

Guiding Light

The Qur'an and the Sunnah on Violence, Armed Struggle, and the Political Process

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Translation

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.*

قرآن كريم

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

1. To those against whom
War is made, permission
is given (to fight), because
They are wronged—and verily,
Allah is Most Powerful
For their aid—
(They are) those who have
Been expelled from their homes
In defiance of right—
(For no cause) except
That they say, "Our Lord
Is Allah." Did not Allah
Check one set of people
By means of another
There would surely have been
Pulled down monasteries, churches,
Synagogues, and mosques, in which
The name of Allah is commemorated
In abundant measure. Allah will
Certainly aid those who
Aid His (cause)—for verily
Allah is Full of Strength,
Exalted in Might,
(Able to enforce His Will).
Al Hajj (22:39-40)

• اٰذِنَ لِلَّذِيْنَ يُقَاتِلُوْنَ

يَاۡنَهُمْ ظَلَمُوْا وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ

عَلٰى نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيْرٌ

• الَّذِيْنَ اُخْرِجُوْا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ

بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ اِلَّا اَنْ يَقُوْلُوْا رَبَّنَا اللّٰهُ

وَلَوْلَا دَفَعَ اللّٰهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ

لَهَدَمْتَ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيْعٌ وَصَلُوٰتٌ

وَمَسٰجِدٌ يُذَكَّرُ فِيْهَا

اَسْمُ اللّٰهِ كَثِيْرًا

وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللّٰهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ

ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيْزٌ

سورة الحج: (٢٢: ٤٠-٣٩)

2. Fight in the cause of Allah
Those who fight you,
But do not transgress limits;
For Allah loveth not transgressors.
And slay them
Wherever ye catch them,
And turn them out
From where they have
Turned you out;

• وَقَاتِلُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْنَ يُقَاتِلُوْنَكُمْ وَلَا

تَعْتَدُوْا ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِيْنَ

وَأَقْتُلُوْهُمْ حَيْثُ نَفَقْتُمُوهُمْ

وَأَخْرِجُوْهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوْكُمْ

For tumult and oppression
Are worse than slaughter;
But fight them not
At the Sacred Mosque,
Unless they (first)
Fight you there;
But if they fight you,
Slay them.
Such is the reward
Of those who suppress faith.
Al Baqarah (2:190-191)

وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ
وَلَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ فَإِنْ قَتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ
كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ
سورة البقرة (٢: ١٩٠-١٩١)

3. And fight the Pagans
All together as they
Fight you all together.
But know that Allah
Is with those who restrain
Themselves.
O ye who believe! what
Is the matter with you,
That, when ye are asked
To go forth in the Cause of Allah,
Ye cling heavily to the earth?
Do ye prefer the life
Of this world to the Hereafter?
But little is the comfort
Of this life, as compared
With the Hereafter.
Al Tawbah (9:36, 38)

● وَقَاتِلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَافَّةً كَمَا
يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ كَافَّةً وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ
مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ
● يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ
لَكُمْ أَنْفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنَّا قَاتَلْتُمْ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ
أَرْضَيْتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ
فَمَا مَتَّعَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ
سورة التوبة (٩: ٣٦-٣٨)

4. Let not the Unbelievers
Think that they can
Get the better (of the godly):
They will never frustrate (them).
Against them make ready
Your strength to the utmost
Of your power, including
Steeds of war, to strike terror
Into (the hearts of) the enemies
Of Allah and your enemies,
And others besides, whom
Ye may not know, but whom
Allah doth know. Whatever
Ye shall spend in the Cause
Of Allah, shall be repaid
Unto you, and ye shall not
Be treated unjustly.
Al Anfāl (8:59-60)

● وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
سَبَقُوا إِنْهُمْ لَا يَعْرِضُونَ
● وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ
مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ
تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ
وَالْآخَرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ لَا نَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ
وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
يُؤْتِكُمْ إِيَّاهُ وَتَنْتَهُمْ لَا تَنْظُمُونَ
سورة الأنفال (٨: ٥٩-٦٠)

5. If two parties among
The Believers fall into
A quarrel, make ye peace
Between them: but if
One of them transgresses
Beyond bounds against the other,
Then fight ye (all) against
The one that transgresses
Until it complies with
The command of Allah;
But if it complies, then
Make peace between them
With justice, and be fair:
For Allah loves those
Who are fair (and just).
The Believers are but
A single Brotherhood:
So make peace and
Reconciliation between your
Two (contending) brothers;
And fear Allah, that ye
May receive Mercy.
Al Hujurat (49:9-10)

● وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
أَقْتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا
فَإِنْ بَعَثَ أَحَدُهُمَا عَلَى الْآخَرَى
فَقْتُلُوا الَّذِي تَبَغَى حَتَّى تَقْبَلَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ
فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا
بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ
● إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ
فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

سورة الحجرات: (٤٩ : ٩-١٠)

6. Truly, if the Hypocrites,
And those in whose hearts
Is a disease, and those who
Stir up sedition in the City,
Desist not, We shall certainly
Stir thee up against them:
Then will they not be
Able to stay in it
As thy neighbours
For any length of time:
They shall have a curse
On them: wherever they
Are found, they shall be
Seized and slain
(Without mercy).
(Such was) the practice
(Approved) of Allah among those
Who lived aforeside:
No change wilt thou find
In the practice (approved)
Of Allah.
Al Ahzab (33:60-62)

● لَئِن لَّرَبِّنَا مُنْفِقُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ
وَالْمُرْجِفُونَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ
لَنُغْرِبَنَّكَ بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا يُجَاوِرُونَكَ
فِيهَا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
● مَلْعُونِينَ أَيْنَمَا ثَقِفُوا
أُخِذُوا وَقْتَلُوا نَقْتِيلًا
● سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي
الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا

سورة الأحزاب (٣٣ : ٦٠-٦٢)

