

Materialism vs. simple living

Philosophy



The definition of materialism is not far-fetched from the word material, from which it was derived. Materialism simply means the quest for possessions. Some would readily call it acquisition of goods. It is a term encoding a life style born in a continuous desire to acquire goods of this world with possibly an end result of deriving satisfaction. Hardly any will argue that human needs some basic things in life, conversely, what has been an imprecise issue is, what these human's needs are. This has generated a lot of argument both in the distant and recent past. However, an agreement has been arrived at that human's needs are basically Food, shelter and Clothing. Virtually all schools of thought have given assent to these three basic needs, but the question yet unanswered is, will life be bearable with just these three things?

Apparently, anybody attempting the above question will answer with a salvo no!, for the idea of human without cars, mobile phones, computers etc is a painful conception itself not to mention human practically living it. At this juncture, we cannot but subscribe to the materialist doctrine, for all logical human know that these material things do not only make our everyday lives easy, they virtually make our existence possible and a reality.

Following a logical trend, few would disagree with the fact that too much of many human's habit is bad. Like a medical doctor will rightly explain that too much smoking is dangerous to health, psychologists would claim that a child being exposed to too much film full of violence is wrong, consequently, it will not be far away from truth to claim that too much desire for materials things is wrong. After all, these things we claim give satisfaction to us are short

termed, that can be referred to as timed satisfaction, such as things that do not stand the test of time after a longing for them.

It is simply ephemeral (short live). Taking a philosophical flight, one would realize that human can be considerably happy with little or few material things. Imagine the sheer pleasure of sitting under a tree in a nearby park on an early morning before sunrise, with the natural bliss of early singing birds waking all the blossoming flowers. This priceless experience could be unparalleled to any acquisition of all the wealth in the world. Aren't the best things of life free?

Living a materialistic existence is a habitual passion to quench thirst for unnecessary luxuries that probable in the end bring pain to human. Imagine the expense of maintaining tax on a garage of cars of different models and brands. The lifestyle could be based on some objective and subjective reasons. For example, a quest for comfort at all time backs up the need to get equipped with different form of expensive automobiles even though it is certain that more than one cannot be in use at the same time. Some will rather submit that materialistic existence is more than ninety percent base on psychologically reasons that may be unfit to hearing. Many rather remain silence at such a question about the necessity of getting those materials.

“ We are dust, and to dust we shall return”! This was an aged verdict of the creator of men. Who sees us occupying space for only a calculated period of time. With a strong holding on this believe, majority of the people who consciously live a simple lifestyle attached reasons to this. Others who are known to live a simple lifestyle really do not have a genuine excuse other

than the financial strength to maintain the pace of materialism without wearing out in the lane, but several surveys have proved them the happiest people. We also have the ‘ busy ones’ who do not care about other things beyond a single purpose of contributing to their generation. Scientists are categorized in this class.

They experiment new discoveries all and derive joy solely in their works, which they consider as the only relevant essence for living in this world. These categories have been the ones that contributed mostly to the world. Their discoveries generate all the expensive gadgets the materialists seek with lust. Personally, I believe most of material things human acquire are not only meant to satisfy their needs but to either impress or entice this or that person, “ vanity” to borrow a word from the bible. Many have gone bankrupt trying to maintain the exotic lifestyle of the society they chose to belong to. Many cases of suicide have been traced to this source.

However, between materialism and simple living the thin line separating the two can be difficult to mark out, after all, no human can claim he or she does not enjoy the pleasure of the good things. Today, even the so called men of God are known to have all the material benefit this life could offer, what they renounce is an excessive lust for these things which they claim leads to evil. Summarily, since it has been proven that man cannot do without some material needs and that too much lust after material these things is uncalled for, it will be a logical conclusion to claim that human should pursue their need with moderacy, by limiting their pursuit to their basic need of existence.

References

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