



**ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
SOME PROBLEMS ANALYZED FROM
THE ISLAMIC POINT OF VIEW**

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FOREWORD

As part of its endeavor to spread the Islamic culture far and wide, develop the contents of this culture, raise a sound awareness about its purport and objectives, promote the Islamic thought and strengthen its role in the shaping of modern life, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) included in its Three-Year Action Plan for 1998-2000 **a project on fostering awareness about the Islamic heritage and addressing issues of modern times**. Focusing on the Islamic heritage, the project aims to broach this lore from a contemporary perspective so as to shed ample light on its riches and expound issues and concepts not within reach for the present-day researcher and reader. Modern cultural and social issues are thus examined, and their cultural, economic and political implications investigated against the Islamic principles and fundamentals in such a way as to bring answers to the questions and problems raised by these issues.

One of the components of this project consists in the preparation of a series of fifteen studies featuring the Islamic outlook on subjects and problems of interest to the contemporary society. Translated and published in Arabic, English and French booklets, the studies will be subsequently released through ISESCO's Islamic database aimed to publicize the religion, culture and civilization of Islam through Internet.

The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is pleased, therefore, to present ***“Environmental Studies : Some Problems Analyzed from the Islamic Point of View”*** to the reader. Expounding the Islamic principles in dealing with the environment, the book highlights their value as to redressing the environment and removing all factors of pollution and spoliation. A conclusion of paramount importance is then reached, namely that the fallouts of pollution besetting our contemporary societies

are, in fact, the result of failure to implement the teachings of the Righteous Religion.

Our thanks are due to the authors, Dr. Ahmad Ar-Raïssouni, Dr. Farouk Hamada, and Dr. Ahmad Al-Kadmiri, for their excellent presentation of the Islamic viewpoint on the subject.

Our thanks also go to Dr. Najat Sebti, author of this most accurate English translation.

It is hoped that this publication will rise to the expectations pinned by readers on their Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

We beseech Almighty Allah to crown our efforts with success, guide us to the right path and enhance the benefits of this book.

Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri

Director General of
the Islamic Educational, Scientific
and Cultural Organization
-ISESCO-

INTRODUCTION

It is a fact that the environmental issue is a new contemporary problem and that, in our ancestors' days, it was not as important and alarming as it is ; today because ; back then, there was no pollution. Consequently, one cannot expect to find in our muslim heritage any direct and detailed treatments to this problem, or the same careful thoughts and debates which it provokes nowadays. We have no written works on the issue; even in the Islamic legal texts, we find no passage dealing with it. Therefore, this problem is really specific to our era, and it is our duty to deal with it earnestly, to lay down whatever regulations, directives and measures that are appropriate for finding a solution for it.

Although we have no precise texts and no detailed studies to rely on, we can nevertheless find in the holy texts of the Quran and the Sunna some passages stating the rules of good behaviour to be respected and promoted if we are to create an ecological culture, to make the necessary efforts to save the environment, and to adopt a civilized environment-friendly way of life.

For these reasons, we here present these studies with the aim to broaden the readers' theoretical knowledge and increasing their awareness of the environmental problems in the hope that Muslims will be able to remedy those problems in their respective countries and to participate in the search for solutions worldwide.

"Allah is Beautiful and He cares for beauty"

Because we have little interest in all the beauty which Allah has created everywhere in nature, we are led inexorably to destroy life on earth. We destroy all the living creatures which the earth shelters, and we spoil what Allah has created by turning all natural splendours into man-made ugliness.

Yet, ultimately, the perpetrator of such destructive actions will suffer the consequences; he will find himself among the victims, for Allah has created the earth for the benefit of all, and not for a few individuals only, or part of mankind, to benefit alone from its resources.

AESTHETIC EDUCATION AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS ON THE PRESERVATION OF NATURE

Dr. Ahmad Ar-Raissouni (*)

By "aesthetic education", I mean the whole education of the mind, its predisposition, its gift for contemplation, all that which makes man's attention be attracted to everything beautiful in life and in nature, which allows him to experience emotions and a sense of respect on seeing beauty, to enjoy it and benefit from it while watching over its preservation and its blossoming. In the Quran as well as in the Sunna, Islam stresses the importance of that aspect of education, the noblest of all, and it aims at instilling it in human nature by promoting the nobility of heart and soul, the sharpness of mind and feeling, of the senses of hearing, sight, smell, and taste.

