from fretting and stressing himself out, as a shift in activity is considered beneficial in soothing the mind, and thereby fortifying it to deal with the problem at hand in a better way. Therefore dereflection should not be disregarded as a mere mode of distraction or a form of escapism. This is the precise

reason behind the idea of cultivating hobbies. Even the curriculum of schools are designed to include games, physical training and arts. Yet, the value of these extracurricular activities is grossly undermined at school. The students ingrain this attitude from their elders and learn to disregard everything except the work that generates income as valuable. Such individuals eventually resort to the use of narcotic products and other sedatives to distract themselves from their difficulties and dispel their tension and stress. In due course of time they get addicted to these products and thus get trapped in a vicious cycle of affliction and addiction.

Painting, travelling, dancing, drawing, reading and playing sports are popular modes to relax the mind. After having gauged the therapeutic properties of these activities, which are commonly known as hobbies, professional therapeutics have used them to offer therapies to the suffering masses. Thus, hobbies not only distract the mind from the problems, but also enable man to face the situation in a better and more mature way.

The characters analysed in the novels chosen for this research, have preferred reading as their mode of dereflection. They took refuge in reading whenever they wished to divert their attention from the hostile circumstances life had placed them in. Anne Frank, the author of *The Diary of a Young Girl* had also endorsed the power of reading in her diary. The thirteen year old girl, who was forced to go into a hiding place with her family because they were Jews, stated: "The only way to take one's mind off it all is to study, and I do a lot of that" (108).

In the book *Proust and the Squid*, Maryanne Wolf has stated that the wiring of the human brain is not rigid and can be changed. It is possible to rearrange the connections of the brain by reading, and research works conducted in this area have corroborated this fact. A person's behaviour and attitude is predominantly dependent on the pattern of

wiring and with every additional experience, the brain acquires a new connection.

Reading also has the ability to alter the connections in the brain, and thereby has the power to alter the attitude and perceptions of a human being:

We were never born to read. Human beings invented reading only a few thousand years ago. And with this invention, we arranged the very organization of our brain, which in turn expanded the ways we were able to think, which altered the intellectual evolution of our species. Reading is one of the single most remarkable inventions in history; the ability to record history is one of its consequences. Our ancestors' invention could come about only because of the human brain's extraordinary ability to make new connections among its existing structures, a process made possible by the brain's ability to be shaped by experience. This plasticity at the heart of the brain's design forms the basis for much of who we are, and who we might become. (3)

Frankl has stated that the root cause of all the troubles experienced by people living in the modern world is the heightened levels of obsession with themselves. He has asserted that, this narcissist approach to life is responsible for the degradation in mental health and familial bonding. Frankl has termed this selfish focus of mankind on his own betterment as "collective obsessive neurosis". He has squarely pointed out that thinking only about oneself would unequivocally act as an impediment in the process of discovering meaning and one should get rid of this trait to identify the unique purpose of one's life.

Environmentalists also state that the selfish and exploitative attitude of human beings is responsible for the imbalance in nature which not only results in his ruin, but

also destroys the planet in general. Man is under the illusion that he is the supreme master of Earth and it is his birthright to exert his control over other living things on the planet. He thereby indulges in mindless deforestation, encroachment, mining and poaching, thereby destroying the natural landscape and ruining the balance established by nature. Man's avarice is responsible for the pollution of land, water, air and soil, which eventually affects every single living organism on Earth.

The destruction caused by mining is portrayed in the novel *Mister Pip*. It is evident that the ones who destroy nature and ruin the beauty of the landscape are invariably the ones who dominate another section of their own species. These megalomaniacs with a capitalist and fascist mindset are the ones who would go to any lengths and use their power and supremacy to satisfy their lust for power and wealth. It is thereby essential to mould the attitudes during the formative years of life to ensure that man learns to live in harmony with nature. Children should be taught to co-exist amicably with other species occupying the planet and treat the environment with reverence and responsibility.

From times immemorial, children have received adequate training to speak in a way that is socially acceptable and to behave well. Every child is taught basic etiquettes and manners to conduct themselves well. Unfortunately, the modern education system does not train the students to think the right way. However, thoughts form the basis of every action and thereby, it is essential to nurture the roots. A healthy thought process would engender a healthy and peaceful mind which in turn would make the individual a productive and good person.

