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A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS ON THE QURANIC PHRASE 'AL-HAYAT AL-DUNYA'

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Abstract

In this article, we will be focusing on a very important Quranic phrase, which is 'al-hayat al-dunya.' The phrase consists of the words 'al-hayat' and 'al-dunya.' Thus, first we will shortly deal with these two words separately and then investigate into the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya.'

The phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya,' as the scholars of Islam and specifically the scholars of Quranic studies understood it, is simply taken as having the meaning 'the life on the planet called World.' However, a thorough inquiry of the phrase entitles us to see that it also includes –and thus denotes– the life on any planet in the Universe.

Consequently, one might contend that a careful study of the phrase not only changes the general perspective about the deepness and inclusiveness of the Quranic phrases it also helps understand the hermeneutical wisdom of the Quranic studies in general.

Keywords: Quranic Studies, Quranic Wisdom, Al-Hayat Al-Dunya.

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Introduction

It is well known that many words (and concepts) that appear in the Quran have various meanings depending on their contexts. In the discipline of Quranic Studies, such words are called ‘the words that have different versions of meaning’ (in Arabic: *kelimâtun dû wujûh*) (al-Suyûtî, nd.: I/141). These kinds of words (Muqâtil, 1993: 13-182 (Arabic part); Al-Zarkashî, 1391:102-111; Demirci, 1998: 178-179) often times have meanings that are close to one another. However, they might bring about important changes of perspectives in our understanding of the Quran. Therefore, when translating or simply studying the Quran, one has to fully comprehend and take into consideration the principle that the meaning of a word appearing in the Quran might change depending on its context, which is normally crucial in the discipline of Quranic Studies. In all other respects, it is highly likely that some misunderstandings or even deviations of meaning in the study of the Quran will emerge (Al-Suyûtî, nd.: I/141-142; Güngör, 1996: 131-132).

That is the case for the phrase ‘al-hayat al-dunya.’ In other words, taking a phrase into consideration with the same meaning every time it appears in the Quran would bring about a deviation in meaning or at least a semantic shift. Thus, one ought to translate the phrase ‘al-hayat al-dunya’ by considering the context in which it appears in the Quran.

We find that the phrase as it appears in many verses of the Quran displays a very intricate semantic disposition and thus out to be studied very carefully. Depending on this point, we will examine the phrase in detail. However, considering the scope and the limits of this article, only some of the possible meanings associated with the two words that constitute the phrase will be included.

A – The term ‘al-hayat’

1 – The meaning(s) of the term ‘al-hayat’

The word ‘al-hayat’ (الحياة) is an infinitive form stemming from the root-word ‘hayy’ (حي) (For different views concerning the root-word, spelling and pronunciation of the word “al-hayat,” see: Al-Khalîl, 1988: ha-y-v; Ibn Dureyd, nd.: ha-y-y; Al-Râzi, nd.: ha-y-y; Al-Jawharî, 1990: ha-y-y; Ibn Manzûr, 2003: IV/292; Al-Zebîdî, 1414/1994: ha-y-y). The word “hayy” as a verb in the Arabic language is used as having meanings such as “opposite of death,” “to live,” “to become alive and fresh,” and “to have life.” (For extensive information, see: Al-Isfahânî, 1418/1998: ha-y-y; Al-

Râzî, nd.: ha-y-y; Al-Jawharî, 1990: ha-y-y; Ibn Manzûr, 2003: IV/292-299; Al-Zebîdî, 1414/1994: ha-y-y; Asım Efendi, 1304: IV/934) By extension, it also came to signify some other meanings different than the ones mentioned above (See: al-Râzî, nd.: ha-y-y; Al-Jawharî, 1990: ha-y-y; Ibn Manzûr, 2003: IV/292-299; Al-Zebîdî, 1414/1994: ha-y-y; Asım Efendi, 1304: IV/934-937). The word 'al-hayat' was also said to be "the name of a river in paradise making everything alive that comes in touch with it." (Al-Khalîl, 1988: ha-y-v). In this article, we will be focusing on the various usages of the word in the Quran and its relation with the word 'al-dunya.'

2 – The meanings of the word 'al-hayat' in the Quran

The root-word of 'al-hayat' has many various usages in the Quran (For those usages and the relevant meanings, see: Muqâtil, 1993: 108-109; Al-Isfahânî, 1418/1998: ha-y-y). The many words stemming from the root-word 'hayy' are mentioned in the Quran 190-odd times (See: Abdulbaqi, 1417/1996: 273-277). On the other hand, the word 'al-hayat' with different forms is mentioned in 50 chapters (*surahs*) of the Quran (For more information, see: Aydar, 2007: 34-45).

The word 'al-hayat' appears in the Quran in various forms and patterns. Whereas some of them are in verb form such as *past*, *imperfect*, and *imperative* modes in singular, two-person-plural or more-than-two-person-plural forms, some others are in the noun forms. In addition to its usages in infinitive form, there are also the kinds of usages of 'al-hayat' in trilateral (*sulâsî*), four-letter (*rubâî*), and six-letter (*sudâsî*) forms. Sometimes it was used in such a form as noun (حَيٍّ = hayy) (Al-Anfal, 8/42; Meryem, 19/31; Al-Enbiya, 21/30; Yasin, 36/70) meaning 'to be alive' and simply 'to live.' As a matter fact, it was used with this meaning in the following verse: "You [Allah] cause the night to enter the day, and You cause the day to enter the night; and You bring the living (الْحَيِّ = al-hayy) out of the dead, and You bring the dead out of the living (الْحَيِّ = al-hayy). And You give provision to whom You will without account." (Al-i Imran, 3/27). Whereas it was used generally with literal meaning in such verses, it was used figuratively in the following verses: "... And whoever saves one – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely. ..." (Al-Maide, 5/32). "O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger [Prophet Muhammad] when he calls you to that which gives you life." (Al-Anfal, 8/24).

Occasionally, the word was also used in the Quran with the meaning of 'coming into life,' for instance: "And Allah has sent down rain from the sky

and given life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness. . ." (An-Nahl, 16/65. Also see: Al-Bakara, 2/164; Al-Ankebut, 29/63; Ar-Rum, 30/19).

The word was also used in the Quran with such meanings as 'to wish well-being' and 'to greet,' (See: al-Zemahsherî, 1418/1998: IV/478) like in the following verses: "But when you enter houses, give greetings of peace upon each other – a greeting [تَحِيَّةٌ = tahiyyah] from Allah, blessed and good." (Al-Nur, 24/61) "Those will be awarded the Chamber for what they patiently endured, and they will be received therein with greetings and [words of] peace." (Al-Furkan, 25/75; Al-Ahzab, 33/44). ". . . And their greeting therein [in Paradise] will be, 'Peace.'" (Yunus, 10/10. Also see: Ibrahim, 14/23).

In another verse, the word appears with three different forms, past passive, infinitive and imperative, all of which are in the same meaning: (See: Al-Zemahsherî, 1418/1998: I/533) "And when you are greeted (حَيِّتُمْ = huyyîtum) with a greeting (تَحِيَّةٌ = tahiyyah), greet (حَيُّوا = hayyû) [in return] with one better than it or [at least] return it [in a like manner]. Indeed, Allah took count over all things." (Al-Nisa, 4/86). However, it should be noted that some scholars of the Quranic exegesis stated that the word 'tahiyyah' and the other two words coming from it, all of which appear in this verse, in fact denote 'peace' (See: al-Fakhr al-Razi, 1401/1981: X/214) and thus the meaning of the verse would be as follows: "When you have a peace offer, return it with one better than it or [at least] return it in a like manner [accept it as it is]." (M. Öztürk, 2011: 125)

There is also a meaning associated with the word 'al-hayat,' which is "to get shy, to become timid, to abstain." (See: Az-Zemahsherî, 1418/1998: I/117-119; Çağrıçı, 1997: XVI/554). The following verse is an example of the word used with that meaning: "Indeed, Allah is not timid (لَا يَسْتَحْيِي = la yastahyi) to present an example – that of a mosquito or what is smaller than it." (Al-Bakara, 2/26) The word "istihya" as the derivative of the word 'al-hayat' implies "shyness, decency." And these meanings are already included in the meanings of the word 'al-hayat.' (See: Ibn Manzur, 2003: IV/293; Çağrıçı, 1997: XVI/554). Consequently, one can contend that the word 'al-hayat' denotes the meaning 'to keep sharp and alive' given that a person who is devoid of shyness or decency can be seen as morally dead (For more information concerning the concept 'hayâ,' see: Çağrıçı, 1997: XVI/554-555).

