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*The promotion of happiness**



Ms. Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen, It would be inappropriate, especially for a Pole, to begin a lecture about happiness without reviving the memory of the world-famous philosopher, Professor Władysław Tatarkiewicz.

Fifty years ago, that is, in the year of the foundation of our Medical University, I was presented with a gift on the occasion of my graduation from high school and the reward was Professor Tatarkiewicz's study entitled *On Happiness*. This book became one of the cornerstones of the upbringing of the young people post-war generation; it was a symbol of the potency of Polish culture. The author finished writing it in 1939. The eruption of the war made its publication impossible but it also provided the author with new materials and new reflections, so that he enriched his study with new chapters, among others, about suffering and about adversity. After the defeat of the Warsaw Uprising, Professor Tatarkiewicz took the manuscript of the book from his house on fire and walked in an escorted column of prisoners to the camp in Pruszków. A German officer snatched away the manuscript and threw it into the gutter shouting "Es gibt keine polnische Kultur mehr" (There is no Polish culture any longer). Risking his life, Professor Tatarkiewicz picked up the scat-

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The other aspect of the mind, RIGPA, is described as a wisdom transmitter or as the Real Nature of the Mind. It is formed by the accumulated experiences of all the generations of the world, indeed, of the whole evolution. It has access to the Library of the Universe, containing the whole truth about reality. It is this unwritten library that was used by the "greatest religious creators and the mystics who – by modern criteria – would be regarded as mere illiterates, though the wisdom preached by them and written down by their disciples retained its validity for millennia. RIGPA operates only in tranquillity; it deals with matters demanding solutions for which facts alone and knowledge are insufficient but which require sensibility, intuition, spontaneity, wisdom. These are mainly matters of the heart – marriage, upbringing of children, friendship, love. The Real Nature of the Mind constitutes a permanent, unchangeable oasis of internal peace, satisfaction, joy, wisdom, good, and common sense. Each of us carries it in himself or herself, although today it is hard to perceive because it is overwhelmed by the aggressive operation of superficial, computer thoughts. In spite of that, almost to each of us there occur spontaneous interruptions in this daily, rather gloomy thinking. At moments of particular inspiration, of exceptional enchantment and awe, we gain momentary glimpses of the extraordinary world of the True Nature of the Mind. The past and the present cease to exist. We are fused with the Universe. We experience only the here and now and we enjoy it with all our being. Let us try to recall – perhaps in memories of our childhood or early youth – and become aware of the moments of enchantment with the sun setting behind mountains, the murmur of the waterfall, birds singing in spring, love exaltation, a beautiful concert. If the storehouses of our memories contain such moments of enchantment and ecstasy, then it was IT.

THE PRODIGIOUS DISCOVERERS OF OUR EPOCH

Descartes, Newton, Einstein, Heisenberg, Bohr and others have described their prophetic dreams, gleams of intuitive enlightenments, unexpected occurrences of visions of great ideas. Grasping the sense of these visions, translating them into the computer language, and finally applying them in scientific explanations of reality – constitute their accomplishments.

Spontaneous, accidental discoveries of the True Nature of the Mind do not satisfy the human being. Since the very beginning of history, humanity made attempts to gain access to that source of peace, joy, truth, happiness and wisdom. A road that might lead to this goal was found in meditation. Thanks to it, thousands of monks and lay people have been affecting these extraordinary states for centuries. A conscious, planned, purposeful attainment of the RJGPA state is within reach of every person. But this is a separate, broad subject for those particularly interested in it.

Let us return to more practical, generally accessible sources of our promotion. One of the conditions of peaceful experiencing of happy moments is the achievement of harmo-

nious relations with our surroundings. In this case the understanding of the principle of separate psycho-realities may prove particularly helpful. Throughout life, the computer mind analyses, processes and accumulates experiences, opinions, views and pieces of information arriving from our surrounding world. This mind selects all such materials critically, radically and broadly, and then constructs of them in us a consistent system of convictions, which is figuratively called a filter, a prism or a sieve. We create it in silence, truth and mystery of our existence, when we are alone with our dreams, hopes, aspirations, desires and passions. It is also shaped by our successes and failures, satisfactions and humiliations, suffering, and anxieties. It is permeated with the spirit of benevolence, advice and instruction of the people closest to us – our parents, teachers, educators, friends. It is therefore really ours – we believe in it totally, we defend it and are unwilling to change it. The filter is a reflection of an individual, unique history of the life of every person but it contains our subjective evaluation of reality, not an objective truth. If our experiences had been different, our convictions would also have been different. Before reaching our consciousness, each new bit of information arriving from the outside, each opinion, proposition or suggestion is filtered, compared with what we already know from our own experience, provisionally evaluated – and then accepted, rejected or ignored. The understanding of the truth that every person has a different, subjectively coloured, separate system of thought, even though far from being perfect, has multiple consequences, namely: it teaches humility, lesser self-assurance, and it allows for our fallibility; it demonstrates the truth that every person must perceive the world differently; it makes one expect distinctness of judgements rather than an approbation of our evaluation of reality; it manifests the charm, beauty and richness of life resulting from its multiplicity; it turns hostility into curiosity, and disfavour into respect.

