

True Worship, Joy, and Happiness – The Ultimate Goal of All Human Desires

Summary

This writing talks about the difference between short-lived enjoyment and long-lasting happiness. It makes the case that real satisfaction is what all people want most. It looks at how ethnic backgrounds, like Eastern, Western, and indigenous ones, affect how people search for joy/happiness, spiritual meaning and community interrelationships. It shows how Western Judeo-Christian societies have moved toward strict rules and rituals governing spiritual life and activities in general. The result is that, without realizing it, people in these societies care more about faith than the moral quality of their actions. This change has led to an increase in selfish pleasure-seeking around the world, as the influence of Western culture has gradually spread around the world. The text concludes that true joy or happiness can come only from true worship, which was the goal of the more primitive societies. But that true worship, in turn, can only come through joyful, helpful activities towards our neighbor and other creatures. The result will be living in harmony with our neighbors and our environment, which will also align our being with the divine laws that govern existence. Using quotations from The Grail Message, the writing concludes that only by living in accordance with these laws of Creation can a true spiritual life be found. A life that automatically works towards a "jubilant affirmation" of life through deed, and not through rituals, or pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.

The ultimate goal of all human activity is to give or receive joy or happiness. Even a socio-path, in their twisted way, seeks joy in another's pain or suffering. This assertion will likely make a normal person (i.e., a non-socio-path) recoil at the idea of classifying both actions as stemming from the same natural human desire.

So, what could possibly explain such diametrically opposite manifestations of the same human desire?

Without delving into the specifics of human psychology, it is apparent that the difference arises in one being able to differentiate between Pleasure, and Joy/Happiness. Both, certainly give a sensation of pleasure. But, the desire for pleasure alone usually leaves one wanting more. This soon leads to an increasingly intensive craving with the result that the pleasure seeker is never satisfied, regardless of whether they are giving or receiving. And the intensified craving drives to a reckless frenzy of activity, to enjoy more of the same pleasure (e.g., from the exercise of control, power, seeking adulation, and other addictive behaviors). Surprisingly, this is as true for the social-benefactor, who becomes addicted to doing "uncontrollable good", as it is for the socio-path's uncontrollable destructive activities.

By stark contrast, Joy and Happiness leaves one with a sense of inner calm and fulfillment; a feeling that often leads to introspection and inner gratitude for the experience. This is true for the giver and the receiver. Also, this sensing alters the focus on the individuals involved in the action. Instead, they each unconsciously feel a higher force behind what has transpired. Thus, it is not surprising that a form of silent or vocalized prayer often accompanies a truly joyful or happy experience.

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Modern psychology recognizes the difference between the two, describing pleasure as a quick hit, like a sugary snack, versus happiness as the sustained satisfaction from a fulfilling life with strong relationships or meaningful work.

A quick review of pre-modern societies confirms that they did not place as much emphasis on pleasure. Rather, their focus was on life fulfilling activities, i.e., man's relationship with the higher forces and building strong relationships. So, in an objective mind, this finding should raise the question of how such a cultural setting gave rise to modern Western cultural thinking in which pleasure has become the primary focus of desire? Also, it is remarkable that, as the western mind settles in other cultures, we observe an increasing global search and desire for pleasure.

Perhaps the answer can be found by taking a closer look at the institutions that primarily influence the shaping of cultural values and group mind set, and how they go about this - especially since their interpretations or guidance set the direction for further development.

To help us form a picture, we shall take a look at three major cultural settings, (1) Primitive cultural settings, (2) Buddhism cultural settings (Eastern), and (3) Judeo-Christian cultural settings (Western).

PRIMITIVE CULTURAL SETTINGS (THIRD WORLD SOCIETIES)

Their focus is on a deep connection to “spirits” in all things, and oral tradition. They lack formal scriptures, dogma, or rigid clergy. Rather, their beliefs are integrated into daily life, emphasizing interconnectedness, ancestor reverence, and rituals for life events. They also have a pervasive sense of the sacred, through the elements (earth, wind fire, water).

They accomplish this through trying to understand the inexplicable (like meaning of life and death), ensuring continuity of the society (fertility rites), and connecting with the “spiritual” world to gain guidance on how to influence their environment, protect their community, and find meaning in existence. Their focus is also on forging and maintaining a tight knit community with interdependence of activities.

BUDDHIST CULTURAL SETTINGS (EASTERN SOCIETY)

The primary religious goal of Buddhist societies is to achieve Enlightenment, which means liberation from suffering and the endless cycle of rebirth by extinguishing greed, hatred, and ignorance. They believe that this can only be achieved through the way the individual treats the environment and their fellow creatures.

They accomplish this through disciplined the practice of ethics and wisdom, following the Four Noble Truths (*the truths of suffering, cause of suffering, end*

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of suffering, and of the path to reach that end) to find inner peace, truth, and in helping all creatures on Earth.

JUDEO-CHRISTIAN CULTURAL SETTINGS (WESTERN SOCIETY)

The central goal is the affirmation of one eternal God, as the sole creator and moral authority of the universe. The philosophy places focus on salvation, which can only be attained through entering into the covenant between God and humanity, as expressed by their sacred texts. However, there are also significant differences in theological interpretations, by their different sects, particularly regarding the specific path to salvation.

