

THE DURATION OF LIFE

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ABSTRACT

Fairy tales and myths are manifestations of the psyche giving symbolic expression to the unconscious and conscious processes and events. In the present paper, two narratives on man's life are taken up for interpretation. The two tales descend from different cultures—European and Assamese—yet, due to the Collective Unconscious, they are parallel; symbols vary but their meaning is the same. Taking up a fairy tale and a myth to interpret and reflect on human life is an objective and transpersonal way of knowing and conceptualizing, making truths latent in such narratives accessible to human consciousness.

The Duration of Life is a fairytale taken from the Brothers Grimms and *Man's Life-span* is a folktale taken from the book *Assamese Folktales* (Goswami, 1980). The following is a meta-narrative that interrelates and sequentially organises the two tales.

Man's Duration of Life

In the beginning of Creation, the god of Destiny (Bidhata, in Assamese folktale) called each creature to appoint their spans of life.

The Ass (Grimm's Fairytales)/Monkey (Assamese folktale) arrived first and inquired how long he was to live. A span of thirty/ sixty years was assigned to the ass/monkey.

In the Grimm's fairytale, the Ass expressed its displeasure and pleaded that some years may be taken away because thirty years was too long a duration for him to carry wearisome burdens from morning till night; consacks to the mill that others may eat bread, receive blows and kicks, and yet keep always active and obliging. He was pitied and a life of only eighteen years appointed to him, whereupon he went gladly away.

The Dog (Grimm's Fairytales)/Vulture (Assamese folktale) made his appearance and asked the same. A span of thirty/sixty was given to the dog/vulture.

The Dog was unhappy as it was a long duration for him to have run so much that it would tire his feet, to have lost his voice and not be able to bite, and have nothing to do but to crawl and howl from one corner to another. The Dog's plea was allowed and twelve years appointed for his age, after which he departed joyfully.

The Monkey (Grimm's Fairytales)/Snake (Assamese folktale) arrived next and a span of thirty/sixty was allotted to him.

Like the Ass and the Dog, the Monkey also conveyed that he could never endure thirty long years as he must always be making comical faces for people to laugh at; and all the apples they give him to eat turn out sour ones. His sadness often gets hidden by joke. Thereupon ten years were allowed to him.

Last of all, Man appeared, healthy and vigorous, and requested a time to be appointed to him. He was given thirty (Grimm's)/forty (Assamese folklore) years to live.

In the Grimm's fairytale, Man began to whine and protested that thirty years was too short a span for him. Just when he shall have built himself a house, and lighted a fire upon his own hearth, and planted trees to bear him fruit in their season and enjoy life, it would be time for him to die. He prayed that his life be lengthened.

The god of Destiny added the eighteen years of the Ass, but Man was dissatisfied. The twelve years of the Dog's life was further added, Man still remained discontent and pleaded for more years to live. Finally, the ten

years deducted from the Monkey was given to Man and instructed to desire no more. Man was then obliged to leave, but he was not satisfied.

Thus Man lives seventy years. The first thirty are the days of his manhood, which pass quickly away; he is then healthy and vigorous, works with pleasure, and rejoices in his being. Then follows the eighteen years of the life of the Ass, which bring to him one burden after another; he must work for corn which nourishes others, and abuse and blame become the reward of his labours. Next comes the twelve years of the Dog, during which Man has to sit in corners, grumbling because he no longer has any teeth to bite with. And when this time is up, then the ten years of the monkey bring the close of the scene. The Man becomes childish and foolish, and does strange things, which make him ridiculous in the eyes of children.

The Assamese folktale offers a slight variation. Man was returning happily after having obtained his lifespan of forty years when he was met by monkey, vulture and snake who convinced him that Bidhata had cheated him by assigning him lesser number of years to live. Man is assigned twenty years each from the monkey, vulture and snake as Bidhata gets annoyed at the complaint of man claiming more years to live. He was irritated that the monkey, vulture and snake made Man believe that he has been cheated as they got more years to live than Man. So he deducts twenty years each from the three.