7. Fighting is prescribed
Upon you, and ye dislike it.

● كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ

But it is possible
 That ye dislike a thing
 Which is good for you,
 And that ye love a thing
 Which is bad for you.
 But Allah knoweth,
 And ye know not.
 They ask thee
 Concerning fighting
 In the Prohibited Month.
 Say: "Fighting therein
 Is a grave (offence);
 But graver is it
 In the sight of Allah
 To prevent access
 To the path of Allah,
 To deny Him,
 To prevent access
 To the Sacred Mosque,
 And drive out its members."
 Tumult and oppression
 Are worse than slaughter.
 Nor will they cease
 Fighting you until
 They turn you back
 From your faith
 If they can.
 And if any of you
 Turn back from their faith
 And die in unbelief,
 Their works will bear no fruit
 In this life
 And in the Hereafter;
 They will be
 Companions of the Fire
 And will abide therein.
Al Baqarah (2:216-217)

وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
 وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ
 وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ
 ● يَسْأَلُونَكَ
 عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ
 قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ
 وَصَدٌّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
 وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ، وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
 وَإِخْرَاجِ أَهْلِهِ، مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
 وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ
 وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ يُقْبِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ رُدُّوكُمْ
 عَن دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَعُوا
 وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ
 فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ
 أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ
 وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ
 هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ
 سورة البقرة (٢: ٢١٦-٢١٧)

The use of force in human relations as well as within and between human societies is one of the most important issues facing humanity. A correct understanding of power and its relationship to force and violence is essential to human progress and stability. To successfully understand and deal with progress, stability, peace, and security, one must be able to understand and conceptually distinguish between the internal and the external, the political, the legal, and the constitutional.

During the later history of the ummah, we can see that a clear understanding and a proper handling of force and power relationships vis-à-vis Muslim

societies and groups has been absent. This reality represents a major cause of the ummah's contemporary political instability and decline. It also explains the authoritarian tendencies found in the structure and approaches to Muslim political and social systems as well as organizations like the family, political parties, voluntary societies, and governments.

Historical developments, alien cultural influences as well as various external, physical, and intellectual factors—especially tribal, racial, and class interests and orientations—have contributed to this crisis. However, the intellectual aspect may be the most important and most strategic factor here, for since the early years of Islam Muslim intellectuals have shied away from political issues. Such noninvolvement eventually caused a separation between the individual's private life and the ummah's public and political life. This, in turn, led to confusion over the domains of the political, the legal, and the legitimate as well as between the internal and the external. This separation also lent itself to apathy. The consequent lack of intellectual analysis, inquiry, and understanding of these issues defeated the Muslims' ummatic (nation-building) movements and aspirations. The idea that the public and the political are inauthentic and illegitimate partially explains the tendencies towards fragmentation and the absence of public spirit and concern throughout the Muslim ummah.

To clarify these issues as they relate to Muslim education, organizations, and practices, Muslim intellectuals, social scientists, and scholars must pay attention to the foundations of Islamic thought. They must analytically and systematically study the Qur'an and the Sunnah to learn what they contain concerning the use of force and power and their various aspects. They must also negate the confusion between the various aspects of power so that Muslim governments, institutions, individuals and all other sectors of the ummah can cultivate, practice, and implement *shūrā* (consultation). Nothing in the proper way should be excluded from its activity: childhood, the family unit, education, neighborhood and local affairs, state government and ummatic issues as well as political and social organizations.

In this article, I will deal only with the internal and external aspects of power and force in human societies, using the texts of the Qur'an and the Sunnah to see how these sources address the people in the light of the historical space-time background and context. It is mainly the linguistic-based studying of these texts which generally explains the Muslims' confusion on the use of force instead of more suitable political means. Hopefully, our intelligentsia will begin to analyze the Qur'an and the Sunnah with the intention of understanding the relevant principles and then using this understanding to draw up the guidelines and directions needed for nation-building and shuratic (consultative) social and political systems.

According to the above verses, the Qur'an asks and authorizes Muslims to fight and use force (*qitāl*) against their oppressors, enemies, or hostile outsiders. In these verses and many others, the Qur'an requires Muslims to acquire force, power, and their necessary instruments so that they can fight their enemies.

We also notice here, as elsewhere, that the Qur'an addresses the group: whether it is the people, the Muslims, the *mu'minūn*, or their leaders who represent them, the government, or the *jamā'ah* (group). The Prophet is often addressed not as an individual, but as the symbol of the Muslim community. In the same manner, the Qur'an speaks of the Muslims' enemies as a group or a community. In neither case does Allah refer to individuals. It is interesting to note that when the Qur'an addresses individuals on the issue of fighting or killing, it approaches the subject in a totally different manner: as an illegitimate act of murder.

8. Never should a Believer
Kill a Believer; but
(If it so happens) by mistake,
(Compensation is due);
If one (so) kills a Believer,
It is ordained that he
Should free a believing slave,
And pay compensation
To the deceased's family,
Unless they remit it freely.
If the deceased belonged
To a people at war with you,
And he was a Believer,
The freeing of a believing slave
(Is enough). If he belonged
To a people with whom
Ye have a treaty of mutual
Alliance, compensation should
Be paid to his family,
And a believing slave be freed.
For those who find this
Beyond their means, (is prescribed)
A fast for two months
Running: by way of repentance
To Allah; for Allah hath
All knowledge and all wisdom.
If a man kills a Believer
Intentionally, his recompense
Is Hell, to abide therein
(Forever): and the wrath
And the curse of Allah

● وَمَا كَانَتْ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَنْ يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَاً
وَمَنْ قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَاً فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ
مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ ۖ إِلَّا أَنْ
يَصَّدَّقُوا فَإِنْ كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَدُوٍّ لَكُمْ
وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ
وَإِنْ كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ
وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ فِدْيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ
إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ ۖ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ
فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ
مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا
● وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِدًا
فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا
وَعَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ

Are upon him, and
A dreadful penalty
Is prepared for him.
Al Nisā’ (4:92-93)

وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا

سورة النساء (٤: ٩٢-٩٣)

9. And he entered the City
At a time when its people
Were not watching; and he
Found there two men fighting—
One of his own people,
And the other, of his foes.
Now the man of his own
People appealed to him
Against his foe, and Moses
Struck him with his fist
And made an end of him.
He said: “This is a work
Of Evil (Satan): for he is
An enemy that manifestly
Misleads!”
He prayed: “O my Lord!
I have indeed wronged my soul!
Do Thou then forgive me!”
So (Allah) forgave him: For He
Is the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
Al Qaṣaṣ (28:15-16)

● وَدَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ عَلَى حِينٍ غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ

أَهْلِهَا فَوَجَدَ فِيهَا رَجُلَيْنِ يَقْتَتِلَانِ

هَذَا مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ، وَهَذَا مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ

فَاسْتَعَاثَ الَّذِي مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ، عَلَى الَّذِي

مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ، فَوَكَرَهُ مُوسَى فَقَضَى عَلَيْهِ

قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ

إِنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ مُّضِلٌّ مُّبِينٌ

● قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي

فَغَفَرْنَا لَهُ إِنَّكَ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

سورة القصص (٢٨: ١٥-١٦)

In the above-mentioned verses, the Qur’an describes killing done by those not legally authorized to do so and by those who do not represent the community (ummah or *jamā’ah*) as an illegitimate, criminal, and immoral act of murder and bloodshed. The Prophet clearly stated that one who kills or bears arms against another individual is a criminal, that he is outside of the *jamā’ah* or ummah, and that such an act is *kufr* (denial of Islam). Al Bukhārī and other imams relate that the Prophet said: “Whoever takes up arms against us is not one of us,” “Do not become apostates after me by striking (cutting) the neck of one another,” and “Abusing a Muslim is *fusūq* (doing evil), and killing him is *kufr* (disbelief).”

From these citations, we learn that legitimate and authorized fighting and killing can only be carried out by the ummah, the *jamā’ah*, or in their name. We can also see that this is essentially an external act, as it is one of the ways which the Muslim *jamā’ah* reacts to hostile non-Muslims.

10. Let there arise out of you
A band of people

● وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ

Inviting to all that is good,
Enjoining what is right,
And forbidding what is wrong:
They are the ones
To attain felicity.
Āl 'Imrān (3:104)

يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ
سورة آل عمران (٣: ١٠٤)

11. Curses were pronounced
On those among the Children
Of Israel who rejected Faith,
By the tongue of David
And of Jesus, the son of Mary,
Because they disobeyed
And persisted in Excesses.
Nor did they (usually)
Forbid one another
The iniquities which they
Committed: evil indeed
Were the deeds which they did.
Al Mā'idah (5:78-79)

● لُعِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي
إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ
مَرْيَمَ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ
● كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ
فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ
سورة المائدة (٥: ٧٨-٧٩)

12. Nor take life—which Allah
Has made sacred—except
For just cause. And if
Anyone is slain wrongfully,
We have given his heir
Authority (to demand Qīṣāṣ
Or to forgive): but let him
Not exceed bounds in the matter
Of taking life: for he
Is helped (by the law).
Al Isrā' (17:33)

● وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ
وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوْلِيهِ
سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يَسْرِفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنصُورًا
سورة الإسراء (١٧: ٣٣)

13. (They are) those who,
If We establish them
In the land, establish
Regular prayer and give
Regular charity, enjoin
The right and forbid wrong:
With Allah rests the end
(And decision) of (all) affairs.
Al Hajj (22:41)

● الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ
وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ
سورة الحج (٢٢: ٤١)

A hasty or distorted reading of Islamic texts could cause us to misinterpret or misunderstand the proper method for upholding what is (rightly or wrongly) considered good (*ma'rūf*) or for opposing what (rightly or wrongly) is considered bad or evil (*munkar*).

If we look at the above verses, the only conclusion we can draw is that it is an Islamic duty to uphold good and eliminate evil. There are many ways to do this. One fact, however, is clear: an individual or group which takes up arms against the *jamāʿah* or resorts to unauthorized violence in the name of establishing *maʿrūf* or eliminating *munkar* is in reality a criminal guilty of murder. If we study the Sunnah, we find that the Prophet asked individuals to engage in a peaceful or a nonviolent, as opposed to an armed, struggle against the *jamāʿah*'s or the public authorities' injustice (*ẓulm*), even at the cost of increased personal suffering or death. Imām Muslim narrated that the Prophet said:

Your authorities (*aʿimmatukum*) are the ones you love and who love you. They pray for you and you pray for them. Your evil (*shirār*) authorities are the ones you hate and who hate you. You curse them and they curse you.

It was asked: "O Messenger of Allah. Should we rise against them?" He replied: "No, as long as they establish the *ṣalāh*. If you see those in authority doing something you disapprove of (*takrah*) then disapprove of the act, but do not resort to rebellion (*tanziʿu yadak min al tāʿah*).

Al Tirmidhī narrated that Umm Salāmah said:

The Prophet said: "You will get rulers; some you will approve of and some you will disapprove of. Whoever objects is cleared and whoever shows dislike is saved, but (the trouble is to) those who accept and follow." It was asked: "Should we fight them?" The Prophet replied: "No, not so long as they pray."

The books of al Sunnan narrated that the Prophet said: "The highest jihad is a word of justice addressed to an unjust ruler."

Imām Muslim and others narrated that the Prophet said:

Whoever comes across an evil (*munkar*) should correct it with his hands. If this is not possible, he should correct it with his tongue. And if this is not possible, he should deny it with his heart.

These *ahādīth* show that Muslims seeking to enforce good or oppose evil in their societies are not allowed to use force to achieve their aims. No relevant text lends itself to a contrary interpretation. *Shūrā* within the Qurʾanic (constitutional) frame of reference is the only legitimate way of addressing the issue of public order in Islam.

