

Dunya and Aakhira - Reflections from Surah Al-Hadid

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُمْ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي
الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ
مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

Know that this worldly life is no more than play, amusement, luxury, mutual boasting, and competition in wealth and children. This is like rain that causes plants to grow, to the delight of the planters. But later the plants dry up and you see them wither, then they are reduced to chaff. And in the Hereafter there will be either severe punishment or forgiveness and pleasure of Allah, whereas the life of this world is no more than the delusion of enjoyment.

@lqraSense

Surah Al-Hadid, 20 - Quran

Let's ponder this very powerful verse from the Noble Quran (see image above)

Let us take a moment to reflect deeply on this life - the dunya we are living in. This dunya, as alluring as it may seem, is nothing more than a

fleeting illusion - a shimmering mirage that promises joy, beauty, and accomplishment, only to leave us grasping at shadows.

The Illusion of this Dunya (World)

Day after day, the dunya - the transient world around us - and the whispers of Shaytaan (Devil) pull us into their captivating dance. They dazzle us with the glitter of wealth, the allure of possessions, and the pride that comes with fleeting achievements. We find ourselves chasing after more - a better home, a fancier car, a higher paycheck - as if these things define our worth. Shaytaan whispers in our ears, convincing us that our success, our value, and even our happiness are tied to what we can accumulate in this world. ***And we follow, don't we? We run faster, we push harder, all in pursuit of things that ultimately slip through our fingers like grains of sand.***

Think about it: how often do we measure ourselves against others? How often do we feel a pang of envy when someone achieves something we desire - whether it's wealth, recognition, or status? The dunya feeds this comparison, making us believe that life is a competition to outshine, to outdo, to outrun. ***But here's the truth, my friends: every glittering treasure, every ounce of pride we feel for our accomplishments, is temporary.*** It doesn't matter how much wealth we accumulate or how many accolades we receive - when we leave this world, none of it will follow us.

Allah reminds us in the Quran:

أَلِهَاتِكُمُ التَّكَاثُرُ
حَتَّى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ

“The mutual rivalry for piling up of worldly things diverts you, until you visit the graves” (Surah At-Takathur 102:1-2).

All that we chase after, all that dazzles us, ends the moment we return to the dust.

The Dance of Dunya (World) Will End

So, ask yourselves, my friends: when the dance of dunya ends, what will remain? Will it be the wealth that we spent a lifetime accumulating? Will it be the recognition that fades as quickly as it came? Or will it be the deeds that we sent ahead, the moments of sincerity, the sacrifices made for Allah's sake? *Shaytaan wants us to forget this reality.* He wants us to keep spinning in this dance until it's too late, until we realize - when standing before our Creator - that we chased the wrong goals. Let us wake up now, before the music of this dunya fades, and choose a path that leads to what truly endures. Let us remind ourselves that this dunya, no matter how captivating, is but a fleeting illusion. What matters is how we use it to draw closer to Allah, to earn His pleasure and His mercy (*Rahma*), and to prepare for the everlasting life that awaits us.

Allah, in His infinite wisdom, reminds us in this verse of Surah Al-Hadid:

“Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in wealth and children” (Surah Al-Hadid 57:20).

But if we ponder deeply, - what are we truly striving for? Allah likens this dunya to rain that nourishes the earth. At first, it brings lush greenery that pleases the eye, but soon it fades. The vibrant plants wither, their golden hues turning to dust, scattered by the winds. Such is the fate of worldly pursuits - temporary, fragile, and ultimately unsatisfying.

Looking for the Eternal Truth

But within this fleeting existence lies a greater, eternal truth: the reality of the Aakhirah (Hereafter). Beyond the illusions of this dunya awaits the Hereafter, where every deed - no matter how small - is weighed, and eternity stretches before us. Allah reminds us of this stark reality in Surah Al-Zalzalah:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ
وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

“So whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it” (99:7-8).

The Aakhirah offers two outcomes: the torment of severe punishment or the infinite mercy of Allah’s forgiveness and His divine approval - His *Fadl* (bounty) and *Rahma* (mercy). The choice, my dear friends, is ours. Will we chase the fleeting delusions of this dunya, or will we strive for the eternal pleasure of our Creator? Allah paints the choice clearly in the Quran: indulgence and heedlessness on one side, or remembrance and purpose on the other. ***Which will we choose?*** It is a call to raise our gaze beyond the transient horizon of this world, to envision the eternal gardens of Jannah promised to those who surrender to Allah’s will - ***gardens beneath which rivers flow, a place of Rahma beyond comprehension.***

Our Choices and Our Path Forward

And so, I ask you: what, then, is this worldly life except a fleeting mirage? Its beauty deceives; its permanence is an illusion. Yet, for those who awaken to this reality, life becomes something far greater - it becomes a bridge, a means to draw closer to Allah, to sow the seeds of an eternal harvest.

The wise among us understand that this life is not the destination but a temporary stop on the journey to the everlasting Akhirah. As Allah reminds us in Surah Al-Ankabut:

وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهُوٌّ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

“And the life of this world is nothing but amusement and diversion, and the Hereafter is the true life if only they knew” (29:64).

Let us, therefore, hold the blessings of this dunya lightly, appreciating them but never letting them define our purpose. Let us live with balance, striving always for the lasting rewards that lie beyond this world. Together, let us walk this path with humility, gratitude, and sincerity, sending forth deeds that will bear weight *on the Day when no wealth or children will benefit us, except those who come to Allah with a sound heart*

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ
إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

(see Surah Ash-Shu'ara 26:88-89).

May Allah guide us to this realization, make our hearts rich in faith, and our deeds abundant and meaningful. Ameen.