The understanding and acceptance of the otherness of another person puts an end to intolerance as well as to tolerance which is not particularly laudable, either, since it charitably assumes our superiority. It may turn conflicts and misunderstandings into mutually benevolent interest, mutual enrichment, and harmonious co-existence. Every relation with another person begins with ourselves. If we awaken positive feelings in ourselves, we open way for mutual respect, honest agreement and authentic love. We may share our own satisfaction with others. If you are looking for evil in your neighbour, you will most certainly find it – but what will you gain in this way?

As has been stated above, happiness dwells in our inner world and there one should look for its source, there it should be built and its basis founded. But it turns out that the sphere of our psychic life, though it is constantly so close to us, is particularly hard to investigate. Since our earliest years of life we learn to direct our attention and all our capacities to the surrounding world of material goods, the flood of information, technology and progress with which one is expected to keep pace. The overcoming of these habits, withdrawal of attention from the external world and transferring it to the internal world in order to observe one's own thoughts, feelings and moods, cause serious problems to the Western man. The methods applied in this case are called self-observation,

introspection or meditation, when “I” observes “me”. What is the observing “I” and what is the observed “me”?

The “I” is not thoughts, the body, the name etc. because they change and pass away. The “I” issues from the world of the Real Nature of the Mind, from the land of peace, happiness, and immortality. The “me” is the changeable, egoistic part of our self, bedecked with a variety of labels. The success of the self-observation session is dependent on the elementary conditions secured for its duration.

Let us then reserve an hour just for ourselves. Let us totally suspend our everyday activities. We need only silence, relaxation and certainty that nobody will disturb our peace. We sit in a chair in loose, comfortable and warm clothes. The back should be upright, the head raised high, eyes closed, breathing easy, muscles relaxed. We then raise the curtain of our internal theatre, directing all our attention inside. We try not to think about anything, while retaining a certain presence of mind and alertness of the observer. And only within seconds after arresting the thought process there begins a rebellion and invasion of everyday computer thoughts. They appear without any reason, without logical connections, some of them departing and others taking their place. The flood of thoughts cannot be completely arrested. All we can and should do is preserve the detachment of observation, without involvement, evaluation, classification, without reflecting on particular thoughts. We watch them as we watch clouds drifting in the sky. Unfortunately, we often soon yield and one of the more aggressive thoughts gains control over the mind. We drop back into the whirl of the external world and the introspection session must be resumed again from the beginning. Patience and persistence will be rewarded by the discovery and understanding of the principles of the functioning of the *psyche*, which are vitally important for happiness promotion.

PRINCIPLES OF THE FUNCTIONING OF THE *PSYCHE*

Spontaneously, independently of our will, we create a stream of thoughts directed towards the external world. The thoughts appear without any causes, without links and thus they depart. Their contents are unexpected, and often surprising.

Some of these thoughts remain longer and may master our consciousness, consuming all forces and meanings. If they have an obsessive character, they awaken negative emotions and bad temper.

Fortunately, the choice of thoughts for detailed analysis may be largely controlled by our will. It is of great practical significance because the elimination of toxic thoughts affects the mood of our lives.

Moods popularly described as bad or good humour belong to the human nature; we cannot avoid them, since they are part of the human condition. Each thought which is an attempt to interpret a situation induces emotions. Each emotion is preceded by a thought. Thoughts, emotions, and moods are interconnected, coupled, interdependent.

The stream of thoughts flowing in our mind also causes a stream of changeable emotions. Ups and downs are unavoidable. We cannot directly influence our mood, but our will can determine the choice of thoughts we are dealing with, and thus, indirectly, we can affect our moods. The role of the mood in experiencing the state of happiness cannot be overestimated. How hard it is to endure people who often have bad moods, especially if they have some power over us. External conditions are neutral – it is our thoughts that endow them with meanings – and that is why the same circumstances may and do have various senses for different people. It is our thoughts, rather than our situation, that determine what we feel like. The same reality we may experience and evaluate differently, according to our internal disposition. Depending on individual memories and associations, a subtle fragrance of refined perfume may evoke feelings of love and tenderness or, on the contrary, those of anger, envy and hatred.

When we are in a bad mood, life seems hard to bear, oppressive, while people seem wicked. There creep in suspiciousness, dejection, and depression. We become obstinate, defensive, intolerant. We lose the dispassionate attitude to difficulties. It is then easy to encounter misunderstandings and hostility. We are oppressed by obsessive thoughts about problems and people. In a good mood life is beautiful, problems are easy, people are kind and generous. Patience, calmness and charm facilitate compromise. We react friendly to the words and responses of the partner. Happiness promotion means daring about the world of emotions, about the mood in which we live.

