

Surah 6, al-Anam [The Cattle], Mecca 55

The Quran's Text & Yusuf Ali's translation:

قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَنُلِ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ ...

6: 151. Say:

"Come, I will rehearse what God hath (really) prohibited you from":

...أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا...

- join not anything as equal with Him;

...وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا...

- be good to your parents:

...وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِمَّنْ إِمْلَاقٍ نَّحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ...

- kill not your children on a plea of want; -- We provide sustenance for you and for them; --

...وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ...

- come not nigh to shameful deeds, whether open or secret;

...وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ...

- take not life, which God hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law:

...ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ (١٥١)

thus doth He command you, that ye may learn wisdom.

Transliteration *Qul ta'a_lau atlu ma_ harrama rabbukum 'alaikum alla_tusyriku_ bihi syai'aw wa bil wa_lidaini ihsa_na_(n), wa la_ taqtulu_aul_dakum min imla_q(in), nahnu narzuqukum wa iyya_hum, wa la_ taqrabul fawa_hisya ma_ zahara minha_ wa ma_ batan(a), wa la_ taqtulun nafsali harramalla_hu illa_ bil haqq(i), za_likum wassa_kum bihi la'allakum ta'qilu_n(a).*

[Ali's comments:

976 Instead of following Pagan superstitions, and being in constant terror of imaginary taboos and prohibitions, we should study the true moral law, whose sanction is God's Law. The first step is that we should recognise that He is the One and Only Lord and Cherisher. The mention of goodness to parents immediately afterwards suggests: (1) that God's love of us and care for us may -on an infinitely higher plane- be understood by our ideal of parental love, which is purely unselfish; (2) that our first duty among our fellow creatures is to our father and mother, whose love leads us to the conception of divine love. Arising from that is the conception of our converse duties to our children. God provides sustenance (material and spiritual) not only for us, but for them; hence any custom like the Pagan custom of sacrificing children of Moloch stands condemned. Then come the moral prohibitions against lewdness and all unseemly acts, relating to sex or otherwise, open or secret. This is followed by the prohibition of killing or fighting. All these things are conformable to our own interests, and therefore true wisdom from our own point of view. (6.151)

977 For the comprehensive word haqq I have used the two words "justice and law"; other significations implied are: right, truth, what is becoming, etc. It is not only that human life is sacred, but all life is sacred. Even in killing animals for food, a dedicatory formula "in the name of God" has to be employed, to make it lawful: see n. 698 to v. 5, and n. 962 to vi. 138. (6.151)]

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ... ^{up}

6: 152. - And come not nigh to the orphan's property, except to improve it, until he attain the age of full strength;

...وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ ...

- give measure and weight with (full) justice;

...لَا تُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا...

no burden do We place on any soul, but that which it can bear;

...وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَى...

- whenever ye speak, speak justly, even if a near relative is concerned;

...وَبِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا...

- and fulfil the Covenant of God:

...ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ (١٥٢)

thus doth He command you, that ye may remember.

Transliteration *Wa la_ taqrabu_ ma_lal yatimi illa_ billati hiya ahsanu hatta_ yabluga asyuddah(_), wa aful kaila wal miza_na bil qist(i), la_ nukallifu nafsana illa_ wus'aha_, wa iza_ qultum fa'dilu_ wa lau ka_na za_ qurba_, wa bi'ahdilla_hi aful_, za_likum wassa_kum bihi la'allakum tazakkaru_n(a).*

[978 Cf. v. 1, and n. 682. (6.152)]

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ... ^{up}

6: 153. Verily, this is **My Way, leading straight**: follow it:

...وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ...

follow not (other) paths: they will scatter you about from His (great) path:

...ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ (١٥٣)

thus doth He command you that ye may be righteous.