The following examples, taken first from the Quran⁽¹⁾, then from the Sunna attest to it.

In the holy Quran

It is said that the kind of beauty which man must admire, contemplate, and preserve first and foremost is that of the human species itself.

Allah the Glorious has said in this respect: *"O man! What evil has enticed you from your gracious Lord, Who created and proportioned you, and moulded your body to His will?"* (surat "Al Infitar," ["The Cataclysm,"] verses 6-8.)

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(1) For the English translation of the quranic sourates and verses, I am most indebted to N.J. Dawood : The Koran, the Penguin Classics Edition, 1975. However, I have taken the liberty of making some changes in his translation, whenever deemed necessary (Translator's note).

These verses clearly emphasize the evolutionary aspect of beauty and embellishment in the creation of the human being: "He created you and proportioned you."

In another surat (surat "At-tin" ["The Fig,"] verse 4,) Allah said: "*We moulded man into a most noble image.*" This very same divine power is expressed in many other verses that speak of the creation of man himself, of his remarkable sensitivity, his eloquence and his perfection. However, Allah the Almighty and the Magnanimous talks here about human creation of a special kind: it is that which manifests itself through kindness, virtue, and beauty ("*We moulded man into a most noble image.*") In his prayers, the Prophet (Peace and Grace of Allah Upon Him) used to say: "O Allah, May You take care over my morals the same way You took care over my birth...." By this, the Prophet draws our attention to the essential point which is that, whenever a man looks at himself in a mirror, or at anybody else, he must never lose sight of the principles of virtue and self-improvement ("the same way You took care over my birth,"), but he must keep praying and yearning for more embetterment, for more beauty of another kind: that of his moral standards for which he must strive. Allah has endowed us with every possible means to improve our physical condition, and it is up to us to preserve those means while keeping up the pursuit of another kind of improvement, of beauty: that of our morals.

1. The Quran stresses the manifestations of beauty in nature and in all creatures:

After dealing with man, the Quran then proceeds to discuss various aspects of the universe whose beauty Allah urges us to admire. The verses that talk about the universe and all creatures are numerous. The ones in which I am particularly interested here are those which put forth the idea that we have to appreciate and to enjoy beauty, but we must also always respect it. Along the same lines, surat Qaf, verses 6-10, reads: "*Have they never observed the sky above them and marked how We built it up?*" then "*and furnished it with*

ornaments." It does not just say *"how We built it up;"* it says *"how We built it up and furnished it with ornaments."* This statement is something more than the mere assertion that something good and solid has been created. As a matter of fact, Allah draws our attention to something else too, when He adds about the sky: *"We built it up and furnished it with ornaments, leaving no crack in its expanse."* The fact that the sky has no cracks, no holes, no openings, and no clefts is one manifestation, among others, of its beauty. *"We spread out the earth and set mountains upon it. And in it We created fruitful unions to bring forth all kinds of delectable plants."* (Anything that fills the perceptive observer with cheerfulness and hope is delectable). *"And in it We created fruitful unions to bring forth all kinds of delectable plants. A lesson and a reminder for penitent men. We send down blessed water from the sky with which We bring forth gardens."* The effect of the image of the earthly gardens, described as heavenly, is to draw our attention to their beauty since gardens are, in general, symbolic of beauty, and the beauty of nature and gardens itself evokes Paradise. *"We bring forth gardens and the harvest grain, and tall date palm-trees laden with clusters of dates."* Obviously, these aesthetic descriptions have a highly symbolic value (everybody knows that date palm-trees are tall and have clusters of dates.) We are not dealing here with a lesson on dates, on all the food, the drinks and other goods that can be derived from the date palm-tree; what we have here is a description that puts forth the aesthetic qualities of the date palm-tree. From surat "Sheba", verse 15, we learn that: *"The natives of Sheba had two gardens in their dwelling-places."* Allah (the Almighty and the Glorious) emphasizes the beauty and the magnificence that characterized those gardens, to the extent that they are compared to earthly paradises in the dwelling-places of the Sheba inhabitants. Those gardens are compared to paradises as a way to make the importance of their luxuriousness stand out --a luxuriousness for which we have to thank Allah, for those who are not thankful to Him will suffer the same fate as the natives of Sheba.

