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HUMAN BEING AS A CREATURE SEEKING AND DEEPENDING HOPE

There was written and said a lot about hope especially after editing the Encyclical *Spe Salvi* of the Pope Benedict XVI. Hope becomes more often a subject of scientific derivations in psychology, philosophy and theology. The term is also present in the artistic creation, especially in literature. Hope was the subject for saints, poets, candidates to altars, scientists but hope is also a term used by ordinary people in several different circumstances and life situations.

Hope is a natural state of human existence, is this psychic disposal, which lets set the sense to our lives and actions. It is an activating factor for human actions, because thanks to hope a man aims effectively his goals and at the same time may feel safe in life and expect fulfilling of his aspirations and plans. He may have a feeling that every difficulty, success and defeat as well as the death has a deep sense and meaning. Human hope covers several areas concerning human functioning and the spheres of spiritual experiences.

Hope concerns two realities. From one side it embraces everyday actions and situations. A man hopes that he will complete school, have a well paid job, an operation of somebody ill from the family will succeed, that his marriage will be happy, that the new government will protect rights of the poor. From the other side hope reaches also beyond human's death, which means it touches the reality giving sense to life's struggles, illnesses, sufferings and tragedies. Hope is realized through human existence and is connected with his functioning "in hope and with hope". People seek in life the realization of their aims, plans, desires, they pursue to self-realization, self-fullness in every action which is supported by hope. Therefore human being is a creature, who "possesses hope" and "lives through hope". A person full of hope crosses the borders of existence and searches for source of his being. A man heads also the understanding of his own destiny but also to understand all he is experiencing and was previously experiencing and what the people in future will experience.

1. Structure of hope as psychological disposition

A person, who hopes, expects favorable circumstances enabling the achievement of certain valuable goal, that is the good. Heading a certain good, which means a realization of ones attempts, a person takes up specific actions. Therefore hope is an important motivator of human actions directing a person towards certain aim. An aim headed by a man is always of a certain value of good but its achieving is guarded by a kind of uncertainty. A man is never sure of achieving his goal but he *hopes* and the hope activates his operations. Thanks to hope a man rediscovers the sense of his particular actions but also of his life as such. Nevertheless it happens that people loose hope and they cease to believe they will achieve their goals which means the headed good. In that situation they fall in despair and loose hope for realization of each and every action maintaining in the state of anxiety, despair, depression and apathy.

As a rule people are conscious that hope is indispensable in forming and realizing plans and goals. That is why they seek hope and its sources. That is the fundamental and in the same time the basic human need. There are several methods of recovering hope as well as its sources.

According to philosophical, theological, psychological and common tradition hope was classified as emotions. But in the convention of the modern cognitive psychology, according to the opinion of psychologist Józef Kozielski, that assumption should be revised. The author understands hope as “multidimensional cognitive structure, which central factor consists of the assumption that one in the future will gain the good as such with the certain level of assurance”¹. Hope as a dimensional structure contains many factors such as emotions, thoughts about future, affiliate assumptions, motives and causative factors. Therefore hope is a certain psychic constancy dominated by the cognition.

J. Kozielski distinguished four types of hope: passive, active, particular and general one basing them on two criteria: activity-passivity and particularity-generality.²

Passive hope can be characterized with the conviction of an individual that after a certain period of passive waiting will achieve the desired score or aim. Such convictions are usually accompanied by positive emotions. However in such situations man's behavior is passive, which means he does nothing in order to enlarge the chances of gaining the expected good. Still passive hope may lead to frustration in a case of not achieving the expected results, states of things or goals.³ I think such type of hope is defined as “mother of all fools”.

