

Diseases of the Soul: Love of the World – Hubb ad–Duniyah

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Article

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But you prefer the life of the world. (The Qur'an, 87: 16)

Although the Hereafter is better and more lasting. (The Qur'an, 87: 17)

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a) said: 'Whoever has a heart attached to the world, has three things attached to his heart: unremitting sadness, unfulfilled desire, and unachievable hope.'

[Al Kulayni, *Usul al Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 320, hadith # 17]

Abu 'Abd Allah [Imam al-Sadiq] (a) said: "One who passes his evenings and mornings in such a way that the world is his biggest concern, God ordains poverty between his two eyes and causes his affairs to become disjointed and dissipated, while he does not attain anything except what has been apportioned for him. And as for the one who passes his evenings and mornings while his biggest concern and goal is the Hereafter, God puts contentment to his heart and gives a wholeness and unity to his affairs.

[Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p.319, hadith # 15]

The Definition Of 'World' Based On Islamic Teachings

There are several definitions and interpretations given by scholars and mystics of the 'disapproved world' *i.e.*, 'the world' in the sense in which it is necessary for the person seeking the Hereafter to shun it and the factors that assist and guide him on the path of salvation.

- Great Scholar Allama Majlisi [ra] defines the term 'accursed world' as 'The sum total of all those things that prevent human being from obeying God and keep him from His love and from seeking the Hereafter.'
- Another scholar remarks: "Your 'world' and 'Hereafter' are two inner states of your heart: That which is nearer and is concerned with the life before death is 'the world', and whatever that follows it and is concerned with the life after death is 'the Hereafter'. Therefore, everything that earns you pleasure and joy and provokes your lust before

death, it is 'the world' for you."

- Imam Khomeini [ra] says: 'The world' may sometimes be regarded as meaning the lowest level of existence and the abode of change, transition, and annihilation. 'The Hereafter' signifies return from this lower mode of existence to the higher, celestial plane, one's inner world, which is the abode of permanence, stability, and eternity. These two worlds exist for every individual. Accordingly, that which is mentioned in the Qur'an and traditions regarding the disapproval of 'the world' does not actually apply to the world itself, but is meant to refer to absorption in it and love and attachment for it. This shows that man has two 'worlds' one of them is disapproved and condemned, while the other is extolled and praised.
- Imam Zayn al-Abedin (a) said: **There are two worlds: The delivering [to the Hereafter] world and the cursed world.** [*Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 94, p. 99]

Brief Explanation Of 'Worlds' And A 'Worldly Action'

- The world, which is approved, is that which one acquires in this earthly abode, where higher stations and lasting spiritual merits are exchanged for transitory goods and where arrangements are made for the abiding abode [Hereafter] by performing virtuous actions. These cannot be possibly acquired without entering this physical world, the lower level of existence.
- While this worldly existence is a lower and defective realm of being, but since it is a nursery for the training of lofty souls and a school for acquiring higher spiritual stations, it is a field for cultivating the Hereafter. In this sense, it is the most sublime of the realms of being and the most profitable of worlds for the lovers of God and the wayfarers of the path of the Hereafter. And if God Almighty had not made this world a realm of transition and annihilation, not a single imperfect soul would have attained its promised state of perfection to enter the eternal Kingdom of God and achieve its place of honour in Hereafter.

Any action that causes His good pleasure and one's nearness to Him belongs to 'the Hereafter,' even though apparently it should seem to be a matter of the world such as trade and business, agriculture, industry and crafts whose purpose is to provide subsistence for one's family for the sake of obedience to God's command, for spending one's income for charitable purposes and the welfare of poor and needy, and to avoid dependence on others and beseeching their help.

