Now, we have a problem regarding the priority of principles relating to sanctity of life. If we stick to principles relating to sanctity of life irrespective of circumstances, the issues like killing, murder, abortion, suicide, and euthanasia cannot be classed as moral and many of our daily activities cannot be held as morally good, because in our day-to-day life, we do harms to many lives. But viewed from practical standpoint, these forms of action sometimes generate from human necessity. What should be our rational and moral decision then? Ought we to accord priority to sanctity of life in strict sense or with reference to particular situations? We may, in the present context, say that morality or immorality of an action, to a great extent, depends on situations under which an action is done. Therefore, to judge the moral excellence of these actions, they should be considered from situational context. In fact, this sort of approach is relatively lenient, but more concrete and effective to mitigate practical problem.
If the principles relating to sanctity of life are prioritized in the strict sense, moral laws would be too abstract and if all laws are rigidly adhered to, we cannot perform our daily activities, as our food habit is directly concerned with killing of lives. If we judge morality or immorality of our action in unbiased manner, we do not find any rationale in killing lives for our interest. Killing shows an act of stronger upon weaker which overrides the interest of the latter and is no other than an animal habit. In animal kingdom, strongers prey upon weakers to survive. But as we are humans; we should not repeat animal behaviour. For our survival, killing of animals is not an essential necessity. We must put moral restraints on our behaviours to differentiate it from animal ones. Therefore we are morally obligated to honour sanctity of life.

Though in practice, we cannot fully stick to the standpoint of Albert Schweitzer who rigorously opines that life is sacred, yet we must assign value to different lives. But in assigning values, practically we cannot overlook hierarchy, because in nature some forms of life are
valuable than others. And to accord value to lives, we have to undertake considerable changes in our old-fashioned approach to life, we should not accord values to lives by their utility, rather we have to admit the intrinsic value of different lives.

It is true that we often speak of sanctity of life, but in practice we do not follow it. It is a patent fact that though modern scientific and humanistic centuries are associated with many changes, yet there has been little compassion for non-humans. Though the position of pets is relatively better, yet nothing is done specially for animals in general. There has been a clear anthropocentric bias in respect of assigning value to different lives. We never take seriously the dignity of non-humans and we always pay less attention to severity of pain of non-humans. We are relatively considerate if our fellow-humans are in unbearable pain; to ease their pain, we take some healing measures. But if it be non-human, if it be gravely injured, and becomes burden and unproductive, the common way to ease its pain by taking its life. Of course, it is not practically possible on our part to equate the
interests and pain of non-humans with humans, but we can at least reduce the amount of pain inflicted on non-humans if we bear it in our mind that sanctity of life does not mean sanctity of human life, but more precisely, life in general. We must keep in mind that human life is not only life, which is valuable; rather interests of other species count morally. Therefore, to be moral and unbiased, we need a comprehensive approach, which is non-anthropocentric in nature, which views 'life as life', effects a re-assessment of human duties towards conservation of life. Therefore, our ultimate approach is holistic environmental approach and ultimate challenge of environmental ethics is conservation of life on this earth. Life on this planet is an aggregate of many species and preservation of each and every species is indispensable for maintaining variety of nature. Sometimes death of a particular member of a species has no visible effect, but we cannot say that it has no effect on nature at all. However, to conserve life on this planet, we should expand the circle of moral considerability so that we can include non-humans within its periphery. We should impose restriction on our speciesist attitude, which
endangers life of other species and undermines sanctity of life. Hence an ethics of respect for life is urgent for the benefit of any species.

