

# Guiding Light

## Selections from the Holy Qur'an

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Translation

قرآن کریم

*In the Name of Allah*

*The Most Beneficent, ever Merciful*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

6. Have We not made  
The earth as a wide  
Expanse,

﴿٦﴾ أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهْدًا

7. And the mountains as pegs?

﴿٧﴾ وَالْجِبَالِ أَوْتَادًا

8. And (have We not) created  
You in pairs,

﴿٨﴾ وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا

9. And made your sleep  
For rest,

﴿٩﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا

10. And made the night  
As a covering,

﴿١٠﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا

11. And made the day  
As a means of subsistence?

﴿١١﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا

12. And (have We not)  
Built over you  
The seven firmaments,

﴿١٢﴾ وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا

13. And placed (therein)  
A Light of Splendour?

﴿١٣﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا

14. And do We not send down  
From the clouds water  
In abundance,

﴿١٤﴾ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً نَبَّاجًا

15. That We may produce  
Therewith corn and vegetables,

﴿١٥﴾ لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا

16. And gardens of luxurious growth? (78:6-16)

﴿١٦﴾ وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا (٧٨ : ٦-١٦)

190. Behold! In the creation  
Of the heavens and the earth,  
And the alternation  
Of Night and Day,  
There are indeed Signs  
For men of understanding, —(3:190)

﴿١٩٠﴾ إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
وَإِخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ  
لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ (٣ : ١٩٠)

191. Men who celebrate  
The praises of God,  
Standing, sitting,  
And lying down on their sides,  
And contemplate  
The (wonders of) creation (3:191)

﴿١٩١﴾ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا  
وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ  
فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ (٣ : ١٩١)

19. (O Unbelievers!) If ye prayed  
For victory and judgment,  
Now hath the judgment  
Come to you: If ye desist  
(From wrong), it will be  
Best for you: if ye return  
(To the attack), so shall We.  
Not the least good  
Will your forces be to you  
Even if they were multiplied:  
For verily God  
Is with those who believe! (8:19)

﴿١٩﴾ إِنْ تَسْتَفِيحُوا  
فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْفَتْحُ  
وَإِنْ تَنْتَهُوا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَإِنْ تَعُودُوا  
نَعُدْ وَلَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْكُمْ فِئَتِكُمْ شَيْئًا  
وَلَوْ كُفِّرَتْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (٨ : ١٩)

49. Verily, all things  
Have We created  
In proportion and measure. (54:49)

﴿٤٩﴾ إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ (٥٤ : ٤٩)

2. He to Whom belongs  
The dominion of the heavens  
And the earth: no son  
Has He begotten, nor has He  
A partner in His dominion  
It is He Who created  
All things, and ordered them  
In due proportions. (25:2)

﴿٢٥﴾ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمَلِكِ  
وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ بَدَدًا مُّحَدَّدًا (٢ : ٢٥)

2. Who hath created,  
And further, given  
Order and proportion;

﴿٢﴾ الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ

3. Who hath ordained laws.  
And granted guidance; (87:2-3)

﴿٢٣﴾ وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ (٨٧ : ٢-٣)

16. Not for (idle) sport did We  
Create the heavens and the earth  
And all that is between! (21:16)

﴿١٦﴾ وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ  
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الْعِيبَ (١٦ : ٢١)

73. It is He Who created  
The heavens and the earth  
In true (proportions):  
The day He saith, "Be."  
Behold! it is. His Word  
Is the Truth. His will be  
The dominion the day  
The trumpet will be blown,  
He knoweth the Unseen  
As well as that which is  
Open. For He  
Is the Wise, well acquainted  
(With all things). (6:73)

﴿٧٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ كُنْ<sup>١</sup>  
فَيَكُونُ قَوْلُهُ الْحَقُّ وَلَهُ  
الْمَلَكُ يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ  
عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ  
وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ (٦ : ٧٣)

71. If the Truth had been  
In accord with their desires,  
Truly the heavens and the earth,  
And all beings therein  
Would have been in confusion  
And corruption! Nay, We  
Have sent them their admonition,  
But they turn away  
From their admonition. (23:71)

﴿٧١﴾ وَلَوْ اتَّبَعَ الْحَقُّ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ  
لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ  
بَلْ آتَيْنَهُمْ بَيِّنَاتٍ  
فَهُمْ عَنِ ذِكْرِهِمْ مُعْرِضُونَ (٢٣ : ٧١)

These verses make it clear that what man observes about himself and the universe around him is a system. This is a true observation. These verses also indicate the nature of systems, that they interact in a controlled, purposeful manner. Any disruption of that interaction would disturb and/or destroy those systems. This phenomena is illuminated in the Qur'ānic concept of *qadar* (precision), *fitrah* (innate nature), and *Sunan* (natural laws; cause and effect).

