

TO LIVE IS THE RAREST THING IN THE WORLD. MOST PEOPLE EXIST, THAT IS ALL

Outline

A. Introduction

B. Debunking the Statement

C. Living is the Rarest Thing in the
World as most People just Exist:
Manifestation

i. Individuals prefer survival and
fail to follow the desires of their
heart and live a fulfilled life.

(Your Survival Instinct is Killing You)

ii. Choice of career and professional
life is dictated by ^{trends and} parents, preventing
a satisfied and happy life.

(Case study of Pakistani Society)

iii. Fear of isolation and uncertain
life forces people to live in
the compromised relationships without
deeper connections.

(The lonely City)

iv. Rejection of self-discovery and

inner journey makes ^{people} conform to societal ideals and social acceptance.

(Theme of Jane Eyre)

- v. Illusion of living and enjoying a futuristic life compels people to waste their present moments.

(Quote of Albert Camus)

- vi. Political system and laws limit the thinking and actions of man and preclude him from aspiring and achieving a desired life.

(Theory of Manufacturing of Consent)

- vii. Technological advancement pushes people to adapt to new mode of survival and abandon his beloved and traditional lifestyle.

(Appeal of Romanticism)

- viii. Materialism and earning like a machine blind man to find peace in pause and simplicity.

(The Conquest of Unhappiness)

- ix. Fear of uncertain outcomes makes man lead a mediocre life without risks at the stake of inner satisfaction.

(Quote of Jack Canfield)

- x. People deliberately deny themselves of worldly pleasures ^{and accomplished life} to obey the religious teachings of asceticism.

(Fatalism in Religious Teachings)

- x. Gender norms and patriarchal relationships disproportionately affect women to forego their dreams of leading life as per their wishes.
(Feminist Theories)

D. How can one Transition from mere Existence to Living :

- i. Self-reflection and mindfulness of present moments and cherishing them to full extent helps to alleviate ^{the} anxiety of future.

(The Power of Now)

- ii. Choosing passion over fear and trust over uncertainty make life a beautiful journey.

(Ikigai book)

- iii. Balancing inner peace with external means assists in prioritising individual's internal desires.

(Meditations by Marcus Aurelius)

E. Conclusion

People from all ages have attempted to decide the meaning of life, purpose of existence and ways to live a profound life. Some became absurdists while others propounded that life is barren and nihilism is the ultimate reality. Similarly, rationalists, romantics, existentialists and realists tried to explore life in their own ways. Their approach and interpretations clash with one another; however, the quest to unravel the truth and pull the human beings out of the stage of mere existence remains the same. Despite their efforts, majority of people cannot transcend the stage of existence and enter in the realm ^{of} living. Most of the people are ^{just} breathing without realising the miraculous effect of their rhythmic life. People deliberately prefer survival to avoid the toils of an accomplished and fulfilled life. They only exist and walk like shadows because they have no control over their career and professional choices. Moreover, fear of uncertainty forces people to repeat the similar loop of toxic relationships. Similarly, people exist and not live because they are not willing to discover their inner self. Additionally, the illusion of future

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destroys the beauty of present life. Furthermore, political systems and technological upgradation impede the cherishing of life by human beings. Likewise, materialism and unchecked hoarding make man a calculated being without emotional touch. Lastly, people deny themselves of worldly pleasures and enjoyment of life because their religious beliefs contradict them. In brief, to live life is the rarest thing in the world because individual, societal and structural barriers promote conformity and propagate mere survival, existence and

"To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all" is a famous quotation of Oscar Wilde. According to him, majority people are in the existence phase in which primary instincts for survival are fulfilled. However, as human beings, they are capable of more than just breathing. They are blessed with beautiful mind, heart and emotions to upgrade their lives and enjoy every

second of it. Nevertheless, people do not realise that they are wasting their lives and their potential to change them - the way they aspire to. Therefore, they end up as not lived at all ~~and regretting their lives~~ ^{as} ~~(existence wasted)~~ on their death bed.

Most of the people are just existing and not living their lives because they prioritise survival more than life itself. They bury their deep desires of flying high, surpassing mountains and exploring the world. They search for safety, security and mediocrity at the expense of their happiness. As a result, they never feel satisfied with their current situation and lose their vigour and charm to appreciate every moment as a gift. In the book "**Your Survival Instinct is Killing You**", the author **Marc Scheon** argues that not taking risks to turn dreams into reality and playing safe each time impede humans from living a fulfilled life. Therefore, survival instincts make people survive and exist only.