14. If it had been the Lord's Will,
They would all have believed—
All who are on earth!
Wilt thou then compel mankind,
Against their will, to believe! . . .
Say: "O ye men! Now
Truth hath reached you
From your Lord! Those who receive
Guidance, do so for the good
Of their own souls; those
Who stray, do so to their own loss:
And I am not (set) over you
To arrange your affairs."
Follow thou the inspiration
Sent unto thee, and be
Patient and constant, till Allah
Doth decide: for He
Is the Best to decide.
Yūnus (10:99, 108-109)

● وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ

حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

● قُلْ يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْحَقُّ مِنْ

رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ أَهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ

ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

● وَأَتَّبِعْ مَا يوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ

وَأصِرْ حَتَّىٰ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ

سورة يونس (١٠: ٩٩-١٠٨-١٠٩)

15. Let there be no compulsion
In religion: Truth stands out
Clear from Error: whoever
Rejects Evil and believes
In Allah hath grasped
The most trustworthy
Handhold, that never breaks.
And Allah heareth
And knoweth all things.
Al Baqarah (2:256)

● لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ

فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ

فَقَدْ آسَمَّسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا

وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

سورة البقرة (٢: ٢٥٦)

16. The Religion before Allah
Is Islam (submission to His Will):
Nor did the People of the Book
Dissent therefrom except
Through envy of each other,
After knowledge had come to them.
But if any deny the Signs of Allah,
Allah is swift in calling to account.
So if they dispute with thee,
Say: "I have submitted
My whole self to Allah
And so have those
Who follow me."
And say to the People of the Book
And to those who are unlearned:
"Do ye (also) submit yourselves?"
If they do, they are in right guidance,

● إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

وَمَا اختلفَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ

مَا جَاءَهُمْ أَلْمَلُؤُا بَيْنَهُمْ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ

بِتَايَبَاتِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

● فَإِن حَاجُّوكَ فَقُلْ أَسَلَمْتُ

وَجِهِيَ لِلَّهِ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي

وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْأُمِّيِّينَ

ءَاسَلَمْتُمْ فَإِنِ اسَلَمُوا فَقَدْ اهْتَدَوْا

But if they turn back,
Thy duty is to convey the Message;
And in Allah's sight
Are (all) His servants.
Al 'Imrān (3:19-20)

وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلْغُ
وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ
سورة آل عمران (٣: ١٩-٢٠)

17. Therefore do thou give
Admonition, for thou art
One to admonish.
Thou art not one
To manage (men's) affairs.
But if any turns away
And rejects Allah –
Allah will punish him
With a mighty Punishment.
For to Us will be
Their Return;
Then it will be for Us
To call them to account.
Al Ghāshiyah (88:21-26)

● فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ
● لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ
● إِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلَّى وَكَفَرَ
● فَيُعَذِّبُهُ اللَّهُ الْعَذَابَ الْأَكْبَرَ
● إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ
● ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ
سورة الغاشية (٨٨: ٢١-٢٦)

The above-cited verses clearly establish fundamental Islamic constitutional concepts. They also clearly indicate that Muslims must regard humanity as having the freedom to choose its own beliefs. Islam views life as a testing ground for the human will. Within the Muslim community, Islam uncompromisingly protects the individual's right to freedom of choice and, outside the Muslim community, Islam seeks to secure this right for everybody. Islam protects the right of choice regardless of whether a person chooses Islam or another religion. Thus, Muslims cannot allow themselves to accept any interpretation other than these basic Qur'anic beliefs and principles as the basis for the use of potentially lethal force outside the public order.

18. Invite (all) to the Way
Of thy Lord with wisdom
And beautiful preaching;
And argue with them
In ways that are best
And most gracious:
For thy Lord knoweth best,
Who have strayed from His Path,
And who receive guidance.
And if ye do catch them out,
Catch them out no worse
Than they catch you out:
But if ye show patience,

● ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ
الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدِّ لَهُم بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ
● إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ
وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ
● وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ
مَا عُوقِبْتُمْ بِهِ ۖ وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ

That is indeed the best (course)
 For those who are patient.
 And do thou be patient,
 For thy patience is but
 From Allah; nor grieve over them:
 And distress not thyself
 Because of their plots.
Al Nahl (16:125-127)

لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِلصَّابِرِينَ
 • وَأَصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ
 عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ
 سورة النحل (١٦: ١٢٥-١٢٧)

19. Nor can Goodness and Evil
 Be equal. Repel (Evil)
 With what is better:
 Then will he between whom
 And thee was hatred
 Become as it were
 Thy friend and intimate!
Fuṣṣilat (41:34)

• وَلَا تَسْتَوِ الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ
 أَدْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ
 وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ
 سورة فصلت (٤١: ٣٤)

20. But indeed if any do help
 And defend themselves
 After a wrong (done)
 To them, against such
 There is no cause
 Of blame.
 The blame is only
 Against those who oppress
 Men with wrongdoing
 And insolently transgress
 Beyond bounds through the land,
 Defying right and justice:
 For such there will be
 A Penalty grievous.
Al Shūrā (42:41-42)

• وَلَكِنْ أَنْصَرْ بَعْدَ ظَلْمِهِ
 فَأُولَئِكَ مَاعَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ
 • إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
 يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْعُونَ
 فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ
 أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ
 سورة الشورى (٤٢: ٤١-٤٢)

21. "Go, both of you, to Pharaoh,
 For he has indeed
 Transgressed all bounds;
 But speak to him mildly;
 Perchance he may take
 Warning or fear (Allah)."
 They (Moses and Aaron) said:
 "Our Lord! We fear lest
 He hasten with insolence
 Against us, or lest he
 Transgress all bounds."
Tā Hā (20:43-45)

• أَذْهَبَا إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى
 • فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَيِّنًا
 لَعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى
 • قَالَ رَبَّنَا اتَّخَفْنَا أَنْ يَفْرُطَ
 عَلَيْنَا أَوْ أَنْ يَطْغَى
 سورة طه (٢٠: ٤٣-٤٥)

22. And dispute ye not
 With the People of the Book,

• وَلَا تَجِدُوا أُمَّةً أَحَدًا تَكْفُرُ

Except with means better
(Than mere disputation), unless
It be with those of them
Who inflict wrong (and injury);
But say, "We believe
In the Revelation which has
Come down to us and in that
Which came down to you;
Our God and your God
Is One; and it is to Him
We bow (in Islam)."
Al 'Ankabūt (29:46)

إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ
ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ
وَقُولُوا آمَنَّا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأُنزِلَ
إِلَيْكُمْ وَإِلَهُنَا وَإِلَهُكُمْ وَاحِدٌ
وَنُحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ
سورة العنكبوت (٢٩ : ٤٦)