Since then, from the age of forty to sixty, Man becomes greedy like the monkey, from the age of sixty to eighty, he remains sitting with his head bent like the vulture, and from the age of eighty to hundred he keeps to his bed lying like the snake.

HYPOTHETICAL INTERPRETATION

Creator or nature personified in the present fairy tale is in conversation with the creatures: ass, dog, monkey and man. Fairy tale, and the present one being no exception, is intimate with the natural life of man so nature is displayed with the faculty to communicate in order to tell the sub-human species and man the number of years each should exist. Even if we assume that the act of communication is directly through the Creator it does not deviate or distort the interpretation. In any case, the communication took place in the mythic-sacred time when the world and the creatures were created. Since everything that is born is destined to perish, so in the beginning the created creatures were appointed the precise duration of life. The focus of the fairy tale, however, is selective and culminates with the determination of duration of human life.

Duration is the intermediate space and time between cosmos and chaos: extension of space is sequential in time. "It is only the intervention of time and space here and now that makes reality" (Jung, 1953). Human reality enfolds within the duration of birth and death. Like all the species in nature, who come into being and wither away within a specific period, human beings too are transient in existence and have manifold experiences of the juxtaposition of space and time: duration of life. In accordance with the human experience focus herein is primarily on time. "Sense of time is central to concept of self and its relationship with the outside world" (Sims, 2003). In the present fairy tale related to human lifespan, the duration of life is four-fold—appointed, appealed, added and aggregate.

Appointed Duration

The appointed duration is the fixed number of years each creature is given—thirty years—to exist in nature out of which some years are subtracted in the case of ass, dog and monkey, and to which the years allotted to the mentioned creatures are added to the appointed duration of human life.

The appointed duration—thirty years—is symbolic of totality of human processes: birth, ascent and descent. It is expressive of human situation with limitations of consciousness and sufficiency of development. It is the ideal of contentment as it is the minimum required duration of biological achievement, rational organization, and material and spiritual fulfilment.

The appointed duration, in the beginning, implies predestination.

Appealed Duration

Appealed duration is the reduced or subtracted duration in the number of years of existence. It is obtained when reduction is requested, and eighteen years, twelve years and ten years are allotted to the ass, the dog and the

monkey respectively. The creatures merely appealed that their lifespan should be reduced; the appointed years subsequent to their appeal are determined in their favour according to the discretion of the Creator or nature.

While the animals are contended with the appeal and the number of years allocated to them, man on the contrary is of the opinion that the extent of appointed duration is short thus dissatisfying and insufficient to see the fullness in time. While the appealed duration is due to subtraction to reduce the burden of life, the sum total of the appealed duration—forty years—added to human life increases labor and suffering.

Added Duration

The addition of years determined for the creatures result in the period of forty years added to the appointed thirty years duration of human life. Forty years are added to the human lifespan, as man desires for more time because he knows precognitively that his life would fall short of many things. Even though we have miles to go before we sleep, yet we are always aware of the emotional sojourn into things and the inevitable death. Paucity of time is a general human experience of inability to add days to life, situated freedom, spiritual imperfections, moral shortcomings, monetary limitations and decay of the body; it is the natural feeling of knowing that nothing lasts forever—*nihil aeternum est*. True meaning of life is that even if we are destined to die sooner or later, it is a blessing that we are given an opportunity to live.

Man's life emerges out of nature and merges back into the same. Every standard of life follows such a design, conditioning by nature. "Reduction to natural condition is for man neither an ideal nor a panacea" (Jung, 1928 b). Natural life is to be appropriately taken as given and to be nurtured to the fullest to appreciate the meaningfulness of its compulsions and probabilities. Labour and fatigue gives fruits on the one hand, and on the other hand happiness is followed by *longueur*. It is just because man has an innate sense of his limitations in nature therefore in the secular world he attempts to extend himself through science and technology, and because he intuitively knows his farther reaches he has angels and gods. Man must enjoy the beauty of heavens but keep his feet firmly on the ground.