Many children have grave misconceptions about success. Nowadays success has become synonymous with wealth. Children are imbued with the idea that life is

tantamount to a stiff competition and one should win it at any cost. During the initial stages of life, classmates are viewed as competitors and the focus is always to secure the first rank in the class as opposed to gaining knowledge. After securing employment, colleagues are looked upon as competitors. This attitude acts as a hindrance in developing healthy relationships with people, as the mind is constantly in a state of conflict. Such individuals also cease to enjoy life as they view it as a battlefield and their sole focus is on emerging victorious in the 'fight'.

Indoctrination of such lessons is the reason behind increased stress levels and depression. The mental makeup of the society has become such that failure is excessively feared and not accepted. Committing suicide upon failing in an examination or in a business venture has become a commonplace occurrence. People are increasingly in need of counsellors and most of the schools have made it mandatory to appoint a counsellor, as the student community seems to be in dire need of it.

All the problems faced by the students boils down to the fact that they are unable to cope with the competitive world or do not have supportive parents back at home, to give them their time. Nowadays, a vast majority of people live in nuclear families wherein, both the parents are employed. They are thereby unable to spend quality time with the children and assuage their guilt by convincing themselves that more wealth would ensure a better and more secure future for their child. However, they fail to realize that money would only ensure better material comforts and not better emotional and psychological well-being. Lack of valuable human relations, especially during the vital formative days of childhood is responsible for the state of existential vacuum that many face at a very tender age. Logotherapy has undoubtedly offered a solution to eradicate existential vacuum,

but children who are not naturally inclined to think the right way should be monitored and tutored until their attitude becomes conducive to their well-being.

The concept of reductionism has been vociferously attacked by Viktor Frankl. He asserted that man cannot be viewed as a sum total of his drives and desires. He also refuted trauma theories by stating that the behaviour of a man depended on his choice to respond to a situation by exercising his free will and thereby cannot be predicted in advance. In his book *Man's Search for Meaning* he has cited the case of a doctor whom he has referred to as Dr. J. He. The doctor had the reputation of being a mass murderer in the concentration camp. After the war came to an end, he was imprisoned for his atrocities but from then onwards, he was on his best behaviour till his last days. He was eventually diagnosed with cancer in the prison but even that did not dampen his spirits. Instead, he was the one who encouraged and consoled everybody. He thereby spent his final days by living a life that abided by every conceivable moral value: "Man is capable of changing the world for the better if possible, and of changing himself for the better if necessary" (133).

Research works pertaining to the study of the brain have also presented their findings that support the claim of Viktor Frankl. Human brain is not a rigid structure and is therefore receptive towards changes. Irrespective of the number of harrowing experiences and the intensity of the traumatic incidents encountered, a man can overcome it if he decides to do it:

Underlying the brain's ability to learn reading lies its protean capacity to make new connections among structures, and circuits originally devoted to other more basic brain processes that have enjoyed a longer existence in human evolution, such as vision and spoken language. We now know that

groups of neurons create new connections and pathways among themselves every time we acquire a new skill. Computer scientists use the term “open architecture” to describe a system that is versatile enough to change – or rearrange – to accommodate the varying demands on it. Within the constraints of our genetic legacy, our brain presents a beautiful example of open architecture. Thanks to this design, we come into the world programmed with the capacity to change what is given to us by nature, so that we can go beyond it. We are, it seems from the start, genetically poised for breakthroughs. (Wolf 5)

Viktor Frankl managed to debunk the theories of doyens of psychology with his views on reductionism. According to Sigmund Freud’s Psychosexual Development Theory, the initial six years of a child’s life are of vital importance, as an individual’s personality is shaped to the maximum extent during these early years of life. Any drawback experienced during these stages would create repercussions throughout the life of the person. Another psychologist named Erik Erikson had also delineated eight stages of psychosocial development that commenced during infancy and lasted well into adulthood. He too echoed the ideology of Freud by asserting that the successful completion of these stages was quintessential, if the individual desired a healthy personality.

Frankl, nevertheless, disabused the very concept of compartmentalizing man into sections and analyzing him as disparate components, as opposed to viewing him as a composite whole. He emphasized on the fact that man’s attitude had the capacity to overcome any obstacles that emerged as the outcome of his unsuccessful past. Nothing that happened to him during his childhood had the power to hinder him from living a

meaningful life filled with purpose: "...forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation. You cannot control what happens to you in life, but you can always control what you will feel and do about what happens to you" (Frankl, "Man's" 8).

