



COPING IN A MATERIALISTIC WORLD

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Have you ever felt overwhelmed by the way people often misjudge others based on what they have? Have you ever felt unjustly considered because you were at a distinct point of not having as much as what others have or expect?

We have to live in a consistently materialistic world, a world where the worth of people is judged according to what they have to show. Success is measured with certain parameters and yardsticks, so woe to those who have less in life or those who sadly fall short. Although man has been blessed with technology and science to enable him to see things in a much broader perspective, the effects of such modern advances have brought about a more or less tainted view of achievement: what type of car you drive; which exclusive enclave you have built your home in; which school you attend; what company you work for; and the list goes on endlessly.

A man's value is not measured by the amount of dough he makes in his career or how many trips abroad he makes in a year. It is not measured by the number of the latest gadgets he has in his possession, or the groups of letters he affixes to his name. It should never be measured by the signature clothes he wears, the branded accessories he has in his wardrobe, or the exclusive resorts he can afford to go to on holidays.

Sadly, the human spirit is heavily weighed down by thoughts on materialism. The spiritual is constantly laughed at, mocked, and considered taboo. Sensitive issues like religion and beliefs are often ignored and replaced with 'more comfortable' topics: people, places and events. Religion, they say, will not save you. What happens when we find out eventually that it does? Or it will?

It is only natural that we all wish to succeed. We go for the best education that money can buy, we want to have a sense of belonging in our corner of the world, we want to see and be seen. Taking pride in one's achievements is fine, but there are still such things as genuinely tasteful pride and awfully tasteless boastfulness. If we are out only to put others way below us while ceaselessly elevating ourselves, that is wrong. If we wish to mark certain things as mediocre while those that are associated with ourselves we only wish to put in precedence, then that is wrong. Whatever we have is ours only because a Higher Power is generous enough to give it to us. We should not for a minute believe that self-worth is attributable only to our own efforts. We, after all, should always do our best, but it is the Almighty that does all the rest.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How do people demonstrate materialism?
2. Can a man's value be truly measured by what he has? Explain your answer.
3. How can we all make the world an ultimately better place?
4. What do you think of people like the Dalai Lama? Nuns and priests?
5. Why is it difficult to measure up to materialistic parameters?