Physical life of man is claimed by the nature and even though man enjoys the luxury of mental capabilities that seems to elevate him above the vegetative and animal species, he is still confined by the nature. Even though man learns to harness the forces of nature, he must first learn to be obedient to them. At times, higher values of the spiritual order transcend his situation in many ways but still he cannot go beyond that which nature does not permit and must at all times live in accordance with nature. 'We should not rise above the earth with the aid of "spiritual" intuitions and run away from hard reality, as so often happens with people who have brilliant intuitions. We can never reach the levels of our intuitions and should therefore not identify ourselves with them. Only the gods can pass over the rainbow bridge; mortal men must stick to the earth and are subject to its laws' (Jung, 1953). Therefore in the present fairy tale as man is blessed with the maximum duration, he is asked to desire no more. Contentment, it seems, is the only possible *summum bonum*.

As the present fairy tale unfolds, man is not contended even when his life's duration is extended. Dissatisfaction in life is due to time perceived as short and also because of the natural conditions subsequent to the passing of thirty years of health, vigour and pleasure. Life of ass, dog and monkey, added to that of man, projects the aging process and experience. The life of the ass is the end of the duration of minority and younger days, and the beginning of matured period wherein one must accept responsibility even if it is burdensome and one must labour even if it is not always rewarding. The life of the dog is expressive of the deterioration of body, retirement from work and being compelled to withdraw from the active life. Finally, the life of the monkey is the experience of regression in the old age when one is functionally less able and socially alienated from the dynamism of life, and the elderly attempts to relive an early age of childhood when one is in actuality close to the end of life. *Bis pueri senes*—old men are twice children.

This certainly is a pessimistic reality of life, as we grow old only to suffer the conditions of old age aging is the natural conditioning of the growth of body and it is this characteristic of life that keeps man grounded in spite of his social and spiritual attainments. The fairy tale on the duration life is not about the distribution of lifespan, rather all in the aging process on the natural destiny of life realizes it. The tale does not share the experiences of life at the early period, but does care to make us see beyond the youth and experiences that await each one of us. Maturity in linguistic ability, emotion and thinking are virtues of aging for the one who cares as he grows old but the general experience of most of the elderly is less positive as youthfulness of the body begins to decay. "The wine of youth does not clear with advancing years; oftentimes it grows turbid" (Jung, 1933). It is true that aging accompanied by the experiences of the life of ass, dog and monkey shall befall and one is condemned to choose old age because one has begun living, life is not altogether a psychopathology; life also has its moments

of rejoicing though meaning of pleasure and management of pain changes over a period, especially in the advancing years. Aging does not necessarily mean the loss and the sorrow; it also means the joy of reaping harvest for all the good one has struggled for earlier. In the early period of life one desires to take life in abundance, later one can let go and give to others what one has gathered. No wonder with advancing years one has a possibility of becoming less egocentric, more forgiving, more experienced in sorting out the problems of life, and often considering the religious ways more seriously. While one is depended upon oneself, attempts more and more to assert oneself when young, in the later part of one's life one finds the facility to have complete faith in something beyond one's own self. 'In the light of the possibilities revealed by intuition, man's earthliness is certainly a lamentable imperfection; but this very imperfection is part of his innate being, of his reality. He is compounded not only of his best intuitions, his highest ideals and aspirations, but also of the odious conditions of his existence, such as heredity and the indelible sequence of memories which shout after him: "You did it, and that's what you are!" Man may have lost his ancient saurian's tail, but in its stead he has a chain hanging on to his psyche which binds him to the earth—an anything-but-Homeric chain of conditions which weigh so heavy that it is better to remain bound to them, even at the risk of becoming neither a hero nor a saint. (History gives us some justification for not attaching any absolute value to these collective norms.) That we are bound to the earth does not mean that we cannot grow; on the contrary, it is the *sine qua non* of growth. No noble, well-grown tree ever disowned its dark roots, for it grows not only upwards but downwards as well' (Jung, 1953).