Usually people in their actions apply active hope because they actively take part in obtaining what they wanted. Active hope is characterized by the strong conviction of an individual that thanks to personal abilities and strong motivation initiating and maintaining the activity, one will achieve the goal with the probability more than zero. In the active hope human will is very important and creates an interaction of searching abilities and constructing actions with strong motivation in obtaining the goal.⁴

Active and passive hope are of particular (single) character because they are connected with strictly established aim wanted to be achieved in particular time and place with previously estimated probability. According to particular hope a man is able to formulate several aims starting from the most simple to more complicated.⁵

Apart from particular hope we can distinguish main hope called also the general or the absolute one, which can be both passive and active. Such kind of hope does not refer to concrete result, state of things or goal but it is “a general conviction that in the future there will emerge new important tasks, which solutions will be full of positive values and goods”⁶.

Such hope allows to achieve substantial goals but also realize personal and social businesses. General hope, as the designation implies is not connected with concrete space, time or action but it is generalized, which means that a man lives according to hope and in hope. General hope has two basic functions in the human life. Firstly it influences the sense of life also in tragic, dramatic and dangerous situations. Secondly it

¹ Kozielski, J. *Psychology of hope*, Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”, Warsaw 2006, p. 37.

² Kozielski, p. 38.

³ Kozielski, p. 39.

⁴ Kozielski, p. 39.

⁵ Kozielski, p. 40.

⁶ Kozielski, p. 41.

influences positively the particular hope. In such cases it is the general hope which prevents the man from despair and hopelessness.⁷

Hope as multidimensional cognitive structure consists of several integral elements. There should be distinguished: cognitive, emotional, temporal, affiliative and causative components.⁸

The cognitive component stays in the centre of hope according to J. Kozielski's concept and constitutes a system of beliefs, thought, opinions, associations, images of individuals about the future obtaining of an important and substantial aim, result or certain good.⁹

The emotional and affective components play in hope fundamental role because the conviction that one will achieve the goal is always full of emotions, feelings and sometimes desires. Human emotional experiences are connected with the sphere of human comprehension and expectations about the upcoming results. Generally hope connected with the future actions, situations and phenomena causes positive emotions such as happiness, joy, excitement, satisfaction, and pride.

Temporal component allows placing hope in the future time. It is obvious that human choices, beliefs and feelings are influenced by the past experiences but also by present situations and events; nevertheless hope is concentrated on the future. In hope the meaning of past and contemporary time is secondary comparing to the future one, which also influences the way of experiencing the present and interpreting the past. Hope has as well deeper dimension captured by J. Kozielski in the following phrase... "there is no hope without future and no future without hope"¹⁰. It concludes in joining the context of hope with the future and present time.

A substantial factor of hope is its affiliativeness, which is the reference to other people, for example parents, friends, neighbors, clericals, teachers, doctors or generally to mankind, social institutions, Church, tradition, natural phenomena or culture. Special position in experiencing and interpreting event and situations by people is their relation towards God, faith, beliefs and transcendental values¹¹.

Instrumental factor gives hope dynamic character and that is why it influences psychical and social human processes. It has motivating function directed to achieving goals and to succeed. That factor increases human activity, stimulates planning abilities, which help solving problems and creating works socially needed. It decides also on the durability of human activities which is why in many cases it influences the success of an individual. Above all, instrumental factor influences the sense of human life¹².

Psychologist E. Erikson states that hope is being created around the first year of life and is "a special conviction of an individual about two general characteristic of the world: that it is ordered and reasonable and that its attitude towards people is generally favorable"¹³. Hope has its cognitive character in the sense it allows interpreting and predicting events.

⁷ Kozielski, p. 42.

⁸ Compare Kozielski, p. 42-47.

⁹ Kozielski, p. 43.

¹⁰ Kozielski, p. 45.

¹¹ Kozielski, p. 45.

¹² Kozielski, p. 46.

¹³ J.Trzebiński, M.Zięba, Hope, loss and development, „Psychology of the Quality of Life”, 2003, II, no 1, p. 4.

E. Erikson distinguishes crisis moments, which are prime movers of human development¹⁴. Those crisis moments change human life and cause anger and conflicts but at the same time they allow achieving new competences to easily adopt to complicated reality. The ways of living through crisis moments depend on the energy accumulated by the individual, on the social forms of support and on the experience from the previous periods of development. No conflict is solved once and for all but it influence the future life and the development of one's ego. Each and every period of human development depends on the previous ones and prepares the upcoming ones¹⁵.

