

Guiding Light

Selection from the *Holy Qur'an*

Comments by Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman

Translation

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

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

- | | |
|--|--|
| 19. Truly man was created
Very impatient; | هَإِنِّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا ۝ |
| 20. Fretful when evil
Touches him; | إِذَا مَسَّهُ الْفِتْرُ جُرُوعًا ۝ |
| 21. And niggardly when
Good reaches him; | وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا ۝ |
| 22. Not so those devoted
To Prayer; | إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ ۝ |
| 23. Those who remain steadfast
To their prayer; | الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ ۝ |
| 24. And those in whose wealth
Is a recognised right; | وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ ۝ |
| 25. For the (needy) who asks
And him who is prevented
(For some reason from asking); | اللسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ۝ |
| 26. And those who hold
To the truth of the
Day Of Judgment; | وَالَّذِينَ يُصَدِّقُونَ بَيِّنَاتِ اللَّهِ ۝ |
| 27. And those who fear
The displeasure of their Lord, . . . | وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ خَشِفُونَ ۝ |
| 29. And those who guard
Their chastity, . . . ; | وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَفْوَاجِهِمْ حَفِظُونَ ۝ |
| 32. And those who respect
Their trusts and covenants; | وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رِعُونَ ۝ |
| 33. And those who stand firm
In their testimonies; | وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَتِهِمْ قَائِمُونَ ۝ |
| 34. And those who guard
(The sacredness) of their worship; | وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ۝ |
| 35. Such will be
The honoured ones
In the Gardens (of Bliss). Surah LXX. | أُولَئِكَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ مُّكْرَمُونَ ۝ |

For behavioral scientists, especially psychologists and psychiatrists, most of whom these days are preoccupied with wide-spread psychological anxieties and suicidal behavior, the Qur'an in this part of *Surah al Ma'arij* proposes certain traits and qualities of man which counter human fears and anxieties. It is the duty of Muslim behavioral scientists in general and psychiatrists in particular to study and research these Qur'anic directions and propositions about human nature, and the traits, habits and behaviors necessary to counter their negative effects on human life, peace and mind and gratification. It is their duty to make people understand the important role of these Qur'anic directions in human life and suggest the ways and means to the Muslims to develop

the traits recommended by Qur'an in the individual life and the structure of society. We need to be reminded that spiritual and moral aspects of human life are as important and essential as the physical aspects. These are different dimensions of one whole and are complementary to each other as well as inter-related. Empirical and systematic scientific research by Muslim social scientists is needed to bring these aspects to light, and making the inter-relationships, understandable, defining their scopes, and developing ways and means for helping human beings to appreciate and adopt them.

It is very important to point out here that understanding the Arabic text of the Qur'an and Sunnah is crucial because partial, careless, or casual study and poor translation cannot help scientists to understand adequately and appreciate properly the Qur'anic and Islamic proposition and direction. It is also important to notice that translation, no matter how good it is, cannot reveal all possible meanings of these texts which could be obtained only from specialized deep scientific study of the original texts. Many of the available translations may be very good for general readers but they are not precise and comprehensive enough so as to enable the scientists to comprehend the meaning of the Qur'anic or the Sunnah texts to the extent to undertake serious study for the purpose of subjecting its propositions and directions to scientific research. The above portion of the Qur'an which I am commenting on here is a good example. I find that the translation of the words *halū'ā*, *Jazū'ā* and *al-musallīn* of Yusuf Ali and M. Pickthall are not accurate and comprehensive enough, especially for the purpose of scientific behavioral and educational studies. The word *halū'a* is derived from the word *halā'* and means to frequently and easily get shaken and frightened. The word *Jazū'a* is derived from the word *Jaza'*. It means to easily lose patience, control, become grieved, fall apart or lose hope. The word *impatience*, the definition used by most translators, is not complete considering its use for scientific research.

The word *al-muṣallīn* is derived from *salah*. People who understand Islam know that *salah* besides being a form of worship is a specific form of meditation to be performed regularly at certain times of the day. The word *al-muṣallīn* here means only to describe those people who are punctual in their prayers and meditations which signify the regular contact, consciousness and awareness of these people and a sense of accountability to Allah (SWT) consequences of their acts and deeds in this life. It should give them on one hand a sense of security, and direct their lives toward good deeds and pushing them away from evils on the other hand. It will help them live peaceful lives free of fear and anxiety. That is why the Qur'an emphasizes here the aspect of punctuality (*da'imūn*). But if the word *salah* is translated to convey only the general meaning of worship, it will not be able to signify the aspect of punctuality and regular contact with Allah because many readers may miss the specific aspect which the Qur'an meant to emphasize. This translation as the ones above misses the specific points the Qur'an is making in discussing the whole issue.