



# A Cry of the Suppressed Psyche: A Camusian Perspective

**Mr. Yahya Ali Mutaher Al-qadhi**

Ph.D Researcher, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad-MS

**Abstract:** *During the period preceding and ensuing the World War II, most of the common people felt oppressed either by the entire absence for all the human facets or by the strict ideologies included as principles to be practiced by the people. So, a lot of atrocious acts had been noted in Europe, USA, Japan, and Russia. A Suicide, undeniably, was spreading more especially in the poor communities. Therefore, there was a need to modify both the way of human conditions and the tyranny of the established organization. So, Albert Camus, the famous French philosophical essayist, novelist, and playwright exquisitely wrote his *The Myth of Sisyphus*, his splendid essay in which he apparently refused the concept of suicide to get an individual rid of his dilemmas insisting meanwhile on the absurd reasoning to deal with the possible ways of life. Thus, the human psyche suffered from a lot of plights as losing of its' identity, isolation, and the caged dream.*

**Keywords:** Absurdity, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Suicide, Absurd Reasoning, Suppression, Society and an individual.

**Introduction:** Albert Camus (1913-1960) spoke about the necessity to overcoming of the absurd in his splendid essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1943). He wrote it under the influence of committing suicide among a large number of people in Europe. Moreover, he highly was preoccupied with the nihilistic perspective of Nietzsche and his followers who declared that God doesn't exist and in case of his existence, he is ignoring the systemized domination over His universe. In the Absurd Philosophy, Camus asserts his view which is very close to such of the existentialists as Kierkegaard, Sartre, Kafka, and Schopenhauer that man is living in a world full with ordeals but he should suit himself to satisfy both his internal confidence and his society's ideology. So, Camus depicts the human conflict in his essay as a struggle between an individual's ambitions and his ideological community's offers.

An individual undeniably suffers a lot in this life particularly for being living on a war-like regions. So, his quandaries and pains represent the main stream for a lot of artists to tackle in their oeuvres. Hence, several perspectives would appear to offer the plights and others to expect the suitable remedy so as to provide an individual's life with meaning. Verily Camus argued more to confirm how important an individual to be free in all his attitudes. He indeed tried to bring the points of difference on the existentialists and nihilists while speaking about the liberty of a man. Therefore, the absurd philosophy has its roots in Nihilism and Existentialism. Peter Francev asserts the nature of closeness between such ideologies,

Turgenev was nihilism's proponent, and he was the first person to refer to the new word as a proper term. . . . Dostoevsky elaborates on nihilism in terms of the character in: *Notes from Underground*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Possessed*, and *The Brothers Karamazov* . . . . Nietzsche discusses nihilism in the most negative of terms: one where "Everything lacks meaning" . . . [however] it was Camus who became the first philosopher to examine the Absurd as an independent extension of nihilism. (126)

As being away from any religious instructions during the brutal war, people normally lose the very meaning of life. They leave vividly in futile nature which lacks the human attitudes of life and a man becomes indeed living as a monster just as represented by Ionesco in his *Rhinoceros* and Albee in his *The Zoo Story*. So, Camus, like other philosophers, spent long time to identify the real meaning of this life passing through many pessimistic stations. The philosophers of Absurdism from them Albert Camus is regarded as the most famous figure, believe on that an individual is having endless wishes and permanent desires trying meanwhile to ask the world to satisfy his internal interest. Therefore, the rejection of the world for such human demands patently may lead to force him to live in whole isolation and may lead him to commit a suicide as was considered. Thus, Camus tries his best to prove the futility of suicide and to refuse the individual despair. So, death due to Camus is not the real solution for the human suffering.

Camus offers Sisyphus as suffering the strictest torment by Gods for his disloyalty for their orders. He depicts how an individual should patiently face the challenges and consequences of life. The Greek hero Sisyphus was punished to permanently pick up a big rock to the top of mountain. Camus visualizes that Sisyphus could manage his torture transforming that stone to be his own. Verily, Camus aims to confirm that an individual should be more strict even than the punishment itself and not to succumb for the harsh ordeals of life. Hence, Sisyphus can represent any hero fighting endlessly to reach his dreams and to satisfy his demands despite of the intended silence of the arbitrary world.