The fairy tale on the duration of life is all about the downward growth of life, meaning the second half of life. The appointed duration of thirty years is the morning and afternoon of life. The remaining duration of forty years, starting with the life of ass, marks the mid-life and the commencement of the second half of life—the evening and the night of life. It could be hypothesized that the inclusion of the creatures in the life of man and their characteristics correlated to the latter half of life stands for the evening of life (life of ass) and the night of life (life of dog and life of monkey) when one is primarily engaged in work irrespective of the results (life of ass), and subsequently retire and the decline in bodily functions (life of dog) leads to further health issues (life of monkey). "Middle life is the moment of greatest unfolding, when a man still gives himself to his work with his whole power and his whole will. But in this very moment evening is born, and the second half of life begins. Passion now changes her face, and is called duty; what was voluntary becomes inexorable necessity, and turnings of the way which formerly brought surprise and discovery become dulled by custom. The wine has fermented and begins to settle and clear. Conservative tendencies develop if all goes well; instead of looking forward one looks backward, for the most part involuntarily, and begins to take account of the manner in which life has developed up to this point. Thus real motivations are sought and real discoveries made. The critical survey of himself and his fate permits a man to recognize his individuality, but this knowledge does not come to him easily. It is gained only through the severest shocks" (Jung, 1928). No longer being youthful in itself is an acute feeling, for in that moment dawns the clear sense of loss, missed opportunities and unfinished business of life more than all the achievements, if any, put together. The length of life fills us with sorrow rather than recollecting what we have done so far. Such are also the times when we forget to count the blessings received. We lament more for not having lived some aspect of life to the fullest, negating the simple fact that we have at least all along lived this far.

In line with the European fairy tale, the Assamese folktale contains the same meaning, although the numerically the duration of life is different. Like its European counterpart, the Assamese folktale also does not focus on the first half of life and use creatures of nature (in the present context, monkey, vulture and snake) to address the issues related to the second half of life.

The second half of life, according to the folktale, begins with the one of the three mortal sins, avarice (the other two being, pride and lust) in Christian theology. Simian has positive meaning especially when the creature is associated with Lord Balaji in India. However, herein the creature is symbolic of baser forces, greed being one. The meaning of greed in the second half of life is to be understood as longing to have life in abundance, for by the time the individual reaches this span of life, much in life begins to slip out of hands, ambitions of the younger days no longer grip the heart, there is not much one can do about the missed opportunities in life, and all that has lead the individual up to this age and stage of life. Therefore, one begins to lament over all those aspects of life, which one could not live in fullness (symbolized by hundred years). The individual begins to experience deprivation of things that now he/she can no longer have. With the feeling of deprivation comes depreciation in energy, and as it creeps in, one becomes desperately in need, especially psychologically.

The aging individual becomes in need of attention, just like an infantile, from his immediate social circle. The individual becomes greedy because from now onwards he must begin to settle all things down, recollect himself and start gathering up all that would take him through the remaining part of life's journey.

If some feeling of greed is innate in the act of gathering up because one can no longer afford to squander himself, physically and psychologically, it is natural and therefore acceptable. Greed in former times could be considered sinful but when one is getting close to retirement a little reconsideration might help an aging individual to collect all that he can to provide some comfort in the latter part of life. This is the period of the monkey when man is filled with greed.

The period of the vulture when man remains sitting with his head bent is the duration of social withdrawal, in the sense that the individual in this phase need not struggle for social identity, that is, head.

Plato in *Timaeus* asserts that the human head is the image of the world. In the present context of the second half of life, the world is perceived with different eyes as the individual awaits death (vulture) and inclines towards abnegation and spiritual counsel (vulture), especially true for many individuals in India.

The last period of life is that of the snake when the aged individual keeps to his bed. Due to health considerations the individual get limited to the comfort of the bed, restrain from active movements and becomes more sedentary.

In the spiritual sense, the period of the snake (in India snake is a spiritual symbol) is when having attained wisdom from the tutelary spirits (vulture) one can now coil up like a snake and enter *samadhi*.

Whether life will bear spiritual fruits or not depends on how one has lived.

