

LOVE FOR WORLD

QUR`AN- (The Qur`an with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal)

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ
حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ

Al-Shura/20. Whoever desires (and strives to gain) the harvest of the Hereafter, We increase him in his harvest; and whoever desires the harvest of the world, We grant him out of that, and he has no portion in the Hereafter. (Surah Ash – Shura, 20)¹

اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ وَفَرِحُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا
الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا مَتَاعٌ

God enlarges provision for whom He wills, and straitens it (for whom He wills). They (the unbelievers who have been given abundant provision and indulged in the present, worldly life, oblivious of God and the Hereafter) rejoice in the present, worldly life, whereas the present, worldly life is but a fleeting enjoyment as compared with the Hereafter. (Surah Al-Rad, 26)²

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ وَأَخْشَوْا يَوْمًا لَا يَجْزِي وَالِدٌ عَنْ وَلَدِهِ
وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ هُوَ جَازٍ عَنْ وَالِدِهِ شَيْئًا إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ
الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكُمُ بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ

O humankind! Keep from disobedience to your Lord in reverence for Him to deserve His protection, and fear a Day when no parent will be able to avail his child, nor a child avail his parent, in anything. God's promise (of the Last Judgment) is certainly true. So do not let the present, worldly life delude you, nor let any deluder (including especially Satan) delude you (in your conceptions) about God. (Surah Luqman, 33)³

¹ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=42&min=10&show=10

² http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=13&min=20&show=10

³ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=31&min=30&show=10

إِعْلَمُوا أَنَّهَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوَ زِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ
وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ
يَهْبِجُ فَتَرِيهُ مُصَفَّرًا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ
وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْعُرُورِ

Know that the present, worldly life is but a play, vain talk and ostentation, and mutual boasting among you, and competing in wealth and children it is like when rain comes down and the vegetation grown by it pleases the farmers, (but) then it dries up and you see it turn yellow, then it becomes straw; and in the Hereafter, there is a severe punishment, but also (there is) forgiveness from God and His good pleasure (which are everlasting), whereas the present, worldly life is but a transient enjoyment of delusion. (Al-Hadid, 20)⁴

إِنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوَ وَإِنْ تَوَمَّنُوا وَتَنَقَّوْا يُؤْتِكُمْ أَجُورَكُمْ
وَلَا يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَمْوَالَكُمْ

Muhammed/36. The present, worldly life is nothing but play and pastime. If you truly believe and keep from disobedience to Him in reverence for Him and piety, He will grant you your rewards, and will not ask of you your wealth. (Surah Muhammed, 36)⁵

يُنَبِّئُ لِلنَّاسِ حُبَّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ
الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ
ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَبِ

Made innately appealing to men are passionate love for women, children, (hoarded) treasures of gold and silver, branded horses, cattle, and plantations. Such are enjoyments of the present, worldly life; yet with God is the best of the goals to pursue. (Surah Al-Imran, 14)⁶

⁴ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=57&min=10&show=10

⁵ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=47&min=30&show=10

⁶ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=3&min=10&show=10

نَمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ
 نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّى إِذَا أَخَذَتِ الْأَرْضُ
 زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ أَهْلُهَا أَنَّهُمْ قَادِرُونَ عَلَيْهَا أَتَيْهَا أَمْرُنَا لَيْلًا
 أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَاهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَن لَّمْ تَعْنِ بِالْأَمْسِ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ
 الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

The present, worldly life is like this: We send down water from the sky, and the earth's vegetation, of which humans and animals eat, mingles with it, until, when the earth has taken on her ornaments and has been embellished, and its inhabitants suppose that they are its masters with a free hand over the earth, Our command comes upon it by night or day unexpectedly, and We cause it to become like a field mown down, as if it had not flourished the previous day. Thus, We set out in detail the signs (the signposts of Our way, and the relevant commands and guidance included in the Qur'an) for a people who reflect (on them and draw the necessary lessons). (Surah Yunus, 24)⁷

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
 فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَّاحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
 عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا

And strike to them a parable of the present, worldly life: (it is) like water that We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it (flourishing abundantly). Then it turns into dry stubble which the winds scatter about. God is absolutely able to do all things. (Surah Al-Kahf, 45)⁸

رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ
 وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ

(Those guided are) men (of great distinction) whom neither commerce nor exchange (nor any other worldly preoccupations) can divert from the remembrance of God, and establishing the Prayer in conformity with all its conditions, and paying the Prescribed Purifying Alms; they are in fear of a Day on which all hearts and eyes will be overturned. (Surah Al-Nur, 37)⁹

⁷ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=10&min=20&show=10

⁸ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=18&min=40&show=10

⁹ http://mquran.org/index.php?option=com_quran&action=viewayat&surano=24&min=30&show=10

HADITH

Abdullah narrated :

"The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) was sleeping upon a mat, then he stood, and the mat had left marks on his side. We said: 'O Messenger of Allah! We said: 'O Messenger of Allah! We could get a bed for you.' He said: 'What do I have to do with the world! I am not in the world but as a rider seeking shade under a tree, then he catches his breath and leaves it.'"¹⁰

Anas bin Malik narrated that the Messenger of Allah (S.a.w) said:

"Three follow the deceased, two of them return, and one remains. He is followed by his family, his wealth, and his deeds. So his family and his wealth returns, and his deeds remain."¹¹

Abu Sa'eed narrated that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said:

"The poor Muhajirin will enter Paradise before the rich among them by five hundred years."¹²

Al-Mustawrid bin Shaddad said:

"I was with the caravan of those who stopped with the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) at a dead lamb. The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said: 'Do you think that this was insignificant to its owners when they threw it away?' They said: 'Yes! It is because of its insignificance that they threw it away O Messenger of Allah!' He said: 'The world is more insignificant to Allah than this to its owners.'"¹³

Sahl bin Sa'd narrated that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said:

"If the world to Allah was equal to a mosquito's wing, then He would not allow the disbeliever to have a sip of water from it."¹⁴

'Abdullah bin Mas'ud narrated that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said:

¹⁰ <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/36/74>

¹¹ <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/36/76>

¹² <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/36/48>

¹³ <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/36/18>

¹⁴ <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/36/17>

"Whoever suffers from destitution and he beseeches the people for it, his destitution shall not end. And whoever suffers from destitution and he beseeches Allah for it, Allah will send provisions to him, sooner or later."¹⁵

Abu Wail narrated:

"Mu'awiyah came to Abu Hashim bin 'Uthbah to visit him when he was ill (and dying). He said: 'O Uncle! Why do you cry? Is it from the pangs of death or desire for this world?' He said: 'Neither of these. But the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) had commissioned me with an obligation that I did not abide by. He (s.a.w) said: "It suffices you to gather the wealth of a servant or a rider in the cause of Allah." And (it is only) today I find that I have gathered it."¹⁶

Abdullah [bin Mas'ud] narrated that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said:

"Do not take to the estate, such that you become desirous of the world."¹⁷

Anas bin Malik narrated that the Messenger of Allah said:

"If the Son of Adam had a valley of gold, then he would still like to have a second. And nothing fills his mouth but dust, Allah turns to whoever repents."¹⁸

Abu Dharr narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w) said:

"Abstinence in the world is not by prohibiting (oneself) the lawful nor by neglecting wealth, but abstinence in the world is that you not hold more firmly to what is in your hand than to what is in the hand of Allah, and that you be more hopeful of the rewards that come with an affliction that you may suffer if it remain with you."¹⁹

Mutarraf narrated from his father, that he met up with the Prophet (s.a.w) while he was saying:

"The mutual increase diverts you". He (s.a.w) said: "The son of Adam says: ' My wealth, my wealth, but is there something for you from your wealth besides what you give in charity that remains, or you eat which perishes, or what you wear that grows worn?'"²⁰

Salamah bin 'Ubaidullah bin Mihsan Al-Khatmi narrated from his father -and he was a Companion- who said:

¹⁵ <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/36/23>

¹⁶ <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/36/24>

¹⁷ <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/36/25>

¹⁸ <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/36/34>

¹⁹ <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/36/37>

²⁰ <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/36/39>

"The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said: "Whoever among you wakes up in the morning secured in his dwelling, healthy in his body, having his food for the day, then it is as if the world has been gathered for him."²¹

Anas narrated that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said:

"O Allah! Cause me to live needy, and cause me to die needy and gather me in the group of the needy on the Day of Resurrection." 'Aishah said: "Why O Messenger of Allah?" He said: "Indeed they enter Paradise before their rich by forty autumns. O 'Aishah! Do not turn away the needy even if with a piece of date. O 'Aishah! Love the needy and be near them, for indeed Allah will make you near on the Day of Judgement."²²

Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said:

"Richness is not having many possessions, but richness is being content with oneself."²³

Ka'b bin Malik Al-Ansari narrated from his father, that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said:

"Two wolves free among sheep are no more destructive to them than a man's desire for wealth and honor is to his religion."²⁴

From the Risale-I Nur Collection by Beduizzam Said Nursi – a thematic tafseer

The Words, Thirty-Second Word, Second Stopping Place

The world has three faces:

Its First Face looks to God Almighty's Names; it displays their impress. It is a mirror to them, reflecting their meanings. This face of the world consists of innumerable letters or missives describing the Eternally Besought One. This face is utterly beautiful, and is worthy of love, not loathing.

Its Second Face looks to the hereafter. It is the seed-bed of the hereafter and arable field for Paradise.

It is the flower-bed of mercy. This face is also beautiful like the first one and is deserving of love not contempt.

Its Third Face looks to man's base appetites. It is a veil of neglect and a plaything for satisfying the desires of the worldly. This face is ugly because it is transient and mortal; it is full

²¹ <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/36/43>

²² <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/36/49>

²³ <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/36/70>

²⁴ <http://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/36/73>

of pain and it deceives. The contempt described in the Hadith and the loathing of the people of truth, then, is for this face.

The importance and approbation which the All-Wise Qur'an demonstrates towards the universe and all beings is towards the first two faces. It is the first two faces of the world that the Companions of the Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) and other people of God seek.

There are four classes of people who have contempt for the world.

The First: Those who seek knowledge of God. They have contempt for it because it is a barrier to knowledge, love, and worship of God.

The Second: Those who look to the hereafter. They see the world as ugly either because unavoidable worldly matters prevent them from doing works pertaining to the hereafter. Or, due to their elevated degree of belief, they see it as ugly in relation to the perfections and beauties of Paradise.

Indeed, in the same way that a handsome man will appear ugly when compared to the Prophet Joseph (Peace be upon him), however valuable the qualities of this world, when compared to those of Paradise, they become as nothing.

The Third: These have contempt for this world because they cannot obtain it. This contempt arises not from loathing but from love.

The Fourth: These have contempt for the world because although they obtain it, it does not stay, it leaves them. And this vexes them. They insult it in order to console themselves and say it is foul. But this arises from love of the world, whereas acceptable contempt arises from love of the hereafter and the love that springs from knowledge of God.

That is to say, acceptable contempt is of the first two kinds. May God Almighty make us like those people. Amen.

In veneration of the Lord of the Prophets.²⁵

Al – Mathnawi Al-Nuri, Seedbed Of The Light

KNOW, O FRIEND who strives for the world. Renounce the world for the following four reasons: First: It goes swiftly and decays. The pain arising from decay and separation remove the pleasure of attainment of, or union with, something subject to decay. Second: Only pain and grief are left after pleasure. Third: The grave, which waits for you and toward which you travel, is the door to the other world. It does not accept your ornaments of the world as gifts, for in the other world they will change into error and sin. Fourth: [To understand the difference between this world and the Hereafter, reflect on] the difference between staying for an hour among enemies and vermin and among your most beloved friends and elders for years. The Lord of earthly and spiritual dominion calls you to abandon that hour of pleasure so that you may have perfect comfort and satisfaction in the company of your beloved ones in those years. So answer His call before you are sent to Him fettered. All glory be to God, how great are His Mercy and Favor toward humanity. He buys the property that He has entrusted to us for a very high price, and preserves it permanently for us. If we claim ownership of it and do not sell it to God, we are exposed to great calamity and misfortune, as our power is so small and insufficient that we cannot preserve and carry it. If we try to carry it, it will prove too heavy for us to carry. It will disappear swiftly and go for nothing, leaving to us only our sins.²⁶

²⁵ <http://www.erisale.com/index.jsp?locale=en#content.en.201.653>

²⁶ https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/sgia/imeis/masnavinuriye_ingilizce_23_02_07.pdf

Fethullah Gulen – Reflections Of The Quran – a thematic tafseer

But seek, by means of what God has granted you, the abode of the Hereafter... (Al-Qasas 28:77)

