

Guiding Light Selections from the *Holy Qur'an*

Comments by Dr. *AbdulHamid 'AbūSulaymān*

Translation

In the name of Allah, most benevolent, ever-merciful.

Generations before you
We destroyed when they
Did wrong: their Apostles
Came to them with Clear Signs,
But they would not believe!
Thus do We requite
Those who sin! Surah X:13

وَلَقَدْ أَهَلَكْنَا الْقُرُونَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا
وَجَاءَ نَهْمُ رُسُلِهِمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا
كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْجَارِمِينَ
(يونس: ١٣)

Now such were their houses,—
In utter ruin,—because
They practised wrong-doing.
Verily in this is a Sign
For people of knowledge.

فَتِلْكَ بُيُوتُهُمْ خَاوِيَةً بِمَا ظَلَمُوا إِنَّ
فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

And We saved those
Who believed and practised
Righteousness. Surah XXVII:52-53

وَأَنْجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ
(التل: ٥٢—٥٣)

We have revealed for you
(O men!) a book in which
Is a Message for you:
Will ye not then understand?

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَابًا فِيهِ
ذِكْرُكُمْ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

How many were the populations
We utterly destroyed because
Of their iniquities, setting up
In their places other peoples? Surah XXI:10-11

وَكَمْ قَصَمْنَا مِنْ قَوْمٍ كَانَتْ ظُلْمَةً
وَأَنْشَأْنَا بَعْدَهُمْ قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ

(الأنبياء: ١٠—١١)

Such were the populations
We destroyed when they
Committed iniquities; but
We fixed an appointed time
For their destruction. Surah XVIII:59

وَتِلْكَ الْقُرَىٰ أَهَلَكْنَا مِمَّا ظَلَمُوا وَجَعَلْنَا
لِمَهْلِكِهِمْ مَوْعِدًا
(الكهف: ٥٩)

Nay, the evil results
Of their deeds overtook them.
And the wrong-doers
Of this (generation)–
The evil results of their deeds
Will soon overtake them (too),

Surah XXXIX:51

فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَالَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ سَيُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا
(الزمر: ٥١)

[But] thus it is: goodly seem all
Their own doings to those who
Deny the truth. And it is in this
Way that We cause the great ones
In every land to become its [greatest]
Evildoers, there to weave their
Schemes: yet it is only against
Themselves that they scheme–
And they perceive it not. Surah VI:122-123

كَذَلِكَ يُزِينُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ
وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ أَكْبَارًا يَرْجُمُوهَا
لِيُنْكَرُوا فِيهَا وَمَا يَنْكُرُونَ إِلَّا
بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ
(الأنعام: ١٢٢–١٢٣)

And fear tumult or oppression,
Which affects not in particular
(Only) those of you who do wrong:
And know that Allah
Is strict in punishment. Surah VIII:25

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَأَصِيبَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ
(الأنفال: ٢٥)

These are the limits
Ordnained by Allah;
So do not transgress them.
If any do transgress
The limits ordained by Allah,
Such persons wrong
(Themselves as well as others). Surah II:229

تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ
حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ
(البقرة: ٢٢٩)

To Pharaoh and his Chiefs: for truly
They are a people
Rebellious and wicked." Surah XXVIII:32

إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ
(القصص: ٣٢)

“O my son!
Join not in worship
(Others) with Allah: for
False worship is indeed
The highest wrong-doing.” Surah XXXI:13

يَا بَنِيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ
(لقمان: ١٣)

Nor would thy Lord be
The One to destroy
Communities for a single wrong-doing,
If its members were likely
To mend. Surah XI:117

وَمَا كَانَتْ رَبِّكَ لِئِيْهِكَ الْقَرْيٰ
يُظْلِمَ وَاَهْلَهَا مُضِلِّطُوْنَ
(هود: ١١٧)

"It is those who believe
And confuse not their beliefs
With wrong—that are
(Truly) in security, for they
Are on (right) guidance." Surah VI:82

الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَلَمْ يَسْلُبُوْا اِيْمَانَهُمْ
يُظْلِمُ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ اٰمَنْ وَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ
(الأنعام: ٨٢)

Verily, Allah does not do the least
Wrong unto men, but it is men
Who wrong themselves. Surah X:44

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلٰكِنَّ النَّاسَ
اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ
(يونس: ٤٤)

Why were there not,
Among the generations before you,
Persons possessed of balanced
Good sense, prohibiting (men)

فَلَوْلَا كَانَ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
اُولُوْا اَبْقِيَّةٍ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْفَسَادِ فِي الْاَرْضِ
الْاَقْلِيَّةَ يَنْجِنَا مِنْهُمْ وَاَتَّبَعَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا
مَا اَنْتَ بِفَوَاقِيْهِ وَكَانُوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ
(هود: ١١٦)

