

# Bean there, done that

## Coffee talks, Take one

*Two men drank their coffee in silence.*

*“You know,” said one, “life is like a cappuccino.”*

*“Why do you say that?” asked his comrade.*

*“How can life be like a cappuccino?”*

*“How should I know? What am I, a philosopher?”*

## Coffee talks, Take two

*Two men drank their coffee in silence.*

*“You know,” said one, “life is like a cappuccino.”*

*“Why do you say that?” asked his comrade.*

*“How can life be like a cappuccino?”*

*“Hokay so it’s not like a cappuccino.”*

## Full of beans

*Coffee: A mud-brown beverage consisting of granulated tropical beans methodically dribbled into scalding water, and consumed in copious quantities for its power to produce a satisfactory level of nervous agitation. (Rick Bayan, Cynic’s Dictionary)*

*I drink coffee; therefore I am.*

*Life is short...don’t waste it drinking lousy coffee.*

*The living are the dead on holiday. (The Belgian essayist who said that probably drank too much dark roast in some Antwerp coffee bar.)*

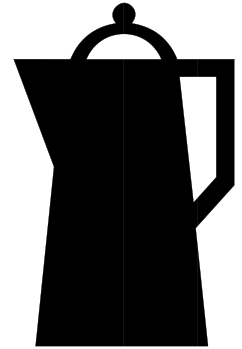
*The meaning of life is that it stops. (That’s Kafka for you!)*



*Life is like an empty coffee cup that leaves but a faint ring on a table.*

## **Ennui schennui!**

The empty cup syndrome is a common human experience. A fancy French word for this malady is *ennui*. It's that overwhelming feeling of weariness and dissatisfaction. Boredom. The way you might feel before, during, or after work.



## **Bean and nothingness**

*The great and fatal fruit of our civilization is boredom...Modern people are inwardly, thoroughly bored. Do as they may, they are bored.* Yet writer D. H. Lawrence made this observation *years* ago. Much later writer Norman Mailer would cast it this way: *The war between being and nothingness is the underlying illness of the 20th century. Boredom slays more of existence than war.*

**So what?** Boredom...nothingness...free-floating anxiety...that's for philosophers to figure out, therapists to fix, and *krechsters* to sing about. Anyway, what have the philosophers, writers, and critics of this world have to show for all their wisdom?

## **Ancient ennui**

Boredom is as old as the hills. An ancient “bean there, done that” wise man named Solomon wrote: *Everything is so weary and tiresome. No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not content. History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing under the sun is truly new.*

Solomon, or the ancient king in the divided kingdom who wrote this book) had this irritating habit of describing a garden-variety of human experiences and enterprises as “meaningless.” And he would know, I guess, since he tried just about everything there was to try back then. He had this knack for watching the way our world works, which might tempt a mother to ask, “From this he makes a living?”

## **Ancient angst**

The wise one studied human behavior: *People who live only for wealth come to the end of their lives as naked and empty-handed as on the day they were born.* So much for “living well is the best revenge.”

*All along I have tried my best to let wisdom guide my thoughts and actions. I said to myself, “I am determined to be wise.” But it didn't really work. Wisdom is always distant and very difficult to find. Not only that, should wisdom be found, it's tough to put to good use. There is not a single person in all the earth who is always good and never sins.*

**And then there's the bean-all and end all:** *None of us can hold back our spirit from departing. None of us has the power to prevent the day of our death. There is no escaping that obligation, that dark battle. This is called “wisdom literature”?*

## Nu?

Wise Solomon lived about 3,000 years ago; 2,000 years ago a bunch of men hanging out on Mars Hill in Athens (possibly in a coffeehouse!) fancied they could solve life's problems with intellectual cures. They shared this obsession for any novelty that came along. Epicureans and Stoics alike would pounce on, talk about, and listen to any new ideas. Yet they couldn't produce any satisfactory answer for the *life-is-a-grind-and-then-you-die* dilemma. 2,000 years later, in a world going to pot, a lot of us are still waiting for the answer.

### Now don't get all ongeblozen.

All this talk is not meant to *peeve* you, or make you jittery with angst. It's just that it might be time to wake up and smell the coffee. *For G-d has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man he has appointed, and G-d proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead.* Who else could that be? Messiah is both the mighty power and wonderful wisdom of God himself. And better you should know about him! **Better latte than never!**