HOW SHOULD IT BE REALIZED IN PRACTICE?

First of all, one must identify the ill. Emotions constitute a barometer of good humour. They are like a control light which blinks when our thinking becomes unhealthy. Then in the internal world one should localize the source of the ill in the form of toxic thoughts in order to silence them and interrupt that particular course of thinking.

Finally, one should check and restrict actions. When in a bad mood, one should not instruct, advise, or persuade. Potential “bad situations” will not disappear but we shall solve them more effectively and better when good mood returns. One should actively sit out a bad mood, not unlike bad weather; it will pass away more quickly when left alone.

Apart from the principle of separate psycho-realities and rules governing the world of thoughts, emotions and moods, there is also a number of factors which hinder and even make impossible the experience of states of happiness.

The psyche of each of us functions in the following way: we think, we are subject to moods, we construct filters, we live in separate psycho-realities, we experience emotions – and, if only for these reasons, we should have plenty of forbearance for ourselves and for others. Every person has an individual road to happiness. Every person must identify the barriers on this road in order to remove or bypass them. The most tragic obstacle we have inherited from the passing century concerns the devastation in the internal life, limi-

tation of independent thinking, narrowing down of the horizons of consciousness. The “brain washings” accomplished by fascism, communism, religious fundamentalisms, extreme nationalisms stupefied and still stupefy people so effectively that they are ready to sacrifice their lives and – even more willingly – the lives of others, for the sake of an alien idea imposed on them. There is still a lot of bloodshed in the world and people endure an immensity of suffering for illusions born in the heads of madmen. The treatment of a “brainwashed” mind, the purification and modification of the internal filter are extremely difficult. Most people affected with this illness, in spite of the knowledge they possess, still prefer suffering in poisonous stifling ambience to getting outside and thus disarming the nightmares of the past.

Experiencing moments of happiness may also effectively restrict various life addictions – love of fame, prestige, approval, titles and various decorative labels, power and material goods. When we depend on the opinions and moods of other people, we become tense and experience states of anxiety. But the discovery of such dependence usually restores the balance.

Ladies and Gentlemen, The promotion of health and the canons of holistic medicine show the way to the accomplishment of biological health and worthy longevity. The promotion of happiness attempts to teach one how – during this long life – one may enjoy internal peace, joy of existence, beauty of nature, culture and art, harmonious and profitable co-existence with the surroundings. Hence, there only remains the realization of the main aim of human life, namely, the cognition of the truth about ourselves and our surrounding reality and participating in the evolution of consciousness which continues its mysterious journey from the matter, through the life, the mind, and the soul towards the spirit, which is to be the condition of the survival of the human kind in the twenty-first century.

SUMMARY

The human mind is capable of creating an internal world – the psychic sphere – including the phenomena characteristic of human nature, such as selfconsciousness, conscious experiences, conceptual thinking, symbolic language, dreams, art, creation of culture, sense of values, interest in the distant past and care about the distant future. According to the exceptionally concordant opinions of the sages and scholars of the East and the West it is just within this internal world that human happiness dwells.

Happiness is a state of the spirit which consists in: internal peace, satisfaction with one’s life, the joy of life, benevolence and cordiality towards oneself and towards others; sensitivity to the beauty of nature, culture and art; harmonious co-existence with the surroundings.

The achievement and experiencing of the states of thus understood happiness depend mainly on ourselves and, similarly to the project of health promotion, require knowledge, willingness and possibilities.

Happiness Promotion denotes the commendation and popularizing of a certain definite way of thinking and acting – showing the road which leads to the frequent experiencing of happy moments.

PROMOCJA SZCZĘŚCIA

Umysł ludzki posiada zdolność tworzenia świata wewnętrznego – sfery psychicznej, obejmującej zjawiska charakterystyczne dla ludzkiej natury, takie jak: samoświadomość, świadome przeżycia, myślenie pojęciowe, język symboliczny, marzenia, sztukę, tworzenie kultury, poczucie wartości, zainteresowanie odległą przeszłością i troska o daleką przyszłość. Według wyjątkowo zgodnej opinii uczonych Wschodu i Zachodu właśnie w tym wewnętrznym świecie mieszka ludzkie szczęście.

Szczęście to stan ducha, na który składają się: wewnętrzny spokój, zadowolenie z życia, radość istnienia, życzliwość i serdeczność wobec siebie i innych; wrażliwość na piękno przyrody, kulturę, sztukę; harmonijne współżycie z otoczeniem. Osiąganie i przeżywanie stanów tak rozumianego szczęścia zależy w głównej mierze od nas samych i podobnie jak to było w promocji zdrowia – wymaga wiedzy, chęci i możliwości. Promocja Szczęścia to lansowanie i upowszechnianie określonego sposobu myślenia i postępowania, to wytyczanie drogi prowadzącej do jak najczęstszego przeżywania szczęśliwych chwil.