

Guiding Light

Selections From the Holy Qur'an

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Translation

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

قرآن كريم

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. Ye are the best
Of Peoples, evolved
For mankind,
Enjoining what is right,
Forbidding what is wrong,
And believing in Allah.
If only the People of the Book
Had faith, it were best
For them: among them
Are some who have faith,
But most of them
Are perverted transgressors.
Al 'Imrān (3:110)

● كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ
لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ
وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ
سورة آل عمران (٣: ١١٠)

2. (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 مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
أَفَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ
وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوُا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ
سورة الحج (٢٢: ٤١)

3. "Those who follow the Messenger,
The unlettered Prophet,
Whom they find mentioned
In their own (Scriptures)
In the Law and the Gospel—
For he commands them
What is just and forbids them
What is evil; he allows
Them as lawful what is good
(And pure) and prohibits them

● الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ
الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْنُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ
وَإِنْجِيلٍ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ
وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ

From what is bad (and impure);
He releases them
From their heavy burdens
And from the yokes
That are upon them.
So it is those who believe
In him, honor him,
Help him, and follow the Light
Which is sent down with him—
It is they who will prosper.”
Al A'raf (7:157)

الْحَبِيبَ وَيَضْعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ
وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ
فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ
وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ
أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ
سورة الأعراف (٧: ١٥٧)

4. The Believers, men
And women, are protectors,
One of another: they enjoin
What is just, and forbid
What is evil: they observe
Regular prayers, practice
Regular charity, and obey
Allah and His Messenger.
On them will Allah pour
His Mercy: for Allah
is Exalted in power, Wise.
Al Tawbah (9:71)

● وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ
أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ
الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ
سورة التوبة (٩: ٧١)

5. Those that turn (to Allah)
In repentance; that serve Him,
And praise Him; that wander
In devotion to the cause of Allah;
That bow down and prostrate
themselves in prayer
That enjoin good
And forbid evil; and observe
The limits set by Allah—
(These do rejoice). So proclaim
The glad tidings to the Believers.
Al Tawbah (9:112)

● التَّائِبُونَ الْعَابِدُونَ
الْحَامِدُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ
الرَّاكِعُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ الْأَمْرُونَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَالْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
سورة التوبة (٩: ١١٢)

6. “O my son! establish
Regular prayer, enjoin what is
Just, and forbid what is wrong;
And bear with patient constancy
Whatever betide thee; for this
Is firmness (of purpose)
In (the conduct of) affairs.
Luqman (31:17)

● يَبْنِيْ اِقَامِ الصَّلَاةَ وَاْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَاَنْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاَصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَا اَصَابَكَ
اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْاُمُوْرِ
سورة لقمان (٣١: ١٧)

7. The Hypocrites, men and women,
(Have an understanding) with
each other:

● الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ بَعْضُهُنَّ مِنْ

They enjoin evil, and forbid
What is just, and are closed
With their hands. They have
Forgotten Allah; so He
Has forgotten them. Verily
The Hypocrites are rebellious
And perverse.

Al Tawbah (9:67)

بَعْضٌ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَقْبِضُونَ
أَيْدِيَهُمْ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيَهُمْ
إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُونَ

سورة التوبة (٩ : ٦٧)

When we look at the above verses our attention is immediately drawn to the concepts of *al amr bi al ma'rūf* and *al nahy 'an al munkar* (which means in general the ordering or enjoining of what is known to be or considered as right or good and forbidding what is considered or known to be as wrong or bad). It is very clear that these are very important and central principles, concepts, and values in Islam. They are important Qur'anically-prescribed features of Muslim societies. They represent the goal, quality, and measure of substance and performance of the Ummah both collectively and individually. *Lack of these concepts and qualities will mean that the individuals and societies follow the opposite concepts—al amr bi al ma'rūf and al nahy 'an al munkar—* which are indicators and signs of hypocrisy.

The Qur'an does not stop at this; in many verses it goes on to show how great and all-encompassing are the dimensions and magnitude of these principles and concepts.