E. Erikson introduced into his concept the idea of basic virtue of ego. It is a vital force which is a result of solving the moments of crisis and development. As the first and fundamental one there emerges the virtue of hope (Trzebiński, Zięba, 2003).

The concept of Erikson's hope had been verified by J. Trzebiński and M. Zięba. They introduced the term of elemental hope which differs a little from the hope understood as the fact that "things are going to be all right (p. 4). The level of elemental hope is an important factor of personality.

Elemental hope enables two types of reactions on situations: on the situation of something new and reaction to the damage of previous order. In the situation of something new elemental hope increases abilities to new challenges and desires for building new order. Elemental hope may influence abilities to adopt to new circumstances more than an optimism or belief in ones own strength.

Trzebiński and Zięba claim that elemental hope constructs the solid structure of human personality. The fundamentals of hope arise in the early childhood and its level changes permanently during human life. The factors that influence those changes are turning points of human life which may increase as well as decrease the level of elemental hope. The research led by the authors had shown that in the situation of loss people who with higher level of hope rarely resign and in the situation of failure more often take the active posture. Trzebiński and Zieba in their research claimed that the level of hope influences "ability to adapt reactions to difficult situations". Authors stated the differential functionality of elemental hope and belief in one's own strength in the situation of irreversible loss and failure"¹⁶. Elemental hope influences also the cognitive and emotional human reaction and "is a decisive factor which influences the constructivism of pre-decision-making cognitive processes in difficult situations. Hope influences the positivism of thinking about situations and the positivity of emotions towards situations(...). However in the case of making decisions and its realization (behavioral reaction to loss) substantial factors are as follows: the level of elemental hope and the level of belief in one's own strength and abilities"¹⁷.

Trzebiński and Zięba had show also that the high level of elemental hope positively influences psychotherapy and facilitates the overcome of personality crisis caused by the rejection of close people. People with high level of hope are more likely to create new identity"¹⁸.

The higher level of hope influences positively the developmental consequences of difficult situations, abilities to constructively draw conclusions from failures and to reorganize new actions¹⁹.

14 R.J. Gerring, P. G. Zimbardo, Psychology and life, PWN, Warsaw 2006; p. 329-331.

15 Sękowska, 2000, p. 115.

16 Trzebiński, Zieba, p. 10.

17 There, p. 12.

18 There, p. 15.

19 There.

The lower the level of elemental hope the more one can suggest the crisis of hope. Hence the low level of elemental hope is often combined with somatic symptoms and with depression²⁰.

Hope understood as multidimensional psychological inclination does not only consist in faith that "things are going to be all right". It relates to transcendental and eternal value which suppresses even death. A man gives hope to God and give his the life hoping that God leads him towards eternal happiness. God who creates the life eternally connected with hope and who is a creator of human being not able to live without hope, is a God of love defeating death. God promised redemption to people, which should free people from death and sin. That promise had been express by Jesus Christ not only by the hope for God's Kingdom but also through his suffering and death. Resurrection of Jesus became a sign and guarantee of general resurrection. A Christian who lives with the hope of eternal life looks easily toward future because he expects the fulfilling of Jesus' promise and the possibility to become united with the Creator.

The posture of Christian hope is essentially a posture of unlimited faith in God who is the greatest love because he gave his life for each and every human being. From that belief there emerges the patience and persistence in achieving the Christian goal and taking path of Christ with your own cross. Those features of Christian hope allow waiting for fulfilling the good in human life. As a conclusion to that one can state that the hope the hope not only concerns eternal issues but also shapes the posture of Christian activity in life. The hope frees a man from senselessness of life and from fatalism. It defeats from doubts and resignation from life activities. It gives strength and spiritual resistance. Thanks to hope one has motivation to pursue God's Kingdom with the conviction that God leads us to achieving the last success.

