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### **PSYCHOLOGICAL TOURISM: THE ESSENCE OF THE CONCEPT**

The emergence of psychological tourism as an independent direction of tourism activity has activated the interest of the scientific community to the study of the relationship between psychology and tourism.

Tourism is a form of social activity, oriented towards the achievement of goals, which initiates volitional, intellectual and emotional activity of the individual. The change of habitual environment and interaction with new conditions allow the tourist to expand the experience and perception of the world, contributing to the assimilation of new values and meanings.

Psychological aspects of tourism play a key role both in the organisation of tourism business and in achieving its effectiveness. From the objective point of view, tourism activities are aimed at preserving the environment and preventing environmental threats. On the subjective side, tourism contributes to personal development, forming volitional and spiritual qualities. Tourist expeditions and hikes help a person to realise the finitude of human life and contribute to the search for answers to fundamental questions about the meaning of existence. Immersion in nature enhances the experience of mortality and at the same time opens up a sense of belonging to the eternity of the surrounding world.

Psychological tourism combines travel and recreation with various psychotechnologies such as training, psychotherapy and counselling. In this approach, a special space for personal and group development is created, where

environmental conditions (natural and socio-cultural) become important factors. Themes, programmes and methods of work within the framework of psychological tourism are formed on the basis of these factors and the tasks facing the participants [1].

When planning psychological tours it is important to take into account actual psychological requests of participants. Some of them can be realised and formalised in the form of specific needs, while others remain at the level of hidden internal conflicts.

Psychological tourism covers two key areas: 1) psychotherapeutic travel and 2) tourism with elements of psychology. Both approaches seek to combine organised recreation with professional restorative practices. It is important to utilise the healing resources of nature and managed extreme sports to replenish psychological and spiritual potential. Such tourism allows the individual to focus on the present moment, temporarily disengaging from the past and future, and to experience new experiences that are meaningful «here and now».

The goal of psychological tourism is to achieve inner harmony and integrity of the individual through carefully organised tourism activities. The main tasks of this area include:

- solving psychological difficulties by harmonising the inner world and external existence;
- development of the ability to feel the joy of being, the fullness of life and the awareness of one's significance and 'demand';
- the tourist's cognition of his/her own psychological reality and identification of personal resources, including hidden physical and mental capabilities;
- improving social interaction skills, including the ability to establish and maintain social contacts;
- developing and strengthening responsibility for one's own thoughts, feelings, actions and decisions.

From a psychotherapeutic point of view, one of the key benefits of tourism is the ability to restore inner harmony. This applies to both the motivational and value

sphere and ethno-cultural identity. The existential meaning of tourism practices lies in the fact that by getting to know the cultures of other nations, a person returns to the origins of his or her own culture. Overcomes his or her cultural marginality in the modern world by strengthening the connection with the values, beliefs and symbols inherent in his or her cultural traditions.

Thus, psychological tourism can serve as a tool for resolving internal conflicts, and help consolidate a person's ethnic, landscape-geographical and cultural identity.

### **References:**

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