Surat "An-naml" ("The Ant"), verse 60, talks about: *"He Who made the heavens and the earth and, for you, sends down water from the sky, bringing forth gardens of delight."* Therefore, those gardens do not yield only fruits, but also another kind of "bounty" onto which the Quran calls our attention: it is the atmosphere of heavenliness which those gardens emanate to the delight of the strollers and the contemplators. Indeed, an important lesson to bear in mind is that we should not consider those gardens merely as sources of profits and food, but also as sources of delight: *"Try as you may, you cannot cause such trees to grow. Another god besides Allah? Yet, they set up equals with Him!"*

Verse 5 of surat "Al Hadj" ("Pilgrimage") reads: *"You sometimes see the earth dry and barren: but no sooner do We send down rain upon it than it begins to stir and swell, putting forth every kind of radiant bloom."* This is one more instance of the Quran celebrating the cheerfulness stemming from the beauty of nature, of all those trees, those dates and those plants.

In surat "An-nahl" ("The Bee"), one finds many such verses of celebration. This surat reminds us of the necessity to contemplate Allah's creatures and their beauty. In it, Allah (the Mighty and the Majestic) says: *"He created the beasts which provide you with warm clothing, food, and other goods. They look beautiful to you."* Thus, Allah mentions the beauty of those animals, and does not reduce their worth to the food and the transportation with which they provide us. Allah then adds: *"How beautiful they look to you when you bring them back to rest in the evening, or when you take them out to graze in the morning. They carry you and your burdens to far-off lands, which you could not otherwise reach except with painful toil if Allah the Compassionate and the Merciful had not given you horses, mules, and donkeys which you may ride or use as ornaments."* Beauty is therefore embodied even in horses, mules, and donkeys, and we have to contemplate it, appreciate it, and admire it in those animals instead of considering them simply as mounts, as means of transportation for us and our luggage.

"It is Allah Who has created the sea so that you may eat of its fresh fish and bring up from it ornaments with which to adorn your persons." So, we derive from the sea ornaments, that is, means of embellishment, of increasing beauty. Like everything else which Allah has created, the sea is therefore more than a source of fresh fish: it is a source of beauty and adornment. Such is the other angle from which Allah wants us to look at the sea.

"And in cattle too, we give you to drink of that which is in their bellies, between their bowels and their blood-streams: good nourishing milk."

To state the obvious, one could say that milk is a healthy food that appeases our hunger and strengthens our bodies. However, Allah has endowed it with yet another important quality: that of being good, that is, of tasting good --for Allah Almighty could have created food that is nourishing for our bodies, but tasteless. So, flavour makes the beauty of food; it is on this particular point that Allah draws our attention when He speaks of *"good nourishing milk."* A food's nutritional value does not lie in its flavour; a food may have the sustenance needed for our survival, and yet be tasteless and difficult to digest. Therefore, Allah urges us fully to enjoy our food to which we do not pay the attention it deserves since we usually think only of satisfying our hunger and ensuring our survival, without attaching much importance to the foods' flavour and delight.

2. Aesthetic education in the Sunna

Deep interest for particulars and for the ordinary run of things has always characterized the Sunna. It is from it that we have taken the following enlightening accounts which initiate us into the aesthetic experience and the art of building up a harmonious lifestyle.

According to the account of Ibn Messaoud, Allah Bless him, the Prophet (PBBUH) said: "He who harbours in his heart even the

slightest feeling of superiority will not enter Paradise." A man remarked that: "Humans like to wear beautiful clothes and shoes." To which the Prophet (PBBUH) replied: "Allah is Beautiful and He cares for beauty."⁽¹⁾ As to that feeling of superiority, it is but falsehood and delusion.

"Allah is Beautiful and He cares for beauty": indeed, here is an absolute truth. It is a truth of cardinal importance for it implies that wearing beautiful shoes and beautiful clothes, and being neat-looking does not at all partake of that feeling of superiority against which the Prophet has warned us. On the contrary, it is something which Allah appreciates. However, as it is said in the account, the slightest feeling of superiority causes one to be denied access to Paradise. Therefore, that humans strongly long to create beauty, in a very natural and innate manner in most cases, does not mean that they have delusions of grandeur; it is something which Allah appreciates because Allah Almighty Himself is beautiful and cares for beauty. In his accounts, Malik attributes the following words to Omar Ibn Al Khattab (ABH): "I like to see the reader wearing spotlessly white clothes."⁽²⁾

According to Ibn Abdelbar, "in this context, the 'reader' means the 'ascetic,' the one who renounces worldly pleasures and devotes himself to the worship of Allah; the readers include Allah's servants and the theologians...." Ibn Abdelbar adds: "The words of Omar, the Prophet's companion (ABH), quoted in this account clearly point out that one should not practice asceticism and worship Allah in gross and dirty clothes for Allah Almighty is Beautiful and He cares for beauty. The dressing style of Allah's Messenger is a model to follow."⁽³⁾

On the other hand, according to the account of Abu Horayra (ABH), the Prophet (PBBUH) said: "Fear the two cursed ones,"

(1) Muslim, in Kitab Al Iman. Malik in Kitab Al-Libass.