Carl Jung (1954) has wisely pointed out: "Our personality develops in the course of our life from germs that are hard or impossible to discern, and it is only our deeds that reveal who we are. We are like the sun, which nourishes the life of the earth and bring forth every kind of strange, wonderful, and evil thing; we are like the mothers who bear in their wombs untold happiness and suffering. At first we do not know what deeds and misdeeds, what destiny, what good and evil we have in us, and only the autumn can show what the spring has engendered, only in the evening will it be seen what the morning began."

The snake is the most appropriate symbol to wind up life. Towards the end, life ought to come full circle. Snake is the only creature in the nature, which can bite its own tail: *Uroborus*. In the period of the snake, life is close to its end and where it ends, it begins...

The beginning is always joyful, or joy is sought in little things in spite of pain but in maturing to the mid-life with increasing consciousness comes the awareness of complexities of human affairs as we try to make way through relationships and work. Stimulations of early times become bore at last. Even the meaning of love and its expressions changes over a period. Newness of things fails to attract, as nothing is new under the sun. Mythic and created super heroes lose their enchantment; the ideal of beauty begins to fade and the aspirations of selfhood merge into the crowd of men. There is no more curiosity and mystery left in life. The more consciousness opens to oneself, others and the world, more one realizes that chances to experience a miracle or magic moment is slim and limits one's reach is all the more less. First half of life is spent in reaching out to the world and yet the world remains beyond one's grasp in the remaining half of life. At first we struggle to learn to walk and by the time we have learnt that, life is nothing short of the way of the cross. As grownups we need to carry the cross, a burden we all must suffer to live. "The middle of life is a time of supreme psychological importance. The child begins its psychological life within the narrow limits, within the magic circle of the mother and the family. With developing maturity, the horizon and the spheres one's own influence are widened; hope and intention are focused upon increasing the domains of personal power and property; the will of the individual becomes more and more identical with the natural goals of the unconscious motivations. Thus to a certain degree man breathes his life into things, until finally they begin to live of themselves and to increase, and imperceptibly he is overgrown by them. Mothers are overtaken by their children, man by their creation, and what was at first brought into being with labor and even the tensest kind of struggle can no longer be held in bounds. First it was a passion, then it became a duty, and finally it is an unbearable burden, a vampire which has sucked the life out of its creator into itself" (Jung, 1928 a). In the negative experience of aging, shadows concern us more than the light and the natural objects, and as one continues to live without attempting to give life to the days one laments upon the shortness of the day and the life. One realizes that one has returned home in the evening empty handed, or with a feeling that the afternoon of life was not all that meaningful and fruitful, and something worth to die for as the night approaches fast to end the day.

In Jungian developmental theory, man grows and changes in nature just like the four seasons and the time of the day. The spring is the morning of life when one is a child. The summer is the afternoon of life when one is blooming with youthfulness. The autumn is the evening of life when one reaches the mid-life and attempts to settle down emotionally and socially. The winter is the night of life when one begins to age, and as one does towards the end of the day, so in life, one prepares to sleep eternally. “To speak of the morning and spring, of the evening and autumn of life is not mere sentimental jargon. We thus give expression to a psychological truth and even more to physiological facts” (Jung, 1933). Accompanied with the aging body comes the reversal in consciousness of reconsidering life. There arises a need to reexamine previous ideals and reevaluate earlier values. As former convictions lose their power, one begins to recognize the falsehood in what had before been truth, and resistance and hostility in that which we had till now accepted as love (Jung, 1928 a) because change is inevitable with the linear time; with the succession of days things flourish and with the progression of events things decay. Even within a span of a day evening is never a duplication of the morning. The familiar world of the morning and the afternoon appears different and at times even frightening when the light of the day begins to withdraw and the sun has set. Verily, one cannot step into the same river twice.

Journey from childhood, adulthood to the old age is like the journey of the sun. Just like the rising sun, man wakes up each morning and in life to reach the peak of the afternoon. Having lived the dynamic part of the afternoon of life, man begins to descend like the sun. With the descent begins the second half of life. The things that we do in the morning are not repeated in the afternoon of life, and the evening of life does not carry forward the activities of the afternoon. In the night of life, when the sun has goes down, life of yester years is left behind and the continuity of life has a different shade.