The novels chosen for the research have characters who overcome their difficulties in life by shifting their focus from their problems to books. Books not only offered them respite from their problems but also inspired their minds and made them more empathetic. With a fortified mind, they set forth to carry on with their lives, despite the numerous challenges that were posed. They accepted the situation and focused on the good things that were still present in their lives and thereby kept their hopes alive. Simultaneously, they busied themselves and strove to add value to their own lives and that of others by doing something for others or indulging in creative work. The characters also had wonderful people around them who added value to their lives and made it more beautiful.

Another common element present in the chosen novels is that they are replete with references of other literary works. Each novel contains numerous references to various literary works and renowned authors. Also, all the novels are set in war-torn regions and have retained varying degrees of historical facts in their novels.

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society is a novel written using the epistolary style and the story unfolds as the characters exchange letters to each other. The whereabouts of the most prominent character Elizabeth is also divulged by other characters through the letters they address to each other. Incidents such as the Nazi Occupation of the island, the demilitarization of the island by the British, the sending away of children to London before the Germans could arrive, are some of the historic

truths intricately woven into the storyline of the novel. It is thereby similar to a historical novel on several counts.

The novel *Mister Pip* has acquired its title from the character named Pip of the novel *Great Expectations*. The novel *Great Expectations* is read out by Mr. Watts to the children of the island and the difference between the protagonist Pip and Mr. Watts almost began to dwindle in the eyes of the children. Towards the end of the novel, the character Pip claimed the life of Mr. Watts, as a result of mistaken identity. The novel has adopted the technique of intertextuality. Mr. Watts not just narrated the story of *Great Expectations* from the novel written by Charles Dickens, but introduced his own improvisations and even diluted it to make it suitable for his young listeners and retain their interest. He then narrates his story to the rebels and the islanders, which is an amalgamation of several stories that comprised his biography, the story of *Great Expectations*, *The Bible* and the fables he heard the islanders narrate in the classroom.

The article “Literature That Saves: Matilda as a Reader of *Great Expectations* in *Mister Pip* by Lloyd Jones” expounds the importance of literature during testing times, thereby corroborating the view that reading is one of the most effective modes of dereflection that not only saves the skin of the person in danger but also allows them to momentarily seep into the skin of another individual and experience a different life altogether (Lyczkowski).

The author Lloyd Jones has retained the historical facts of the Civil War fought between the rebels of Bougainville and the redskins of Papua New Guinea to gain control over the copper mine in Bougainville, which had been under the control of Australians for a long time. The historical facts present in the novel *An Unnecessary Woman* is the

Civil War that battered Lebanon, followed by the siege of Beirut, laid by the Israelis in the year 1982. This novel is another example of a fiction that employs the technique of intertextuality. Recollections of intriguing lines from various novels read by Aaliya contribute to the development of the plot. Stream of consciousness technique has been extensively used in the novel and we get to know about the life of Aaliya and her other characters in the novel predominantly through her reminiscences. The role played by the novel in creating awareness about the importance of literature in the current age has been recorded in an article titled as “An Unnecessary Woman by Rabih Alameddine review- ‘a complicated literary pleasure’”:

Alameddine’s novel is a hymn to an important type of excess – that of art and philosophy – that our ever more efficient and supposedly rational era is quick to discard. In this sense, he – through Aaliya – is as impassioned as Dostoevsky was when he wrote *Notes from Underground* in furious response to Chernyshevsky’s doctrine of enlightened self-interest. (Messud)

The Book Thief is set during the period of World War II. The narrator of the novel is the personified form of Death. It is death who is the omniscient narrator as he has the ability to be everywhere and perceive everything. The protagonist Matilda is the titular book thief, as she steals books to read. Her first book was stolen in a graveyard, a place closely associated with the narrator of the novel. She then began stealing books from the bonfires in Nazi Germany which amounted to theft, as the books chosen to be burnt, were the ones that were deemed unfit for the public, as they failed to toe the line of the ideology of the Nazis.