- On the other hand, any act of worship and devotion to God could be 'worldly' such as exercises in spiritual self-discipline, virtuous deeds and supererogatory acts of worship, as they might be performed with great devotion and care, but because they are done to seek 'the world', lead to alienation from God and do not bring a person near to Him. Such are the deeds and the practices of the infidels and hypocrites and those who are away from the right path.
- Imam Ali (a): **Indeed, this world is the abode of truth for him who appreciates its truthfulness, a place of safety for him who understands it, a mine of treasures for him who collects provisions from it [for hereafter], and a house of instructions for him who draws lessons from it. It is the shrine of worship for those who love Allah, the house of prayer for His angels, the place where revelations of Allah descend, and the marketplace for those devoted to Him. Herein they earn His mercy and herein they acquire Paradise by way of profit.** [*Nahj al-Balaghah*, saying # 131]

Harms Done By The Love Of World

- The attachment of the heart and the love of the world are synonymous with the accursed world mentioned earlier, and the greater the attachment, the thicker the veils between man and the realms of sublimity, and denser the curtain between the heart of the human being and his Creator.
- The more a person looks at this world with wonder and love, the more his heart will be attached to it, and his need for it will also increase proportionally to his love. A sense of poverty and neediness will appear in his personality and he will pursue short-term aims, neglecting hereafter in his endeavours.

- In addition, his heart will become anxious, melancholic, and fearful and his affairs will not be carried out according to his wishes. His hope and greed will increase day by day. Though apparently looking normal, grief and regret gradually seize him and confusion and despair invade his heart. Besides losing faith and weakened will power, such a person also becomes afraid of death.
- Imam Baqir (a): **The harm done by two ferocious wolves, one attacking from the front and the other from the rear, to a herd without a shepherd, is less rapid than the one done by the love of the world to the faith of the faithful.** [Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi*, vol. 4, p.3]
- Imam al-Sadiq (a): **The example of the world is that of sea water; the more a thirsty person drinks from it, the thirstier he becomes until it kills him.** [Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi*, vol. 3, p.205]
- Imam al-Kazim (a): **Whoever loves this world, fear of Hereafter will depart from his heart.** [Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 78, p. 315]

An Advice To Cure Love Of The World

It is an undeniable fact that human being is physically the child of this world of matter, nature being his mother, and he being the offspring of water and dust. Thus, the love for this physical world is implanted in his heart since the early time of his development and growth. He grows by consuming material of earth.

- As human being grows, this love also increases. On account of the faculties of desire and the organs and senses of deriving pleasure that have been granted to him by God Almighty for the sake of the preservation of individual and species, this love grows day by day.
- As he considers this world as a place of pleasure and luxury, and death as the end of these activities, even if he is led to believe in the Hereafter, its states, conditions and

rewards, yet his heart remains unfamiliar with them and does not accept them, let alone obtaining certainty of their reality. Due to these reasons, his love for this world and his attachment to it increase considerably.

- But if he realizes the fact that this world is the lowest of the existence and the house of decline and change and the realm of imperfection, destruction and death, and that there are other realms of existence beyond death, each of which is eternal and stable, perfect and permanent, where life is bliss and beatitude, his heart would naturally acquire the love of that world and would abhor this world.
- If one were to rise above this physical world and become aware to the realities of world of Hereafter, and observe the real inward form of this physical world and the attachment to it, then this world will become unbearable for him. He will detest it and desire to leave this abode of darkness and to get rid of the shackles of time and transition. These feeling and attitude are apparent in the words, invocations and *munajaats* of Imams of guidance (a) and *awliya'*.
- Human being's inclination towards absolute perfection and permanence of bounties and pleasures is innate. It is known that this world is not a place of perfection and permanence. Pleasures here are transient. Thus, realizing this basic fact, those who work for the Hereafter, their attention towards the world diminishes and increases towards the Hereafter. While they physically live in this world, interest and the love for this world diminishes in their hearts till they care no more about the world and its allurements. A sense of richness and plentifulness is lodged within their hearts and the treasures of this world lose their value in their sight. They live a life of a passenger performing their duties and fulfilling their responsibilities in this physical world and keep themselves ready to die anytime. Therefore, absence of need and presence of plentifulness are infused in their hearts by the light of Needless-in-Itself, the Almighty God.

Conclusion

The Prophet (s) said: **"The great man among the people of this world is the one who doesn't consider world worthy of importance."** [Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 77, p. 112]

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