

## UNCERTAINTY OR JUST ANOTHER FEELING OF MIND

By Ir. Tedjo Tjahyadi

It was exactly three years ago, when being a full-fledged (80 years) old man, I wrote an article with the subject; The meaning of old and ills philosophy. One of my friends considers for a person at my age, three years seem to be quite a long time. It may also be said as a crucial period in life. It is also a period of uncertainty, since everything pertaining our health condition as related to the so called age-acquired degeneration can appear within a fortnight, or even within a single day. We may not be so sure of what will happen next on when we wake up in the morning. It is certainly a blessing, when first thing in the morning we could wake up feeling fresh and sound; even if we have a quality sleep of five hours only. This should be much better compared with having an intermittent sleep and feeling like taking a nap only; or even worst feeling like stay awake all night long. Usually we may not feel fresh and assured when we wake up after having such a non-quality sleep. So our daily activities and mood conditions that follows can somewhat affect our health. Then I consider morning walk with some other senior people as a good exercise. It is an opportunity to make new friends and socializing with them is also a part of our brain sport, and thus enabling us to have a healthy body with a sound mind.

In the last ten years, I happened to win friends who were approximately older or younger than myself. And very strange enough, coincidentally they are mostly widower. They are from different walk of life and educational background. In spite of the diversities that may prevail, we are just getting fine so far. Of course, there were some occasion when both party would stick to their own standpoint and have a rather hard discussion, but eventually they will calm down and everything seems to be fine.

It is rather fortunate that none of us are getting senile; vascular dementia to a certain extent may be; This should be the main reason why elder people tend to forget almost everything that has taken place not so long ago; but then sometimes, strange enough, they are in a position to tell nearly everything of the past. There is a common experience among us; when we are trying to memorize something don't ever push our brain too hard, usually it would come out of nothing. Try to be calm and do it in more relaxed manner; if you are lucky everything will come out like the rattling of a machine-gun fire.

If ever a commencement for this new "status" of widowhood was organized, just like the case in institute of higher learning in the U.S, I am but a fresh graduate. My wife just passed away in December last year, but most of my old friends had been widowers for more than three years and some others even more than ten. So I have to be more sociable with them, because they are supposed to be more experienced in managing their "single parent" life. In the meantime, I have to adjust myself and try to be more acquainted with self-imposed discipline in managing my own life alone.

Now what are those old people doing day in and day out at their houses? Really I do not know, since very seldom I ever ask them this question. As about my part, besides doing some exercises and socializing with friends, reading newspaper and books become a part of my daily

activities. Whenever I am in the mood, I also try to write some articles in English, just as I am doing now. Household works three days a week for about three hours a day only. So far I am just doing fine, but I am also aware that time will come when I have to change or even stop doing such physical activities.

There is a humorous way in describing old people deficiencies in Indonesian as the 7 B'S. they are namely; budek ( hearing deficiency), buram ( low vision of the eyes), botak (bald), bongkok (hunchbacked), bebelan (constipation), beser (passing water very frequently), bochai (useless). Actually, they are what we call old-related degeneration process. It is a one way process that could only be delayed to some extend, but so far there is no effective way to stop it for good. That is why some old people have taken for granted as something being natural, and do not take it too seriously.

In his book, NEARING HOME, Billy Graham the World-renowned author, preacher and evangelist, in his introduction page among other wrote: I never thought I would live this old. He was then ninety-three when he wrote these few words. I do not know how was his emotion, when he wrote these few words. But for a person in his standing, these few words should have come from the inner deep of his heart. I myself appreciate his frankness and sincerity very much. Of course, his perfect health condition is a condition sine qua non that could make him live that long. Although I am now still ten years younger than him at the time when he wrote his book; I like to try in understanding his philosophy of life.

We often hear people say: "Tomorrow is another day "This few words seem to be very optimistic, but to most old people that might not be so. Many even have the notion that tomorrow is the day of uncertainty. As an illustration: you may feel like driving a car in the desert with no milestone or other road signs, so as to make us know how near we are to our destination. We can only know many kilometers we have covered from the odometer. Even nowadays being in possession of modern sophisticated device, that is the so called GPS, which will keep our car always on the right path; but it was told that somehow there was a case when a misleading sign of the instrument led the driver astray, Well an instrument is an instrument; who dares to guarantee that it works perfectly all the time, Of course, in dealing with life it might be different; we are not depending on machinery or modern gadgetry only. It is only an illustrative example trying to point out that three years may lead them to certain backwardness, for example unable of doing things that they usually can in the past. This could be a mental burden, and in some way affect their physical ability as well.

In spite of all the unfavorable conditions that old people may encounter, fortunately we can and may always ask the guidance of God to lead the way in the course of our life in our prayer.

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