

This Free E-Book is brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

On the Purpose and Meaning of Life

By Peter M.K. Chan

On the Purpose and Meaning of Life by Peter M.K. Chan

=====
On the Meaning and Purpose of Life

All rights reserved

This article is a self-contained section to be found in my book titled
Soul, God, and Morality copyrighted and published in the United States.

=====
As it has so very often been lamented, the lot of being human is really nothing more than a bed of thorns adorned by a few occasional roses. Its tenure is rather harsh for some, bitter for many, and short for all. To be a human being, in other words, is not altogether that privileged an affair. For the few comforts sometimes enjoyed, one must slave for one's needs, live with anxieties, struggle against external threats and so on and so forth. What also seems regrettable is that as one become less sensitised to all these adversities, one is also programmed to slide toward Sunset Avenue, and eventually die. The apparent pointlessness of it all could only make one wonder: Why are we here? What is the meaning and purpose of all it all? Is death really the end of one's existence? In the history of the human kind, it is questions such as these that have given rise to answers of the religious kind.

As to the wherewithal of human toil and suffering, religious deliberations have by and large come down to this. They all say that it is due to the sinful (unlawful) tendencies of the human kind. According to monotheistic religions, the original source of trouble is traceable to the disobedience of the First Couple vis a vis the command of God. With Christianity, this opinion was further crystallized into the doctrine of original sin. For non-theistic religions such as Buddhism, however, suffering is deemed rather as the consequence of natural retributive justice as dictated by the iron law of cause and effect (that every effect must have its like cause, and conversely, every cause must have its like effect). In terms of this understanding, one is bound to reap what one has sown. That is to say, what one suffers now is but the consequence of one's evil deeds and intentions either committed or entertained in the past; and how one performs now is also indicative of what is to come in this life as well as in the next. It should thus be seen that despite doctrinal differences, the message is actually one and the same. No one

On the Purpose and Meaning of Life

should blame Heaven or Deity for what one has to endure as a human being. The culprit is actually oneself.

As to having to die so quickly and the purpose of it all, it is also generally agreed that bodily death is really not the end of one's existence. It should be seen rather as the gateway for one's soul into the next - to become another incarnated being in the flesh (as in the case of Buddhism) or to reside permanently in the realm of the spirits (as in the case of Christianity and Islam). In either case, it was further surmised that all souls in the hereafter will have to face up to the consequences of some laws, either divine or natural. This has got to be so, or so it was also said, because the governance of the universe of which the human kind is a part is fundamentally retributive in character, as witnessed by the decreed of God in the one case, and retributive justice as necessitated by the iron law of cause and effect in the other.

Now, regardless of whether not one is really consoled by any of these views, let me say that they have in fact been a kind of makeshift cushion for many. At the very least, it has injected some trace of meaning or sense of purpose into what seems to be so pointless a state of affair. It has also helped to soothe and rationalize away much of the pain and suffering that one must endure for just being here. Seen in one way, it gives many their needed courage to persist. Understood in another, it offers them also some distant ray of hope. As you can see, I would be the last to write off completely the self-hypnotising psychiatric function of religion. Only that the having of placebo effects is not necessarily an indication that the metaphysical capsules offered are really what is usually taken to be. It is possible to have the same effect by taking a different kind of pills nowadays known as the 'power of positive thinking'. What distinguishes some of these secular dispensations from their religious counterparts is that they are mostly offered with the view of encouraging active self-reliance rather than passive dependence on interventions from the Beyond.

As a matter of fact, it is not too late to remind everyone of the views of Solomon – one of the kings of ancient Israel. He was one of the first to have put his views about the purpose and meaning of human existence on public record. His dissertation on the subject, if you do not know, is titled Ecclesiastics (one of the wisdom books in the Old Testament). What was his answer? Well, let me paraphrase it for you. He said that life is actually for nothing at all. And let me assure you that he was not singing sour grapes either. He had a high intellect, political power, financial wherewithal (he taxed his people rather hard for his new Temple of God), not to say ladies and servants in waiting. It is not until one gets to one of his closing remarks that one realizes why he was so nihilistic. He said that after the human body returns to dust, its spirit therein will have to be returned to God. From a statement such as this, it seems rather clear to me that he did not really believe that persons would persist as souls with memories and self-identity intact in the hereafter. That may also explain why he had to whine and grind so much about the futility of being human.