Again, if we appraise moral worth of an action with reference to situation, we see that there is some sort of conditionality in moral utterances. If we speak of unconditionality of moral laws, we cannot follow it completely in practice. If we take non-killing of humans as a moral law and if we speak of its unconditionality, practically it sets forth some problems. Surely we have our moral duty and moral obligation to protect life, but if we are badly attacked by someone with an intention to kill us, to defend our own being, situation warrants killing of the assailant; otherwise, we have the possibility of being killed by him. It is also worth noticing a fact that sometimes moral interpretation of an issue depends on its being shared by majority of people. We always pay attention to or condemn an act of murder when committed by an individual, but this standpoint undergoes change when killing of human-being becomes a regular occurrence. We always make a difference between individual selfishness and group
selfishness, and we do not always trouble ourselves with the question of sanctity of life when humans are killed in group clash, political rivalry, religious riots, or when a nation engages in war with another aggressor nation and out of patriotism soldiers take innocent lives, or when soldiers encounter terrorists, kill them, and so on. Therefore, some forms of murder under grave circumstances are always sustained by situations even if we endorse sanctity of life.

But to honour sanctity of life in the present context, we must say that no one can ever be killed other than in self-defence, if killing becomes necessary, and even killing in self-defence should not be overemphasized as only alternative to defend one’s self. Rather, one’s whose life is put at risk should try other peaceful means short of violence to preserve himself, he can resort to violent means if peaceful means fail to stop other’s violent attitude. And in doing harm to a man, we have to stop at a point otherwise violence would breed violence and it would effect definite fall-off in human civilization. Therefore, if a nation engages in war with another nation, if war becomes inevitable,
no devices should be practised, which disturb environmental balance and give birth to crippled generations. And to escape nuclear holocaust, we must have tolerance and international consensus.

Furthermore, morality or immorality of an issue sometimes centers round public pressure, which shapes moral decision of a particular period. Society passes law for the benefit of its member, breaks and reframes them to mitigate the changing need of society. Thus moral laws are ultimately relative having bearing on particular situation or time. Nowadays our society relaxes its rigid laws once framed against abortion and recognizes it as a common social phenomenon with some legal restrictions. Today society gets open-minded towards those who commit suicide and treat them mentally ill patients and adopts more humane approach to the problem of suicide. And though the problem euthanasia is comparatively of recent origin, its practical importance and appeal make it a global issue. If we take social support of these issues into account, we have to make compromise between our age-old moral laws and changing social setup. We need to undertake some
changes in our traditional moral principles. We must apply moral principles in such a way that our practical life might find its meaning. This incorporation of changes in moral life means changes in our moral attitudes not in principles, it means changes in treatment of moral issues, which are centered on particular social framework. The issues like abortion, suicide and euthanasia perfectly fit into today’s social framework, acceptability and unacceptability of these issues are often considered from practical and legal standpoint. And taken the public support into consideration, to give moral justification, we cannot brand abortion as utterly immoral today, because sometimes abortion becomes an urgent necessity, and is concerned with social interest. But to honour sanctity of life, we can check sex-selective abortion because gender is not genetic disorder. Nature keeps balance of male-female ratio in its own way and we are morally obligated to maintain nature’s order, not to disturb its plan, which is not always comprehensible. Lastly, the issues like self-killing and euthanasia are mainly associated with the question of individual right which is the main concern of today. An act of suicide fully depends on subjective choice. If someone
takes his life simply because he feels it not worth anything, we cannot apply any objective standards to justify such a claim. If we accord priority to individual rights over life and consider seriously the situational context under which one thinks of taking his life or begs death, practically we cannot disregard his choice. But from moral point of view, we can make a difference between irrational and rational choice and our moral discourse concerns with the latter. In case of euthanasia, we have objective standards when some forms of passive or negative euthanasia are warranted by situations. But we cannot morally justify an act of suicide or an act of euthanasia just to accord priority to individual freedom. If we accord priority to individual freedom regardless of circumstances, disregarding its social impact, morality would be a name for individual freedom, and unbridled human freedom would make moral life impossible. Human life has meaning, because it has social responsibility. Therefore, no individual freedom should be contrary to social interest. And to take changes in our moral attitudes, we have to consider the social implications of these changes. If a man is morally allowed to take his life to avoid stressful moments or he is
granted death because he wishes to be killed, a problem might emerge that value of life becomes subordinate to human choice. Hence to assign value to life, we should remember that life is always precious besides the stresses and strains it possesses. Death cannot be a reasonable solution to all problems, because it brings an end to all the good that life possesses.