The word also appears in the Quran as 'hayy' in the meaning 'alive' and as 'ahyâ' (أَحْيَا), which is the plural form of 'hayy.' When it appears in the Quran as 'al-hayy' (Topaloğlu, 1997: XVI/549-550) it points out one of the names of God with the meaning "the one who is alive and undying, everlasting." (al-Zajjâj, nd.: 56) For instance, it appears in the following verses with the above-mentioned meaning: "Allah – there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence (الْحَيُّ = el-Hayy)..." (Al-Bakara, 2/255; Al-i Imran, 3/2. Also see: Taha, 20/111; al-Furkan, 25/58; al-Gafir, 40/65). When it appears as the plural form of 'hayy,' it points out that the martyrs are not dead as opposed to being alive: "And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allah, 'They are dead.' Rather, they are alive (أَحْيَاءُ = ahyâ), but you perceive [it] not." (Al-Bakara, 2/154. Also see: Al-i Imran, 3/169).

Some of these usages have the metaphorical meanings. The following verse is an example of the usage of the word with metaphorical meaning: "And not equal are the living and the dead. ." (Fatir, 35/22). A number of scholars such as Al-Süddî (d. 128/745), Muqatil b. Süleyman (d. 150/767), Al-Zajjac (d. 311/923), Al-Zemahsherî (d. 538/1143) and some others contended that while the phrase 'the living (ahyâ)' in this verse points out the people who embraced Islam as a religion, the phrase 'the dead (emvât)' points out the people who did not become Muslim (See: al-Süddî al-Kebir, 1414/1993: 394; Muqatil, 1423: III/556; al-Zajjaj, 1408/1988: IV/268; al-Mâwardî, nd.: IV/469; Al-Zemahsherî, 1418/1998: V/150).

In this context, it should be mentioned that another name of God stemming from the root word 'hayy,' appears in the Quran as 'Muhyî' (Concerning the fact that 'Muhyî' is a name of God, see: Al-Zeccâc, 1408/1988: 56) in the meaning 'the one who gives life.' (See: Al-Rûm, 30/50; Fussilet, 41/39) One verse that includes the name 'Muhyî' is as follows: "So observe the effects of the mercy of Allah – how He gives life to the earth after its lifelessness. Indeed, that [same one] will give life [مُحْيِي = Muhyi] to the dead, and He is over all things competent." (Al-Rum, 30/50).

Coming from the same root, the word 'mahyâ' also appears in the Quran (See: Al-En'am, 6/162; Al-Câsiye, 45/21) as denoting the meaning 'life' or 'a certain period of time spent in the world': "Say, 'Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living [مَحْيَا = mahyâye] and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds.'" (Al-En'am, 6/162). It should also be mentioned that the word Yahya (يَحْيَى = Yahya), which comes from the same root word, appears in the Quran as a name of a prophet (See: Âl-i Imrân, 3/39; Al-En'am, 6/85; Meryem, 19/7, 12; Al-Enbiyâ, 21/90).

The word 'al-hayat' appears in the Quran 76 places. In 64 places out of them, it appears as the first part of the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya,' which is widely construed as having the meaning 'the life in this world.' (See: Abdulbâkî, 1417/1996: 224-225).

On the other hand, it appears in the Quran as 'al-hayat' in a single definite form twice (see: Tâhâ, 20/97; al-Mülk, 67/2) and one time in its definite form modified by the word 'di'f' (ضعف) (see: al-Îsrâ, 17/75), and as 'hayat' four times in its indefinite form (See: Al-Bakara, 2/96, 179; Al-Nahl, 16/97; Al-Furkân, 25/3). A verse in which the word 'al-hayat' appears in its definite form is as follows: "[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed. . ." (Al-Mülk, 67/2). The verse in which it appears as modified by the word 'di'f' talking about the Prophet Muhammad's tendency to compromise with some of the demands of the idolaters is as follows: "Then [if you had], We would have made you taste double [punishment in] life and double [after] death. . ." (Al-Isra, 17/75).

Another verse in which the word 'al-hayat' appears with its indefinite form ('hayat') alluding to the children of Israel is as follows: "And you will surely find them the most greedy of people for life (hayat). . ." (Al-Bakara, 2/96) In terms of this type of usage of the word, it should be noted that while a verse states that "there is for you in legal retribution [,] [saving of] life. . ." (Al-Bakara, 2/179) another verse declares: "Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer – We will surely cause him to live a good life (حَيَوةً طَيِّبَةً = hayatan tayyibah). . ." (Al-Nahl, 16/97) Another verse talking about the idolaters and the idols that they worship is as follows: "But they have taken besides Him gods which create nothing, while they are created, and possess not for themselves any harm or benefit and possess not [power to cause] death or life ('hayat') or resurrection." (Al-Furkan, 25/3).

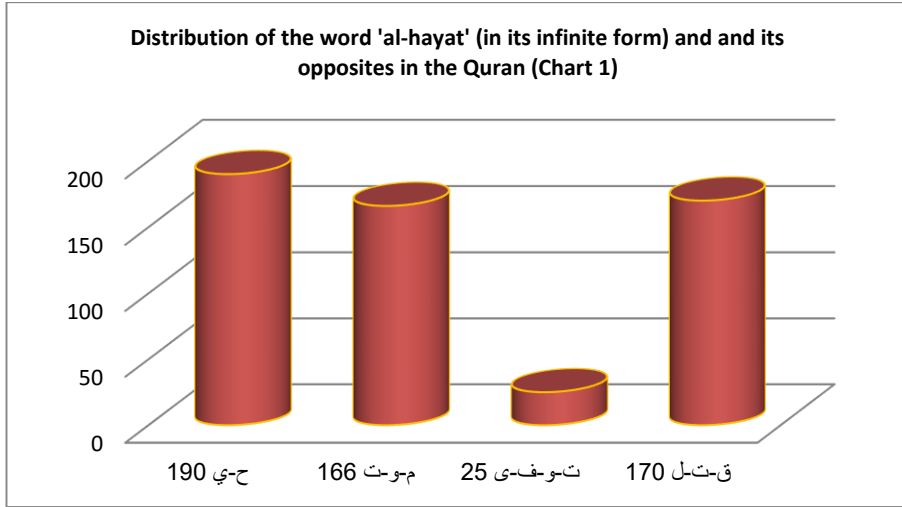
The word 'hayat' was sporadically used in the Quran as adjacent to pronouns. It was also used in the form 'hayyah' (hayye) (See: Tâhâ, 20/20) as denoting the snake into which the staff of Moses turned (Ibn Manzûr puts forth an account that everything that is mortal can be called 'hayy.' See: Ibn Manzûr, 2003: IV/293).

Generally, the word 'hayat' means 'vitality,' 'vividness,' or 'a period of time spent in the world.'

One should also point out that 'al-hayat' was used as the antonym of the word 'mawt,' which means 'death,' 'absence,' or simply 'to die.' The word

'mawt' appears in the Quran 166 times in various forms (For these forms, see: Abdalbâkî, 1417/1996: 774-776). In more than 70 places the two words were mentioned together. They were mentioned together in the verses in which simply the concepts of life and death were involved in the relevant contexts.

It can also be asserted that the word 'al-hayat' is the opposite of the word 'tawaffâ' (توفى) with the meaning of 'causing someone to die' and 'qatala' (قتل) with the meaning 'to kill.' Whereas the word 'tavaffâ' appears in different contexts 25 times, the word 'qatala' appears 170 times in the Quran.