23. Say: "O People
Of the Book! come
To common terms
As between us and you:
That we worship
None but Allah;
That we associate
No partners with Him;
That we erect not,
From among ourselves,
Lords and patrons
Other than Allah."
If then they turn back,
Say ye: "Bear witness
That we (at least)
Are Muslims (bowing
To Allah's Will)."
Āl 'Imrān (3:64)

● قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا
إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ
أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ
شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا
بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا
أَشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا
مُسْلِمُونَ
سورة آل عمران (٣ : ٦٤)

24. Allah forbids you not,
With regard to those who
Fight you not for (your) Faith
Nor drive you out
Of your homes,
From dealing kindly and justly
With them: For Allah loveth
Those who are just.
Allah only forbids you,
With regard to those who
Fight you for (your) Faith,
And drive you out,
Of your homes, and support
(Others) in driving you out,
From turning to them
(For friendship and protection).
It is such as turn to them

● لَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ
الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوا فِي الدِّينِ
وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ
وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ
● إِنَّمَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُواكُمْ
فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُواكُمْ مِنْ دِينِكُمْ
وَظَنَّهُمْ وَعَلَىٰ إِيخَارِكُمْ أَنْ تُتَوَلَّوْهُمْ
وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ

(In these circumstances),
That do wrong.
Al Mumtahinah (60:8-9)

هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ
سورة الممتحنة (٦٠ : ٨-٩)

25. Fight in the cause of Allah
Those who fight you,
But do not transgress limits;
For Allah loveth not transgressors.
And slay them
Wherever ye catch them,
And turn them out
From where they have
Turned you out;
For tumult and oppression
Are worse than slaughter;
But fight them not
At the Sacred Mosque,
Unless they (first)
Fight you there;
But if they fight you,
Slay them.
Such is the reward
Of those who suppress faith.
Al Baqarah (2:190-191)

● وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعَدُّوا أَرْبَابَ اللَّهِ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ●
وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ يَقْبَلُوهُمْ
وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ
وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ
وَلَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ فَإِنْ قَتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ
كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ
سورة البقرة (٢ : ١٩٠-١٩١)

26. And why should ye not
Fight in the cause of Allah
And of those who, being weak,
Are ill treated (and oppressed)?—
Men, women, and children,
Whose cry is: "Our Lord!
Rescue us from this town,
Whose people are oppressors;
And raise for us from Thee
One who will protect;
And raise for us from Thee
One who will help!"
Al Nisā' (4:75)

● وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ
وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ
رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَوْلَاهَا
وَأَجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا
وَأَجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ نَصِيرًا
سورة النساء (٤ : ٧٥)

27. Behold! Allah promised you
One of the two (enemy) parties,
That it should be yours:
Ye wished that the one
Unarmed should be yours,
But Allah willed
To justify the Truth
According to His words,
And to cut off the roots
Of the Unbelievers—
Al Anfāl (8:7)

● وَإِذْ يَعِدُكُمُ اللَّهُ إِحْدَى الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ
أَنَّهَا لَكُمُ وَتُؤَدُّونَ أَنْ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ الشَّوْكَةِ
تَكُونُ لَكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُحِقَّ
الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَيَقَطَّعَ دَائِرَ الْكُفْرِينَ
سورة الأنفال (٨ : ٧)

The above verses clarify the basic approach of Muslims to their adversaries, i.e., they are to peacefully approach them and use care, concern, and gentleness (as long as these adversaries are not being aggressive) in dealing with them. Otherwise, it is the Muslim authorities who are responsible for punishing and retaliating in a just and proper manner. Naturally, inter-Muslim relationships should lend themselves to more understanding, caring, and discipline than those with non-Muslims.

28. And obey Allah and His Messenger;
And fall into no disputes,
Lest ye lose heart
And your power depart;
And be patient and persevering:
For Allah is with those
Who patiently persevere.
Al Anfāl (8:46)

● وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا
فَنَفْسُكُمُ وَاللَّهِ يَكُونُ
وَأَصْبِرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ
سورة الأنفال (٨ : ٤٦)

29. O ye who believe!
Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger,
And those charged
With authority among you.
If ye differ in anything
Among yourselves, refer it
To Allah and His Messenger,
If ye do believe in Allah
And the Last Day:
That is best, and most suitable
For final determination.
Al Nisā' (4:59)

● يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا
الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ
فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا
سورة النساء (٤ : ٥٩)

30. Those who harken
To their Lord, and establish
Regular prayer; who (conduct)
Their affairs by mutual Consultation;
Who spend out of what
We bestow on them
For Sustenance;
And those who, when
An oppressive wrong is inflicted
On them, (are not cowed
But) help and defend themselves.
Al Shūrā (42:38-39)

● وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ
وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنِهِمْ
وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ
● وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ
الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْصُرُونَ
سورة الشورى (٤٢ : ٣٨-٣٩)

31. It is part of the Mercy
Of Allah that thou dost deal
Gently with them.

● فَمِمَّا رَحِمْنَا مِنْ اللَّهِ لَنَتَّخِذَ لَهُمْ

Wert thou severe
 Or harsh-hearted,
 They would have broken away
 From about thee: so pass over
 (Their faults), and ask
 For (Allah's) forgiveness
 For them; and consult
 Them in affairs (of moment).
 Then, when thou hast
 Taken a decision,
 Put thy trust in Allah.
 For Allah loves those
 Who put their trust (in Him).
Āl 'Imrān (3:159)

وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ
 لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ
 فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ
 وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ
 فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ
 سورة آل عمران (٣: ١٥٩)

These verses show us the constitutional and fundamental frame of reference for Muslim societies, governments, and authorities. Clearly, the constitutional points of reference and legitimate authorities in Muslim society are Allah (the Qur'an), His Messenger (as the Messenger of Allah to the Muslims and as a leader accepted by the believers [the Sunnah]), and the leadership of the people (*ūlū al amri minkum*).