Moreover, the choice of career and professional life is not decided by one's own heart rather by family and trends. Family and society indoctrinate a person towards certain life goals and objectives. They draw boundaries for individual to stay within them and pursue his career accordingly.

Oftentimes, his own passion is lost in the way of satisfying parents and conforming to trends. Without passion, his work life feels like a mere duty and a burden. As a result, he loses interest in other happy aspects of life and gets used to silence down his inner inclinations. In

Pakistani society, choice of career is dictated by parents in many cases which make children sacrifice their own desires. Hence, people only exist for the sake of existence.

Furthermore, fear of isolation, rejection and uncertain outcomes compels people to lead a compromised life in the unhealthy relationships. Relationships have a profound impact on a person's life. Living among the toxic

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people with negativity not only impairs self-esteem but also deprives a person to experience the beauty of life. Failure of man to break away the shackles of toxicity and come out of unhealthy relationships, owing to fear of aloofness, makes him numb to acknowledge the charm of life. "The Lonely City" written by **Olivia Laing** sheds light on the dark aspects of dwelling in painful relationships. People become traumatised, depressed and even suicidal as a result of emotional exhaustion. Hence, the choice of relationships downgrades life from living to ^{only} existence.

Additionally, denouncement of self-discovery and internal awareness makes people unable to locate the cause of their discomfort and unhappy life. Inner reflection is the mirror to soul and real happiness. However, people intentionally choke their inner voices out of fear of change. For them, following the society is right than to listen to their inner self. Consequently, the

continual act of delaying or rejecting self discovery forces people to live a shallow life without gratitude and enrichment. **Jane Eyre**, a masterpiece of **Charlotte Brontë**, explores the theme of introspection, self-journey and non-adherence to repulsive norms. Failure to do so results in a life full of unfelt and unappreciated moments.

Likewise, the illusion of futuristic best life also obstructs an individual ^{to} lead an extraordinary life. People willingly deprive themselves of enjoying their present life in the futile hopes of a better future. They think that future is the converging point of all their happiness, enjoyment and accomplishments. They also believe that present is for toils and compromises. Subsequently, future never comes and present moments go wasted. As **Albert Camus** stated, "Real generosity towards the future lies in giving all to the present". On contrary, making future the ultimate destination compels people to exist and not to live.

Additionally, political systems and laws make one live an unfulfilled life pertaining to restrictions and limitations. Social institutions notably law and politics exert an overbearing control on the personal life of people. Their thoughts, acts and goals are controlled by indoctrination, rewards and punishments. Those aspirations and desires which are contrary to the ideals of prevailing law are foresaken. They act as puppets which are regulated by external control. Resultantly, people lose interest in their lives and give up on their dearest wishes of complete liberty. In this regard, Noam Chomsky's **theory of Manufacturing Consent** explains the deleterious implications of limiting people's choices and voices on their lives. Therefore, government and law also bound one to live below excellence.

Moreover, technological advancement forces individuals to quickly adapt to the new way of life even if they are unwilling. People often get comfortable and satisfied with a familiar and traditional way of living. However, the changing

technology and modes of production compel individuals to change their way of life in order to survive in a new normal.

As a result, people feel hopeless and detached from their customs, values and traditions. The age of industrialisation was unacceptable for people as it clashed with their rustic country life. Poetry and literature produced by Romantics outline the root causes of man's happiness owing to ^{the} age of machines. Similarly, the age of computers present more serious dangers for man to experience real satisfaction. Therefore, technological innovations act as roadblocks to live a remarkable life.

Similarly, materialism and unchecked hoarding deprive man to appreciate the beauty of simplicity. Philosophers and saints regard greed and love of wealth as the integral causes of unhappiness. Money cannot heal the inner ills of soul; and it also limits the vision of man to perceive life from a ~~narrow~~ ^{narrow} angle. Moreover, it heightens ^{the} anxiety of man to not feel satisfied with what he has attained. As a result, the constant

agitation of collecting more and more erodes person's ^{ability to} feel gratitude for small ^{yet meaningful} moments.