Muqatil b. Süleyman (d. 150/767), in his book titled *Al-Vujûh va al-Nazâir*, points out six different dimensions of meaning concerning the word 'al-hayat.' According to him, the word 'al-hayat' means:

- 1 – The life after creation,
- 2 – 'Beliver' (Mu'min),
- 3 – 'Staying alive' (baqâ),
- 4 – The creation of the nature,
- 5 – Jesus' revitalizing the dead as an exemplary lesson or warning,
- 6 – The life after doomsday (See: Muqâtil, 1993: 107-109).

Al-Râgib al-Isfahânî (d. 502/1108) also states that the word ‘al-hayat’ was used mainly in six different contexts in the Quran and gives examples (See: Al-Isfahânî, 1418/1998: “ha-y-y”).

From the accounts laid out so far, it is clear that the word ‘hayat’ was used in the Quran in various contexts with various meanings (Concerning the sufi meaning of the word ‘al-hayat,’ see: Aydar, 2007: 46-47). One should point out that such meanings as ‘life,’ ‘vitality,’ ‘to be alive’ (See: Al-Mulk, 67/2.) ‘to live in the worldly life,’ (See: Al-A’raf, 7/25) ‘time period spent in the world’ (See: Al-i Imran, 3/185) are especially important in order to aptly understand and thus translate the phrase ‘al-hayat al-dunya.’

B – The word ‘al-dunya’

1 – The meaning of the word ‘al-dunya’

The word ‘al-dunya,’ which constitutes the second part of the phrase ‘al-hayat al-dunya,’ is one the words that were frequently used in the Quran. Nevertheless, there is disagreement amongst the scholars of Islam as to the root word from which it comes.

a – The notion of ‘al-dunya’ coming from the root word ‘d-n-v’ meaning ‘near’

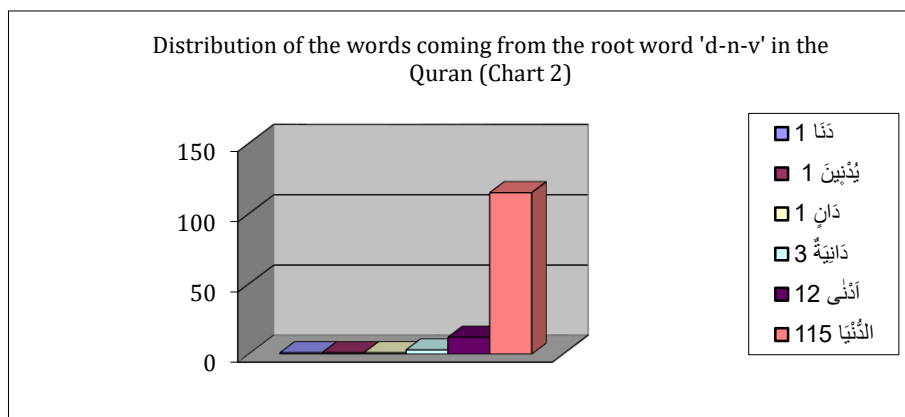
Some scholars assert that the word ‘al-dunya’ is an adjective coming from the root word “d-n-v” [دنو – دناوة], which means ‘to be near or close in terms of time and space.’ (See: el-Isfahânî, 1418/1998, (d-n-v); Ibn Manzûr, 2003, V/310-311; Muhammed al-Râzî, nd., (d-n-v), I/89; Yazır, 1971, I/403; Carra de Vaux, “Dunyâ,” 1977, III/646; Ateş (1), nd., I/194; Uludağ, “Dünya”, 1994, X/22; Y. N. Öztürk, 1999, 95) As a matter of fact, there is such an expression in classical Arabic as ‘danâ al-shay’u min al-shay’i’ [دنا الشيء من الشيء] with the meaning ‘something got closer to (or near) something’ (Ibn Manzûr, 2003, V/310). For instance, the Arabic expression ‘danat al-shams lilgurûb’ [دنت الشمس للغروب] was used to that effect (Ibn Manzûr, 2003, V/310). So, according to these scholars, the word ‘al-dunya’ is the feminine form of the word ‘adnâ,’ as a superlative adjective, which means ‘the nearest or the closest,’ and thus amounts to the name of the life as people know it (al-Tahânevî, ibid, (“ad-dunyâ”), I/799.). And the fact that this life is associated with the word ‘al-dunya’ is because it is nearer or closer than the life in the hereafter (Ibn Manzûr, 2003, V/310; Asım Efendi, 1304, IV/959; Ateş, 1997-2003, “Dünya”).

Those who assert that the world 'al-dunya' comes from the root word "d-n-v" [دنو – دنوة] with the meaning 'to be near or close' also argue that the word 'al-dunya' appears in the Quran with that meaning (See: Al-Isfahânî, nd., (d-n-v); Ibn Manzûr, 2003, (d-n-v)). In this regard, they put forth the following verse: "[Remember] when you were on the near side ['al-udwa al-dunya'] of the valley, and they were on the farther side. . . [إِذْ أَنْتُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الْقُصْوَىٰ] (Al-Anfal, 8/42).

b – The notion of 'al-dunya' coming from the root word 'd-n-v' meaning 'bad'

Another group of scholars asserted that the word 'al-dunya' stemmed from the root word 'danûa' (دنؤ) or 'danâat' (دناءة), both of which mean 'to be bad, low, sham, and crude.' (See: Al-Isfahânî, nd., (d-n-v); Ibn Manzûr, 2003, (d-n-v), V/310; Muhammed al-Râzî, nd., (d-n-v), I/89; Yazır, 1971, I/403; Carra de Vaux, 1977, III/646; Ateş, nd., I/194; Uludağ, 1994, X/22; Y.N.Öztürk, 1999, 95.) As a matter of fact, in order to make a remark about a man being bad and low, Arabs say the following: 'rajulun danîun' (رجل دنئى) (Ibn Manzûr, 2003, V/311). Consequently, scholars also asserted that the word 'al-dunya' in the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' was used as the opposite of the hereafter ('al-hayat al-âhirah') functioning as an adjective of the word 'al-hayat' to denote the meaning 'low, sham, and crude life' and that this amounted to an indication of the word 'al-dunya' coming from the root word 'danâat' (Yazır, 1971, I/403. For further information concerning the specific views of the scholars claiming that the word 'al-dunya' comes from the root word 'danâat,' see: Tatlı, 1426/2005, 12, fn 3.)

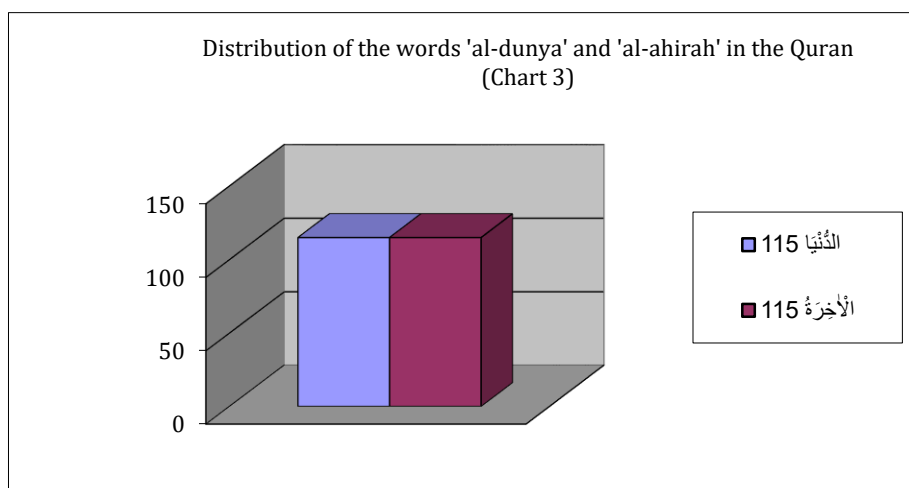
2 – The usage of 'al-dunya' in the Quran



One can easily see that there are 133 words in the Quran coming from the root word 'd-n-v.' (See: Abdulbâkî, 1417/1996, 321-324). These words appear in 46 chapters of the Quran with various forms. In other words, the words coming from the root word 'd-n-v' appear in the Quran in various contexts with five different forms (The calculation rules out the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' since it will be discussed separately).