The Nazis were notorious for burning books and this incident has been recreated in several works of fiction. *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury is a dystopian novel set in the future wherein, books are illegal and firefighters are employed to burn them down. The mentality of the fascist Nazis to burn down anything that displeased them is represented in this novel by substituting the Nazis with a government set in a futuristic world.

The Book Thief has numerous morbid elements portrayed in a refreshing way and when viewed in juxtaposition with the Nazis, the latter appear more grotesque. Death is depicted as an overworked pallbearer, who is tired of working overtime because of the atrocities committed by man, who is akin to a callous boss.

Next in line, Liesel is initiated into the reading process, with a book titled *The Gravedigger's Handbook*. Though her passion for books commenced with this morbid book, it was books that eventually made her look forward to life. Likewise, the word 'basement' or 'cellar' has negative connotations and is always associated with darkness and bondage. However, Hans Hubermann dispelled Liesel's nightmares and cemented a strong bonding with her in the basement. Matilda learnt to read and spent almost all her leisure time reading in that basement. She found her beloved friend Max in the basement and the happy times they shared were in the basement. Whenever their city was bombed, the citizens used to hide themselves in the basements to remain safe. Finally, Liesel began to write sitting in the basement and when her street was bombed, everyone except Liesel was killed and she was rescued out of the basement. The author has thereby given a refreshing perspective of negative things and by doing so, has subtly implied that man is the one who is to be really feared. To counterbalance the negative traits of human beings displayed by the Nazis, good ones like Liesel, Hans, Max and

Rosa are portrayed to assure that unmindful of the hardships heaped upon them, there will be a faction of human beings who would choose to retain their benevolence, remain strong and overcome the hurdles.

A section of the novel *Of Human Bondage* is set during the period of World War I. The rest of the novel is replete with autobiographical elements from Somerset Maugham's life. In fact, writing this book down helped him to purge his emotions and obtain psychological respite. He mentioned the restlessness he experienced till he made up his mind to write this novel in his biography *The Summing Up* (1938):

I was but just firmly established as a popular playwright when I began to be obsessed by the teeming memories of my past life. The loss of my mother and then the break-up of my home, the wretchedness of my first years at school for which my French childhood had so ill-prepared me and which my stammering made so difficult, the delight of those easy, monotonous and exciting days in Heidelberg, when I first entered upon the intellectual life, the irksomeness of my few years at the hospital and the thrill of London; it all came back to me so pressingly in my sleep, on my walks, when I was rehearsing plays, when I was at a party, it became such a burden to me that I made up my mind that I could only regain my peace by writing it all down in the form of a novel. (194-95)

Before propagating the effectiveness of logotherapy to the world, Frankl had applied it on himself and experienced the results, which vouches for its authenticity. Frankl was a survivor of four concentration camps and was sent to the camp in 1942, the very same year in which his marriage had taken place. His new bride, mother, father and

brother died in the camps and Frankl and his sister were the only ones in the family to survive. His life thereby stands out as a source of inspiration to people who get frustrated with life at the drop of a hat. Especially, the younger generation has become so emotionally fragile, that they contemplate suicide at the slightest pretext.

The novels chosen for the study portray an array of characters that represent people from myriad walks of lives. The problems experienced by them are also varied and thereby, serve as an inspiration and guide to those placed in similar circumstances in life. The novel *Mister Pip* comprises characters living in a war-torn region. The protagonist Matilda and her fellow villagers are deprived even of the bare minimum comfort of having a set of spare clothes and a roof over their head. Matilda's mother was raped before her eyes and was later brutally hacked into pieces and thrown to the pigs. Matilda had witnessed all of this at the age of thirteen. Regardless of that, she did not allow the traumatic events to haunt her for a lifetime. She took charge of her life, got educated and decided to go back to her village and make a difference.

Numerous trauma theories endorse unacceptable behaviour by placing the blame on the events of the past. Research has been conducted on delinquents and the samples collected have revealed that most of them were abused as children. Nonetheless, this should not be normalized and viewed as the natural outcome. Man has been given a free will to choose his course of actions. He is thereby responsible for his behaviour irrespective of what happens to him. Frankl had explicitly stated that the cause and effect phenomenon is not applicable to human beings as mankind is the master of his own self. He can choose not to be a prisoner of the past and liberate himself from its clutches.

Matilda too, grew up to be an understanding and mature person as she chose to retain the lessons from her traumatic experience and not the painful emotions associated with it.

