

# The Courage to Exist

A Philosophy of Life and Death in the Age of Coronavirus

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A report on Chapter 1.

The author in the first chapter talks about the aspects of life and how one ought to live one's life.

The author is quick to point out the mundane aspect of life - days are similar in one's life, however he is hopeful that they can be made interesting by trying to seize each day by thinking differently. He also wants the reader to understand that *how we do it* is important and not *what we do*. The author says that science cannot give meaning to our lives, but *fully experiencing and living life* gives true meaning to life. The author cautions us against the narrowness of our social interactions and warns us that these are of no help to our mortal souls. Further, to be wise does not mean to follow the path of reason, but to see the cruelty of fate and to be able to surpass this, since a wise human knows how to live simply and be independent minded. The author brings out the cruelty of fate. He says that in search of happiness we suffer. Nevertheless the author has a bleak outlook of life, for he believes that life is not a quest of happiness, but an experience of suffering.

According to Pascal, "Anyone who does not see the vanity of the world is very vain himself"(Pascal 2008b: 16). A vain person is a prisoner in a mental ghetto. 'Vanitas' is a Latin word that Pascal uses to refer to the emptiness of a being whose pretensions go beyond their actual capacities. The author talks about how success has become the iron necessity of our society and how humans always have a lot to do. In this process we have trapped ourselves and as a result fail to taste the rare moments of our life which anticipate all common sense. He also talks about why solitude and silence should be placed above social life, since one can live deep only in silence. The author wants the reader to understand that all the noise and clamour surrounding us leads us to live a mediocre life. *Ontology is noiseless*, according to the author.

The author also questions the current society as to why we are not able to create great thinkers anymore or why it does not see any necessity to produce them. Following this, he points out that great thinkers command the respect of the people around them since they challenge them to think and to meditate deeper about the world and about their place in the world.

The author then goes on to discuss how one's life must be wild and unruly, and how philosopher-poets who are far from the ills of civilization have an understanding of life. Preserving the art of living in turn implies fighting for the purity of the soul, allowing one to contemplate *dangerously*. It is described how one must love life to be able to live it. Love is a universal religion, and every spiritual being is entitled to it. The reader is warned not to confuse love with sexual love which is simply a desire. Love is beautifully described as *being one with the Otherness of the Other*. Quotes by Martin Luther King Jr. further empower this idea and introduce the idea of balance via non violence.

The author also talks about destiny, which is an inseparable part of life. He mentions the Greek belief that a man's life and future is determined by his destiny. Knowing one's destiny keeps one honest to oneself, and this shapes his character. Someone who knew this was referred to as a Hero. Several like Odysseus and Nietzsche believe that one's choices and character determine his destiny. Greek mythology involves Heros with human consciences and guilt. Achilles loathes himself, and is still considered a Hero. A similar idea and concept is seen in Shakespeare's work, such as Macbeth which describes pain and suffering due to guilt. Shakespeare's great works reveal the complex intricacies of human life via conversations with self. Sensitivity and pain are necessary for humans to maintain their conscience, and avoid making their life an expression of mediocrity.

One must discover compassion in life in spite of the torment that life brings. Schopenhauer's philosophy is now explained by the author. He understood the necessity of love and sympathy. Sensitivity to another living being confronts us with the suffering of Others, and the delicacy of life. Hence, life can be thought of as the chance of embracing empathy in a world with no meaning.