(2) Malik, Kitab Al-Libass.

(3) Al Istidhkar 26/163-164.

that is, those that have provoked Allah into cursing them. "What are those two cursed ones, O Allah's Messenger?" somebody asked him. "He who pollutes people's ways and shelters," who relieves himself at their expense. That one runs the risk of being cursed, and Allah's curse is most feared by the Prophet warns.

Choukani explains that: "The purpose of this hadith is to prevent people from creating disorder and thus harming other Muslims."⁽¹⁾

These various examples clearly illustrate the degradation of beauty and, consequently, the environment in which we live. As Choukani points out, such cursed behaviour is harmful to man's senses of sight, hearing, smelling --in short, to all his senses.

In another hadith, related by Abu Dawud and Ibn Maja, in addition to the examples of the way and the shelter, we find that of the water troughs, the pollution of which is condemned because we are dealing here with vital routes for water.

According to Abi Horayra (ABH), the Prophet (PBBUH) said: "There are about sixty or seventy articles of faith. The most important one is the statement 'There is no other god but Allah,' and the least important one is the commitment to keep public spaces in a good state of cleanliness for a good social behaviour is part and parcel of one's faith."⁽²⁾

The key idea in this hadith is that preserving the cleanliness of public places is one of the articles of faith. The purpose is, obviously, to make us keep our environment and our roads clean and beautiful, to make us protect them from the filth and the contaminants that degrade them and make them ugly.

(1) Na'il Al Awtar 1/85.

(2) Established by all.

And according to Anass, Allah's Messenger (PBBUH) said: "Spitting in a mosque is a sin, and the only way to atone for it is to bury the spittle".⁽¹⁾ This way, we can preserve the beauty, the purity and the cleanliness of the mosques; once adopted by all, such a behaviour will hold inside as well as outside the mosques.

Most of the accounts referred to so far give examples that are shocking to the eye ; but there are also texts that focus on the sense of hearing as yet another sense which partakes of the beautiful, and which we must protect by reducing the noises in our environment.

Numerous hadiths about the positive effects of Quran chanting on one's voice have come into being. They are therefore an incentive for us to improve our voices, and the evidence that vocal beauty has value and benefit.

Regarding the repelling effect of unpleasant voices, Almighty Allah said: "Let your voice low: the harshest of voices is the braying of the ass" (surat "Luqman," verse 19.)

In an authenticated hadith, the Prophet (PBBUH) said: "Whenever you hear an ass braying, you will understand that it has probably seen a bad djinn and you will implore Allah's help."

Thus, the hadith disapproves of unpleasant and irritating voices, and it gives us some practical advice on how to avoid letting our voices become so. It tells us that praying accustoms us to speaking in a quiet and beautiful voice. As a matter of fact, it is quite obvious that one of the consequences of the pollution of the environment is the weakening of our hearing capacity due to all kinds of noises and to the fact that we have lost the habit of speaking in a soft and quiet voice.

Regarding the texts that deal with the necessity to keep our smelling sense and the pleasures we derive from it intact, we can

(1) Established by all.

mention the accounts of Abu Horayra (ABH) according to which the Prophet (PBBUH) said: "Whoever is offered a mild and sweet fragrance should take it." Thereby, the Prophet stresses the advantages of acquiring and using a fragrance, and he invites people to seek sweet scents. Nowadays, bad odours and vile smell are manifest signs of the degradation of the environment.

In his account, Abi Khodri (ABH) reports the following words spoken by the Prophet (PBBUH): "It is an obligation for every nubile person to take a bath on Friday, to use some siwak, and also to put on a reasonable amount of fragrance." People who put on some perfume emanate a smell that is pleasant both for themselves and for the others, thereby covering up whatever stenches may be coming out from their bodies or their surroundings.