As the word appears 115 times in its masculine form, which is 'al-dunya,' it also appears one time in its feminine form, which is 'al-adnâ,' in the Quran (See: Al-A'râf, 7/169).

We will mostly take up the usage of the word as 'al-dunya' since it centers on the subject of our focus in this article. One can understand from the above-mentioned accounts that the word 'al-dunya' stemmed from the root word 'd-n-v' or 'danua.' Likewise, one can take into consideration both of these root words at the same time. When considering the root word 'd-n-v,' the word 'al-dunya' denotes the life people live as the opposite of the hereafter. On the other hand, when considering the root word 'danua,' the word 'al-dunya' denotes the life people live that is less valuable and important than the hereafter. The word 'al-dunya' was used with both of the meanings in the Quran.



Consequently, the word 'al-dunya' could have stemmed from both of the root words. However, we consider that it would not be appropriate to eventually espouse the word 'al-dunya' with the meaning 'base, ragged, or abject.' Because in any case the life people live as the opposite of the hereafter would also constitute a sign indicating both the existence and

greatness of God. Besides, the fact that the Quranic terminology considers the life people live in this world as the opposite of the hereafter somewhat turns it into some kind of the counterpart of the hereafter. In other words, it would be more realistic than otherwise to espouse the meaning of 'al-dunya' as '(something that is) more recent and close' compared to the hereafter which is remote and distant.

In the meantime, one should state that the word 'al-dunya' appears 115 times in the Quran. Likewise, its correspondent word, 'al-ahirah' (the hereafter), appears in the Quran 115 times as well. In addition, the word 'al-dunya' appears 36 times in the Quran as the direct correspondent of the word 'al-ahirah.'

Interestingly enough, this chart is indicative of the fact that the word 'al-dunya' ought to be associated with the word 'al-ahirah': people should not ignore one for the other, that is, they are both important for peoples' spiritual well-being. As expressed in a statement (*hadith*) attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (See: Ali el-Kârî, 1422/2002, VIII/3242; al-Haddâdi, 1356, III/499.), they are equally important and should not be taken into account separately.

The words 'al-dunya' and 'al-ahirah' connote each other like the words 'husband' and 'wife' and the words 'mother' and 'child.' Thus, when one of them is mentioned the other one is remembered (See: Izutsu, nd., 78).

One can contend that the word 'al-dunya' as the antonym of the word 'al-ahirah' (the hereafter) also means the world as a planet. As a matter of fact, because of the association between Earth and the notion of 'life on Earth,' the word 'al-dunya' lost its adjective quality over the course of time and became one of the proper nouns of the planet Earth (Uludağ, 1994, X/22). Thus, when the word 'al-dunya' is uttered, the first thing that comes to mind is Planet Earth (See: Ibn Manzûr, 2003, XIV/272; Muhammed al-Râzî, nd., I/89; Uludağ, 1994, X/22).

The word 'al-dunya' used in the Quran as a possessive phrase
(Chart 4)



The word 'al-dunya' appears in 64 places in the Quran as the second part of the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya.' (See: Abdalbâkî, 1417/1996, 321-324) The word 'al-dunya,' which is in the feminine form because it functions as an adjective of the feminine word 'al-hayat,' generally means 'near or close life.' (See: al-Darwish, 1417/1996, I/140). Thus, the word 'al-dunya' constitutes an antonym of the word 'al-ahirah,' which denotes 'the life after death' or 'the remote life' (the hereafter) (See: Topaloğlu, 1998, I/543-548; Y.N.Öztürk, 1999, 31-32; Yüksel, 2001, 17-29; Demirci, 2000, 319-355). In fact, referring to the children of Israel, the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' was used as the antonym of the phrase 'al-hayat al-ahirah' in the following verse: "Those are the ones who have bought the life of this world [in exchange] for the Hereafter ['al-ahirah']..." (Al-Bakara, 2/86).

The word 'al-dunya' also appears in the Quran with various combinations. Sometimes it appears as a modifier of a pronoun. And some other times it appears as modified by words. For instance, it appears 4 times as modified by the word 'savâbe' ('savâbe'd-dunyâ') (See: Âl-i Imrân, 3/145, 148; Al-Nisâ, 4/134 (twice)), 3 times as modified by the word 'samâe' ('semâe'd-dunyâ') (See: Al-Sâffât, 37/6; Fussilet, 41/12; Al-Mülk, 67/5), and one apiece with the word 'matâ' ('matâu'd-dunyâ') (See: Al-Nisâ, 4/77), 'arada' ('arada'd-dunyâ') (See: Al-Anfâl, 8/67), and 'hars' ('harsa'd-dunyâ') (See: Al-Shûrâ, 42/20). In these places, depending on the context, the word 'al-dunya' meant the following: the life people spend as opposed to the life in the hereafter, the properties of the world, temporary interests, etc.

The word 'samâ' (the sky) in the phrase 'samâ al-dunya' ('the sky of the world') simply means 'sky,' 'ascendancy,' or 'dignity.' (See: Ibn Manzûr,

2003, s m-v). Besides, the word 'samâ' appears in many verses in the Quran (See: Abdulbaki, 1417/1996, 445-450). The word also appears in the Quran in its plural form as 'samâvât.' When it was used as a modifier of 'al-dunya' grammatically, it meant 'sky' in a geographical sense: "Indeed, We have adorned the sky of the world [al-samâ al-dunya] with an adornment of stars." (As-Saffat, 37/6). As a matter of fact, the word 'al-dunya' was used as well with the meaning 'earth' in a geographical sense, which we will discuss below. In addition, depending on the notion that the word 'al-dunya' means 'near' in the above-mentioned verse, it was indeed translated into Turkish by some scholars as the following: "We have adorned the nearest sky [al-samâ al-dunya] with an adornments and with stars." ["Biz en yakın göğü ziynetlerle, yıldızlarla donattık."] (S.Yıldırım, 2002, 445; Altuntaş & Şahin, 2003, 445).

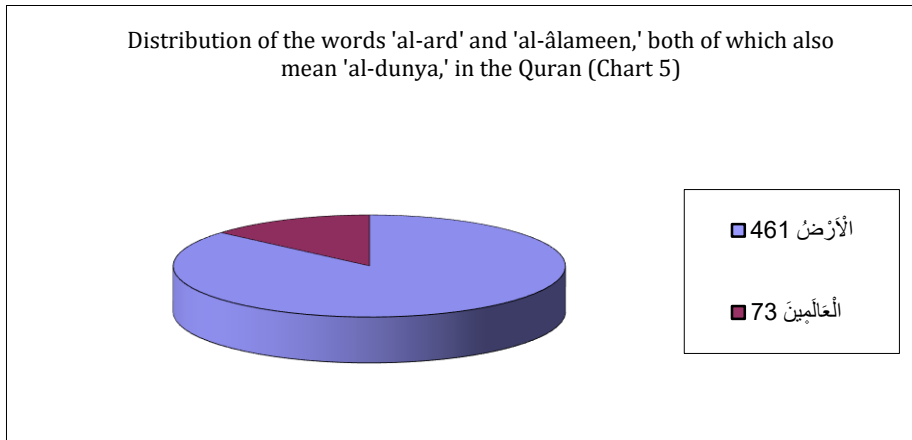
The verse in which the word 'al-dunya' appears as modified by the word 'matâ' (merchandise) is as follows: ". . . They [some Muslims] said, 'Our Lord, why have You decreed upon us fighting? If only You had postponed [it for] us for a short time.' Say, The enjoyment of this world [matâ al-dunya] is little, and the Hereafter is better for he who fears Allah. . ." (Al-Nisa, 4/77).