8. O Prophet!

When believing women come
To thee to take the oath
Of fealty to thee, that they
Will not associate in worship
Any other thing whatever
With Allah, that they
Will not steal, that they
Will not commit adultery
(Or fornication), that they
Will not kill their children,
That they will not utter
Slander, intentionally forging
Falsehood, and that they
Will not disobey thee
In any just matter—
Then do thou receive
Their fealty, and pray to Allah
For the forgiveness (of
Their sins): for Allah is
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
Al Mumtaḥinah (60:12)

• يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ
إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ
عَلَىٰ أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا
وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ
وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ
وَلَا يَأْبِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ
بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ
وَلَا يَعْتَصِبْنَكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ
فَبَايِعْهُنَّ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لهنَّ اللَّهُ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

سورة الممتحنة (٦٠ : ١٢)

9. When ye divorce
Women, and they fulfil
The term of their ('Iddah),
Either take them back
On equitable terms
Or set them free
On equitable terms;
But do not take them back
To injure them, (or) to take
Undue advantage;
If anyone does that,
He wrongs his own soul.
Do not treat Allah's Signs
As a jest,
But solemnly rehearse
Allah's favors on you,
And the fact that He
Sent down to you
The Book
And Wisdom,
For your instruction.
And fear Allah,
And know that Allah
Is well-acquainted
With all things.
Al Baqarah (2:231)

● وَإِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ
فَبَلِّغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ
أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ
وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِّلْعُنُودِ
وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ
وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوًا
وَأذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَمَا أَنزَلَ عَلَيْكُم مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ
وَالْحِكْمَةِ يَعِظُكُم بِهَا لِنُورِ اللَّهِ
وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عَالِمٌ
سورة البقرة (٢ : ٢٣١)

10. If any of you die
And leave widows behind,
They shall wait concerning
themselves
Four months and ten days:
When they have fulfilled
Their term, there is no blame
On you if they dispose
Of themselves in a just
And reasonable manner.
And Allah is well acquainted
With what ye do.
Al Baqarah (2:234)

● وَالَّذِينَ يَتُوفَوْنَ مِنْكُمْ
وَيَذُرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَرِيضْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ
أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ
فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ
سورة البقرة (٢ : ٢٣٤)

11. There is no blame on you
If ye divorce women
Before consummation
Or the fixation of their dower;
But bestow on them
(A suitable gift),
The wealthy
According to his means,

● لَّا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ
إِن طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ
أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً
وَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ عَلَىٰ التَّوَسُّعِ قَدْرُهُ

And the poor
According to his means –
A gift of reasonable amount
Is due from those
Who wish to do the right thing.
Al Baqarah (2:236)

وَعَلَى الْمَقْتِرِ قَدْرُهُ مَتَاعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ط
حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ
سورة البقرة (٢: ٢٣٦)

12. Those of you
Who die and leave widows
Should bequeath
For their widows
A year's maintenance
And residence;
But if they leave
(The residence),
There is no blame on you
For what they do
With themselves,
Provided it is reasonable.
And Allah is Exalted in Power,
Wise.
Al Baqarah (2:240)

● وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ
وَيَذُرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا وَصِيَّةً لِأَزْوَاجِهِمْ
مَتَاعًا إِلَى الْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ إِخْرَاجٍ
فَإِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ
فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ مِنْ مَّعْرُوفٍ
وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ
سورة البقرة (٢: ٢٤٠)

13. Kind words
And covering of faults
Are better than charity
Followed by injury.
Allah is Free of all wants,
And He is most Forbearing.
Al Baqarah (2:263)

● قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ
خَيْرٌ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أذى
وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَلِيمٌ
سورة البقرة (٢: ٢٦٣)

14. Make trial of orphans
Until they reach the age
Of marriage; if then ye find
Sound judgement in them,
Release their property to them;
But consume it not wastefully,
Nor in haste against their
growing up.
If the guaradian is well-off,
Let him claim no remuneration,
But if he is poor, let him
Have for himself what is
Just and reasonable.
When ye release their property
To them, take witnesses
In their presence:
But all-sufficient
Is Allah in taking account.
Al Nisā' (4:6)

● وَأَبْلُوا إِلَيْكُمْ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغُوا النِّكَاحَ
فَإِنِ اسْتَمْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ رُشْدًا فَادْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ط
وَلَا تَأْكُلُوهَا إِسْرَافًا وَبِدَارًا أَن يَكْبُرُوا
وَمَنْ كَانَ غَنِيًّا فَلْيَسْتَفِئِفْ ط
وَمَنْ كَانَ فَقِيرًا فَلْيَأْكُلْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ط
فَإِذَا دَفَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فَأَشْهَدُوا عَلَيْهِمْ ع
وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا
سورة النساء (٤: ٦)