Albert Camus displays his acceptance for the absurd as dominating the life of the common people. He deals with it as a phenomenon which obstructs any human desire. For Camus, the futile conduct of the world can hinder any human ambitions and the outcome will be the complete alienation from the universe and from one's caged soul too. Kathleen O'Dwyer states,

Camus's acceptance of the absurd entails a simultaneous relinquishment of the comforting illusion of hope. The desire for unity and meaning, for sense and purpose, is an understandable

aspect of the human condition; however, the individual is confronted by a universe that is indifferent and irrational and that fails to respond to this human demand. According to Camus, an acknowledgement and an acceptance of the absurd release the individual from the illusion of hope. (170-171)

It may be believable that the argument of Camus regarding the strong connection between absurdity and meaninglessness of life dealing with it as a real cry of the suppressed psyche to reject the predicament of suicide and to return for the religious rituals to provide our life with an appropriate meaning. So, the human potential remains only obsessed with how to defeat the limitations and frustrations that may shape one's life. Besides, an individual is forced to live in perpetual conflict with the ready-made ideologies which obstruct his desires.

Camus once referred to the political origin of the new world portraying it as empty from any national and geographical meaning. Due to Camus, the violence, fear, and poverty had dominate the aftermath of the WWII. He declares, "The new world order that we are seeking cannot be merely national or even continental, much less Western or Eastern. It has to be universal" (2) C6. The ideological world, according to Camus, should be universal and national to satisfy the human justice and ambition. In other words, humanity should control society but not the opposite. The mental territory, therefore, is obviously affected by the political ideology having no sufficient power to differentiate between the right and wrong. Camus argues,

The mind's first step is to distinguish what is true from what is false. However, as soon as thought reflects itself, what it discovers is a contradiction. Useless to strive to be convincing in this case. Over the centuries, no one has furnished a clearer and more elegant demonstration of the business than Aristotle: the often ridiculed consequence of these opinions is that they destroy themselves. (14)

By the end of the World War Two, almost all the facets of human life have been changed and some have been shifted whether for the best or the worst. Therefore, there was a strong need to portray such quick changes in all the streams of life so as to enhance and share both an individual and society in the creation of the suitable remedies. Hence, drama has taken great role in such visualization and the revolution against the conventional drama has been patently appeared. So, the appearance of the Absurd play under the influence of Camus's Absurd philosophy strongly settled famous stage in the theatre. Hence, the oppressed human soul became the cornerstone for many splendid playwrights to depict its dilemmas and calamities. The struggle of people to get an appropriate meaning for life represented important thread. Digvijay Pandya and T. S. Sangha asserts,

The emergence of the Theatre of Absurd was a total revolution in the domain of drama. These dramatists stopped arguing about the absurdity of human life and existence; they just presented it in being. They never try to overcome or resolve the absurdities of life. Interestingly, as an absurdist dramatist, the thrust of Beckett is to dramatize the deflation of the protagonists. Their escape from self is an inevitable existential reality and the present research has tried to explore

their struggle to escape from self; their fruitless quest of identity; their metaphysical despair, alienation, and absurdity. (453)

Suicide, due to Camus, is considered as a realization proving that life is valueless and it came as a penalty for its absurdity. So, the conflict apparently represents a psychological battle between the desire of an individual to get meaning of life and the lack of opportunities to find that meaning. So, the Camusian perspective, thereby, tackles that a suicide is the reflection of the inability of the suppressed psyche to deal with the irrational, religious, and political tenets to overcoming of the absurd. Thus, a suicide proves the mental illness of an individual who cannot suffer more in a meaningless committing it to escape the miscellaneous disasters of life. Therefore, a man becomes a victim of both his mental weakness and his system's tyranny.

Albert Camus (1913-1960) patently rejects suppressing of the human psyche and committing of any physical or philosophical suicide but meanwhile, he also rejects strongly the consistency and conformity. He avers that an individual can cope with the existence and the non-existence of human moral values as decisive judgments to create his own and to establish his private community and character. So, Camus is highly preoccupied with how to overcome the absurd and to force it to be one's matter. He faced a lot of dilemmas earlier particularly after the sudden demise of his father. He was compelled to both study and work and to adjust between the two careers. The sudden shifting in Camus's attitude to the Absurd is noted in a collection of three letters to his German friend, written between July 1943 and July 1944. The first was written in the *Revue Libre* in 1943. Then he took down the second in the *Cahiers de Libération* in 1944. Also the third letter had been written in the newspaper *Libertés* in 1945. Hence, these three letters had been published as (Letters to a German Friend) in 1945, and were published in the collection called *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*.