Mr. Watts, was the sole foreigner living in the midst of the islanders and thereby could be categorized as a minority. Numerous books and articles have been written on the rights of the minority community that pontificate on how the majority community should make them feel secure and create a sense of belongingness. Research works dealing with issues such as the protection of the language, religion, food, customs and traditions of the minorities are also commonly available. However, works dealing with the responsibilities of the minority community and the efforts they must take to create a sense of belongingness is conspicuously absent.

The onus is disproportionately placed on the majority community which eventually makes the minorities feel that they are entitled beings with all the rights but no responsibilities. But Mr. Watts did not expect the Black people to make the first move. In the absence of teachers, he took the initiative to teach the children of the island and invited the elders of the island to share their knowledge with the children. Mr. Watts thereby made himself an indispensable member of the community by using his skills to promote the welfare of a foreign community, amongst whom he had made his home. Within a short span of time, he became the central force that brought the community together. He had also managed to dispel the prejudices that people had regarding him.

Aaliya Saleh of the novel *An Unnecessary Woman* faced the very same set of issues that is plaguing the twenty-first century. Divorce and loneliness are considered to be two great stressors. Divorce brings a host of emotional and financial problems along

with it. Depression, mental turmoil, loneliness and suicidal tendencies are the common hazards that loom large over divorced people.

Similarly, retirement is usually viewed with dread and portrayed in a negative light because of a lack of proper attitude. Many fail to accept the fact that this is another phase of life and continue to live in denial. Visualizing a bleak future, developing a negative perception of oneself and incessant harmful autosuggestions about their presumed uselessness, takes a toll on both mental and physical health of the older population.

Researchers have stated that thoughts can bring about changes in the body. An experiment had been conducted in Harvard Medical School by the neuroscientist Alvaro Pascual-Leone to prove this fact. A set of subjects were asked to play piano for two hours per day for five days. They were then subjected to a transcranial-magnetic-stimulation (TMS) test that mapped their brain and found significant changes in the motor cortex, an area of the brain that was associated with the movement of the fingers. The same experiment was repeated with another set of subjects, but in an entirely different fashion. They were asked to imagine the act of playing a piano and were instructed not to move their fingers. When their brains were mapped using the TMS test, the changes observed were similar to the ones observed in the earlier instance (Bangert and Altenmuller).

This experiment proved that thoughts had the power to alter the structure of the physical form. Thereby, it would not be an exaggeration to state that an improper attitude coupled with pessimistic thoughts could easily manifest in the form of diseases in the body. This explains why older people who failed to take care of the quality of their thoughts became more vulnerable to diseases after retirement. The seventy-two year old Aaliya can thereby serve as a role model to the older people who are unable to cope with the

retirement phase, as she has been portrayed as setting a new goal and changing her course of action at an age, when most people lose the vigour even to take interest in their everyday routine.

The book *Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life* (2016) by Albert Liebermann and Hector Garcia has carried out a survey on centenarians and conducted interviews, during which they divulged the secret of their longevity. They asserted the importance of indulging in some form of work, no matter how insignificant, in order to keep the body and mind healthy.

Many people experience dissatisfaction because they measure the value of their lives by comparing it with others. This dangerous practice is vehemently opposed by Frankl and he has categorically stated: “As meanings are unique, they are ever changing. But they are never missing. Life is never lacking a meaning” (“Unheard” 39).

Innumerable cases of suicides reported in the newspapers have one or the other of the reasons endured by the aforementioned characters. In fact, the problems experienced by Viktor Frankl in his life and the characters in the novels are of a graver nature compared to the ones an ordinary man is likely to encounter in his life. According to Frankl, what made the survivors emerge victoriously out of their circumstances unlike the ones who gave up their lives is that they had said “yes to life in spite of everything” (“Man’s” 139). Frankl has elucidated the concept of ‘tragic triad’ in logotherapy, stating that every man had to experience pain, guilt and death unconditionally. Regardless of that, the person who managed to remain optimistic in the face of this tragic trio is the one who is able to decode the meaning of his bitter experiences and he has termed this phenomenon as ‘tragic optimism’ (139).