Hope belongs to one of the three theological virtues, thanks to which by faith and love a man realizes the desire for eternal life, which means eternal happiness in the Kingdom of God. The virtue of hope corresponds as we can read in Cathehism: "to pursuing happiness, which is hidden in human hears by God; it acts as inspirations for human beings in order to free them and direct toward heaven; it defeats from doubts, resist in loss and defeats from egoism in order to bring love"²¹.

Faith, hope and love are connected as the Holy Trinity. Faith consists in cognition and acceptance of God and God the Creator, the Father God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Hope and love derive from faith and are closely connected to faith that they are not able to exist separately. If the one develops the other develop as well; if the one collapses, collapse the rest.

2. The attributes of grown hope

Often people do not realize hop deeply hope influences their lives. Only when they loose it they realize that it is almost impossible to live without it. The hope does not always emerges in the same level in all of people. Several life situations influence the level of human hope which implicates their decisions and existential actions.

J. Tischner claims that human hope consist in the heroism of people and in the maturity of their souls²². It is the hope which allows a man act heroically. A man who

²⁰ There.

²¹ Cathihism of Catholic Church, 1817, Pallottinum, Poznań 1994, p. 426.

²² J.Tischner 1994, p. 294.

hope for fulfilling important values acts extremely, for example as a soldier who is able to die defeating his motherland, a mother who is able to do everything for her child and a policeman catching a criminal. The human heroism can not only be defined through big and extreme acts. Rafał Kalinowski claimed that the heroism of hope consists above all in the ability to overcome everyday difficulties. Not only human can act heroically but the heroism had been seen in the posture of Jesus Christ in his suffering and death on the Cross. There would not be this heroic act without the hope for redemption of the human kind. People would also not act heroically and altruistically without the hope for fulfilling some general good and fundamental values. Finally the hope gives sense also to the death and even defeats it. J.Tischner states that "human heroism is as big as his hope"²³.

The maturity of hope is one of the most important personal values and the hope itself is the most important perspective in discovering the truth about the man and about the world by giving the life its elemental sense.

Czesław Miłosz in his poem *Hope* encourages to take pains in order to experience the hope *deeper and wiser*.

Hope

Hope is with you when you believe
The earth is not a dream but living flesh,
That sight, touch, and hearing do not lie,
That all things you have ever seen here
Are like a garden looked at from a gate.
You cannot enter. But you're sure it's there.
Could we but look more clearly and wisely
We might discover somewhere in the garden
A strange new flower and an unnamed star.
Some people say we should not trust our eyes,
That there is nothing, just a seeming,
These are the ones who have no hope.
They think that the moment we turn away,
The world, behind our backs, ceases to exist,
As if snatched up by the hands of thieves.

J. Tischner claims that "a man grows up pararely with the growth of the level of hope. Hope grows up by becoming deeper and imperishable, it is strong and real"²⁴.

Psychologists also distinguish the mature and childish hope and characterize the mature one. They pay attention to the process of maturing concerning the hope.

J. Koziellecki states that the mature hope should be active, progressive, conscious, expansive, realistic, regulating and concentrated on the unique experiences. Active hope consists in whole involvement of human being into cognitive, emotional and motivating sphere in order to achieve the setup goal. Achieving extraordinary purposes cannot be led without human consciousness, so that only conscious hope assures the realization of plans, aims and diverse actions. It is only possible when hope develops, which means that a man tress to higher the level of hope. The progress of hope is multidirectional because it consists in enlarging the sum of its activities. Thanks to that an individual is able to take choices, come up with smaller or bigger aims with several levels of difficulty.

²³ There, p. 295.

²⁴ J.Tischner, p. 308.

