

# Abstract

Religious and existential issues by Viktor E. Frankl.

Its reception in theological thinking with special regard to Czechoslovak Hussite Church.

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Viktor E. Frankl is considered as one of the most important person of 20<sup>th</sup> century in the area of medicine, namely in the branch of neurosurgery and psychiatry. He was Professor of Neurology and Psychiatry at the University of Vienna Medical School. He was also the founder of the Third Viennese school of Psychotherapy (after Freud's psychoanalysis and Adler's individual psychology) – the school of logotherapy. Frankl's life and work influenced millions of people all around the world. He published thirty-two books, which have been translated into more than twenty-three languages, including Japanese and Chinese.

During my scientific stay in Vienna, I have visited many places, which are connected with Frankl's life. I have also made a lot of pictures. Some of them can be seen in the attachment at the end of this work.

The initial part of this thesis describes Frankl's life story from his birth in 1905 to his death in 1997, with main emphasis to experiences which led to his discovery of logotherapy. Frankl's entire family, excepting for his sister, perished during World War II in camps (or were sent to the gas ovens). In the Nazi camps Frankl lost every possession, his values were destroyed; he suffered from hunger, cold and brutality. In spite of these horrible experiences, he was able to continue live, work and love.

As it was told, Frankl created his own psychotherapeutical theory – logotherapy. The main therapeutical methods are paradoxical intention and dereflection. Frank's whole life and work were devoted to searching and finding meaning of life. According to logotherapy, people can discover the meaning in life in three different ways – by creating a work or doing a deed, by experiencing something or encountering someone and by the attitude people take

toward unavoidable suffering. Besides meaning in life, this thesis describes also meaning of human suffering, meaning of love, work and death.

The thesis puts Frankl's logotherapy in connection with theological views. I was trying to find also the meaning of suffering of Jesus Christ, meaning of his cross and resurrection.

Frankl's work is passed through deep spirituality which can be seen especially in his description of the situation in the camp, during which he met his death wife Tilly. He heard her voice and saw her smile. He forgot the horrible conditions, which were around him and was surrounded only by love of his wife and for this moment, he was very happy and satisfied. It was an extraordinary religious ecstasy, which he then remembered for his whole life. In my work, I put his experience into parallel with another similar occasion – a converse of Paul by Damascus. These two religious experiences have many common features, which I tried to discover. It is also mentioned the experience of Indian man Sadhu Sundar Singh, which converted to Christianity while he had similar religious ecstasy.

The main emphasis of the thesis is put on the importance of logotherapy for the Czechoslovak Hussite Church. The books of Viktor Frankl have been brought to the Czech theological area by Zdeněk Trtík, an important person in the theology of Czechoslovak Hussite Church. Trtík translated Frankl's books and reflected them in his own works. He was the first, who introduced Frankl's life story and logotherapy in our country. In the final part of my thesis, I compare main ideas of Trtík with thoughts of Frankl.

Czechoslovak Hussite Church has in its teachings many common attributes with Frankl's search for meaning, especially with the education to meaning. This could be also the main benefit, because our church can profit from his theory using it in its pastoral praxis. The priests, preachers and pastoral assistants should be educated in logotherapy and in searching for meaning by education to meaning. It can be organized various of workshops, lectures and conferences, in which people can teach, how to find meaning in their lives and difficult situations. I hope that my thesis will help them to start with their searching and finding.