But seek, by means of what God has granted you, the abode of the Hereafter (by spending in alms and other good causes), without forgetting your share (which God has appointed) in this world. (Al-Qasas 28:77)

Some have interpreted this verse as calling people to seek the world or a happy worldly life. However, as those who have some knowledge of Arabic will admit, the verse orders to seek the afterlife. The verb “ibtaghi,” which is translated as “seek,” means to pursue an aim with all one’s being and capacity as well as with all one’s faculties, such as the mind, heart, feelings, consciousness, comprehension, health, wealth, and offspring. The second part of the verse— “without forgetting (or do not forget) your share (which God has appointed) in this world”— balances this “seeking.” That is, we must pursue “the abode of the Hereafter” with all our capacity and faculties; gaining eternal happiness must be our goal in this life, but we should attend to this life as well. We should not beg from others, nor should we live dependent on others. By working and earning in lawful ways, we must meet our essential needs, as well as the needs of those for whose livelihood we are responsible. If we neglect the main order in the verse and understand it as calling us to work only for our worldly life and calling others to worldliness, this will be a great error. Such an understanding also contradicts with the verse, “God has bought from the believers their selves and wealth because Paradise is for them” (At-Tawbah 9:111), and reduces the Qur’ān to a book that contains contradictions.

The verse gives us this criterion: Seek the world in proportion to its value, and seek the Hereafter proportionately to its value. The world is like the “Plain of ‘Arafat” (where the pilgrims stay for some time on the Eve of the Festive Day of Sacrifice) for the people whose souls are content and at rest with the Divine Religion. And the life-span spent in this fleeting world is but like the Eve of the Festive Day spent on the Plain of ‘Arafat. We will, therefore, reach the Festive Day beyond this world. Thus, our criterion must be sound, and we must live this short life-span in this world without wasting even a single minute.

If a pilgrim misses the time of staying on the Plain ‘Arafat on the Eve of the Festive Day, he or she will miss the pilgrimage that year but can compensate for it the next year. But if we waste our worldly life on trivialities or miss living our worldly ‘Arafat—that is, miss the opportunity of living our worldly life in a profitable way—we will not be given a second chance or second life in the world as a means of compensation.

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “What business can I have with the world! I am but a traveler who takes a rest under the shadow of a tree and then goes on his way leaving it.” This hadīth does not mean renouncing the world totally, but it teaches us our position in the world. In another hadīth our Prophet said, “If the world had had as much value in God’s sight as the gnat of a fly, He would not have given an unbeliever even a sip of water from it.”

While it is God Who has created the world with whatever is in it, those who deny God should have no right in benefiting from the world. But purely out of His infinite Mercy, God Almighty allows unbelievers to live in the world and provides for them. However, since there is an eternal realm beyond this world where unbelievers will find no happiness, God does not disturb their enjoyment in this world out of His Mercy.

As Said Nursi states, “A thousands years of happy life of this world is not equal to even one hour of the Hereafter. Likewise, a thousands years of happy life in the Hereafter is not equal to even one minute of seeing the Beauty of God.” Accordingly, we are seeking such a life described above. Thus, how much value can this world have in comparison to the Hereafter so that we can attempt to compare it with Hereafter? We have in average sixty-year lifespan in this world, half of which passes in sleeping. Hence, what value can such a life have? Therefore, to overvalue this world by transgressing the limits of balanced thinking and to compare the world and the Hereafter in equal terms mean a lack of true understanding of the Qur’ān and the essentials of the religion.

In addition, Bediüzzaman Said Nursi has a very meaningful approach to the world, which I have not seen in another. He says that the world has three facets: one looking to the All-Beautiful Names of God, the second looking to the fact that it is the field of the Hereafter, and the third relating to human desires and lusts.

In regard to being a polished mirror of God’s All-Beautiful Names, this world is an invaluable realm. We love it very much in respect of this. It is an arable field to be sown with the seeds of the Hereafter, and we could not have been candidates for the Hereafter if we had not been sent to this fleeting world. The world has an exceptional value in respect to this as well. As for the third aspect of the world, which allures our desires and lusts, it is worse than it seems to be. In other words, if people are caught up in their personal pleasures and forget the afterlife, then this world is despicable and deserving of contempt.

