

Surah 16, an-Nahl [Bees], Mecca 70

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

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ... ^{up}

16: 90. God commands

- justice,
- the doing of good,
- and liberality to kith and kin,

... وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ...

and He forbids

- all shameful deeds,
- and injustice and rebellion:

... يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾

He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition.

Transliteration *Innalla_ha ya'muru bil 'adli wal ihsa_ni wa ita_'i zil qurba_ wa yanha_'anil fahsya_'i wal munkari wal bagyi ya'izukum la'allakum tazakkaru_n(a).*

Other translations:

16: 90

Muhammad Asad

Behold, God **enjoins justice**, and the **doing of good**, and **generosity towards [one's] fellow-man**; and He **forbids** all that is shameful and **all that runs counter to reason**, as well as **envy**; [and] He exhorts you [repeatedly] so that you might bear [all this] in mind.

Muhammad Pickthall

Lo! Allah enjoin justice and kindness, and giving to kinsfolk, and forbid **lewdness and abomination and wickedness**. He exhort you in order that ye may take heed.

Edip Yuksel

God orders justice and goodness, and that you shall help your relatives, and He forbids from evil, vice, and transgression. He warns you that you may remember.

[**Qurba** – near or close ones, relatives, kith and kinsfolk, or even **fellow human beings**]

Asad comments

108 Lit., "the giving to [one's] kinsfolk (dhu '1-qurba)". The latter term usually denotes "relatives", either by blood or by marriage; **but since it occurs here in the context of a comprehensive ethical exhortation, it obviously alludes to man's "kinsfolk" in the widest sense of the term, namely, to his "fellow-men"**.

109 The term **al-munkar** (rendered by me in other places as "that which is wrong") has here its original meaning of "that which the mind [or the moral sense] rejects", respectively "ought to reject". Zamakshari is more specific, and explains this term as signifying in the above context "that which [men's] intellects

disown" or "declare to be untrue" (ma tunkiruhu al-'uqul): in other words, all that runs counter to reason and good sense (which, obviously, must not be confused with that which is beyond man's comprehension). This eminently convincing explanation relates not merely to intellectually unacceptable propositions (in the abstract sense of the term) but also to grossly unreasonable and, therefore, reprehensible actions or attitudes and is, thus, fully in tune with the rational approach of the Qur'an to questions of ethics as well as with its insistence on reasonableness and moderation in man's behaviour. Hence my rendering - of al-munkar, in this and in similar instances, as "all that runs counter to reason".

Ali's comments

2127 Justice is a comprehensive term, and may include all the virtues of cold philosophy. **But religion asks for something warmer and more human, the doing of good deeds even where perhaps they are not strictly demanded by justice,**

such as returning good for ill, or obliging those who in worldly language "have no claim" on you; and of course a fortiori the fulfilling of the claims of those whose claims are recognised in social life. Similarly the opposites are to be avoided; everything that is recognised as shameful, and everything that is really unjust, and any inward rebellion against God's Law or our own conscience in its most sensitive form.