

131088 - Meaning of the verse {and [yet], do not forget your share of the world}

the question

What is the meaning of the verse {and [yet], do not forget your share of the world} [al-Qasas 28:77]?

Detailed answer

There are two famous scholarly views regarding the interpretation of this verse.

The first view:

is that the meaning is: Do not forget your share of what Allah has permitted to you in this world of food, drink, clothing, housing and marriage, for your Lord has a right over you, your own self has a right over you, and your wife has a right over you." (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir* 6/253).

This is the view of al-Hasan, Qatadah and Ibn Jurayj.

Imam Malik (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about this verse, and he said: It means living, eating and drinking without imposing unnecessary restrictions on oneself." (*Al-Muntaqa* 4/302).

This view is supported by the words that precede these: { But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter} [al-Qasas 28:77]. In other words: use what Allah has given you of this abundant wealth and blessings to obey your Lord and seek to draw close to Him by doing different acts of worship and righteous deeds, through which you may attain reward in the hereafter, yet at the same time do not forget your share of this world.

So We do not instruct you to give all your wealth in charity and leave yourself destitute; rather spend for your hereafter and enjoy your life in this world in such a way that will not

harm your faith or your hereafter.

See: *Tafsir at-Tabari* (19/625); *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (6/253); *Zad al-Masir* (6/241); *Tafsir as-Sa'di* (p. 623).

Islam takes a middle course with regard to striving for this world and the hereafter, for both come under the heading of worshipping Allah, may He be exalted, and fulfilling the purpose for which humans were created, within certain conditions. Other religions and ideologies, on the other hand, waiver between focusing solely on materialistic matters, as in the case of modern Western civilisation, whose object of worship is wealth, power, luxury and material prosperity, and scorning material prosperity and worldly enjoyment, as in the case of religions and ideologies that promote monasticism and mortification of the flesh for the purpose of spiritual benefit and discipline in order to attain annihilation of the self or ego death. But in Islam, Allah, may He be exalted, says:

{Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire} [al-Baqarah 2:201]

{But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters} [al-Qasas 28:177].

Buhuth Nadwah Athar al-Qur'an fi Tahqiq al-Wasatiyyah wa Daf' al-Ghulu (p. 400).

The second view:

is that it means do not forget your share of this world, but use it as a means to attain your goals in the hereafter.

This view was favoured by most of the commentators, and it is the view of 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him).

Ash-Shawkani said:

The majority of commentators said that it means striving during the life of this world for the hereafter, and the person's share [of this world] is his lifespan and his righteous deeds.

Az-Zajjaj said: What it means is: do not forget to strive for your hereafter, because a person's true share of this world is what he uses for his hereafter."(*Fath al-Qadir* 4/266).

It was narrated that Mujahid said: It is your lifespan, during which you strive for your hereafter."(*Tafsir Ibn Abi Hatim* 9/3010).

Mujahid also said: Do not fail to strive in this world for the hereafter, so that you may be saved from punishment, because a person's true share of this world is striving for the hereafter."(*Tafsir al-Baghawi* 6/221).

'Awn ibn 'Abdillah said: Some people misunderstand the words {and [yet], do not forget your share of the world}, but what it really means is: Strive in this world to obey Allah [and do righteous deeds]."(*Tafsir at-Tabari* 19/524).

At-Tabari said: It means: do not ignore your share in this world, and use your share in this world for the hereafter; strive in this world to do that which will save you from the punishment of Allah in the future."(*Tafsir at-Tabari* 19/524).

Al-Qurtubi said: There was a difference of opinion concerning it. Ibn 'Abbaas and the majority said: [It means:] do not waste your life by failing to strive in doing righteous deeds in this world, because the hereafter is something to be striven for. So a person's share [in this world] is his lifespan and the righteous deeds he does in his life. Hence according to this interpretation, it is a strict kind of exhortation.

Al-Hasan and Qatadah said: What it means is: Do not neglect your share in this world, in the sense of enjoying what is permissible and seeking it, and at the same time think of the outcome of your life in this world. According to this interpretation, there is some gentleness in this phrase, and advice to take care of what one desires."(*Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an* 13/314).

There is no contradiction between the two views, because the believer should not forget his share of this world, and he may have some permissible enjoyment that will not draw him towards what is prohibited. This type of permissible enjoyment will help him to obey Allah, may He be exalted, and do righteous deeds, so this enjoyment becomes like a kind of refreshment and restoration of his energy.

The believer does not forget his share of this world, which is his righteous deeds which will accompany him in his grave. Hence Allah, may He be exalted, praises those who offer the supplication: {Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire} [al-Baqarah 2:201].

Ibn Kathir said:

This supplication combines seeking everything that is good in this world and warding off everything that is bad. For what is good in this world includes everything that is desirable in this realm, such as well-being, a comfortable home, a beautiful wife, abundant provision, beneficial knowledge, righteous deeds, an amenable mount, the commendation of others, and other things that the commentators have listed. There is no contradiction between them, because all of that comes under the heading of what is good in this world.

With regard to what is good in the hereafter, first and foremost among that is admittance to Paradise and what that includes of being safe from the greatest terror in the arena of judgement, an easy reckoning and other good things in the hereafter." (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir* 1/558).

And Allah knows best.