The constitutional process of political authority is *shūrā* (consultation). This constitutional frame of reference and process leaves all political matters to the people as regards legal identity and their legitimate political leadership, a fact which makes it impossible for an individual(s) or a group(s) to take the law into their own hands. It does, however, demand and encourage individuals to seriously pursue all legal means of action by participating, directing, and enhancing what is good and by opposing and eliminating what is bad.

Obedience to those in authority and positive participation is a duty and clearly required when the ideal Islamic constitutional rule prevails in a Muslim society. But what about non-Muslim societies in which the ideal does not exist (i.e., secular societies in which religion is a personal matter and citizens are allowed to perform their Islamic rituals) or non-Muslim and totalitarian societies which deny their citizens the right of religious belief and practice?

Many texts of the Qur'an and the Sunnah state that under no circumstances is armed rebellion allowed as long as Muslims can keep their beliefs and practice their religious rituals and prayers.

As for the second issue, we have to analyze the relevant Qur'anic verses to understand it.

32. "No reason have we why
 We should not put our trust

• وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نَتَوَكَّلَ

On Allah. Indeed He
Has guided us to the Ways
We (follow). We shall certainly
Bear with patience all
The hurt you may cause us.
For those who put their trust
Should put their trust on Allah.”
Ibrāhīm (14:12)

عَلَى اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانَا سُبُلَنَا
وَلَنَصْبِرَنَّ عَلَى مَا آذَيْتُمُونَا
وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ
سورة إبراهيم (١٤ : ١٢)

33. Say: “O ye men! Now
Truth hath reached you
From your Lord! Those who receive
Guidance, do so for the good
Of their own souls; those
Who stray, do so to their own loss:
And I am not (set) over you
To arrange your affairs.”
Follow thou the inspiration
Sent unto thee, and be
Patient and constant, till Allah
Doth decide: for He
Is the Best to decide.
Yūnus (10:108-109)

● قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْحَقُّ
مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ أَهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ
وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا
وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ
● وَأَتَّبِعْ مَا يُوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَأَصْبِرْ حَتَّىٰ
يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ
سورة يونس (١٠ : ١٠٨، ١٠٩)

34. Therefore patiently persevere,
As did (all) messengers
Of inflexible purpose;
And be in no haste
About the (Unbelievers). On the Day
That they see the (Punishment)
Promised them, (it will be)
As if they had not
Tarryed more than an hour
In a single day. (Thine
But) to proclaim the Message:
But shall any be destroyed
Except those who transgress?
Al Aḥqāf (46:35)

● فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعَزْرِ
مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ
كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرُونَ مَا يُوعَدُونَ لَمْ يَلْبُثُوا
إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّن نَّهَارٍ
بَلَّغٌ فَمَهْلِكُهُمْ
إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقُونَ
سورة الأحقاف (٤٦ : ٣٥)

35. Said Pharaoh: “Believe ye
In Him before I give
You permission? Surely
This is a trick which ye
Have planned in the City
To drive out its people:
But soon shall ye know
(The consequences).
Be sure I will cut off
Your hands and your feet

● قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ءَأَمْنْتُمْ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ
ءَأْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِنَّ هَذَا لَمَكْرٌ
مَّكْرَتُمْوهُ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لِنُخْرِجُوا مِنْهَا أَهْلَهَا
فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ
● لَأَقْطَعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ

On opposite sides, and I
 Will cause you all
 To die on the cross."
 They said: "For us,
 We are but sent back
 Unto our Lord:
 But thou dost wreak
 Thy vengeance on us
 Simply because we believed
 In the Signs of our Lord
 When they reached us!
 Our Lord! pour out on us
 Patience and constancy, and take
 Our souls unto Thee
 As Muslims (who how
 To Thy Will)!"
Al Arāf (7:123-126)

مِنْ خَلْفٍ ثُمَّ لَأَضِلَّ بَيْنَكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

● قَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ

● وَمَا نُنْقِمُ مِنْكَ إِلَّا آتَاءَ أَمَانَا

يَتَايَتِ رَبِّنَا لَمَّا جَاءَنَا

رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا

وَتَوْفَقًا مُسْلِمِينَ

سورة الأعراف (٧: ١٢٣-١٢٦)

These and many other verses describe individuals and groups oppressed by their peoples and ruthless rulers. They were always asked to uphold their belief and to continue calling their people to the right belief and the right path, all the while being patient and enduring the brutalities and the harm inflicted upon them by their oppressors. In all these and similar cases, the Qur'an never suggested fighting, armed rebellion, or retaliation. This does not, however, exclude peaceful means of struggle and striving to advance a just cause. Al Bukhārī narrated that Khubāb Ibn al Ārit said:

We complained to the Messenger of Allah while he rested his head on his upper garment (*burdah*) in the shade of the Ka'bah. We said to him: "Will you not seek victory for us by praying to Allah for us?" He said: "Many were the people before you who were sent to make a ditch for someone. He would be put into it, and his head would then be sawn in half. He would be split into two. That would not sway him away from his religion. His flesh, all the way to his bones or nerves, would be combed with iron combs and it would not sway him from his religion. By Allah, this religion will prevail until the traveler from Ṣan'ā to Ḥaḍramawt will travel fearing nothing except Allah and the wolf for his sheep. But you are in haste (impatient)."