To link the reader with the nature of his psychological and political attitudes, Camus displays us as readers with dual meanings for all the human conditions. Happiness and sadness, light and dark, and life and death which are the fundamental dualities through which Albert Camus is depicting the real universe for us. His main feature while arguing regarding the suppressed psyche is the mortality of human tragic dilemma and chaos. Thus, using of Sisyphus as an immortal hero by Camus affirms apparently the necessity of rebelling against any political norms that shape the human desires. The inconsequential atmosphere of the conditions which fragment our life doesn't sharply deserve to be identified but they must be realized in regard with how and why life is worth to be living due to the ideology of the absurd. So, the rift between the man and his life leads immensely to a sense of exile in which an individual is considered as an alien. Thus, the divine meaning of the world has lost its significance and the tyranny, chaos, and futility have dominated all the human streams of life. Hence, Nihilism can reach high level at directing of a man's psychological and epistemological facets. Ronald A. Kuipers finds out,

The moment we realize that nothing more ultimate than the conventionally interpreted rules of the game prevents us from moving the pieces in any direction or not at all, an infinite array of possibilities starts to loom. Our first response to such looming infinite possibility is anxiety—

for, in the absence of any conventional rules, how shall we decide which to pursue? Finally this anxiety subsides into boredom, as the realization finally sinks in that it would be ultimately pointless to pursue any at all. Whether through reflection, anxiety, or boredom, then, our ability to transcend and suspend framework activity ultimately discloses the meaninglessness of life itself: When we disengage in this way, either deliberately for the purposes of philosophy, or passively when we fall into anxiety or boredom, then previously unquestioned and all-consuming goals emerge in a new light: as optional and ultimately pointless. (58)

In the abovementioned quotation, Kuipers tackles that all the fragments of life that compel an individual to limit the borders of his ambitions and desires are looming and only he can rely upon his own creative nature to provide his life with an appropriate meaning for the purpose of overcoming of the absurd and braking his isolation. To pursue his positive target and create his good deeds in this life, a man shouldn't sink in meaningless norms and indulge in futile constructions but rather he must remove all the monotony and anxiety that hinder his noble attitudes.

A lot of absurdist playwrights have tackled the concept of the absurd in their oeuvres and the most famous ones are Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Jane Genet, Eugene Ionesco, and Arthur Adamov. Martin Esslin has realized the similarities between them and went more to speak about them in his splendid book, *The Theatre of The Absurd* (1962). Esslin has asserted that all these writers have dealt with the essential meaning of life, rejecting of suicide, sharing of an individual to create an ideology of his society and the resistance for the ready-made organizations. So, all these five dramatists and others have portrayed the major dilemmas that suppress the human psyche and deconstruct its hopes leading, meanwhile, to the entire seclusion of a man. Thus, Camus states, "the absurd is the confrontation of the non-rational world by that desperate desire for clarity which is one of man's deepest needs." (qtd by Cruickshank 52)

The suppressed psyche patently is recognized through the changeable attitudes of an individual towards life and death meanings. So, Camus is distinguishing between the actual absurd and the depiction of that absurd philosophically in art. The human soul consumes itself in a thinking about the world which is free of any sense at anywhere. The culture of an absurd is highly associated with three significant points, the freedom, the revolt and the passion of a man. According to Camus, the classical thinking and learning must be yielded to more modest attitude of mind leading to common stream. The relationship between an individual thought and suicide is taking place vehemently in the silence of heart. A man conceals many fragments of the day-to-day ordeals which he faces so as to postpone his clash with the futile fields of life.