Nursi also says that the world should be renounced at heart, not by way of working and earning one’s life. If we approach the world from these viewpoints of Nursi, we will have no problem with the world. One who deals with the world and has relations with it from these perspectives can work, earn as much money as possible in the lawful ways, and become rich. For such people can donate all their earnings in God’s cause and for the needy. Among the Companions of God’s Messenger, ‘Abdur-Rahman ibn ‘Awf was very wealthy. Once he spent in charity seven hundred camels’ load of wealth. God’s Messenger said nothing negative to him because of his richness; he only warned him to carry out what fell to him as a duty in return for it and encouraged him to spend a good portion out of his wealth in God’s cause and for the needy by giving him the glad tidings of Paradise in return.

As recorded in some books on the merits of Prophets and other virtuous, saintly people, angels once said to God: “Our Lord! You are calling Prophet Abraham ‘My Close Friend.’ How can he prove worthy of such a position despite his wealth?” God Almighty sent a few angels to test Abraham. The angels came to Abraham pretending to be long-road travelers in shabby clothes and messy looking, and they told him that they were hungry. Abraham, upon him be peace, immediately slaughtered a sheep, cooked it, and served his guests. Before starting to eat, the angels said the supplication particular to them: “All-Glorified and All-Holy, the Lord of the angels and the Spirit” instead of saying “In the name of God.” This supplication fascinated the pure soul of Abraham to the extent that he begged them to repeat it, saying: “Take one-fourth

of my sheep, please repeat what you said.” When the angels repeated the supplication, Abraham requested them to repeat once more, saying: “Take half of my sheep, please one more time.” Finally, he gave all of his sheep to the angels in return for this supplication. This means that that great Messenger of God, upon him be peace, renounced the world at heart, not by way of working and earning his living.

Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, said nothing condemning richness and earning. Even though some hadīths imply this, they are concerning particular cases. If it is asked why he did not become rich, the answer will be as follows: he descended from a poor family. Besides, if he had become rich, since he was the chief representative of a lofty cause, there might be some speculations about both his wealth and his cause. For this reason, God’s Messenger preferred remaining poor knowingly and intentionally. We should also view scholars, saints, and saintly scholars who have preferred poverty in the footsteps of God’s Messenger from the same perspective.

In consequence, we should remember once more that what is essential in the religion is renouncing the world at heart, not by way of working to earn one’s life. The world should have no place in our hearts and should not cause us to forget the Hereafter. Otherwise, the world will dominate us, and all the seconds of our life lived for the sake of a “better” worldly life will go in vain. In order to be able to be protected against such an end, we should have recourse to the dynamics which will increase our will-power. For example, accurate and sound knowledge of God reinforces our willpower and faith. If you desire and make plans to live an easy, luxurious life and begin making efforts to raise your standard of life, knowledge of God comes to your aid at just this point. One of our friends visited a house. As he was sitting up in the balcony which oversees the sea, a desire to live in such a lovely house arose in his heart. That friend, who felt a desire to live a long, easy life, immediately left the house. The thought coming from knowledge of God that even a thousand years of life in Paradise would not be equal to a minute’s view of God’s Beauty saved him from that ambition and caused him to leave the house.

In short, understanding the part of the verse, “without forgetting your share in this world,” as a call to the world is not a true understanding based on the Qur’ān. In my opinion, a human being can desire a long life so long as they live it like Bediüzzaman without wasting even a minute of it. One should desire life in order to make others live and strive for the guidance and perfection of humanity. One should desire wealth to spend it in God’s cause and for the wellbeing of others and live life in the direction of gaining the eternal happiness. This direction should urge one to earn in lawful ways and spend for lawful goals and licit pleasures. Earning in unlawful ways and spending for illicit pleasures bring pain upon pain.

Let me conclude this discussion with a saying of the pride of humankind, upon him be peace and blessings: “Everyone should reserve something from his own self for his own self, from his world for his afterlife, from his youth for his old age, and from his life for his death. I swear by God in Whose hand is my life that no excuse will be accepted after death, and no place will exist except Paradise and Hell after this world.”

May God bestow blessings and peace on him and his brothers from among the Messengers and Prophets, and on the angels near-stationed to God, and on God's good, righteous servants.²⁷

Fethullah Gulen – Questions And Answers – a thematic tafseer

Why Are There Fortunate and Unfortunate People?