From Choukani, we learn that there exist many sources pointing to the fact that Allah the Mighty cares for sweet scents. Attirmidi quoted Ibn Al Moussayab saying: "Allah the Majestic is Kind and He cares for kindness; He is Clean and He cares for cleanliness; He is Generous and He cares for generosity; He is Benevolent and He cares for benevolence. Lest you should become like the Jews, you must clean up your dirt."⁽¹⁾

In addition to the hadiths that encourage us to stimulate our smelling sense, to get it used to appreciating and demanding sweet smells, there are many other hadiths that reprove vile smell. Among such hadiths, one in particular has caught our attention: it recommends that we not enter a mosque after eating garlic and onion, not until their smell has dissipated .

What relation is there between these various examples and recommendations to which the Quran and the Sunna draw our attention, and the protection of the environment?

(1) Nail Al Awtar 1/188.

The experts in Islamic law put all the hadiths and the quranic verses that urge us to pay heed to the manifestations of beauty and to take care of it by developing an appropriate behaviour in the "need for aesthetic improvement" category. Based on the issues they deal with, the hadiths and the quranic verses are divided into three categories, which are well-known among the experts and quite used in everyday language, namely the category of the essentials of life, the category of nature's needs, and the category of the need for aesthetic improvement. All the various points discussed in the above mentioned accounts belong in the need for aesthetic improvement category. If the law urges us to make improvements in such an ordinary field of life as that of pure beauty, the kind of beauty which we must acknowledge at once as being pure without endowing it with any other a priori value, well, if the law insists on that point, then, one can safely assert that he who makes improvement in this field will aim at elevation in a very natural manner. Imam Achatibi defines the need for improvement, more often than not referred to in relation to the aesthetic field and to the issue of taste, in the following words: "To improve oneself is to take what is best in one's customs, and to avoid indulging in those immoral behaviours that are typical of frivolous minds." Then, he proceeds to give us a few examples to follow, based on what is required by prayers and customs.

- prayers: personal hygiene and, more generally speaking, all forms of purification, decent clothing, offering, for example, giving alms, giving to charities, and the like ;

- customs: compliance with the dietary code which commands that we eat and drink in a civilized manner, and that we avoid the foods and the drinks prohibited by religion, as well as wasting and miserliness in our dealings that may lead us to commit illicit acts such as selling goods unfit for human consumption."⁽¹⁾

(1) Al Mouafaqat 2/11.

Most of these recommendations aim first and foremost at educating people and getting them used to taking care of the entire Creation. Since the law attaches great importance to the preservation of that aspect of our life, then, the preservation of even more lofty things will become like an instinct, and we will see to it spontaneously and without warning. Obviously, working towards improving the aesthetic quality of life is the starting point of a process that will lead us towards much higher goals. That is why we can consider that the aesthetic education which Islam gives us aims essentially at protecting and preserving the environment as much as possible. We urge people not to be destructive; we urge them to protect the beauty of things and not only to ensure their availability as usefulness. Indeed, one must stress the necessity to preserve the beauty of things because it represents the climax of man's efforts to protect the environment, and also because this recommendation reflects the truly deep level of understanding of human needs which characterizes Islam --Islam that urges the human being to preserve things not just in order for him to meet the necessities of life and to satisfy nature's needs, but also to benefit from their aesthetic value. That is man's effort to protect the environment and all nature's goods at its most elevated state, at its noblest. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.



"Religion is the mother of all advice"

In the Name of Allah, most Compassionate and Merciful;

"Do not corrupt the earth after it has been purged of evil, and Pray to Him with fear and hope for His Mercy is within the reach of the righteous. It is He Who sends forth the winds as harbingers of His mercy, and when they have gathered up a heavy cloud, He drives it on to some dead land and lets water fall upon it, bringing forth all manner of fruit. In the same manner, He will raise the dead to life; perchance you will take heed." We are in the Hands of Almighty Allah. (Surat "Al Aaraf" ["The Heights"], verses 56-57.)

MAN'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE ENVIRONMENT: THE ISLAMIC VIEWPOINT

Dr. Farouk Hamada^(*)

Praise be to Allah Who has shown the right path to His servants and has promised the faithful and the righteous vice-royalty and success on earth. Peace and blessings be upon our lord Mohamed Ben Abdallah, Imam of those who have been guided unto the right path, may their lives be full of happiness and success. Peace and blessings upon the Prophet's loyal companions, renowned for their great virtues.