“Imagine the daily course of the sun—but a sun that is endowed with the human feeling and man’s limited consciousness. In the morning it arises from the nocturnal sea of unconsciousness and looks upon the wide, bright world which lies before it in an expanse that steadily widens the higher it climbs in the firmament. In this extension of its field of action caused by its own rising, the sun will discover its significance; it will see the attainment of the greatest possible height—the widest possible dissemination of its blessings—as its goal. In this conviction the sun pursues its unforeseen course to the zenith: unforeseen, because its career is unique and individual, and its culminating point could not be calculated in advance. At the stroke of noon the descent begins. And the descent means the reversal of all the ideals and values that were cherished in the morning” (Jung, 1933). Energy runs contrariwise with the transition from the morning to the evening. An individual slows down, often withdraws and returns back to the basics of life. Previous to fatigue, we are like the prodigal son (St. Luke 15: 11). Feeling the need to explore oneself and the world, we leave home. Psychological detachment from home is an integral part of personal growth to discover oneself, establish healthy relations with others and adjust to the ways of the world. Such openness is often coupled with the perils of squandering oneself. We lose ourselves many time and in a variety of ways. That is the moral of the story of the youthful prodigal son in the afternoon of life. Towards the end of the day, when the prodigal son is in the evening of life, he feels the need to have a home to return to and finally begins the journey back home. Although home sometimes become stifling yet one must find a home where one could belong, where one has hearth to keep oneself warm in the cold of the night. At first we find it hard to stick to home and are ever ready to walk under the heat of the sun and perspire, but as life carries on and exhaustion creeps in, we feel it would be safe to return back home and rest in peace. With the advancing years it becomes increasingly difficult to stay away from the comfort of home for long. When one is young, one can sustain the harshness of nature and the world, however in the later part of life things are otherwise in strength and in spirit. “Our life is the course of the sun. In the morning the sun gains continually in strength until it blazes forth in the zenith-heat of high noon; then comes the *enantiodromia*: its continued movement forward does not mean an increase but a decrease in strength. Thus our task in handling young people is different from that presented by people who are getting on in years. In the case of the former, it is enough if we remove all the hindrances that make expansion and the upward way difficult; but for the latter, the older people, we must summon up all that gives support to the downward journey” (Jung, 1928 a). The descent of life however cannot merely be a pitiable addition to the ongoing complexities of affairs. If the elderly become depended, the same is true for a young one who is equally in need of family and social support. The difference is, the young one needs help as he learns to take charge of his life while the elderly needs help as life takes over him. Evening and night of life are as significant and meaningful as the morning and afternoon of life, though meaning and purpose of life different.

“To be old is extremely unpopular. It is generally forgotten that not to be able to grow old is just as ridiculous as to be unable to outgrow childhood. A man of thirty who is still infantile is certainly to be pitied, but a youthful seventy-year-old, is that not delightful?” (Jung, 1949). This fact is well exhibited by the fairy tale on the duration of life. The second half of life is a critical issue because while growing up we live as if we are going to remain young forever, for the most part we take life for granted and are hardly prepared for aging. Concerns

such as development of reason and expansion of senses in the outer world does mature us but not to the extent that we can visualize the passing of days and years into fullness. Qualifying studies, getting employment, earning money, moving in and out of relationships, establishing family, propagating children and nurturing them preoccupy us so obsessively that we never realize that passions one day from mid-life onwards would begin to fade. Initially we feel life is happening, but later on nothing much happens and even though no one desires or foresees such a situation one inevitably steps into the existential vacuum of the second half of life. The principle of diminishing marginal utility becomes an everyday experience. Thus all that has worked for one so far no longer brings home heartfelt satisfaction. “Wholly unprepared, they embark upon the second half of life. Or are there perhaps colleges for forty-year-olds which prepare them for their coming life and its demands as the ordinary colleges introduce our young people to knowledge of the world and of life? No there are none. Thoroughly unprepared we take the step into the afternoon of life; worse still, we take this step with the false presumption that our truths and ideals will serve us as hitherto. But we cannot live the afternoon of life according to the programme of life’s morning—for what was great in the morning will be little at evening, and what in the morning was true will at evening have become a lie” (Jung, 1933). Plight of aging is precisely clinging on to the past experiences and practices in order to continue to make life meaningful. We would especially like to repeat the same old mode of life if in past it has given us the knowledge of pleasure. Life has more affinity with the known and operates well with the familiars, than with the uniqueness of things and the unknown that only instill apprehensions and fear. Mankind perceives its roots as sacred, is nostalgic about its history and generally finds the present as degraded and evil. In the same spirit, the individual is emotional about his past and finds more joys in the good old days compared to the burdens and cares of his present life. With the future always uncertain and the present always in transition, one has faith only in one’s past. The second half of life brings with it the present, which makes the past, seems much better off. Awareness of aging is seldom a beauty to behold, a feeling which is only associated with the period of youth.