God bestows material wealth and poverty upon individuals for reasons known only to Him. For example, a poor person might inherit wealth when a rich family member or relative dies. Some people inherit intelligence, shrewdness, and business acumen, while others who could undertake these responsibilities successfully are denied the chance to do so.

The Prophet is reported to have said that God bestows this world's goods upon whomever He pleases, but knowledge only upon those who petition Him for it. This hadith, although defectively transmitted, is most significant. Clearly, material possessions should not be seen as necessarily good in themselves. God does not always bestow material security and happiness upon those who ask Him for such things.

There is good in whatever He bestows. For the faithful individual who does good deeds and gives in charity some of what has been bestowed, wealth is a means of good. If, however, the individual is of weak faith and has strayed from the path of right action and charity, wealth becomes a means of evil. For someone who has deserted the path of right action, poverty might be just the excuse needed to engage in inner or outer (or both) rebellion against God. Those who do not submit totally to God, or who do not try sincerely to act upon the teachings of Islam, will find their wealth a means of distress, a severe and demanding test: Know that your children and your worldly goods are but a trial and a temptation, and that God's reward is great (8:28).

We should recall here a saying of the Prophet: "Among you are such people that if they raise their hands and swear by God, He grants them whatever they want and never makes them swear falsely. Bara ibn Malik is one of them." This man, the younger brother of Anas, lived a life of complete poverty at the barest level of subsistence, not having enough food or a place to sleep. Although poor and ragged in appearance, such people were the most loved and appreciated for their sincere piety. They were praised, and their actions were esteemed in the Prophet's assurance that they were among those whose promises God Himself keeps.

It is recorded that once when 'Umar entered the Prophet's room, he saw upon the Prophet's back the marks of the rough matting upon which he had been sleeping. He began to cry, asking why the Byzantine and Persian emperors lived in such pomp and luxury while the Messenger slept on so rough a bed. The Prophet replied: "Don't you agree that they should have this world and we the Hereafter?" Years later during his caliphate, when the treasures of these two empires flowed into the Muslim treasury, 'Umar continued to live a life of bare subsistence.

It is not poverty in itself that is good, but rather the state of mind that has disciplined (and triumphed over) the worldly self (nafs) and set its sight upon eternal life. Poverty may be a

²⁷ <http://fgulen.com/en/fethullah-gulens-works/faith/fethullah-gulen-reflections-on-the-quran/313-suratul-qasas-the-narrative/34000-al-qasas-28-77>

means to achieve that state of mind. But in some people it leads to inner distress, rancor, and ingratitude toward God, which is a root of unbelief. Similarly, affluence and material security may delude certain people into pride and self-esteem, causing them to neglect the needs of others and their debt to God. Such arrogance and ingratitude also is a root of unbelief.

The surest way for believers to progress is to understand that whatever God gives is designed to perfect them. Regardless of personal circumstances, believers should strive to improve the welfare of others and trust inwardly and outwardly in the All-Mighty and All-Merciful. The best attitude toward this world, which is only a resting place on the way to our everlasting destination, is expressed in this brief poem:

I accept, my Lord, whatever comes to me from You,
 For whatever comes to me from You is my good;
 Whether a robe of honor comes or a shroud,
 Whether a sharp thorn or a sweet, fresh rose,
 If it comes with Your blessing, it is my good that comes.²⁸

Fethullah Gulen – Sufism 1 – a thematic tafseer

Zuhd (Asceticism)

Asceticism, which literally means renouncing worldly pleasures and resisting carnal desires, is defined by Sufis as indifference to worldly appetites, living an austere life, choosing to refrain from sin in fear of God, and despising the world's carnal and material aspects. Asceticism is also described as renouncing this world's temporary ease and comfort for the sake of eternal happiness in the Hereafter. The first step in asceticism is the intention to avoid what has been forbidden and to engage only in what has been allowed. The second and final step is being extremely careful even when engaging in what is allowed.