3 – 'Al-Dunya' with the meaning 'earth'

We have pointed out above that the word 'al-dunya' was used with various meanings in the Quran and that one of those meanings is 'the earth' as a geographical concept. In this sense, 'al-dunya' is defined as "a planet that has both day and night times and that is shadowed by the sky and ferried by the earth." (See: Al-Tehânevî, 1996, I/799) One can assert that the word 'al-dunya' as a geographical concept was used in the Quran with two different meanings. The first one is 'near (place)' as in the verse that reads "[Remember] when you were on the near [al-dunya] side of the valley, and they were on the farther [al-quswâ] side, and the caravan was lower [in position] than you. . ." (See: Al-Enfâl, 8/42) in opposition to the word 'al-quswâ,' mentioned in the same verse meaning 'farther (place).' (Al-Râzî, 1401/1981, XV/134) The same meaning is also available in the following verse: "The Byzantines have been defeated. In the nearest [adnâ] land. . ." (Al-Rum, 30/2-3). However, in this verse, instead of the word 'al-dunya' the word 'adnâ' was used, which comes from the same root (d-n-v) as that of 'al-dunya.' The former verse refers to a part of the valley near Madina in which the battle of Badr took place (See: al-Taberî, 1421/2001, X/14; Al-Râzî, 1401/1981, XV/134). The latter verse, on the other hand, refers to Southern Anatolia (Iraq-Syria region), where the battle between

Byzantines and Persians took place and was won by Persians (See: Al-Taberî, 1421/2001, XXI/21). Consequently, one can contend that the word 'al-dunya' in these verses denotes a region or a terrain on the face of the world as a planet in the geographical sense.

The second geographical meaning with which the word 'al-dunya' was used is the following: "a celestial body that takes part in the space as a planet on which creatures live." (See: *Meydan Larousse* nd., "Dünya," V/577; *Büyük Larousse Sözlük* nd., "Dünya," VII/2437-2438). The word 'al-dunya' was frequently used in the Quran with this context. One can easily find out this type of usage in the Quran especially when it is associated with some concepts related to space. In fact, it is clear that the word 'al-dunya' was used with this meaning in the following verse: "Indeed, We have adorned the nearest heaven ['al-samâ al-dunya'] with an adornment of stars." (Al-Saffat, 37/5-6) Moreover, this meaning is more explicit in the following verses: ". . . And We adorned the nearest heaven ['al-samâ al-dunya'] with lamps and as protection. . ." (Al-Fussilet, 41/12) "And We have certainly beautified the nearest heaven ['al-samâ al-dunya'] with stars. . ." (Al-Mulk, 67/5)



There are also some other concepts that were used together with the word 'al-dunya' in a cosmic sense.

The first one of them is the word 'ard' (arz), which in fact was used with the meaning 'al-dunya' in a geographical sense (Ibn Manzûr, 2003, I/87; Uludağ, 1994, X/22). The word 'ard' specifically means 'earth' or 'the face of earth' (Ibn Manzûr, 2003, I/87) and was frequently used in the Quran as well (See: Abdalbaki, 1417/1996, 33-40). One should discuss the two

meanings of the word 'ard' especially in association with 'al-dunya.' The first meaning is 'the face of earth' and the second meaning is simply 'al-dunya.' For example, in the following verses, the word 'ard' was used in the meaning of 'the face of the earth': "... And you see the [face of the] earth [al-ard] barren, but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers and swells and grows [something] of every beautiful kind" (Al-Hajj, 22/5); "And [you, the children of Israel, recall] when you said, 'O Moses, we can never endure one [kind of] food. So call upon your Lord to bring forth for us from the earth [al-ard] its green herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions. . .'" (Al-Bakara, 2/61). In the same context, one can contend that the word 'al-ard' also means a region from the world (See: Muqatil b. Süleyman, 2004, "Arz"). On the other hand, the word 'al-ard' was used with the meaning 'al-dunya' in the following verses (See: Al-Taberî, 1421/2001, I/254, X/114; Al-Râzî, 1401/1981, II/193, XVI/18): "He [Allah] said, 'O Adam, inform them of their names [the names of things].' And when he had informed them [the angels] of their names, He said, 'Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth [al-ard]? And I know what you reveal and what you have concealed.'" (Al-Bakara, 2/33); "... and the earth [al-ard] was confining for you with its vastness." (Al-Tavba, 9/25).

There are also some verses where the word 'ard' was used as having the meaning 'al-dunya.' (See: Abdalbaki, *ibid*, 33-40). It can be asserted that, in those verses, especially when the word 'ard' is interrelated with the word 'al-dunya,' the implied meaning is 'al-dunya.'

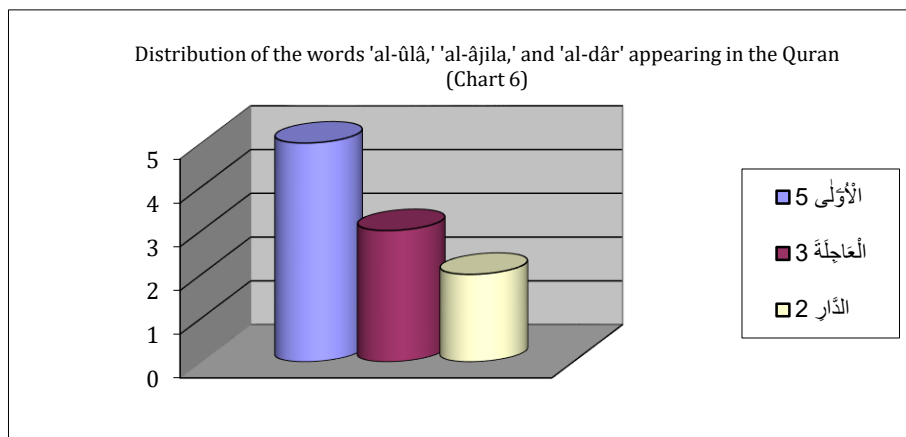
It has also been contented that in the verses where 'al-dunya' is condemned, the implied meaning is not 'ard,' rather, it is the states, thoughts and contents associated with the life in the world (See: Tatlı, *ibid*, 21).

The verses where the word 'ard (earth)' was used as having the meaning 'al-dunya (the world)' in geographical sense signify at times that the world is full of lessons and people should take into consideration what happened to the past nations; for instance: "So have they not traveled through the earth and observed how was the end of those before them?" (Yusuf, 12/109. Also see: Al-i Imran, 3/137; Al-An'am, 6/11; Al-Nahl, 16/36; Al-Naml, 27/69; Al-Rum, 30/5; Fâtır, 35/44; Gâfir, 40/21, 82; Muhammed, 47/10). Accordingly, one can contend that whereas the word 'ard' was mostly used as a geographical term, the word 'al-dunya' often times was used as an ethical and religious term in the Quran. In other words, one could assert that in the Quran, whereas the word 'ard' was used as having

an earthly/tangible aspect of meaning, the word 'al-dunya' was used as involving a spiritual/abstract aspect of meaning.

Another word that can be associated with the phrase 'al-dunya' in a cosmic sense is the word 'âlam' (âlem). The word 'âlam' means "anything that constitutes evidence for the existence of the Creator and that leads to the knowledge of Him" (See: Ibn Manzûr, *ibid*, ("ayn-l-m"), X/265). In this context, the word 'âlam' which also denotes *universe, space, sky, and all creation*, (See: Ibn Manzûr, 2003, ("a-l-m"); Asım Efendi, 1304, ("a-l-m"); T. J. De Boer, 2001, I/296-297; Bolay, 1989, II/357. Also see: Tatlı, 1426/2005, 19-20) and which is mentioned in the Quran only in its plural form ('al-âlameen') (See: Abdalbaki, 1417/1996, 589-591), also sporadically means 'al-dunya' (the world) (For some of the other meanings of the word, see: Mukatil b. Süleyman, 2004, "Âlemîn."). The word 'âlameen' (in plural form) which appears in the verse that reads "And [mention] when the angels said, 'O Mary, indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds [al-âlameen]'" (Al-i Imran, 3/42) and some of the similar ones (See: Al-Maide, 5/20, 115; Al-An'am, 6/86; Al-A'raf, 7/80) simply means the world ('al-dunya').