Transliteration *Wa anna ha_zal sira_ti mutaqiman fattabi'u_h(u), wa la_ tattabi'us subula fa tafarraqa bikum 'an sabilih(i), za_likum wassa_kum bihi la'allakum tattaqu_n(a).*

[979 Note again the triple refrain with variations, in vi. 151, 152, and 153. In verse 151, we have the moral law, which it is for our own good to follow: "Thus doth He command you, that ye may learn wisdom." In verse 152, we have to deal justly and rightly with others; we are apt to think too much of ourselves and forget others: "Thus doth He command you, that ye may remember." In verse 153 our attention is called to the Straight Way, the Way of God, the only Way that leads to righteousness: "Thus doth He command you, that ye may be righteous." (6.153)]

Other translations:

Muhammad Asad

6: 151 Say: "Come, let me convey unto you **what God has [really] forbidden to you**: "Do not ascribe divinity, in any way, to aught beside Him; and [do not offend against but, rather,] do good unto your parents; 146 and do not kill your children for fear of poverty - [for] it is We who shall provide sustenance for you as well as for them; 147 and do not commit any shameful deeds, be they open or secret; and do not take any human being's life - [the life] which God has declared to be sacred - otherwise than in [the pursuit of] justice: this has He enjoined upon you so that you might use your reason; 148

6: 152 and do not touch the substance of an orphan - save to improve it - before he comes of age." 149 And [in all your dealings] give full measure and weight, 150 with equity: [however,] We do not burden any human being with more than he is well able to bear; 151 and **when you voice an opinion, be**

just, even though it be [against] one near of kin. 152 And [always] observe your bond with God: 153 this has He enjoined upon you, so that you might keep it in mind.

6: 153 (6:153) And [know] that this is the way leading straight unto Me: follow it, then, and follow not other ways, lest they cause you to deviate 154 from His way. [All] this has He enjoined upon you, so that you might remain conscious of Him.

Muhammad Pickthall

6:151

Say: Come, I will recite unto you that which your **Lord hath made a sacred duty for you**: that ye ascribe no thing as partner unto Him and that ye do good to parents, and that ye slay not your children because of penury--We provide for you and for them--and that ye draw not nigh to lewd things whether open or concealed. And that ye slay not the life which Allah hath made sacred, save in the course of justice. This He hath commanded you, in order that ye may discern.

6:152

And approach not the wealth of the orphan save with that which is better; till he reach maturity. Give full measure and full weight, in justice. We task not any soul beyond its scope. **And if ye give your word, do justice thereunto, even though it be (against) a kinsman**; and fulfil the covenant of Allah. This He commandeth you that haply ye may remember.

6:153

And (He commandeth you, saying) : This is My straight path, so follow it Follow not other ways, lest ye be parted from His way: This hath He ordained for you, that ye may ward off (evil).

Edip Yuksel

6:151

Say, "Come let me recite to you what your Lord has forbidden for you: that you should not set up anything with Him; and be kind to your parents; and do not kill your born children for fear of poverty, We provide for you and for them; and do not come near lewdness, what is plain of it or subtle; and do not kill the person which God has forbidden, except in justice. That is what He enjoined you that you may comprehend."

Asad's comments:

1 46 In the consensus of all the commentators, the phrase interpolated by me between brackets is clearly implied in the above commandment, since it is mentioned among the things which God has forbidden - and being good towards one's parents is not only not forbidden but, on the contrary, enjoined over and over in the Qur'an.

147 This may possibly refer to abortions dictated by economic considerations.

148 Sc, "and not resort to brute force whenever your private interests are involved". The expression "otherwise than in (the pursuit of) justice" refers to the execution of a legal punishment or to killing in a just - that is, defensive-war, or to individual, legitimate self-defense.

149 I.e., after the orphan in one's charge has come of age, the former guardian may "touch" his property, legally, by borrowing from it or otherwise utilizing it with the owner's consent. The phrase rendered by me as "save to improve it" reads, literally, "in a manner that is best", which implies the intent of bettering it.

1 50 This refers metonymically to all dealings between men and not only to commercial transactions: hence my interpolation of "in all your dealings".

151 The meaning is that God does not expect man to behave with "mathematical" equity - which, in view of the many intangible factors involved, is rarely attainable in human dealings - but expects him to do his best towards achieving this ideal.

152 According to Razi, the phrase "when you voice an opinion" (lit., "when you speak") applies to expressing an opinion on any subject, whether it concerns one personally or not; but the subsequent reference to one's "near of kin" makes it probable that the above injunction relates, in particular, to the giving of evidence in cases under dispute.

153 See surah 2, note 19.

154 Lit., "to become scattered"