36. Go ye forth, (whether equipped)
 Lightly or heavily, and strive
 And struggle, with your goods

● أَنْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا
 بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ

And your persons, in the Cause
Of Allah. That is best
For you, if ye (but) knew.
Al Tawbah (9:41)

وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ
سورة التوبة (٩ : ٤١)

37. O ye who believe!
Take not My enemies
And yours as friends
(Or protectors)—offering them
(Your) love, even though
They have rejected the Truth
That has come to you,
And have (on the contrary)
Driven out the Messenger
And yourselves (from your homes),
(Simply) because ye believe
In Allah your Lord!
If ye have come out
To strive in My Way
And to seek My Good Pleasure,
(Take them not as friends),
Holding secret converse
Of love (and friendship)
With them: for I know
Full well all that ye
Conceal and all that ye
Reveal. And any of you
That does this has strayed
From the Straight Path.
If they were to get
The better of you,
They would behave to you
As enemies, and stretch forth
Their hands and their tongues
Against you for evil;
And they desire that ye
Should reject the Truth.
Of no profit to you
Will be your relatives
And your children
On the Day of Judgement:
He will judge between you:
For Allah sees well
All that ye do.
Al Mumtahinah (60:1-3)

● يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ
تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ
وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ
يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ
أَنْ تُوْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ حَرَجْتُمْ جِهَدًا
فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي
تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ
بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ
وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ
ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ
● إِنْ يَتَّقَوْكُمْ
يَكُونُوا لَكُمْ أَعْدَاءَ

وَيَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَأَلْسِنَتَهُمْ
بِالسُّوْءِ وَوَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ
● لَنْ نَنْفَعَكُمْ أَرْحَامَكُمُ وَلَا أَوْلَادَكُمُ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ
سورة الممتحنة (٦٠ : ٣٠)

38. To those against whom
War is made, permission
Is given (to fight), because

● أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ

They are wronged—and verily,
 Allah is Most Powerful
 For their aid—
 (They are) those who have
 Been expelled from their homes
 In defiance of right—
 (For no cause) except
 That they say, "Our Lord
 Is Allah." Did not Allah
 Check one set of people
 By means of another
 There would surely have been
 Pulled down monasteries, churches,
 Synagogues, and mosques, in which
 The name of Allah is commemorated
 In abundant measure. Allah will
 Certainly aid those who
 Aid His (cause)—for verily
 Allah is Full of Strength.
 Exalted in Might,
 (Able to enforce His Will).
Al Hajj (22:39-40)

بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلَمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ
 ● الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ
 بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ
 وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ
 لَفُتِنَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ
 وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا
 اسْمَ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا
 وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ
 سورة الحج (٢٢: ٤٠-٣٩)

39. Fight in the cause of Allah
 Those who fight you,
 But do not transgress limits;
 For Allah loveth not transgressors.
 And slay them
 Wherever ye catch them,
 And turn them out
 From where they have
 Turned you out;
 For tumult and oppression
 Are worse than slaughter;
 But fight them not
 At the Sacred Mosque,
 Unless they (first)
 Fight you there;
 But if they fight you,
 Slay them.
 Such is the reward
 Of those who suppress faith.
 But if they cease,
 Allah is Oft-Forgiving,
 Most Merciful.
 And fight them on
 Until there is no more
 Tumult or oppression,
 And there prevail

● وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا
 تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ
 ● وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَفِفْتُمُوهُمْ
 وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ
 وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ
 وَلَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
 حَتَّىٰ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ فَإِنْ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ
 كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكٰفِرِينَ
 ● فَإِنْ أَنهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ
 ● وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ
 لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ

Justice and faith in Allah;
But if they cease,
Let there be no hostility
Except to those
Who practise oppression.
Al Baqarah (2:190-193)

الَّذِينَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أَنهَوْا
فَلَا عُدُونَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ

سورة البقرة (٢: ١٩٠-١٩٣)

40. Fighting is prescribed
Upon you, and ye dislike it.
But it is possible
That ye dislike a thing
Which is good for you,
And that ye love a thing
Which is bad for you.
But Allah knoweth,
And ye know not.
They ask thee
Concerning fighting
In the Prohibited Month.
Say: "Fighting therein
Is a grave (offence);
But graver is it
In the sight of Allah
To prevent access
To the path of Allah,
To deny Him,
To prevent access
To the Sacred Mosque,
And drive out its members."
Tumult and oppression
Are worse than slaughter.
Nor will they cease
Fighting you until
They turn you back
From your faith
If they can. . . .
Al Baqarah (2:216-217)

• كَتَبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالَ وَهُوَ كَرِهٌ لَّكُمْ
وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

• يَسْأَلُونَكَ
عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ
قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ
وَصَدٌّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ
وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
وَإِخْرَاجِ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ
وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ يُلْمُونَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَرُدُّوكُمْ
عَن دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَاعُوا

سورة البقرة (٢: ٢١٦-٢١٧)

We notice here that the Qur'an requires Muslims to fight their non-Muslim oppressors and enemies. It is important to note that in these verses the Qur'an addresses oppressed citizens, for it speaks of people driven out of their homes and asks them to organize their own defense and to liberate the oppressed people and believers in Makkah and other Arab tribal communities. The Qur'an is addressing two aspects: the internal (domestic) and the external (foreign). The internal one is where the Qur'an requires people to use patience and civil struggle in their attempt to maintain their existence and belief

and while calling others to the right path. The external one is where the people of one society defend themselves against external aggression, help the oppressed of other societies obtain justice, and attempt to prevent and stop aggression against them, their beliefs, and their just cause. Al Bukhārī narrated that Sa'īd ibn Jubayr said:

'Abd Allāh bin 'Umar came to us. We hoped that he would narrate an interesting hadith. But before we asked him, a man got up and said to him: "O Abū 'Abd al Raḥmān! Tell us about the battle during the time of the afflictions (*fitnah*), as Allah says: 'And fight them until there is no more affliction (*fitnah*),' i.e., no more worshipping of others besides Allah" (2:193). Ibn 'Umar said (to the man): "Do you know what is meant by afflictions? May your mother bereave you! Muḥammad used to fight against the pagans, for a Muslim was put to trial in his religion (the pagans would either kill him or chain him as a captive). His fighting was not like your fighting, which is carried on for the sake of ruling."

Al Bukhārī narrated that two men came to Ibn 'Umar at the time of Ibn al Zubayr's afflictions. They said:

"You, the son of 'Umar and a Companion of the Prophet, see what the people have done. So, what prevents you from joining in?" He said: "What prevents me is that Allah has prohibited the shedding of the blood of my Muslim brother." They said: "Did not Allah say: 'And fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and justice and faith in Allah prevails altogether and everywhere? But if they cease, verily Allah sees all that they do?'" He said: "We fought until there was no more oppression (*fitnah*) and faith in Allah prevailed. You want to fight to make affliction (*fitnah*) and faith in other than Allah prevail."