Western culture promotes a state of disillusionment by exaggerating the importance of living a happy life. People thereby become uncomfortable to express their sorrows fearing that that they may be considered as a pain in the neck in their social circles. Many people thereby tend to pretend to be happy, just to appease others. Frankl has staunchly disabused this unhealthy trend by stating that, happiness should not be pursued as a goal but should be viewed as a natural outcome and thereby encouraged mankind to participate in life wholeheartedly and accept both happiness and sufferings with equanimity. He believed that sufferings came with valuable lessons and whenever an individual managed to understand the meaning behind his pain, he expressed readiness to tolerate even misfortunes gladly (Man's 142).

He does not attempt to undermine the problems of people by associating every case of depression with a state of meaninglessness. There are severe problems that can toss and turn mankind. Hunger, poverty, disease, disability, displacement and death are real problems and people enduring them bravely deserve huge respect and empathy. However, some individuals decide to quit their struggle at a stage, when they feel that the fight is not worthy enough and at that point in time, they cease to put in more effort. However, in cases where people have found their sufferings serving a purpose, they are willing to endure it happily for that cause. There are innumerable cases that corroborate Frankl's claims. For instance, a soldier who has a lost his limb in the process of safeguarding his motherland is more likely to accept his misery as he had the satisfaction of having served a noble purpose and found solace in the knowledge that he had not suffered in vain:

It goes without saying that not each and every case of depression is to be traced back to a feeling of meaninglessness, nor does suicide- in which depression sometimes eventuates- always result from an existential vacuum. But even if each and every case of suicide had not been *undertaken* out of a feeling of meaninglessness, it may well be that an individual's impulse to take his life would have been *overcome* had he been aware of some meaning and purpose worth living for. (Frankl, "Man's" 143)

Viktor Frankl, who had propounded logotherapy, had also undertaken the journey of making his life meaningful, without seeking any kind of external help. The characters chosen for study in this research have not sought the assistance of a professional logotherapist to alleviate their suffering and enable them to discover meaning in their life. They underwent the journey all by themselves, thereby proving that it is possible for other individuals to do so. This research does not attempt to undermine the importance of seeking the help of a professional logotherapist. On the other hand, it attempts to prove that every individual has the innate ability to take up the responsibility of living a purposeful life and discovering meaning, even in circumstances wherein professional help may not be available or denied. Even during such dire circumstances, when an individual would be left to fend for himself, he should not forget that he can be his own logotherapist like Viktor Frankl and overcome his miseries without losing hope.

The applicability of logotherapy was evident in the year 2020 when the entire globe was afflicted by Coronavirus disease. The pandemic that held the entire world hostage tested man's inner strength. People were forced to remain within the confines of their homes. As a result, numerous people lost their jobs, which resulted in a major

financial crunch. Constant fear of being affected by the disease and watching loved ones succumb to it took a toll on the mental health of mankind. Nevertheless, the pandemic also brought out the innate goodness lying dormant within humanity.

During these testing times, many organizations and applications made online books available for free, to help people get rid of their boredom and employ their time productively. Amar Chitra Katha made their comics available for free to engage the attention of children as they are more prone to be restless. Several citizens volunteered to feed the less fortunate and deliver groceries at the doorsteps of the old and disabled. Educational institutions conducted free webinars, online courses and competitions to engage the students and ensure that the process of learning never came to a standstill.

Organizations like the Brahmakumaris, constantly worked towards steering people's thoughts in the right direction by posting free videos regularly on topics such as meditation, positive affirmations and the art of right thinking, to channelize the thoughts in the right direction and help mankind remain emotionally healthy.

The Indian government ensured that free ration was provided to all citizens, in order to prevent the poor from starving. Doctors worked meticulously unmindful of their own health and family, to treat the patients affected by the virus. The Honourable Prime Minister of India constantly motivated the citizens and requested them to express their solidarity with the warriors helping the nation battle with the virus by applauding and lighting lamps. These little gestures created a sense of belongingness to a larger community during the period of isolation. This token of gratitude also motivated the doctors and other healthcare workers to carry on with their parlous yet noble task of saving lives, with greater vigour. This gesture

also made the doctors believe that their suffering had a meaning, as they were in charge of saving the world from the deadly virus.

Hence, it is evident that the values propagated in logotherapy such as, expressing gratitude, being empathetic, remaining optimistic, helping the less fortunate and doing selfless service has enabled mankind to endure the pandemic with immense fortitude.