4 – Synonyms of the word 'al-dunya'



One should also point out that in the Quran there are some synonyms of the word 'al-dunya' such as 'al-ûlâ,' (See: Al-Kasas, 28/70; An-Necm, 53/25; An-Nâziât, 79/25; Al-Leyl, 92/13; Ad-Duhâ, 93/4) 'al-âjila' (See: Al-Isrâ, 17/18; Al-Kiyâma, 75/20; Al-Insân, 76/27) and 'al-dâr' (See: Al-An'am, 6/135; Al-Kasas, 28/37). Although the word 'al-ûlâ' which appears in the verse that reads "And the Hereafter is better for you than the first

one (al-ûlâ) [life]" (Ad-Duha, 93/4) was interpreted as denoting some meanings other than 'al-dunya,' (See: Ar-Râzi, 1401/1981, XXXI/191; Mevdudi, 1997, VII/369; Bilmen, 1966, VIII/4054; Toptaş, 1998, VIII/296) the most preferred meaning of it among the scholars of Quranic exegesis is actually 'al-dunya.' (See: Mukâtil b. Süleyman, 1423, IV7222; At-Taberî, 1421/2001, XXX/280-281; Az-Zemahşerî, 1418/1998, IV/755; Ar-Râzi, 1401/1981, XXXI/191; el-Kurtubi, 1384/1964, XX/95; İbn Kesîr, 1420/1999, IV/675; Mevdudi, 1997, VII/369; Bilmen, 1966, VIII/4054; As-Sâbûnî, 1402/1981, III/545; Toptaş, 1998, VIII/296). That the same verse involves the antonym of 'al-dunya' ['âhira' (hereafter)] is indicative of the fact that the word 'al-ûlâ' was used here as denoting 'al-dunya.'

The root word for 'âjila,' 'a-j-l,' has also many meanings (See: Ibn Manzûr, 2003, ["ayn- c-l"], X/46-47). Likewise, the usage of the word 'al-âjila' with such meanings as 'hurrying, quickly passing by, or the immediate one' appears in the Quran three times and denotes the ultimate meaning 'al-dunya' in each of those places (See: At-Taberî, 1421/2001, XXIX/227, 267; Az-Zemahşerî, 1418/1998, IV/662; Ar-Râzi, 1401/1981, XXX/199). It would be appropriate to quote the following verse as an example: "Whoever should desire the immediate ['al-âjila'] - We hasten for him from it what We will to whom We intend. . ." (Al-Isra, 17/18) The next verse that comes right after this one involves the word 'al-âhirah (hereafter),' which was used as symmetrical to the word 'al-âjila' which constitutes another indication that the word 'al-âjila' in the previous verse has the simple meaning of 'al-dunya,' since the word 'al-âjilah' was used as the opposite of 'al-dunya' in the Quran.

It has also being noted that the word 'al-dâr' which appears in various places in the Quran (See: Abdalbaki, 1417/1996, 324-325) with such meanings as 'home, country, and house' (See: Ibn Manzûr, 2003, V/325) eventually denotes the word 'al-dunya.' (See: Ibn Manzûr, 2003, V/325)

One can come to the conclusion in this regard that the word 'al-dunya' and its synonyms as used in the Quran sometimes denote a geographical or cosmic meaning, which involves no condemnation of the world. And, other times, the word 'al-dunya' denotes a religious and ethical meaning, which amounts to the ultimate meaning 'a way of living' or 'a system of life.' And this is the kind of 'al-dunya' that is sporadically being condemned or blamed in the Quran (See: Uludağ, 1994, X/22).

5 – The word ‘al-dunya’ as a term

Scholars have put the word ‘al-dunya’ under scrutiny in various ways. The definitions that they came up with concerning ‘al-dunya’ were of course in accordance with the perspective of their subject of study (For the definition of ‘al-dunya’ with respect to Sufism, see: Aydar, 2007, 69-71). Thus, there are many definitions of the term ‘al-dunya’ varying according to various subjects of study. For example, a group of scholars define the term ‘al-dunya’ as the “‘tempus’ of this world in which it will go on till the end (the doomsday)” (See: Ibn Kayyim al-Cevziyye, 1990, II/344). As far as this definition is concerned, ‘al-dunya’ amounts to ‘the time duration from the point of its beginning till the end point where the doomsday breaks out.’ Another group of scholars consider the term ‘al-dunya’ as “the name of all things between the earth and the sky” (See: Ibn Kayyim al-Cevziyye, 1990, II/344). As these scholars consider the earth and the sky the end limits of the world, according to their definition, both ‘above the sky’ and ‘under the earth’ do not get involved in the content of the term ‘al-dunya’ (See: Ibn Kayyim al-Cevziyye, 1990, II/344). Consequently, it seems that whereas the former definition, which significantly belongs to the scholars of Islamic theology (scholars of *Kalâm*), takes up the term as ‘time’ the former definition takes it into consideration as ‘space’ (See: Ibn Kayyim al-Cevziyye, 1990, II/344. Also see: Tatlı, 1426/2005,15).

Moreover, it has also been suggested that the term ‘al-dunya’ should be taken into consideration mostly as an ethical term (For an example, see: Ülgener, 1981, 76).

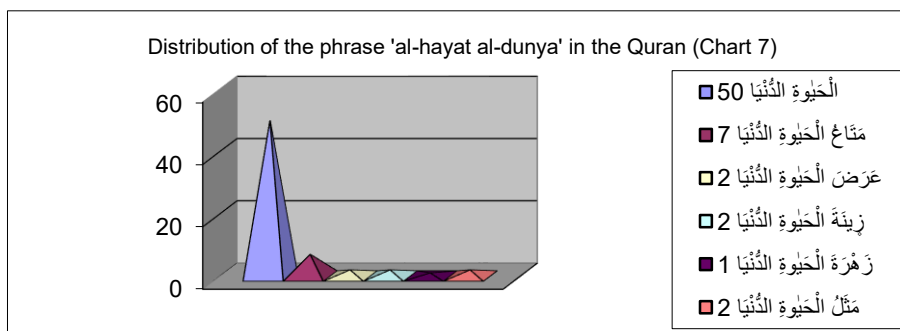
We have so far elaborated to some extent on ‘al-hayat’ and ‘al-dunya’ both as simple words and as terms expanding on some of the issues such as the usages and synonyms of those words in the Quran. Henceforward, let us now turn to ‘al-hayat al-dunya’ as a concept and the contexts in which it was used in the Quran.

C – ‘Al-hayat al-dunya’ as a concept

1 – The meaning of the phrase

As we have mentioned above, ‘al-hayat al-dunya’ is a phrase apparently comprising the two words ‘al-hayat’ and ‘al-dunya.’ Given that ‘al-hayat’ has such meanings as ‘being alive’ or simply ‘life’ and ‘al-dunya’ means ‘near’ or ‘the recent one,’ the phrase ‘al-hayat al-dunya’ means ‘the life that is near, recent and available.’ There are those who construe the phrase ‘al-hayat al-dunya’ as ‘the low, base, or abject life’ considering the word ‘al-

dunya' as coming from the root word 'danâat' which has such meanings as 'low' and 'base.' Based on the fact that the word 'al-dunya' was used in the Quran mostly as the antonym of the word 'al-ahirah' (hereafter), we do not find it appropriate to construe the phrase as having the meaning 'the low, base, or abject life.' As we have mentioned before, according to our account, the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' means 'the near, recent, available life' as the antonym of the phrase 'al-hayat al-ahirah' that has the meaning 'the future, later life.'