From mischief in the earth—
Except a few among them
Whom We saved (from harm)?
But the wrong-doers pursued
The enjoyment of the good things
Of life which were given them,
And persisted in sin. Surah XI:116

And to how many populations
Did I give respite, which
Were given to wrong-doing?
In the end I punished them.
To Me is the destination (of all). Surah XXII:48

وَكَانَ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ اَنْلَيْتُ لَهَا وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ
فَعَدَّ اَحْدَثُهَا وَاِلَى الصَّبِيْرِ
(الحج: ٤٨)

Nay, the wrong-doers (merely)
Follow their own lusts,
Being devoid of knowledge.
But who will guide those
Whom Allah leaves astray?
To them there will be
No helpers. Surah XXX:29

بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا اَهْوَاءَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ
فَمَنْ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ اَضَلَّ اللّٰهُ وَمَا لَهُمْ
مِنْ نّٰصِرِيْنَ
(الروم: ٢٩)

When they disregarded the warnings
That had been given them,
We rescued those who forbade
Evil; but We visited
The wrong-doers with a
Grievous punishment, because
They were given to transgression.

Surah VII:165

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ أَنْجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
السُّوءِ وَأَخَذْنَا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا بِعَنَابِهِمْ مِمَّا كَانُوا
يَفْعَلُونَ

(الأعراف: ١٦٥)

Whoever chooses to follow the right
Path, follows it but for his own
Good; and whoever goes astray,
Goes but astray to his own hurt;
And no bearer of burdens shall be
Made to bear another's burden.
Moreover, We would never chastise
[Any community for the wrong
They may do] ere We have sent
An apostle [to them].

But when [this has been done,
And], it is Our will to destroy a
Community, We convey Our last
Warning to those of its people
Who have lost themselves entirely
In the pursuit of pleasures; and
[If] they [continue to] act sinfully,
The sentence [of doom] passed on
The Community takes effect, and
We break it to smithereens.

Surah XVII:15-16

مَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ
فَأِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهِهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ
أُخْرَىٰ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا

وَلِنَّا آرَدْنَا أَنْ نُهْلِكَ قَوْمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِ
عَادٍ لَّقَدْ مَنَّآ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ لَمَّا فَسَفَوْا فِيهَا
فَدَمَّرْنَا هَاتِلَةً مُّرِيرًا

(الإسراء: ١٥-١٦)



From the above verses, we see clearly that the Qur'anic concepts of justice and injustice refer broadly to following or opposing right objectives, to remaining within or exceeding proper limits, and to observing or violating rules of conduct. The understanding of justice and injustice and the distinction between them were implanted by Allah in the inner nature of every person (*fiṭrah*) and were revealed further by Allah to man in Qur'anic directions about man's nature, role in the world, and ultimate destiny.

These verses make it clear that deviation from the right norms is *ẓulm* and will lead to the destruction of every human society that indulges in *ẓulm*.

The Qur'an makes it clear also that *ẓulm* is the opposite of objectively right behavior and of the constructive conduct of human affairs, which together are termed *iṣlah*. The Qur'an teaches us that Allah, the Creator of the universe, decides and alone knows the objective truth about the nature and goal of life and alone has total and absolute knowledge about man's origin and purpose of existence.

In the Qur'an we learn that *iṣlāh*, i.e. following specific norms of behavior revealed objectively in the Qur'an, is the only road to peace and security (*al-amn*), and that its opposite, *ẓulm*, inevitably leads to sin, conflict, tyranny, and crime (*fusūq*, *Taraf*, *fasād*, and *ijrām*).

To see the object of the above-quoted verses, we need only look at the history of past civilizations and at the present state of affairs in the "modern, developed countries," which evidence all too clearly the spread of crime, social conflicts, and disintegration, as well as the resulting loss of both internal and external security. The Qur'anic verses are warning us about the existing state of affairs and about the future consequences we must expect if persons and societies continue to deviate as they do from the true directions and right norms of human behavior.

Social scientists should try to understand the dilemmas and troubles of contemporary human societies by studying man's nature and behavior according to the teachings and directions of Islam. If statesmen and scientists so far have failed to find the right direction and courses of action to save their peoples, then it is high time for Muslim scientists, i.e. those who study both the cosmos and human affairs, to offer the statesmen and their advisors objective answers to their problems.

There is no doubt that objective norms determine what the right course of action is for everything on earth. The real question is how one can best find out what this right course of action is. Among the members of mankind, Muslims and especially Muslim social scientists are the best equipped to help in this effort, because they have a proper reverence for the Qur'an and because Allah, the Creator of the universe, *alḥamdulillāh*, has kept this complete and universal message intact for every person and civilization until the end of time.