

What Is the Key to Lifestyle Management, and How Does Love Lead to Bliss?

Organizing the Hierarchy of Love: The Key to Lifestyle Management

One of the most significant factors influencing our lifestyle, particularly in the four main areas of decision, relationship, thought, and behavior, is the hierarchy of love. Every individual, whether they are *fitrah*-oriented or naturalists, constructs their lifestyle based on the nature of their attachments and the priorities of their love.

While God created all people with the same *fitrah*, their differing loves and personal decisions have resulted in a variety of lifestyles. A person who recognizes God as their Mentor and Guide regulates their loves based on the pattern introduced in the Quran. From this perspective, we can take control of our lifestyle management and manage our attachments consciously and purposefully.

Every living being inherently shows inclination, love, and desire for its specific food and sustenance. The lack of inclination or desire for food in any living being is considered a sign of illness, weakness, or satiety. The human existence is composed of five distinct parts, and each of these parts requires its specific food and sustenance to be nourished and to achieve balance. The human part of our existence also needs its specific sustenance, just like all other parts of our being.

This sustenance and source of nourishment is the remembrance and love of God. Therefore, if we do not feel a desire to receive this food, or if we do not enjoy it, we must primarily seek treatment.

In many cases, due to inattention and negligence, the main part of our existence has been deprived of its essential sustenance for long periods. As a result, we may feel no inclination toward its specific food, the love of God. In such instances, it is necessary to manage our lifestyle to reorganize the hierarchy of love and create balance within our being.

Our Love hierarchy must be organized so that the love for God, the *Ahl al-Bayt*, and *jihad* are positioned at the head of all loves in our existence. Affections such as love for family, career, money, or social status must be defined based on divine love. Only in this state will these attachments be the source of true inner peace, growth, and happiness. Otherwise, these very affections will transform into obstacles on the path to perfection.

After comprehending the importance of this hierarchy, the next step is how to implement it in daily life, where our decisions, relationships, thoughts, and behaviors must be regulated based on a divine framework. Following this, we will explore practical solutions for implementing this hierarchy in various aspects of life.

Reasons for the Importance of Organizing the Love Hierarchy and Lifestyle Management

But why is organizing the love hierarchy or lifestyle management so important? Experience has shown that what we love or hate practically shapes the path of our life. Attachments are not merely personal interests; they determine our motivation and direction of movement.

The Role of Love in Decision-Making

Organizing the love hierarchy or lifestyle management means that all of life's choices, from marriage and occupation to the type of clothing and place of residence, are made based on a divine pattern. A pattern designed in harmony with our *fitrah*. Our choices are more than momentary decisions; they are, in fact, a reflection of our inner attachments.

For example, choosing an academic major or a career, if based only on superficial interest, money, or family pressure, may lead to disappointment, depression, or even failure. However, if a choice is made in the path of service, growth, and nearness to God, it brings with it a feeling of inner satisfaction and tranquility, even amidst difficulties.

Before every decision, it is enough to ask ourselves: “Does this choice bring me closer to God or take me further away?” This very question can be our guiding light. A correct choice must benefit both the individual and others. A choice that is in conflict with the divine will, even if it has an appealing appearance, must be set aside. For instance, a job that provides high income but leads to inattention to the family does not fit within the framework of innate love.

The more harmonized the choices are with the divine love hierarchy, the more balanced, meaningful, and inwardly satisfying the life will be. The feeling of peace and assurance after making a decision is a sign of the correctness of that choice within the framework of divine love.

The Role of Love in Human Relationships

Humans are inherently social beings. A large part of our growth or decline occurs within the context of our relationships. Therefore, regulating relationships is a key part of organizing love for lifestyle management. Sometimes, relationships are formed voluntarily, and sometimes they are unavoidable due to work or family circumstances. In any case, we must know that all our relationships are a reflection of our inner attachments.

The relationships we establish either help our spiritual growth or cause our deviation. Love for parents, children, spouse, friends, and relatives is beneficial when defined within the framework of divine love. Otherwise, these very affections can turn into chains that prevent human flight toward perfection.

