Instead of seeking immortality, we should strive to lead fuller lives in the lifespan allotted to us. Purba Dutt reports

\textbf{What's got to do with it?}

\textbf{Want to live a long life? How about a hundred? That's pretty normal, you say. OK, ten times that? Ten reboirths, you ask. No, in one lifetime. Serious? We kid you not! As Methuselah prepares to relinquish his defending champion status to the person who's a mere two decades away from being born, and who'll live to see his or her four-digit birthday, we are, or so it would seem, within flitting distance of immortality.}

\textbf{Elixir of everlasting life}

According to scien
tist Aubrey de Grey, the person who'll live up to 150 years has already been born and the 1000-year-old marathon runner is slated for arrival soon.

Now, is this sensationalism scientific hogwash, or are we indeed preparing for the long run? Throwing light on this, Dr Gaurang Desai, family physician with special interest in geriatric cases and conditions says, "Our mythological texts have several references to persons who could choose the time of their death and decide to live for as long as they wanted. My logical sense tells me that immortality is not entirely an unthinkable proposition. We've made great progress in controlling, if not altogether eradicating, many infectious diseases. So, yes, stem cell therapy and our understanding of cellular functions can enhance longevity, though a lifespan of 1000 years is too way out to even consider such a possibility.

\textbf{Live forever, any takers?}

While long life is a blessing we all seek, most appear more terrified than excited at the prospect of life stretching on and on. Says actor Zeenat Aman, "Life is such a precious gift. It would be great to live as long as one is healthy and self-sufficient, whether it's till 60 or 100. It's the quality of life that matters."

Most insist that instead of seeking immortality, we should strive to lead fuller lives in the lifespan allotted to us. "You need to have strong coping strategies if you want to live this long. What is your belief system when you get up in the morning is what will sustain you or trip you. Hope dies first. Without hope, such long lives will be utterly useless."

‘Vipareeta buddh vishnush kale.’ That means if you become overly clever with life, you are going towards destruction. It’s better not to disturb certain fundamentals, because you may not know how to control it once you disturb them. We should be in tune with life instead of getting over smart about it."

Agreeing with Sadghuru Jagg, Dr Desai says, "The arrogance of the scientific community in tampering with the laws of nature is deplorable. Evolution is an intrinsic part of nature. Creation and destruction are but part of nature’s cyclical rhythm. The mad cow disease outbreak was a result of our sabotaging nature’s plan."

\textbf{Life will go on…}

Are we closer to immortality than ever before? "Immortality has always been a fancy pursuit. When people become affluent, they have everything but life is yet to happen to them. So naturally they seek immortality. Every king, every powerful person on the planet always desired to be immortal s o m e h o w," shares Sadghuru Jagg.

He continues, "A significant thing that every human being has to do is to structure their psychological and emotional framework around the most fundamental fact of their life— their mortality. You can truly enjoy and joyful walk through this life only if you know that you are mortal."

Adds Dr Desai, "When we talk about the health aspect of the elderly, it's important to consider the health concerns of the caregivers too. When you're at advanced age and you realise that your passing on might relieve someone, you somehow become mentally prepared to shake off the mortal coil."

Sadghuru Jagg adds, "In our culture, we do not look at immortality as living here forever. Only the physical is mortal. Only the physical has a beginning and an end. It is always bound by time and space. That which is not physical is not bound by space or by time. So when we say immortality, we are talking about moving from the physical to the non-physical dimension, or from the surface to the core, from being a piece of creation to becoming a creator."