15. O ye who believe!
Ye are forbidden to inherit
Women against their will.
Nor should ye treat them
With harshness, that ye may
Take away part of the dower
Ye have given them—except
Where they have been guilty
Of open lewdness;
On the contrary live with them
On a footing of kindness and
equity.
If ye take a dislike to them
It may be that ye dislike
A thing, and Allah brings about
Through it a great deal of good.
Al Nisā' (4:19)

● يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ
أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا ^ط وَلَا تَصْلُوهُنَّ لِتَذَهَبُوا
بِعِضِّ مَاءٍ ءَاتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَنْحِشَةٍ
مُبَيِّنَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا
وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا
سورة النساء (٤ : ١٩)

16. "But if they strive
To make thee join
In worship with Me
Things of which thou hast
No knowledge, obey them not;
Yet bear them company
In this life with justice
(And consideration), and follow
The way of those who
Turn to Me (in love):
In the End the return
Of you all is to Me,
And I will tell you
The truth (and meaning)
Of all that ye did."
Luqmān (31:15)

● وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ
عَلَىٰ أَنْ تَشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ
لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا
وَصَاحِبُهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا
وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ
ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ مَرْجِعِكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُم
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ
سورة لقمان (٣١ : ١٥)

17. It is prescribed,
When death approaches
Any of you, if he leave
Any goods, that he make a
bequest
To parents and next of kin,
According to reasonable usage;
This is due
From the God-fearing.
Al Baqarah (2:180)

● كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ
إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدُكُمْ الْمَوْتُ
إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةُ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ
وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُنْفِقِينَ
سورة البقرة (٢ : ١٨٠)

18. Curses were pronounced
On those among the Children
Of Israel who rejected Faith,

● لُعِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

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)

إِسْرَاءَ يَلْ عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ
 مَرْيَمَ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ
 كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ
 فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ
 سورة المائدة (٥: ٧٨-٧٩)

In the above verse and many other verses we find the Qur'an extends the concepts and the meaning of *ma'rūf* (the literal meaning of the word is "well-known") to cover many issues with many different aspects possessing a wide range of meanings, all of which have the common feature of good, reasonable, and adequate. The wide range of meanings of the word *ma'rūf* in English can be seen from Yusuf Ali's translation and commentary of the above verses where *ma'rūf* has been given the following meanings "just matter,"¹ "equitable terms,"² "reasonable manner,"³ "reasonable amount,"⁴ "reasonable [act],"⁵ "kind words," "just and reasonable,"⁷ "a footing of kindness and equity,"⁸ "justice (and consideration)."⁹ and "reasonable usage."¹⁰

19. Allah commands justice, the doing
 Of good, and liberality to kith
 And kin, and He forbids
 All shameful deeds, and injustice
 And rebellion: He instructs you,
 That ye may receive admonition.
Al Nahl (16:90)

• إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ
 وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَايَ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
 وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ
 يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ
 سورة النحل (١٦: ٩٠)

¹Al Mumtahinah, 60:12

²Al Baqarah, 2:31

³Al Baqarah, 2:234

⁴Al Baqarah, 2:236

⁵Al Baqarah, 2:240

⁶Al Baqarah, 2:263

⁷Al Nisā', 4:6

⁸Al Nisā', 4:19

⁹Luqman, 31:15

¹⁰Al Baqarah, 2:180

20. Recite what is sent
Of the Book by inspiration
To thee, and establish
Regular Prayer: for Prayer
Restrains from shameful
And unjust deeds;
And remembrance of Allah
Is the greatest (thing in life)
Without doubt. And Allah knows
The (deeds) that ye do.
Al Ankabūt (29:45)

● **أَتْلُ مَا أُوْحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ
وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى
عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ
وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ**
سورة العنكبوت (٤٥ : ٢٩)

21. O ye who believe!
Follow not Satan's footsteps:
If any will follow the footsteps
Of Satan, he will (but) command
What is shameful and wrong:
And were it not for the grace
And mercy of Allah on you,
Not one of you would ever
Have been pure: but Allah
Doth purify whom He pleases:
And Allah is One Who
Hears and knows (all things).
Al Nūr (24:21)

● **يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ
خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ
وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ
مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ**
سورة النور (٢٤ : ٢١)

22. "Do ye indeed approach men,
And cut off the highway?—
And practice wickedness
(Even) in your councils?"
But his people gave no answer
But this: they said:
"Bring us the Wrath of Allah
If thou tellest the truth."
Al Ankabūt (29:29)

● **أَإِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ وَتَقْطَعُونَ
السَّبِيلَ وَتَأْتُونَ فِي نَادِيَكُمُ الْمُنْكَرَ
فَمَا كَانَتْ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَأْتَيْنَا
بِعَذَابِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِينَ**
سورة العنكبوت (٢٩ : ٢٩)