Russel in his book "The Conquest of Unhappiness" enlightens his readers on the perils of accumulating more wealth because it destroys the peace of mind. Therefore, many people cannot live life pertaining to their unsatiated love for money and materialism.

Furthermore, fear of uncertain outcomes compels many individuals to choose safety over fulfillment, ultimately trapping them in a mediocre life. Instead of embracing risks that might unlock their true potential, they cling to predictable routines and socially approved paths that guarantee stability but not satisfaction. This avoidance of uncertainty robs them of opportunities for growth, innovation and deeper meaning, leaving them with a hollow sense of existence.

By prioritising security over self-discovery, they sacrifice the joy of pursuing authentic desires. As Jack Confield says, "Everything you want is on the other side of fear". Thus the

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dread of unknown transforms living into mere survival, denying people the richness of a fully experienced life.

Furthermore, people deliberately ~~seal~~ a fulfilled life because their religious beliefs promote a repressive and melancholic life. Religion has a significant impact on the happiness and perception of life. Some people believe that wanting ^{happiness} and striving for a remarkable life are prohibited by religious teachings. They deny themselves of basic pleasures of life to obey the religious provisions. Ultimately, they find life a liability and a heavy baggage without fun.

Fatalism, as advocated by Catholicism, prevented people from enjoying life for ages and ^{forced them to} live in subservience to repressive lifestyle. Therefore, religious conformity is another leading factor of pushing people in an average life.

Last but not the least, gender norms and patriarchal relationships affect women to abandon their dreams and live for the sake of existence. Suppression of women's identity prompts anxiety, depression

and dejection in women. Societal norms keep on putting limitations on their freedoms and choice of life. From childhood to youth, they are trained to serve and sacrifice for their family. They are not expected to question, debate, reject the ^{overarching} social control. As a result, their own dreams and wishes die slowly, and a time comes when they become empty of vitality and life. **Feminist theories critique the patriarchal and male-dominated notions as they hinder women happiness.** Hence, patriarchy confines women to exist and not live a par excellent life.

Above discourse explored the deprivation of man owing to his incapacity to live life. In the coming parts, those steps will be highlighted which are fundamental to upgrade life from the stage of existence to living.

Firstly, self-reflection, self-awareness and gratitude are paramount forces to transform life. Many people are unable to enjoy life because they are blind to the value of living. Therefore, awareness of internal world,

navigation of emotions, mindfulness and appreciation are the great ways to lead a fulfilled and revitalised life. Moreover, the awareness of the price of passing moments helps to acknowledge them and prevents the wastage of life by the mirage of future. Eckhart Tolle in his book "The Power of Now" describes the profound impacts of living present moments on the overall quality of life. Therefore, mindfulness and self-reflection are fundamental to live a happy life.

Similarly, choosing passion and following the path as guided by heart makes life a blend of elated moments. Bearing challenges and hardships in the path of desirous destination transforms journey into an enjoyable road. This involves choosing field of study which compels an individual, adopting career which motivates and exhilarates him and making other decisions of life without external factors. The book *Ikigai* also sheds light on the importance of doing the things in which one finds his flow. In brief, control over life and

ability to
live it as per own wishes make it
to transcend the phases of existence.

Last but not the least, balancing inner peace with external means assists in enriching life. For this, man should not be swayed by empty promises of materialism, modernity and unchecked hoarding of money. He should focus on valuing small acts of kindness, generosity and thankfulness to experience the worth of small happiness. Moreover, making wealth a mean and not end goal of life also alleviates anxiety. **Marcus Aurelius** in his **Meditations** propounds the beauty of simplicity over materialism. Therefore, one should be apt in enjoying life in minimalism.

In a nutshell, living is the rarest commodity in the world because most people are focused only on existence. For them, living means survival and following the basic instincts. The choice of career and profession is also dictated by family which forces people to

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live a mediocre life. Similarly, fear of rejection, isolation and deliberate ignorance of inner desires are other causes of an average life sans vigour. Furthermore, future casts a deadly spell of denying the present moments. Additionally, politics and technology also impede a fulfilled life. Likewise, religious and patriarchal norms deprive men of leading a profound and cherished life. Despite the convoluted web of external restrictions, man can choose to transform his life. It requires self-awareness, listening to the internal voices and prioritising the dearest desires. Only then, most people would be ^{able to} live and not exist merely.