They accomplish this through the institutionalization of formalized Worship, Rites and rituals to enter into the covenant and to stay covered by it. They also include Evangelism to grow the body of believers. These activities are seen as putting into practice their sacred text's teaching of "*loving God and loving one's neighbors*" (Christianity & Islam).

The striking difference between these cultural settings is the highly-structured theology and religious practices of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Here, theology tends towards rigid dogmas, with little or no lee way for individual interpretation. The religious practices focus on the structure of worship and associated rituals. This contrasts with the eastern traditions or the third world traditions, where the focus is on the individual being responsible for implementation of their own spiritual understanding of the truths.

Another major difference is the prevalent idea in Judeo-Christian cultures that performing the acts of worship is more important than one's other actions. For example, the interpretation given to Paul's words, Galatians 2:16 - "*By faith alone is man justified*" – with faith generally being defined as adherence to the teaching or interpretation by the theological authorities and performing the rituals mandated of believers. This interpretation, especially, led to the belief that through the practice of worship, as defined by the religious authorities, the believer has satisfied their hopes of remaining covered by the covenant, and thus connecting with the infinite. Therefore, the need to please GOD through actions, (i.e. the way they live their lives, interact with their environment, or treat their fellow men), became less important. As a result, the importance of extinguishing anti-social behaviors like greed, hatred, and ignorance, or the importance of community interdependence and activity was given less focus in the hierarchy of theological doctrines.

This singular difference can arguably be pointed to as the main cause of the deviation in cultural direction.

Once religious thinking downgraded the importance of one's actions with respect to attaining connection with the infinite, it followed that, except for the very few, the majority pursued actions without regard to the effect or impact on their fellow creatures or the environment. Whereas when

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desires are shaped by consciousness of how it affects others and the environment, they will automatically move in directions that benefit others. In other words, such actions are more likely to bring some joy to others. And, the reciprocal effect will bring joy to the initiator as well, which will lead to an inner sense of fulfillment, out of which True happiness then arises, even if it does not provide immediate sensory pleasure. By contrast, self-centered actions do not generate satisfaction unless it offers some pleasure, be it material, emotional, or psychological. But, as already stated, the sensation from pleasure is fleeting, leaving the individual with a craving for more.

Conclusion

This is not to say that Worship is unnecessary nor vital to religious/spiritual life. On the contrary, true Worship opens our inner being to higher forces that, if used properly, will help us overcome our baser instincts. It is therefore only natural that the resulting effect of performing true worship will more strongly direct us to acts that can only bring joy and happiness to others, as well as to ourselves.

Alas, no society on earth can claim to have attained this utopia - not even the Western or puritanical societies in which worship was enforced for all. Thus, one must conclude that there is something faulty in our understanding about how we practice worship.

The quotes below, from The Grail Message of Abdrushin, will hopefully help the objective reader see how far-removed modern man's social and religious thinking is from the kind of Worship that the sacred books point out to us:

From the Lecture: "The Worship of GOD" -

The real worship of God does not show itself in ecstasy, in murmured prayers, in begging, kneeling, and wringing of one's hands, nor in blissful thrills, but in joyful activity! In the jubilant affirmation of this life on earth! In the full enjoyment of every moment! And full enjoyment means to make full use. Making full use in turn means... to experience! Not however, in dance and play or in time wasting activities, which are harmful to body and soul, and which the intellect seeks and needs as a balance and as a stimulant to its activity, but in looking upwards to the Light and Its Will, which only furthers, uplifts, and ennobles all that exists in Creation!

The fundamental condition for this, however, is the exact knowledge of the Divine Laws in Creation. These show him how he must live if he wishes to be healthy in body and in soul, point with precision to the path leading upwards to the Spiritual Realm, while also enabling him to recognize clearly the horrors he will have to face if he opposes these laws!.....

There are also many nature enthusiasts who take their enthusiasm to be genuine worship of God. They also imagine that they are far superior to those who have no possibility of enjoying the scenic beauties of the earth. It is a crass pharisaical attitude, which manifests only in a personal

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feeling of well-being. It is fool's gold, utterly worthless. When the time comes for such people to seek the treasures of their souls in order to use them for their ascent, they will find their inner shrine completely empty; for what they imagined to be a treasure was only intoxication at the sight of beauty, nothing else. Genuine veneration for their Creator was lacking. —

From the Lecture: The Lord's Prayer

He who at last adapts himself to It in his thoughts, words, and deeds thus practices the purest worship of God; which lies in deeds alone!

Final Words

These quotes from The Grail Message point out the common mistake in group spiritual or religious activities, in the past, and even today. The first is a clear lack of understanding of the purpose for the establishment of a worship routine. This occurs even with the best of intentions. It matters not if the group is adhering strictly to the guidelines laid down by the highest authority, because blind adherence does not automatically convey the inherent benefit from the worship act.

As a result, the misdirected focus opens the group activity to dangers; such as :

- struggling by the unscrupulous for control of the worship center, as a means of controlling the group.
- focusing on updating the procedures and processes of the rituals and liturgy soon takes primary focus, and
- reducing emphasis on trying to foster an environment to help each other grow spiritually.

The result is that members become trapped in routines and activities that do not release the kind of spontaneous joy that leads to the "*jubilant affirmation of life on earth, and the full enjoyment of every moment in the sense of the Will of GOD!*"