Such actions are based on facts and on rational thinking implicating an important attribute of realistic hope. Mature hope plays certain roles regulating behaviour in the direction to achieve real goals. Consequently it leads to the feeling of sense in your life. The last attribute of hope had been called by Kozielski as the unique and extraordinary experiences. It is combined with spiritual and cognitive states as well as with the emotional and transcendental ones which lead to full self-realization and to the spread of good in the close and far surroundings²⁵.

3. A man seeking the source of hope and spreading hope

Hope as the fundamental human psychic predisposition is one of the most important motivators of human actions, which can differ along the whole life. The level of hope can increase and decrease as well as become deeper embracing progressively several spheres of human functioning. Hope possess also the power to change the living individual into the so called "man of hope". Several different situations in life, experiences, interpreting actions influence variously the level of hope. St. Ignace Loyola in his *Spiritual exercises* claims that "where various contradictions are to be found there exist more hope". However seriously dangerous for the human beings is the decreasing level of hope because a man is not able to live without hope. It is hope which encourages human strengths and energies, engages into creation of better tomorrow, gives life sense even in difficult situations and suffering.

People are generally conscious of the importance of hope in their lives and therefore seek the sources of hope. Francis Futyma distinguishes the following sources of hope:

- inborn human faith that the future will be better than the contemporary times;
- human ability to anticipate the upcoming states, especially the desired ones; the knowledge gained by a human being authenticates his expectations of future, which leads to the conviction, that one can achieve the goal; great place taken in it the individual experiences of the one;
- attitude towards the surrounding reality as the derivative of the picture of the world and oneself;
- feeling of personal performativeness²⁶.

The world tries to set people the sources of sure happiness. It gives them easy clues such as money, fame, power, knowledge, beauty, health or material values. A man analysing the earthly "goods" is conscious that they are transitory. They not only lose their value but are easy to be lost for ever. Therefore hope as multidirectional psychic disposition should be related to fundamental values. That is why John Paul II repeated several times that God is the first source of happiness and human hope, that for a Christian the situation is never hopeless. Tomas A. Kempis in his *Imitating Jesus Christ* writes "Do not support yourself on your own strength but support yourself on the strengths of God". On one hand a man formulates goals likely to be achieved and on the other hand searches for the sources of hope sustaining his expectations to achieve it. Faustine Kowalska (2002, p. 116) writes "I lived often with hope against hope and I

²⁵ J. Kozielski, p. 136-138.

²⁶ http://www.tenjaras.webpark.pl/nadzieja_u_alkoholika.html

moved my hope towards eternal faith in God”²⁷. Karol Wojtyła (1999) in his poem *Hope which breaks boundaries* claimed the greatest essence and reason of hope in human existence:

*...And I am written into you with hope
aparta of you I cannot exist...*

Deep dimension of hope emerges not only as the substantial element in the personal life but also as the great value for the humankind. Concerning the fact according to st. Rafał Kalinowski hope is not only individual but also collective. It is a picture of covenant of God and human kind. In the sense of human individualism each and every man finds the feeling of somebody else's selflessness. That what st. Rafał expected for himself he expected also for everybody else. Such a cognition of reality and events which are the picture of God's actions discloses the truth that a man seeking constant happiness cannot find it in the earthly goods hence they are impermanent and transitory. However the essential issue of the authenticity of happiness is its persistence. According to R. Kalinowski a man is devoted to the co-acting in eternal happiness because he discovers permanently the need of possessing stable and permanent fortune. The sureness of such a state brings us God with the promise of eternal life, on the condition that he or she will follow the rules of God's regulations issued by the institution of the Church²⁸.

A man not only searches for the sources of hope but he shares his hope with others. A lot of people conscious of the meaning of hope in the human existence try to sustain it in the life of other people don't letting them lose it. The posture of hope, especially the Christian one should be thought and one has to develop it by oneself. How to do that? In the encyclical *Spe Salvi* the Pope Benedict XVI gives us practical advice. The most important spiritual "places" of forming the Christian hope are prayer and suffering.

A man who possesses and deepens his hope with the internal calmness, optimism and openness expects good events till the end of his life.