“Aging people should know that their lives are not mounting and unfolding but that an inexorable inner process forces the contraction of life. For a young person it is almost a sin—and certainly a danger—to be too much occupied with himself; but for the aging person it is a duty and a necessity to give serious attention to himself. After having lavished its light upon the world, the sun withdraws its rays in order to illumine itself. Instead of doing likewise, many old people prefer to be hypochondriacs, niggards, doctrinaires, applauders of the past, or eternal adolescents—all lamentable consequences of the delusion that the second half of life must be governed by the principles of the first” (Jung, 1933).

As the intensity of the heat of the sun lingers on in the early part of the evening, so the second half of life begins with the shadows, memories, hangover and fragments of the past.

‘An inexperienced youth thinks, instead, that one can let the old people go, because in any case there is nothing much that can be done with them: life is behind them, and they cannot be considered as much more than petrified pillars of the past. But it is a great error to assume that the meaning of life is exhausted with the period of youth and growth; that, for example, a woman who has the menopause is “finished” ’ (Jung, 1928 a).

The rising of the sun is as beautiful to the sight as the setting of the sun.

Aggregate Duration

“A human being would certainly not grow to be seventy or eighty years old if this longevity had no meaning for the species to which he belong” (Jung, 1933).

With the addition of forty years (sum total of years assigned to the ass, the dog and the monkey) to the general appointed years (thirty), man gets the aggregate duration of seventy years. It is sufficient time to mature individually—emotionally, socially, intellectually and even spiritually. Symbolically, it is the required duration to experience all the four seasons and harmonize the terrestrial and the celestial order within the individual.

Duration is the unbroken period of time. Duration is the continuance in time. It could be relatively permanent in nature, or it could be the inability to exist or endure for an indefinitely long duration. However, brevity as a property of being does not mean it does not exist at all. Duration characterized as longness or briefness is a period of time, temporal in extent, consequence of being in existence, attribute of following a measured course, continuum of experience and evolution of organism with successive complexity of consciousness in the stream of life, as contained in the concept of *élan vital* given by Henri Bergson. It is the notion of *āyu karma* of Jain philosophy, which determines the length and the quality of life.

Man experiences life according to his sense of time: “clock time—chronological, physical or historical time—is objective, quantitative, and independent of emotional self. Personal time is subjective—the experience of the way time seems to be passing, circumscribed by the individual’s existence” (Sims, 2003). Both the clock time and the personal time comprehensively constitute man’s experience of the duration of life, and it includes the unconscious and the conscious individuation.

The fairy tale on the duration of life seems to prepare man not only for the second half of life but also death. Carl Jung (1949) states:

“That which happens in the secret hour of life’s noonday is the reversal of the parable, the birth of death. Life in its second half is no longer an ascent, an unfolding, an increase, and an exuberance of life, but death; for its aim is the end. Not to want the climax of our life is the same as not wanting to live. Not wanting to live is synonymous with not wanting to die. Becoming and passing away are the same curve.”

Time for Everything: Appendix to the Duration of Life

“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to get, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
a time to rend, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time of war, and a time to peace.

He hath made everything beautiful in his time...” (Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8, 11).

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