

Quotes From the Salaf About the Life of This World

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Sufyan ath-Thawri said: "Man's love for the life of this world is shown in the way he greets people."

[Look at a chaste poor man ... nobody talks to him. People greet him so warily as if fearing that he may pass poverty to them. But see how the people welcome a rich man, even if he does not perform prayer. They stand up with smiling faces, and each one hopes to greet him first. Note the difference between a man who is so great as seen by Allah and another who does not even weigh a mosquito's wing - but this is life.]

Narrated Muhammad ibn Abi Imran, "I heard a man asking Hatim al-Asamm: 'On what have you based your dependence on Allah?' He said: 'On four points: I knew that my sustenance cannot be eaten by someone else and I am assured, I knew that my duty cannot be done by anyone else, so I kept myself busy with that. I knew that death will come suddenly to me, so I prepared myself for it. I knew that wherever I go I am under Allah's Eye, so I am always shy of Him.'"

`Abdullah ibn Mubarak said, "O man! Prepare yourself for the Hereafter, obey Allah to the extent of your need for Him and anger Him to the extent of your patience in Hell."

Abu Safwan ar-Ru`wini was asked: "What is that life dispraised by Allah in the Qur'an and that the sensible man should avoid?" He said: "Whatever you love in this life seeking worldly benefits is dispraised, and whatever you love seeking benefits in the Hereafter is praised."

Yahya ibn Mu`adh said, "O how poor is man, if he fears Hell in the same degree of his fearing poverty, then he will enter Paradise."

Ali ibn Al-Fudayl said: "I heard my father saying to Ibn Al-Mubarak: You order us to renounce the worldly pleasures and to be satisfied with the minimum, whereas you are buying goods, so what is that?" He said: "I do that to protect my face and my honour, and this helps me obey my Rabb." My father said: "How good is that if realised."

An ascetic said: "I know none who has heard of Paradise and Hell, then spends an hour of his life without praying, remembering Allah or doing a good deed." A man said: "I weep so much." He said to him: "To laugh and admit your sins is better than to weep and feel proud of your deeds." The man said: "I need your advice." He said: "Abandon the life of this world to its people as they have abandoned the Hereafter to its people."

Shumait ibn `Ajlan used to say: "Two persons are tormented in the life of this world: a rich man who is given a great wealth that keeps him so busy with worldly pleasures, and a poor man who is deprived of such pleasures for which he is longing with a heartbreak."

Al-Hasan said: "How good is life in this world for a believer because he uses it to prepare his provisions for Paradise. And how evil it is for a disbeliever who uses it to prepare his provisions for Hell."

Yahya ibn Mu`adh said: "The life of this world is a house of deeds and the Hereafter is a house of horrors. Man remains between deeds and horrors until he settles either in Paradise or in Hell."

One of the salaf said: "Beware of the life of this world because its magic is more effective than that of Harut and Marut. The two latter's separate a man from his wife whereas the life of this world separates a man from his Rabb."

Abu Dardaa' said: "Everyone has an imperfection of knowledge and wisdom, if his wealth increases, he becomes so happy though day and night are working hard on destroying his life-span. So what is good of a wealth that increases and a life-span that decreases."

Al-Hasan al-Basri said: "I am astonished about those people who are ordered to prepare their provisions, then the start of the journey is announced, however they remain unmindful in their vain discussions and fruitless deeds."

A man came to Sufyan ath-Thawree seeking his advice, and he said to the man: "Work for the sake of this life within the extent of your stay in it, and for the Hereafter within the extent of your stay therein."

Al-Fudayl ibn `Ayyad said: "Man's fear of Allah is equal to his knowledge of Him and his renunciation of worldly pleasures is equal to his desire in the Hereafter."

Salman ibn Dinar said: "What you love to have with you in the Hereafter you should advance today, and what you hate to have with you, you should abandon today."

A poet said: "Don't seek anything other than contentment, because therein is the bliss and the comfort of your body. Then consider the case of a person who possesses the whole world, can he take with him in the grave more than cotton and a shroud?"

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