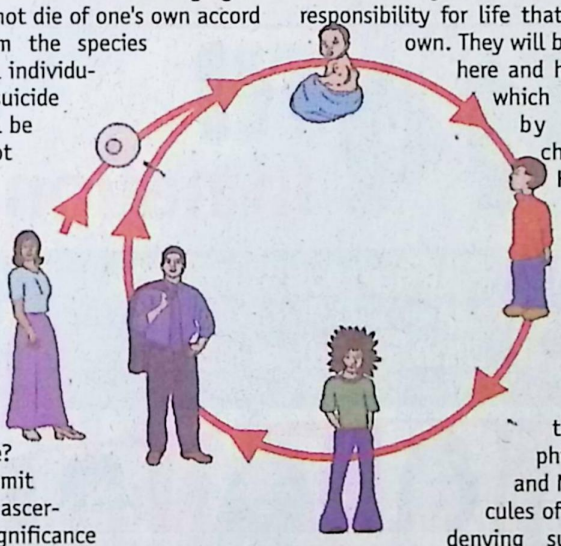
life attains in a short span given. It is not a solace but a burning.

Life is an imposed thing. A mass of material is brought into life through a biological process without any consent of the mass itself. The mass much later in its development comes to know that it has a life and he got it although he did not ask for it. In fact, during germination of life, the foetal lump was not conscious at all what was going on. When it becomes conscious of its existence, there is no way to go back to pre-existence. By the time it has been stuck in the existential quagmire.

It seems that life has a purpose but it is very much a collective one. As an individual, one may find he/she is swimming in the river of life belonging to some species. One must not die of one's own accord because that may harm the species interest of survival. If all individuals decide to commit suicide together, the species will be extinct. So one's life is not for one's own but for the community of humans. This is a great source of disappointment in individual life.



If I have to live for others, not for me, then what is the point in living? Being individual, why should I serve the collective purpose? Why shouldn't I commit suicide? Albert Camus ascertains the philosophical significance of the problem: "There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy." (*The Myth of Sisyphus*) It is a great challenge in front of philosophy to solve the puzzle of life. Is it worth living at all? Life piles on life and the individual is submerged in the great litter. When individualism is overwhelmed by collectivism, you and me cannot retain ourselves as distinct entities.

Life is protected with death. The fear of death prevents one from taking one's own life. Fear is the incantation, the utterance of which keeps death away. Fear is the amulet that gives life the spiritual shield. If there were no fear of death, there would be no way to resist immolation. Fear is the most basic instinct which even the tiniest creature feels. The more developed the organism the more intense the fear. Being at the pinnacle of all primates, humans have the most intense fear. They have been given fear without any direction to conquer it. So they cannot die.

But they have to die one day despite all their fear and unwillingness. It is the destiny of life. If one is born, one is to die. There is no exception. One may question: if one is provided with the blessing of life, then why should it end with the curse of death? The human tragedy is that birth is not in one's hand, nor one's death. One was born when one did not want it and one will die when one will not want it either. Both are unwanted and undesirable, but humans have to accept it. Nothing can be more regrettable than this.

There are further predicaments for humans. On the one hand, they are not responsible for their life; on the other hand, they have full responsibility for whatever they do in life. They have to take the responsibility for life that they did not want and own. They will be rewarded and punished here and hereafter for their deeds, which were mostly determined by circumstances and chances. What a fun! Human ethics is based on shaky ground or no ground at all. Human system of justice is based on a tenet of sheer injustice.

Life has been awarded with the power to survive. It has the will to power, as observed by philosophers Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The first molecules of life struggle to develop, denying suppression and death, though in the last event it will crumble. If that is the destination, then what was the necessity to give it the desire of living? It is the most fundamental enigma of life. There cannot be any answer to it. Or if there is any answer, it is not comprehensible to human intelligence.

A human being is born trapped in the world -- a Platonic cave. He/she ever wallows in mysterious gloom. From another perspective, life remains as a small dot in the big blank page. The dot dances on emptiness and in course of time perishes. For an individual, life is an unconnected entity. There is a big void before and after. One does not know where he/she has come from and where he/she will go. Life ultimately proves to be a joke. The jocular aspect of life was most seriously pronounced by Thomas Mann. "I shall continue to live, to eat, to sleep, to dabble in this and dabble in that; and gradually, as my apathy increases, I shall get used to being a wretched and ridiculous figure." (*The Joker*)

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