Many moral and spiritual problems are rooted in unhealthy relationships. Excessive love or inappropriate dependencies are harmful to both sides in a relationship, like parents who center their attention so much on a child that they neglect their education, or someone who distances themselves from the path of truth for fear of upsetting their friend. For the proper management of relationships and lifestyle management, we must know what role each love plays in our spiritual growth. This is because many deviations arise not from enmity, but from toxic friendships.

Strategies for Relationship Management

To ensure that affection in relationships is healthy and aligned with the divine path, we need practical steps, not just general advice. The first step is an honest review of current relationships. We must measure every connection against the criterion

of divine love. Any bond that distances us from the remembrance of God or makes us attached to the material world requires re-evaluation. Sometimes, boundaries must be set, and at other times, we must have the courage to sever an unhealthy relationship.

A narration from the Holy Prophet (Peace Be upon him) states that friendship and enmity must be for the sake of God and regulated by the love of God [1]. This is a golden rule in lifestyle management that shows us we must regulate our friendship and enmity with others based on God's Will. This is because a relationship founded only on material interests or superficial attractions will not last, whereas a relationship with a powerful source, such as the presence and remembrance of God, will be deep, sincere, and enduring. This perspective on relationships protects us against social pressures, emotional temptations, and unnecessary formalities.

Managing Love in Thoughts

Our thoughts are the source of our behaviors, and what occupies our mind is exactly what we have love for. If our love is for God and divine values, our mind becomes filled with hope, peace, reliance on God, and goodwill. However, if our heart is tied to the world, our mind becomes trapped in comparison, greed, anxiety, and fear.

Unhealthy loves are the root of many negative thoughts: jealousy, anger, desire for fame, fear of others' judgment, or resentment. The first step to correcting this situation is the daily examination of our thoughts. One beneficial method is reviewing verses of the Quran with phrases such as “Indeed, God loves” or “Indeed,

God does not love.” These verses provide good indicators for regulating mental love.

We must also be careful of our mental imaginations and fantasies. If our mind is constantly preoccupied with fear, regret, or obsession, it is a sign that we have distanced ourselves from divine love.

Changing the mental system is not possible overnight. But with daily practice, reviewing thoughts, solitude, and self- scrutiny, our thoughts gradually take on a divine hue. Since our external life is a reflection of our mind, this change will impact all dimensions of our lives.

The Manifestation of Love in Behavior

Our behaviors are the true reflection of our inner attachments. From major choices to a daily smile or silence, everything stems from our inner love hierarchy. It is possible for someone to be a worshipper but treat others with harshness and arrogance. This indicates a disorder in their inner love hierarchy.

The correct regulation of the love hierarchy and lifestyle management must be observable in all our behaviors, from our clothing and food to our manner of speaking, hosting, and helping others. Our goal should be the satisfaction of God, not the approval of those around us or competition with others.

Imam Sadiq (Peace be upon him) said: “The strongest ring of belief to hold onto is to love for the sake of Allah and hate for the sake of Allah, to give for the sake of Allah and deny for the sake of Allah.” This sentence is a clear criterion for evaluating our behavior.

We must ask ourselves: "Is this behavior for God, or to please people?" Or, for example: "Does my silence or my anger come from healthy love, or from improper dependence?"

When our inner love is regulated correctly, even our smallest behaviors acquire a divine meaning, and our life takes on a different hue: the hue of sincerity, tranquility, growth, and true satisfaction.

In this article, we stated that affection is something beyond individual feelings. Attachments shape our lifestyle. If they are regulated based on divine love, the path of our life will proceed toward growth, inner peace, and perfection. Otherwise, these very loves can turn into serious obstacles.

Now it is your turn: How do you manage your attachments, and to what extent is your lifestyle aligned with the divine love hierarchy?

References

[1]. Love for the sake of Allah and hate for the sake of Allah, and befriend for the sake of Allah and contest for the sake of Allah, for Allah's guardianship is attained only by that." (Al-Saduq, *Ilal al-Shara'i'*, vol. 1, p. 140, no. 1.