Al Bukhārī and Imām Muslim narrate that Usāmah ibn Zayd said:

Once the Prophet stood on one of the high buildings of Madīnah and said (to the people): "Do you see what I see?" They said: "No." He said: "I see afflictions falling as raindrops among your houses."

Abū Dāwūd narrated that Abū Dharr said:

The Messenger of Allah said: "O Abū Dharr." I said: "I am happy, O Messenger of Allah, and ready to receive your orders (*labayk wa sa'dayk*)." He said: "What would you do when death is inflicted

upon the people?" I said: "Allah and His Messenger know best," or he said, "Whatever Allah and His Messenger have chosen for me." The Prophet said: "You must have patience," or he said: "You should have patience."

Then the Messenger of Allah said: "O Abū Dharr!" I said: "Yes, O Messenger of Allah." He said: "What will happen to you when you see the stones of al Zayt covered and sunk in blood?" I said: "What Allah and His Messenger have chosen for me." The Prophet said: "You must stick to whom you belong." I said: "O Messenger of Allah. Should I not take my sword and put it on my shoulder? Should I not get ready to fight?" The Prophet said: "You will then have joined the people." I said: "What do you order for me?" He said: "Stay at home." I said: "What should I do if they enter my house?" He said: "If you are afraid of the sword's glitter, cover your face with your clothes. They will go with your sins and their sins. They will return with your sins and their sins."

In these *ahādīth*, we can see the Prophet speaking of times when there would be armed rebellion(s) within the ummah. From their wording, it seems that he was expecting such events to happen in Madīnah and elsewhere in the ummah after his death. He made it clear that no individual or faction had a legal justification for inciting armed rebellion, and that the taking up of arms and participating in any armed rebellion was not allowed, not even in the name of self-defense. Any individual or faction who takes up arms against the legitimate authorities or another Muslim is a rebel or an aggressor, and the ummah should unite behind the legitimate authority so that the latter can punish and subdue such aggression and rebellion. Grievances, injustices, and differences are all political problems and should be resolved by political means.

What lesson can we draw from these texts when they are viewed in the light of the Prophet's actions in Makkah and Madīnah? The lesson is that there is a clear distinction between the use of force in an internal and an external situation. In the former, whether in Makkah or in Madīnah, the Prophet never sanctioned the use of arms by Muslim individuals or groups against those who oppressed and persecuted them. He forbade Muslims to use arms even when people like Hamzah or 'Umar joined them in Makkah. By the same token, the Prophet prohibited the use of arms by individuals striving for justice or upholding what is believed to be good and right—even in the name of self-defense. A person or group who rebels against legitimate authority and commits aggression against the ummah's public order must be clearly identified. This will unify the ummah and make it possible

for the legitimate authorities to subdue the rebellious element with minimum bloodshed.

On the other hand, if individuals and groups seeking justice and calling for the establishment of what is right or for the common good use only peaceful and civil means, they are bound to get a good hearing. In addition, if the authorities or anyone else commits aggression against them or oppresses them, such nonviolence will most likely gain its practitioners the people's sympathy. In this case, the ummah has to unite and cause the authorities to change their attitude if they want to retain any legitimacy, thereby losing all support and becoming doomed to eventual collapse.

History shows that if a cause is to succeed from inside a society, it has to be pursued through political and civil means until the people accept, adapt to, and change the prevailing system. This is how the Roman Empire was converted to Christianity. The Christian missionary victory over the Roman Empire is a great example of such an approach's success. Another example of this is Iran's Islamic revolution against the Shah. Contemporary Western political stability is another good example. Although Islam did not change Makkah from the inside, many exceptional and worthy people joined its cause. Islam shook the moral consciousness of the Makkans and the Arabs and also gave the victory and the spread of Islam a moral power of its own.

It is important to understand that the ummah and society are, to both individuals and groups, like parents to fighting children. As long as the factions are fighting each other, the ummah and society can do little, nor can they take active sides with one or the other factions, just as parents cannot take sides when two of their children are fighting. However, the moment one side resorts to force and the other does not, it is only a matter of time until the ummah as well as the parents interfere and stop the one using force against the peaceful one. If the latter has a just or a good cause, it will undoubtedly have a chance of success. Restraint and patience, as well as peaceful and civil means of resistance, are the ingredients necessary for a stable and successful political system seeking to serve its people.

The external situation and relationship is a different dimension, for this involves physical boundaries separating societies from each other. Governments and local leaderships can influence the situation in their societies, interrupt the means of communication, and mobilize their society's resources in a dangerous and fatal manner against other societies. *Quid pro quo* is an important principle in relations between different societies, peoples, and nations. Armed conflict with an external enemy could help unite people, contrary to the effect of internal armed conflict, which usually destroys the people's unity and lowers their morale and spirit. If a nation is determined

to use force against another nation, the only proper option when diplomacy fails is to stand against the aggressor in order to both deter him and to teach him a lesson. This was how the Prophet dealt with those members of the Quraysh and other tribes who fought him. As soon as he left Makkah, the Prophet used all possible and proper means, such as attacking enemy leaders and interrupting economic life and trade routes, in order to defeat those who opposed him. This shows that despite his ban on fighting within Makkah, where he engaged in a civil rather than an armed struggle, he knew how to fight.

With this, we hope that the consistent and systematic Islamic concept of the use of force is clear. Muslims should draw clear and distinct lines between the internal and the external aspects of their societies. They should realize that force and violence have no place in solving internal political issues. What is political has to be tackled and approached by political means and methods so that political stability and social, economic, and civilizational advancement and success can be achieved.

This important conclusion is based upon a systematic and comprehensive study of the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the life of the Prophet. It both understands and is aware of the historical circumstances prevailing at the time of the Prophet. Such an approach could help put an end to the ummah's political malaise. It could also save the energies of Muslims and direct them into more positive, creative, meaningful, and useful avenues, and by directing them towards more fruitful and just political solutions to the ummah's present problems.

The fields of the Qur'an and the Sunnah are wide open for those intellectuals and scholars who want to study and investigate them in order to furnish the ummah with a better understanding and some guidelines of how to pull itself out of its current impasse.

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