7. By the Soul,  
And the proportion and order  
Given to it;

﴿٧﴾ وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا

8. And its enlightenment  
As to its wrong  
And its right; -

﴿٨﴾ فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

9. Truly he succeeds  
That purifies it,

﴿٩﴾ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

10. And he fails  
That corrupts it! (91: 7-10)

﴿١٠﴾ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا (٩١ : ٧-١٠)

10. And shown him  
The two highways? (90:10) ﴿٩٠﴾ وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ (٩٠ : ١٠)
115. "Did ye then think  
That We had created you  
In jest, and that ye  
Would not be brought back  
To Us (for account)?" (23:115) ﴿١١٥﴾ أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا  
وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ (١١٥ : ٢٣)
50. But if they hearken not  
To thee, know that they  
Only follow their own lusts:  
And who is more astray  
Than one who follows his own  
Lusts, devoid of guidance  
From God? For God guides not  
People given to wrong-doing. (28:50) ﴿٥٠﴾ فَإِن لَّمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكَ فَاعْلَمْ  
أَنَّمَا يَتَّبِعُونَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن  
اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ يَبْغِيهِ هُدًى مِّنَ اللَّهِ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ (٥٠ : ٢٨)
29. Nay, the wrong-doers (merely)  
Follow their own lusts,  
Being devoid of knowledge.  
But who will guide those  
Whom God leaves astray?  
To them there will be  
No helpers. (30:29) ﴿٢٩﴾ بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ  
ظَلَمُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ  
فَمَنْ يَهْدِي مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ  
وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّن نَّاصِرِينَ (٢٩ : ٣٠)
14. He said "Give me respite  
Till the day they are  
Raised up." (7:14) ﴿١٤﴾ قَالَ أَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ (١٤ : ٧)
78. "Who created me, and  
It is He who guides me; (26:78) ﴿٧٨﴾ الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ (٧٨ : ٢٦)
108. 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." (10:108) ﴿١٠٨﴾ قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمُ  
الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ  
فَأِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَمَن ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا  
يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ (١٠٨ : ١٠)
26. O David! We did indeed  
Make thee a vicegerent<sup>1157</sup>  
On earth: so judge thou  
Between men in truth (and justice):  
Nor follow thou the lusts  
(Of thy heart), for they will  
Mislead thee from the Path  
﴿٢٦﴾ يٰدَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً  
فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ  
وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَىٰ فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ

Of God: for those who  
Wander astray from the Path  
Of God, is a Penalty Grievous,  
For that they forget  
The Day of Account. (38:26)

اللَّهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَضِلُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ  
لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ (٣٨ : ٢٦)

203. If thou bring them not  
A revelation, they say:  
“Why hast thou not  
Got it together?”  
Say: “I but follow  
What is revealed to me  
From my Lord:  
This is (nothing but)  
Lights from your Lord,  
And Guidance, and Mercy,  
For any who have Faith.” (7:203)

﴿٢٠٣﴾ وَإِذْ أَلَمْ تَأْتِهِم بِآيَةٍ  
قَالُوا لَوْلَا اجْتَبَيْتَهَا  
قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَتَّبِعُ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ مِنْ رَبِّي  
هَذَا بَصَائِرُ مِنْ رَبِّيكُمْ  
وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ (٧ : ٢٠٣)

2. He Who created Death  
And Life, that He  
May try which of you  
Is best in deed:  
And He is the Exalted  
In Might, Oft-Forgiving;—(67:2)

﴿٢﴾ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ  
لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا  
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ (٦٧ : ٢)

7. That which is on earth  
We have made but as  
A glittering show for the earth,  
In order that We may test  
Them—as to which of them  
Are best in conduct. (18:7)

﴿٧﴾ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ  
زِينَةً لَهَا لِنَبْلُوَهُمْ  
أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا (١٨ : ٧)

27. Not without purpose did We  
Create heaven and earth  
And all between! That  
Were the thought of Unbelievers!  
But woe to the Unbelievers  
Because of the Fire (of Hell)!