Almighty Allah has put the skies and the earth, and all that which they may contain, at His creatures' disposal. He has allowed His worshippers to take advantage of their resources and to draw from them in order to meet their needs. The skies and everything they contain, and the whole earth with its continents and its oceans, are forever in the service of man, thanks to the grace of Allah the Generous. Almighty Allah said: *"Do you not see how Allah has subjected to you all that the heavens and the earth contain and lavished on you both His visible and unseen favours? Yet, some would argue about Allah without knowledge or guidance or illuminating scriptures"* (surat "Luqman," verse 20.)

Allah also said: *"He has subjected to you what the heavens and the earth contain; all is from Him. Surely, there are signs in this for thinking men"* (surat "Al Jathya" ["Kneeling,"] verse 13.)

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"He has subjected to you" means "He has put at your disposal," and to subject something means to show it and to facilitate its access or, as Arraghib Al Aspahani puts it, it is "to drive [something or somebody] perform into fulfilling a given function."

When He says, *"Do you not see,"* Almighty Allah is addressing the whole of humanity.

Everything that the skies contain -namely the sun and the moon, the winds and the rain, the constellations and the celestial spheres- offers advantages and means for man to sustain and to organize his life, and therefore to perpetuate his species.

Almighty Allah said: *"It is Allah Who made the heavens and the earth, and Who sends down water from the sky with which He brings forth fruits for your sustenance. He drives the ships which, by His leave, sail the ocean in your service. He has created rivers for your benefit, and the sun and the moon, which steadfastly pursue their courses. And He has subdued to you the night and the day. He grants you all that you ask Him; if you reckoned Allah's favours, you could not count them. Truly, man is wicked and thankless!"* (surat "Abraham", verses 32-34.)

Allah also said: *"He has forced the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, into your service: the stars also serve you by His leave. Surely, in this, there are signs for men of understanding. It is He Who has subjected to you the ocean, so that you may eat of its fresh fish and bring up from it ornaments with which to adorn your persons. All this He has created, that you may seek His bounty and render thanks to Him"* (surat "An-nahl" ["The Bee,"] verses 12-14.) Many quranic verses describe, and remind sensible people of, Allah's plentiful bounties.

Man gains great benefits from the Creation which, on the whole, has been planned to ensure his peace and his happiness.

Within the Creation, man is limited by two factors, namely time and space both of which contribute to determining his existence. It would be irrelevant to discuss the time factor here since it is not the subject of this study. As to space, Almighty Allah has designed the earth in such a way as to make it both a dwelling-place and a tomb, both a birthplace and a burial ground for man who also bequeathes it when he passes away. Therefore, the earth has been devised according to the best and the simplest plan, as is stipulated in the holy Quran: *"The earth will for a while be your sustenance and dwelling-place. There you shall live and there you shall die"* (surat "Al Aaraf" ["The Heights,"] verse 24.)

And, in surat "Ghafir" ("The Forgiving One,") verse 64: *"It is Allah Who has given you the earth for a dwelling-place and the sky for a ceiling...."*

Also, surat "An-naml" ("The Ant,") verse 61, reads: *"He Who has established the earth and watered it with running rivers."* In other words, Allah has offered us the earth as a shelter and has made it a comfortable dwelling-place for us.

Almighty Allah's benevolence towards His creature, manifest in His design for man's life on earth, is also conveyed in surat "Al Baqara" ("The Cow,") verse 22: *"Your Lord...Who has made the earth a bed for you and the sky a dome."* This is to say that the earth is like a bed in which we can make ourselves comfortable.

"It is He Who spread out the earth and placed upon it rivers and mountains" (surat "Ar-raad" ["Thunder,"] verse 3.)

"It is He Who has made the earth your cradle and traced on it paths for you to walk" (surat "Taha,") verse 53.)

The cradle is that comfortable bed designed for babies; so, the earth has been created with as much care as one takes to get a baby cradle ready.

"We spread out the earth and set mountains upon it. And in it We created fruitful unions to bring forth all kinds of delectable plants" (surat "Qaf," verse 7.)

Also, in surat "Al Hijr," verse 19: *"We have spread out the earth and set mountains upon it. We have planted it with every seasonable fruit."*

Surat "Al Mursalat" ("Those Who Are Sent Forth,") verses 25-27: *"Have We not made the earth a home for the living and for the dead? Have We not placed high mountains upon it and given you fresh water for your drink?"*

Surat "Al Aaraf" ("The Heights,") verse 10: *"We have given you power on earth and provided you with a livelihood...."*

Man has been given the power to manage life on earth, both his and the life of all the creatures it shelters. Hence, he is in charge of the world, of everything which Allah has created in it and has revealed to him.