A hoping man expects favourable circumstances enabling him the achievement of the set goal, which is the good itself. The hope is this psychic disposal which facilitates reaching the expected good. However when the level of uncertainty if the goal can be achieved emerges then the anxiety comes to play the main role. Generally if the probability to reach the aim is less and its importance is bigger, then the anxiety is stronger²⁹. Anxiety is a destructive power disabling the hope. Anxiety invokes several strong behavioral, physiological and psychological reactions such as feeling of danger which disables to reach valuable goal, destroys the development and the sense of self-realization. However hope as a positive power leads to the realization of one's plans which sympathize with personal development of the individual and enriches the culture. A man who searches for hope gets away from fear³⁰.

John Paul the II in his pontificate declared a war on anxiety. His homily gave a lot of words of hope: "When on the April 22nd of October 1978 I have outspoken the words do not be afraid! I could not be conscious how those words would lead me and the whole Church. The essence of it came from the Holy Spirit [...] (John Paul I 1994, p. 160). The main intention of the Holy Father was to invite the contemporary man to cross the borders of hope in order to get away from the state of fear, sadness, agnosticism and

²⁷ Kowalska, p. 116.

²⁸ Fudała, 2005.

²⁹ Kozielski 2006, p. 60.

³⁰ Kozielski, p. 73.

depair by entering the sphere of God's hope in your own heart. The Pope claimed not to be afraid because the man was redeemed by God and the *power of Christ's cross is always stronger than every evie force, which a man could not be afraid of* (John Paul II 1994, p. 161).

The posture of hope from its essence is the posture of believing God who it the greatest love because he gave his life for every of us. From his faith there emerges the patience and persistence in the way to achieve the goal and to take path of Christ with one's own cross. Therefore the man of love indefatigably expects the fulfillment of the good in life. From that there emerges the fact that hope is hidden in each and every life situation. Then the hope releases a man from the feeling of senselessness and fatalism in life. It defeats from resignation and withdrawal from taking responsibility and leads to spreading of good and creating better future by creative development of oneself and other people. It strenghtens against all obstacles and difficulies of life. It is the hope which motivates us to seek the Kingdom of God with the conviction that God shows us the best path to his eternity. Andrzej Sapkowski in his *Lady of the lake* (200, p. 382) clearly stets the *by rejecting God you reject the hope. He hope hat you will not loose what you acieve. The hope for making good choice when it comes to decission making; that you will not be defenceless.*

True hope is directed above all towards Christ, who will lead every of us to his glory³¹. However this aspect of hope based on faith defines for a human being certain actions consisting in making decisions with free will. Hope based on God, who prepared for us big issues, for those who love him and believe in him lets us live in peace and happiness even in difficult everyday situations and troubles. A man who develops hope inside his heart becomes himself a source of hope for the other people. . According to the poet Phil Bosmans emerging hope in oneself means giving courage and giving your life.

Tadeusz Kotlewski in his book *Handful of hope* writes that "hope is like and evangelic seed, which needs to diffused. There is nothing else as to spread the seeds of hope on everybody because hope gives blessed fruits"³².

God is the only source of hope for all the people. He came to us hidden in Jesus in order to give us back hope. The life of Jesus, his learning and above all his death and resurrection which defeated the main enemies such as the evil, sin and death, helps people to find back our everyday hope. St Paul Apostle in the Letter to Romans writes: "in hope thou we are saved" (Rz 8, 24-25) which is recalled by Pope Benedict XVI in his Encyclical.

God is also my hope. He is present in me actions, decisions and relations. When the situation is difficult and I think I let everybody down he remains permanent. He is always on my side – with him I feel secure. Although sometimes there are moments of weakness, anxiety, fear, helplessness, my Lord never leaves me all by myself. He supports me in every second of my life; when I loose strength he sends me a man to support me and when I fell down he gives me his hand. Therefore I await with the meeting with Him.

³¹ Grun 2004, p. 28.

³² T. Kotlewski 2005, p. 9-10.

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