﴿٢٧﴾ وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ  
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَطْلًا ذَلِكَ ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا  
فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنَ النَّارِ

28. Shall We treat those  
Who believe and work deeds  
Of righteousness, the same  
As those who do mischief  
On earth? Shall We treat  
Those who guard against evil,  
The same as those who  
Turn aside from the right? (38:27-28)

﴿٢٨﴾ أَمْ يَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا  
الصَّالِحَاتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ  
أَمْ يَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِينَ كَالْفُجَّارِ  
(٣٨ : ٢٧—٢٨)

45. Say, "I do but warn you  
According to revelation":  
But the deaf will not hear  
The call, (even) when  
They are warned! (21:45)

﴿٤٥﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنذِرُكُمْ بِالْوَحْيِ  
وَلَا يَسْمَعُ الصُّمُّ الدُّعَاءَ إِذَا مَا يُنذَرُونَ  
(٤٥ : ٢١)

97. Whoever works righteousness,  
Man or woman, and has Faith,  
Verily, to him will We give  
A new Life, a life.  
That is good and pure, and We  
Will bestow on such their reward  
According to the best  
Of their actions. (16-97)

﴿٩٧﴾ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ  
وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً  
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ  
مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (٩٧ : ١٦)

40. Those who pervert  
The Truth in Our Signs  
Are not hidden from Us.  
Which is better?—he that  
Is cast into the Fire,  
or he that comes safe through,  
on the Day of Judgment  
Do what ye will:  
Verily He seeth (clearly)  
All that ye do. (41:40)

﴿٤٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ  
فِي آيَاتِنَا لَا يَحْفَونَ عَلَيْنَا  
أَفَن يُلْفَىٰ فِي النَّارِ خَيْرٌ  
أَمْ مَن يَأْتِي ءَامِنًا يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ  
أَعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ  
(٤٠ : ٤١)

Here, the human being, as the rest of the universe, is treated as a system, and, as a human system, has a purpose to fulfill in his or her given lifespan in the world. The human system, too, like all other systems, has limits and required controls and constraints which must be maintained to avoid nullifying its meaning and purpose.

The Qur'ān makes it clear that mankind, unlike animals or other physical systems in the world, needs to understand and to embrace the goals and purpose of creation and existence in personal life and in the world in order to develop realization of limits, rules, and controls necessary for fulfilling the meaning of the human system of life.

The Qur'ān tells us that these goals, with their limits, rules, and controls, are revealed and given to man by Allah (SWT), the Creator, by and through His Guidance (*hudā*) and are discovered in part by man through the development of human knowledge and enlightenment. Mankind will be utterly lost, therefore, if it acts only according to subjective desires (*hawā*) or speculation.

137. Many were the Ways of Life  
That have passed away  
Before you: travel through

﴿١٣٧﴾ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ  
فَسِيرُوا فِي

The earth, and see what was  
The end of those  
Who rejected Truth (3:137)

الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ  
عَقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ (٣ : ١٣٧)

43. So hold thou fast  
To the Revelation sent down  
To thee: verily thou  
Art on a Straight Way. (43:43)

﴿٤٣﴾ فَاسْتَمْسِكْ بِالَّذِي أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ  
إِنَّكَ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ (٤٣ : ٤٣)

14. (It will be said to him:)  
“Read thine (own) record:  
Sufficient is thy soul  
This day to make out  
An account against thee,” (17:14)

﴿١٤﴾ أَقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ  
الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا (١٧ : ١٤)

6. And those to whom  
Knowledge has come see  
That the (Revelation) sent down  
To thee from thy Lord—  
That is the Truth,  
And that it guides  
To the Path of the Exalted  
(In Might), Worthy  
Of all praise. (34:6)

﴿٦﴾ وَيَرَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ  
الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ  
مِنْ رَبِّكَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ  
وَيَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ  
الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ (٦ : ٣٤)

The benefits accrued to mankind by following the right path and thereby gaining from revealed knowledge to be able to fulfill the purpose of life while realizing the limits of existence are obvious from these verses (*āyāt*). On the other hand, disregard of the true guidance of Allah (SWT), the Creator, misleads man to the grave sin of arrogance (*istikbār*), the final end of which is an ultimately self-destructive and utterly wrong plan of action (*makr al sayyi'*). The Islamic vision of mankind, of human nature, purpose and existence, of the limits of his abilities and knowledge and of his need for global direction in this life, *is* capable of keeping pace with the contemporary world and its civilizational crisis which affects both the West and Muslims.