2 – The usage of the phrase in the Quran

The phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' with the above-mentioned meaning was used in the Quran 64 times (See: Abdulbâkî, 1417/1996, 275-276). Whereas 38 times out of them the phrase was used with such letters as 'fi,' 'bi,' 'min' and 'hazihi,' 12 times it was used as an objective case without any propositions. It was used 7 times together with the word 'matâ' ("metâ'u'l-hayâtî'd-dünyâ") (See: Âl-i Imrân, 3/14; At-Tawba, 9/38; Yûnus, 10/23; Al-Kasas, 28/60, 61; Ash-Shûrâ, 42/36; Az-Zuhruf, 43/35), twice with the word 'arad (araz)' ("arada'l-hayâtî'd-dünyâ") (See: An-Nîsâ, 4/94; An-Nûr, 24/33), twice with the word 'masal (mesel)' ("meselu'l-hayâtî'd-dünyâ") (See: Yunûs, 10/24; Al-Kehf, 18/45), and again twice with the word 'ziynat (zînet)' ("ziynetu'l-hayâtî'd-dünyâ") (See: Al-Kehf, 18/28, 46) and once with the word 'zahra (zehre)' ("zehretu'l-hayâtî'd-dünyâ") (See: Tâhâ, 20/131). Moreover, it was used 4 times as the subject of a nominal sentence ("ve ma'l-hayâtu'd-dünyâ") (See: Âl-i Imrân, 3/185; Al-En'âm, 6/32; Ar-Ra'd, 13/26; Al-Hadîd, 57/20), and once as a substitute of the subject of a nominal sentence (See: Dervîş, 1417/1996, VII/458) ("ve ma hâzihi'l-hayatu'd-dünyâ") (See: Al-Ankebût, 29/64). In 6 places it was used as the subject of the verb 'garra [غر]' meaning 'to deceive' ("ve ġarrathumu'l-hayâtu'd-dünyâ", (See: Al-En'âm, 6/70, 130; Al-A'râf, 7/51) "ve ġarratkumu'l-hayâtu'd-dünyâ" (See: Al-Câsiye, 45/35), "fe

lâ tağurrannakumu'l-hayâtu'd-dünyâ") (See: Lokmân, 31/33; Fâtır, 35/5). Finally, it was also used together with the word 'zuyyina (züyyine)' as the substitute subject of the word 'zayyana' in passive form (See: Al-Bakara, 2/212).

3 – Translation of 'al-hayat al-dunya' into Turkish

The phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' ('al-hayatu'd-dunya') is indeed an adjective clause every time it is mentioned in the Quran. And there is no place in the Quran where it is mentioned without the article 'al' with the word 'hayat' as 'hayat al-dunya' ('hayatu'd-dunya') being a noun phrase or possessive construction. Despite that, translators of the Quran into Turkish usually considered the phrase as a possessive noun and gave it a Turkish translation in no way implying the adjective quality of the word 'al-dunya.'

As a matter of fact, in a Turkish translation of the Quran, which was prepared by an academic committee and, going through the scrutiny and revision of the renowned scholar İzmirli İsmail Hakkı (d. 1946), was published in the Ottoman Turkish in the wake of the Republic of Turkey, the phrase was interpreted likewise (For extensive information, see: Aydar, 1999, 186). Besides, the most recent translated versions of the Quran in Turkish usually interpret the phrase as having the grammatical function of possessive construction instead of an adjective phrase (For some examples, see: Sağman, 1980, 95, 106; Karakaya et al., 1981, 35, 52; A. Öztürk, nd., 12, 31, 303; Eryarsoy & Ağırakça, 1999, 14, 33, 34, 52; S. Yıldırım, 1998, 12, 31, 32, 50; Davudoğlu, nd., 14, 33, 34, 52; Bilmen, 1997, 14, 33, 34, 52; Hafız Osman, nd., 14, 33, 34, 52; Yavuz, nd., 14, 33, 34, 52; Yılmaz, 2000, 12, 31, 32, 50, 73).

In the above-mentioned Ottoman Turkish translation, the grammatical structure of the corresponding Turkish phrase ('hayat-ı dünya') was at times similar to that of the Arabic phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya,' possibly indicating an endeavor to directly convey the Arabic phrase into Turkish so not to have to choose in translation between the perception of adjective clause ['denî/alçak hayat' ('the base life')] and that of possessive construction ['dünya hayatı' ('the life of this world')] (See: Heyet, 1344/1926, 25, 109). However, the phrase was also translated at times as having the function a possessive construction ['dünya hayatı' ('the life of this world')] (See: Heyet, 1344/1926, 56, 57, 89, 123). In a few places, the phrase was translated as 'dünyada' ('in the world') ruling out the original word 'al-hayat' ('life') (See: Heyet, 1344/1926, 25).

Muhammed Hamdi Yazır (d. 1942), an eminent scholar of *tafsir*, took up the phrase as an adjective clause and translated it into Turkish likewise ["dünya hayat" ("the low life")]. Stating that the word 'al-dunya' means 'recent (en yakın)' or 'very low (pek alçak),' Yazır points out that the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' is not a noun phrase and thus it does not mean 'the life in this world,' rather, it means 'the life which is called *dunya*,' that is, 'the low, servile life' or 'the recent life (yakın hayat),' in terms of the fact that people already experience it (See: Yazır, *ibid*, I/403). Therefore, according to him, the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' must be considered as an adjective clause and translated likewise (The majority of the people who simplified and republished the work of Yazır disregarded his choice of wording and, instead, espoused "dünya hayatı" ("the life in this world"). See: Çöğenli, Yanık, 1996; Kaya, Baltacı, Aytekin, nd.). However, it should be noted that Dücane Cündioğlu, another translator who simplified the work of Yazır, stayed loyal to his choice of wording and translated the phrase as "dünya (alçak) hayat" ["*dunya* (low) life"]. See: Cündioğlu, 1993). However, it should also be noted in passing that although Yazır took the phrase as an adjective clause and took it as meaning 'dunya hayat' (the low life), he translated it in his hefty work of Quranic exegesis as 'hayat-ı dünya,' to somewhat avoid to translate it as having the function other than that of an adjective clause.

A translation of the Quran by another eminent scholar Hasan Basri Çantay (d. 1964), which was first published in 1952-1953 with the title *Kur'an-ı Hakim ve Meâl-i Kerim*, (For further information, see: Aydar, 1999, 202-204) the phrase was translated as 'dünya hayatı' ('the life of the world: the life in this world') (See: Çantay, 1404/1984, II/503, 538, 541, 549, 571, 847, 855, 858, 873; II/895, 896, 974). Süleyman Ateş, in his translation of the Quran into Turkish, often times translated the phrase as 'dunya hayatı' ('the life of the world') (See: Ateş (2), nd.), 12, 50, 92, 143, 168). However, he also translated the phrase in a few places as 'yakın hayat' ('the recent life') taking it into consideration as an adjective clause (See: Ateş (2), nd., 210, 217, 404, 583). In another work of Turkish translation of the Quran done by a committee under the chairmanship of Ali Özek, the phrase was translated as 'dünya hayatı' ('the life of the world') (Özek, Karaman, Turgut, Çağrı, Dönmez, Gümüş, 1993, 12, 32, 33, 50, 64). Lastly, whereas Yaşar Nuri Öztürk translated the phrase several times as 'dünya hayatı' ('the life in this world') like other translators (See: Y.N.Öztürk, 2000, 14, 33), often times he espoused the phrase's translated meaning as 'iğreti/sefil hayat' ('the false/miserable life') (See: Y.N.Öztürk, 2000, 34).

Also, at one time Öztürk translated the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' as only 'dunya' ('the world') (See: Y.N.Öztürk, 2000, 14).