Be that as it may, I, for one, would think that the baby should not be thrown out with the bathwater. In the eyes of any helpless parent, being able to hold onto some of the remaining bits and pieces may still be better than none. In this connection, I think that some of the 'existentialist' insights of Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean-Paul Sartre, not to mention those of Kierkegaard and Martin Heidegger, are indeed more appropriate. In very commonsensical and simplistic terms, what they said was that life is not a Chinese dinner party where everyone must wait to be served (i.e., with meaning and purpose). It is

more like an outdoor BBQ where one must choose and make one's own. The purpose and meaning of life is something that everyone must try and cook for himself, in terms of what he wants and decides to do, as well as what one actually managed to get done. To just respond obediently to the dictates of another (either human or divine), or surrender completely to the programming of popular culture (religious or secular), is not a meaningful way to live.

To this, I should also like to add three further notes of my own. One is that as every life is bound to undergo various stages for reason of physiological changes and unforeseen circumstances, the meanings and purposes of a life are in fact many – not just any 'this and only' as it is usually mistakenly taken to imply. Another is that the worth of any life (or success, if one must use the word) is not confined to the any one top or bottom that one may have managed to conquer or endure. It must also be defined in terms of the total distance and the nature of terrains covered. Even if one had to limp through in the end, I would rather think, is still more worthy of respect than quitting midway. Last but not least, it is perhaps more appropriate to think about the purposes and meanings in life, or its worth if you like, rather than of it. There is no justification for anyone to write off the former simply for lack of the latter - that is, if one would not want to be so honest and uncouth as to say that from the biological point of view, the meaning and purpose of life is perhaps to eat first and be eaten later.

=====

What is the role of religion in an agnostic (with respect to the supernatural) and neuroscientific (or soul-less) world?

http://www.geocities.com/philosophyofreligion_pmkchan/index.html

=====

Author of two books copyrighted and published in the United States: The Mystery of Mind (2003) Soul, God, and Morality (2004)

Ego, Arrogance, and Self-Esteem

By Edward B. Toupin

The pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain are not our only motivators. Whether you realize it or not, our underlying purpose in life is to define and pursue our true purpose in life. Regardless of what we feel or do, we are all simply searching for some type of meaning within our own individual existence that can somehow take us further. However, many problems we face in our lives arise from the lack of true life meaning.

We sometimes lose our direction and become distressed about our circumstances. Our body goes through the stages of stress, including panic, defiance, and fatigue. When we encounter too much stress, we become exhausted and in a last ditch effort, we replace true meaning with an imitation meaning, and make this the primary focus of life. We then lose our self-esteem and direction under layers of defense mechanisms, ego and arrogance, that not only destroy our external world, but they can obscure our own view of the world.

On the Purpose and Meaning of Life

Ego occurs when you have no foundation of belief or clarity of purpose in your world. Ego is cleverness to hide ignorance and obscures clarity. Ego provides you with the mechanism to affect everyone around you negatively to bring them down so that you can feel better about yourself.

Arrogance occurs when you hold on to useless and malfunctioning ways of living life, but you're unsure of its stability. Arrogance is the stubborn conviction that, against all odds, you will push forward down a path that is obviously wrong for you and everyone around you. It is a situation that develops when you begin to lose faith in your own beliefs and direction, yet you still believe, against your own best judgement, that you can succeed along the same path.

Self-esteem can only exist when you take the time to clear yourself of those things that no longer work, take pride in yourself, and make a realistic plan to better your life and yourself. It is not a feeling of power over others, but it is an acceptance of others and a feeling of power over your own life.

Edward B. Toupin is an author, life-strategy coach, counselor, Reiki Master, technical writer, and PhD Candidate living in Las Vegas, NV. Among other things, he authors books, articles, and screenplays on topics ranging from career success through life organization and fulfillment. Check out some of his recent print and electronic books covering various life-changing topics! For more information, e-mail Edward at etoupin@toupin.com or visit his sites at

or

.

Ego, Arrogance, and Self-Esteem

LIFE'S PURPOSE

What is A Life Purpose

What's Your "Purpose"?

How To Determine What Your Life Purpose Really Is - 3 Guiding Steps To Help You Get Clear

How to Gain and Retain More Customers

Wonderful Wedding Favors and Wedding Gifts

The Alphabet of Birds

Motivate Your Way To Success

Power Profits Autoresponder Course



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

[100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment](#)
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!