Adoption of the right methodology and approach to revealed knowledge never has occurred for the contemporary Muslim mind and way of life because the bulk of the Sunnah (traditions) and *Mu‘āmalāt* (social interaction) were not shaped in an atmosphere conducive to abstraction, theory, and creative approaches to problem solving. This happened when Muslims failed to observe the role of *‘aql* (reason) and human acquired knowledge, thus distancing themselves from life, reality, and the universe. This way they failed to integrate the knowledge available from the innate nature of humankind which is *‘aql*, the knowledge available from *waḥy* (revelation), and the knowledge available from observing *al kawn* (the universe) which might have prepared them to be successful in producing a viable contemporary social and material system.

As for the Western mind and civilization, the crisis is of a different nature. The Western mind has no easy access to the knowledge of revelation (*wahy*) because the historical confrontation between Muslims and Europe compounded the rejection of Islam and its revealed knowledge and contributed to a distorted view of what they considered revealed knowledge both from the Old and the New Testaments of the Bible. The Western mind cannot confidently accept the Bible's revelations without confusion and contradictions, and the role of the church creates even more mental barriers for the Western mind. The net result is either total ignorance of revealed knowledge (secularism), or total denial (atheism).

The after-effect of secularism and atheism, in both cases, leaves the human being with no purpose in life except maintaining a perishable existence and pursuing subjective material pleasures. This vision and attitude of the Western mind tends to create contradictions and portrays man as a system free of meaningful purpose, limitations, rules, or controls. This type of mind considers everything relative and argues the right of the individual to decide for himself or herself what limitations and controls exist, if any. This mind is unable to judge any set of behavior as rash or wrong since the only consideration is whether the involved parties endorse a given pattern or act.

The end result of this Western frame of mind is the dilemma of reality versus human limitations; the need for purpose, rules and controls, and the need for human freedom of choice and determination. Such a dilemma is one of the relationship between the macro and the micro aspects of the human system of life. The macro aspect is the total dimension of life and existence. The major source of human knowledge of this macro aspect is revelation which is given to mankind by the Creator who possesses total knowledge of the material world (*shahādah*) and total knowledge of the dimensions beyond the material world (*ghayb*). The human mind is not capable of and was not designed to be knowledgeable about all these dimensions except in a limited way through revelation.

Mankind needs to be certain of the purposes of life, the limits of the human role in the world's system, and the basic and ultimate rules and controls of life and the world as they appear in revelation. With this kind of macro knowledge (*wahy*), the concept of freedom of human choice is meaningful. Man can thus make choices, determine individual destiny, and, with a clear conscience, accept reward or punishment.

The Western mind cannot overcome this reality (as understood through acceptance of revelation) versus human limitations dilemma nor can it overcome the rising social and intellectual crisis which it faces today. This is because of the loss of credibility of Biblical revelation, because of the role of established religions and institutions, and the vagueness of the notion of natural law due to the lack of access to a credible source of macro knowledge.

The West's attempt to contain this dilemma by developing a higher "authority" such as charters of human rights, vis-a-vis the concept of freedom and the right of individuals and majorities to decide for themselves according to their desires and wishes, is certain to fail. These devised "higher authorities" of human and constitutional rights are superficial and contradictory. The right macro Divine comprehensive knowledge which sets objectives and lays out a basic and higher sense of purpose, setting rules and controls for the human system, is the only viable way to allow human society and civilization to stand squarely on its two feet: namely, macro Divine knowledge of revelation, and the micro human knowledge of man's mind and faculty of reasoning.

Only a truly open-minded comparative study of the three Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), can prepare the Western mind to understand, appreciate and benefit from Islam and common truths in the three revealed religions. The Qur'ān, as an authentic source of revelation in the realm of Abrahamic faiths, and the Sunnah are measuring tools of interpretation of the other two religions—Judaism and Christianity.

The Muslim mind, for its part in building a global civilization, must develop an Islamic civilizational methodology which gives contemporary understanding, real meaning, and relevance of revelation to the challenges of contemporary human life. This civilizational approach completely departs from the descriptive and literal approach of the last few centuries which still enslaves, in varying degrees, the Muslim mind.

When revealed macro knowledge is integrated with human micro knowledge, man will enjoy, in real terms, enormous material resources which can then be directed to the common interest, serving peace and security rather than contributing to worries, tensions, wars and tendencies toward destruction. Finally, the Muslim social scientist is the only social scientist who can recognize and embrace these two sides of knowledge successfully and develop vitally needed methodology, vision and knowledge necessary for the collective human good.