In short, we find the fact that some of the Turkish interpreters of the Quran have translated this adjective phrase as a noun phrase into Turkish due to the common Turkish usage of it in the same way ever since. In other words, in explaining the Turkish translators' attitude with respect to the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya,' one should take into account the fact that the word 'al-dunya' somewhat lost its adjective quality in Turkish describing the word 'al-hayat' over the course of time. One should also note that some of the Turkish translators pointed out the adjective quality of the word 'al-dunya' describing the word 'al-hayat' in their choice of the relevant Turkish phrases, sometimes directly translating the word 'al-dunya' as 'low (alçak),' 'miserable (sefil),' 'false (iğreti)' and 'recent (yakın),' and sometimes adding explanations in parentheses serving the same purpose (For instance, see: S. Yıldırım, 2002, 12). Nevertheless, the majority of them often times made the choice of translating the phrase as 'the life in this world/the life of the world (dünya hayatı).' It seems that, instead of translating the phrase as an adjective clause, espousing a Turkish phrase corresponding to its being translated as a noun clause is always open to serious discussion.

4 – The meaning of 'al-hayat al-dunya' as a term

Scholars of Quranic exegesis stated that 'al-hayat al-dunya' as a geographical entity mostly denotes the life perpetuated on the planet called world. This account is of course accurate but it does not seem inclusive when all the dimensions of its meanings are considered. In other words, when one limits the meaning of 'al-hayat al-dunya' to the life in the world then it might be really hard in the future to explain the verses covering that phrase.

As already known, humanity made a great progress in the area of space science. Nowadays, travelling to various planets is not just a far-fetched idea (See: "Mars Rüyası 2016 Yılında," <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/content/teknoloji/tek005/tekno20.html>). In 2001, an American businessman named Dennis Tito made a journey to space showing that for travel explorers the sky is no longer the limit (See: "Turist Tito Uzayda," <http://arsiv.hurriyetim.com.tr/hur/turk/01/04/30dunya/30dun.htm>). As he made the journey on a Russian rocket together with two Russian cosmonauts he was considered the first tourist out in the space. Later,

some other travels made by people, who are not scientist, ensued. In short, in the future and perhaps in the near future, more and more people like Dennis Tiro possibly will arrange travels to space like planning to travel to a foreign country in the world (See: Tulûhan Tekelioğlu, "Uzaya bir'ki," <http://arsiv.hurriyetim.com.tr/tatilpazar/turk/98/02/15/eklhab/29ekl.htm>).

As a step further from this, there will possibly be an endeavor to establish human colonies in the space or on a planet. It is known that there are plans to that effect involving planet Mars for now. In other words, according to the news, already there are plans to establish some human colonies in the space where people will start living till they die there without ever going back to the world. To this purpose, a project which is named 'Mars One' and led by Nobel laureate Physicist Dr. Gerard't Hooft, was launched. According to this project, people will be able to go to the planet Mars in 2025 and those who will go to Mars will be selected only from amongst the applicants. Consequently, it should be noted that right after the project was announced, 100,000 people from ten different countries including Turkey were reported to have applied (See: "Mars Kolonisine 11 Türk Başvurdu," <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/24509744.asp>). It was also announced that a group of people were selected (See: "Marsta İnsan Kolonisi Kurulacak," <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25489066/>) including some from Turkey to be included in the short list (See: "İşte Mars'a Gidecek Üç Türk," http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/bilim-teknik/24301/iste_Mars_a_gidecek_3_Turk.html# ; "Türkler Mars'a Gidiyor! MarsOne Koloni Projesi", <http://www.kadinhaberleri.com/dunya/turkler-marsa-gidiyor-marsone-koloni-projesi-h66433.html>).

Moreover, Elon Musk, who is the founder of SpaceX (Space Exploration Technologies Corporation), a private American aerospace company, announced that he had been working on a project to establish a colony comprising 80,000 volunteers willing to pay the ticket with a value of \$500,000 on the Red Planet (See: "Mars'a 80 bin Nüfuslu Koloni," <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25401439/>).

When these endeavors elevate to a successful level, it will be possible for people to establish a new life on any planet other than the world and perpetuate it there. One can call this life being established on such a planet 'the life in Mars' ('al-hayat al-Mars'). Likewise, similar naming will be highly likely later when people go to other planets and establish a life in them.

The phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' appears frequently in the Quran. And in the light of the accounts laid out so far, it seems not acceptable to limit the meaning of this phrase to 'the life in this world.' If done so, then it would not be realistic and appropriate to include a life perpetuated in any planet other than the world in the scope of the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya. Thus, the meaning of the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' cannot be limited to the life perpetuated only in the world.

For this reason, it would be more appropriate than otherwise to state that the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya,' even when it appears in a geographical context in the Quran, denotes 'the temporary life,' 'the life that has an ending,' 'the recent life' or 'the life that is the opposite of the hereafter.' Indeed, such an approach will be perfectly convenient considering the grammatical structure of the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya.' In that case, all kinds of lives will be included in the scope of the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' regardless of them being perpetuated on any planet in this universe. Moreover, it would be useful to mention in this context that, on an internet discussion forum, concerning the meaning of the word 'al-dunya' as mentioned in the Quran, one participant (Wadi Hanifa) says the following: "Al-Hayat Al-Dunya ('The nearer life', as opposed to the afterlife). Nowadays it means the 'universe', except in scientific contexts in which the word 'Kawn' (literally 'being') is preferred." (See: Wordreference.com-Language Forums, <http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=482824&langid=20>, last visited: May, 2014). However, it should also be noted that no one on that forum seems to be making a point such that the Quranic phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' is actually inclusive of the lives of the people possibly establishing human colonies in the future on the planets other than the planet earth. At this point, it seems to be worthy of mention that the notion that a human colony living in a planet other than the world we live in with a religious context is somewhat included in a novel by a renowned Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk. For both Turkish and English versions of the novel, see: Pamuk, 2002; Pamuk, 2004).

One can espouse two basic approaches concerning the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' as it appears in the Holy Quran: The phrase might be taken into account both as involving each and every individual separately and as involving all creatures living in the world. According to the first approach, 'al-hayat al-dunya' means 'the life span that the individual has from birth to death.' According to this approach, 'al-hayat al-dunya' is equivalent to the time in which the individual lives in the world. In other words, 'al-

hayat al-dunya' simply denotes the process that each and every individual has to go through from birth till death.

According to the second approach, 'al-hayat al-dunya' is 'the time in which the sum of all creatures live in the world.' According to this approach, 'al-hayat al-dunya' begins with the beginning of the first thing alive and ends with the ending of the last thing alive on the planet called World or rather in the whole universe. This approach still associates 'al-hayat al-dunya' with time; that is, 'al-hayat al-dunya' simply amounts to a certain time or rather a certain process comprising all kinds of events, activities, etc.

There is also a spatial dimension concerning the concept of 'al-hayat al-dunya.' Accordingly, the concept of 'al-hayat al-dunya' also alludes to the life on the planet earth, or on the world as a planet in the solar system.

Nevertheless, it seems to be appropriate to consider 'al-hayat al-dunya' as *a mode of life*. From this point of view, one can interpret 'al-hayat al-dunya' in so many different ways such as 'the modes of life that individuals associate with themselves in the life spans that they are entitled to live,' 'the modes of life that various groups of people espouse depending on a certain belief system, a philosophical understanding, or even a certain social system' or simply 'the modes of life that all people in the world pursue in their life spans on earth.'

Conclusion

In the light of the accounts we laid out so far, it seems that the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' is of utmost importance in the Quranic terminology. The two words that constitute the phrase, 'al-hayat' and 'al-dunya,' were mentioned in the Quran separately as well. Although some scholars asserted that the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' means 'the base, low, and abject life' depending on some of the meanings of the word 'al-dunya,' we do find it appropriate not to yield to that approach. According to our account, the phrase 'al-hayat al-dunya' –also depending on some of the meanings associated with the word 'al-dunya'– means the following: 'the recent (nearer) life, which is the opposite of the hereafter compared to the time we live now' or, simply, 'the life that we live.' We also contended that the accounts implying that the phrase means 'the life perpetuated on the planet called World' is not inclusive and thus not appropriate since they bring about inessential limitations on the meanings of the phrase. More specifically, the meaning of phrase is inclusive of both the life in this world and the one(s) on any other planet in this universe. Furthermore, one

should also keep in mind that the kind of worldly life that the Quran criticizes amounts actually to the life style as opposed to being the mere life perpetuated in this world.

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