As in the modern age particularly by the end of the colonial era, the absurd philosophy had cover the political, social, financial, cultural, and yet ideological facets of an individual's routine life. The materialism could change the confidence and the real love of a man for his conventional past. The industrial revolution, too, increased the suppression of the human psyche that found itself scattered and stored among a leap of materials. Thus, a man lost himself and his trust in the pure and traditional items of his society and the machine, instead of providing with happiness, augmented

the level of suppression and humiliation because the inability of a person to deal with mechanical systems led him obviously into an entire pessimism.

In *The Myth of Sisyphus* a piece called the absurd terminology, Albert Camus proved how an individual is regarded as a futile laborer of the underworld. Sisyphus had been shown in the beginning of his life as a great king but with a passage of time, he stole the secrets of Gods leading to his perpetual torment. So, Camus intended to assure that a man had been tortured because of his being away from his religious commitments. Thus, such essay is a decisive evidence for the disobedience of a man for his God and his social obligations.

To prove how a human spirit is vehemently oppressed and suppressed, Camus and the other absurdist dramatists have used shattered language and non-grammatical sentences. So, an individual linguistically has been appeared or popped up vibrated and confused and yet he has been lost during the matrix of his community's dilemmas. He cannot express himself or declare his dreams and demands. The critic Donald Lazere asserts patently that, *The Myth of Sisyphus* is not that easy work of art to be understood and absorbed but rather it is a difficult piece that wants the readers to visit again and again so as to understand the essential meanings of its sections. He traces back such ambiguity to the scattered language, unsystematic points and unclear arguments of the manuscript itself. Thus, he announces that the reasons behind its difficulty are the "dense construction, digressive asides, and elliptical jumps between sentences, cryptic aphorisms, and lengthily sustained arguments." (Lazere 130)

The suppressed psyche of the absurd man is violently suffering from futile and hopeless labor, nihilistic result, and the uncertainty of the direction. Camus asserts an individual should rebel against the arbitrary conflict and punishment of the system. A man, due to Camus and other followers of the absurd philosophy, should not be a puppet to be used by any political power. Moreover, an individual must create his own fate. Thus, a man in such case can psychologically achieve a kind of victory against his punishers and quandaries. Raj K. Singh opines,

Like Sisyphus, when the absurd man contemplates his torment, he silences all the gods and goddesses. He has victory over all the silence of the earth. Rather little voices of the earth rise up. A man experiences god and evil alike. There is no sun without shadow. Therefore, it is essential to know the night. The absurd man does whatever comes ahead. He makes an effort unceasingly. He thinks that these can be personal fate, but that is his own. He has made it by his own effort. Hence, he is not afraid of the result of his fate. Except death, there is no higher destiny. A man hates death. Until the death comes, at least during his short life, he is himself the master of his days. A man becomes more self-conscious and makes all kinds of attempts for satisfaction. (20)

To live a suitable life, a man must get sufficient power, energy, attention, and the right of selection or else his soul may be divided into fragments punished by the pessimistic circumstances of life. So, a man shouldn't be only preoccupied with his own issues but to share the happiness, sorrow, beauty, knowledge, and even the salvation of others so as to establish a community that satisfies his ambition and human desire. Besides, he must be loyal to his social and

cultural obligations as an active member in the region. Henceforward, he can live a life that provides him at least with an inner satisfaction that prevents him from being inserted in any psychological future ordeals and stresses. His soul can rest and adjust with the surrounded conditions.

### Conclusion:

To conclude, the suppressed psyche is highly preoccupied with how to pass the time safely and not to be punished by the ideological organizations brokers. Camus completely rejects the concept of suicide as a remedy for one's dilemmas and rather he insists on the resistance for the absurd reasoning in this universe. A man shouldn't surrender whatever the level of challenge is. He must look for an appropriate solutions to get him rid of both his oppression and isolation. Therefore, he should be a decisive and creative member so as to share effectively in almost all the political, social, pedagogical, and economic facets and circumstances of his community.

In summing up, an individual should be strong as Sisyphus in order to tolerate the unfair calamities of his existence. Besides he must neglect all the futile situations for the purpose of living somehow satisfied. His caged dreams haven't to be concealed but rather to be declared so as to be reached. In the other thread, the society should be flexible through providing the man with the suitable opportunities to both repair his ideology and share in the construction of his community. Thus, repairing of the system finally is a mutual task between a man and his society.

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