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**Immortality: The Blessing or a Punishment?**

Death has always been considered as an inevitable yet ‘’unpleasant’’ conclusion to one’s lifelong journey. While mainstream religions’ followers could at least remain optimistic about the afterlife possibilities for the atheists, death would always represent a total disappearance from the face of the universe beyond the point of no return. However, recent scientific advancements cloning and sell replacement have led many to believe that biological immortality is a reality rather than a dream. According to some of the leading futurists (e.g. De Grey) turning back the human clock and achieving an indefinite lifespan is just a matter of time, so those of us who are going to last long enough to witness these amazing scientific breakthroughs may be rewarded with another 1000 years or so to enjoy.

While the positives of living healthily and actively forever are second to none, the negatives should also be acknowledged. First of all, it is highly unrealistic that the ‘’live forever’’ technologies are going to become available for every single human being on our planet irrespectively of incomes, places of residence, connections and reputations. Therefore, it is not clear who should be having the highly subjective prerogative to decide who is to live on and who is to die. If only the so-called ‘’valued citizens’’ are to be preserved, then how to establish one’s “value to the human kind”? Surely the process should not be linked to one’s professional activities only or else we will turn into a planet of immortal doctors, scientists, lawyers or (God forbid) politicians. Even a Noble prize should not buy one an indulgence to outlive others and to keep on enjoying the physical pleasures of being alive along with the intellectual ones.

Secondly, fear of the post-death (aka afterlife) religion-infused punishments has been instrumental in encouraging moral behaviour towards others. I even dare to disagree with Albert Einstein who felt that "A man's ethical behaviour should be based effectually on sympathy, education, and social ties and needs; no religious basis is necessary. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hope of reward after death."   
[Albert Einstein, "Religion and Science", New York Times Magazine, 9 November 1930]. We may very well be in a poor way to have to rely on the fear of punishment as the last resort for sustaining morality and socially acceptable behaviour but the reality is – sometimes it is the only measure that works when all the others do not. Living forever will not only save the ‘’criminal minds’’ from the inevitability of Hell as not everybody is religious enough to believe there is one but will also make them smile at the prospect of going to prison for 10-15 years if they have 1000+ years to live.

Furthermore, the entire ‘’philosophy of living’’ is going to get affected. There will be no hurry to get oneself educated, get a job and start a family since all of these activities could always be fulfilled at some later date. One’s life could easily be turned into a never-ending trial session for different kinds of lifestyles and activities, powered by awareness that there will always be time to turn over a new leaf and change for the ‘’better’’, should the current occupation/lifestyle fail. Questions such as ‘’where do you see yourself in 5 years’’ will become meaningless and consequently obsolete!

Personally, I believe that immortality or seriously expandable lifespans are almost inevitable. It is just a matter of time for the scientists to identify and to implement the life-prolonging strategies and activities for the deaths to become very difficult. The real question however is going to be: ***Are we going to live without a death or are we going to die-out due to our immortality?***