An ascetic is steadfast in fulfilling his or her responsibilities, is not defeated by misfortune, and who avoids the traps of sin and evil encountered during the journey. With the exception of unbelief and misguidance, an ascetic is pleased with how the Creator decides to treat him or

²⁸ <http://fgulen.com/en/fethullah-gulens-works/faith/questions-and-answers/24515-why-are-there-fortunate-and-unfortunate-people>

her, seeks to attain God's pleasure and the eternal abode through the blessings and bounties the He bestows, and directs others to the absolute Truth. In the ear of his or her heart, the Divine announcement is echoed: Say: The enjoyment of this world is short; and the Hereafter is better for him who obeys God's commandments in fear of Him (4:77). The command: Seek the abode of the Hereafter in that which God has given you, and forget not your portion of the world (28:77) radiates itself through all the cells of his or her brain. The Divine warning: This life of the world is but a pastime and a game, but the home of the Hereafter, that is Life if they but knew (29:64) penetrates his or her innermost senses.

Some have described asceticism as observing the rules of Shari'a even in moments of depression and especially during financial difficulties, and living for others or considering their well-being and happiness while enjoying well-being and comfort. Others have defined it as thankfulness for God's bounties and fulfilling the obligations that these bounties bring with them, and as refraining from hoarding money and goods (except for the intention to serve, exalt, and promote Islam).

Such renowned Sufi leaders as Sufyan al-Thawri regarded asceticism as the action of a heart set up according to God's approval and pleasure and closed to worldly ambitions, rather than as being content with simple food and clothes. According to these Sufis, there are three signs of a true ascetic: feeling no joy at worldly things acquired or grief over worldly things missed, feeling no pleasure when praised or displeasure when criticized or blamed, and preferring to serve God over every other thing.

Like fear and hope, asceticism is an action of the heart; however, asceticism differs in that it affects one's acts and is displayed through them. Whether consciously or unconsciously, a true ascetic tries to follow the rules of asceticism in all acts, such as eating and drinking, going to bed and getting up, talking and keeping silent, and remaining in retreat or with people. An ascetic shows no inclination toward worldly attractions. Rumi expresses this in the following apt words:

What is the world? It is heedlessness of God;

Not clothes, nor silver coin, nor children, nor women.

If you have worldly possessions in the name of God,

Then the Messenger said: How fine is the property a righteous man has!

The water in a ship causes it to sink,

While the water under it causes it to float.

Having worldly means or wealth are not contrary to asceticism if those who possess them can control them and are not overpowered by them. Nevertheless, the glory of humanity, upon him be peace and blessings, the truest ascetic in all respects, chose to live as the poorest of his people, for he had to set the most excellent example for his community especially for those charged with propagating and promoting the truth. Thus, he would not lead others to think that the sacred mission of Prophethood could be abused to earn worldly advantage.

He also had to follow his predecessors, who proclaimed: My reward is only due from God (10:72; 11:29), and to set an example for those future scholars who would convey his Message. For these and similar other reasons, he led an austere life. How beautiful are the following couplets by Busayri, which express how the Prophet preserved his innocence and indifference even at the time of absolute need and poverty:

Not to feel hunger, he wound a girdle around his belly
 Over the stones pressing upon his blessed stomach.
 Huge mountains wishing themselves gold offered themselves to him,
 But he that noble man remained indifferent to them.
 His urgent needs decisively showed his asceticism,
 For those needs were not able to impair his innocence.
 How could needs have been able to invite to the world the one
 But for whom the world would not have come into being out of non-existence?

There are many beautiful sayings on asceticism. The following, with which we conclude this topic, belongs to 'Ali, the fourth Caliph and cousin of the Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings:

The soul weeps in desire of the world despite the fact that
 It knows that salvation lies in renouncing it and what is in it.
 A man will have no abode to dwell in after his death
 Except that which he builds before he dies.
 Our goods we hoard them to bequeath to heirs;
 Our houses we build them to be ruined by time.
 There are many towns built and then ruined;
 Their builders death has come upon them.
 Every soul even if it somehow fears death,
 It cherishes ambitions to strengthen its desire to live.
 Man exhibits his ambitions but time obliterates them;

Man's soul multiplies them but death puts an end to them.

O God! Show us truth as true and enable us to follow it. Show us falsehood as false, and provide us with the means to refrain from it. Amen, O Most Compassionate of the Compassionate.²⁹

²⁹ <http://fgulen.com/en/fethullah-gulens-works/sufism/key-concepts-in-the-practice-of-sufism-1/24733-zuhd-asceticism>