23. (We also sent) Lūt
(As a messenger): behold,
He said to his people,
"Do ye do what is shameful
Though ye see (its iniquity)?
Would ye really approach men
In your lusts rather than
Women? Nay, ye are
A people (grossly) ignorant!
Al Naml (27:54-55)

● **وَلَوْطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ
أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَحْشَاءَ وَأَنْتُمْ تُبْصِرُونَ
أَإِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً
مِّنْ دُونِ النِّسَاءِ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ جَهْلُونَ**
سورة النمل (٢٧ : ٥٤-٥٥)

In the above verses we find *munkar* (literally those deeds or acts which lack approval, acceptability and to which objections are raised) is a concept of wide meaning and, like *ma'rūf*, represents an attitude, sense of direction, and frame of mind.

In other verses of the Qur'an we find *ma'rūf* is associated and put on the same level with *ʿadl* (justice) *iḥsān*, (exertion of oneself and sincerity), and *itā'u dhu al qurbā* (giving in charity to neighbors and near of kin). The Qur'an also associates and equalizes *munkar* with *fāḥshā'*, the concept most associated with *munkar*, which is also used in the Qur'an to cover a wide range of meanings and issues.

With all this in mind, no doubt, Muslim social scientists should give great attention to these concepts of *ma'rūf* and *munkar*. They should try to understand them and their significance and magnitude and what kind of methodology and social institutions are needed to submit these concepts to the service of the Ummah and humanity. They represent essential traits and dimensions of the true Muslim community. They clearly represent a dimension badly needed in a world filled with all kinds of corruption, loss of values and helplessness, and suffering spiritual, moral, social, mental, and physical ills and diseases. Humanity today is being drawn into either one of two kinds of faulty social systems: one oriented towards bureaucratic, state, and police control; and the other a liberal-oriented society but suffering from moral corruption, addiction, mental disease, broken and one-parent families, crimes, violence, and other social ills. Muslim social scientists should work hard to get to the bottom of the issues of *ma'rūf* and *munkar* in order to establish a healthy, balanced, civilized, and humanistic society of *ma'rūf* and eliminate *munkar* from it.

It is astonishing that the issue of *ma'rūf* and *munkar* has not attracted any serious scholarly work from Muslim intellectuals and social scientists over the centuries, especially during the last century with the growing dangers and sufferings of humanity.

It is also surprising that the image of these all-encompassing Islamic concepts is simply one of state punitive acts related to rituals and morals or of moralistic acts and abusive remarks on the part of individual extremists.

It is surprising that these concepts seem not to have been put into wide, effective, and systematic use for a long time.

No doubt there is a very lengthy intellectual agenda in front of them before Muslims can benefit from these concepts and values. These concepts should be well understood and explained. We have to understand clearly the Qur'anic use and meaning which could not lend themselves to the sanction of state terrorist inhibition, enslavement of the population and destruction of their individual rights, privacy, and dignity. Neither could the Qur'anic use of these terms lend itself to the approval of moralistic regimentation and

supervision nor could the Qur'an justify the abusive behavior of extremists and mentally disturbed individuals. It is also equally true that these concepts are meant to prevent the breeding of corruption of all kinds, economic, social, moral, and spiritual, but are meant to establish healthy and balanced human societies.

It is clear the concepts of *ma'rūf* and *munkar* are dynamic concepts meant to create a dynamic frame of mind and attitude and to provide a natural sense of direction in human individuals and societies to be able to change realities and challenges with consciousness and wisdom. These concepts are meant to provide the bases for healthy, balanced social institutions and societies.

There is no doubt that a major part of the Sunnah of the Prophet (ṢAAS) and the righteous caliphs is an application of these concepts and principles.

Muslim social scientists have to find out how to understand and reapply these concepts, how to make them work, create a frame of mind and conscious dynamic Muslim mentality which is workable and effective in social institutions and societies. They need to study how to relate these absolute values to what is relative and changing and how, in a complex and changing reality, to recognize what should be considered *ma'rūf* and should be considered *munkar* in the light of the goals, principles, values, and priorities of Islam.

This kind of serious intellectual work necessitates a comprehensive analytical and practical approach to make goals and priorities clear. Means and goals are not confused. To achieve this, the people and leadership should be courageous, confident, and willing to carry responsibilities and reach out to higher levels of ideas and achievements.

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