Thus, it is vital for the human species' security and survival to maintain the code found in nature and in the laws that govern life on earth and man's environment. Any act of negligence represents a danger and a prejudice to the human being.

In order to protect the earth and man's environment, the Islamic law has established two fundamental principles. The first one holds that any environment-unfriendly action constitutes an offence, and it sentences the guilty ones to undergo severe punishment. As to the second one, it makes room for measures aiming at making up for the harm done to the environment, at promoting and improving the base structures of man's environment.

The Islamic texts and principles that govern man's relationships with the environment severely condemn environmental pollution, and they are taught in nearly all schools

of law. These texts and principles are based on Almighty Allah's command: *"You shall not damage the earth like vandals."* We find this divine injunction in many surat(s) of the holy Quran: "Al Baqara" ("The Cow,") verse 60; "Al Aaraf" ("The Heights,") verse 74; "Houd,"verse 85; "Ash-shouaraa" ("The Poets,") verse 183; and "Al Ankabut" ("The Spider,") verse 36.

"Do not damage the earth," that is, do not pollute it on purpose, or knowingly.

The same divine order is to be found in surat "Al Aaraf," verse 56: *"Do not corrupt the earth after it has been purged of evil."*

By having an environment-unfriendly attitude, a person, or a group of persons, bring upon themselves the curse of Allah that can appear in multiple ways. Almighty Allah said: *"If you renounced the Faith, you would surely do evil in the land and violate the ties of blood. Such are those on whom Allah has laid His curse, leaving them bereft of sight and hearing"* (surat "Mohammed," verse 22.)

Allah further said: *"As for those who break Allah's covenant after accepting it, who break up what Allah has bidden to be united and commit evil in the land, a curse shall be laid on them, and they shall have an evil end"* ("Ar-raad" ["Thunder,"] verse 25.)

He also said, in surat "Al Baqara" ("The Cow,") verse 27: *"The evil-doers who break His covenant after accepting it and divide what He has bidden to be united and commit evil in the land. Truly, these shall have much to lose."*

And, in surat "Al Fajr" ("The Dawn,") verses 12-14: *"On those who had led sinful lives and made the land teem with wickedness, your Lord let loose the scourge of His punishment; for from His eminence, He observes all."*

In the context of the Quran and the Sunna, what is meant by the phrase to "teem with wickedness" is to go beyond the limits of straightness, (whether the straying is far or close), thus causing imbalance. There is a passage in the Quran that mentions the most dangerous forms of such wickedness that devastate both crops and cattle, both plants and animals. In this respect, Allah the Mighty, the Majestic, said: *"There are some men whose views on this life please you: they even call on Allah to vouch for that which is in their hearts; whereas in fact they are the deadliest of your opponents. No sooner do they leave you than they hasten to commit evil in the land, destroying crops and cattle. Allah does not love evil"* (surat "Al Baqara" ["The Cow,"] verse 204.)

To destroy crops and cattle amounts to shattering the future of humanity, and the more extensive the damage is caused, the greater is the impact. Can there be worse crime than this?

The holy Quran clearly states that the killing of one person is likened to the killing of the entire humanity. On this matter, Allah said: *"Whoever killed a human being, except as a punishment for murder or other wicked crimes, should be looked upon as though he had killed all mankind; and whoever saved a human life should be regarded as though he had saved all mankind"* (surat "Al Maida" ["The Table,"] verse 32.)

From this surat, we can infer that ruining the environment is like killing the whole humanity, hence is the necessity for all of us, each according to their respective situations and means, to fight back those who are guilty of such destructive deeds.

In the holy Quran, we find passages that very unambiguously set the punishment reserved for the guilty. Allah said (Mighty be the Sayer): *"Those who make war against Allah and His apostle and spread disorders in the land shall be put to death or crucified or have their hands and feet cut off on alternate sides, or be banished"*

from the country. They shall be held to shame in this world and sternly punished in the next" (surat "Al Maida" ["The Set Table,"] verse 33.)

In order to prevent disorders, and in addition to the severe punishment it reserves to the guilty, Islamic law provides for the killing of all devastating animals and insects. According to the noble hadith related on the authority of Aisha (ABH), Allah's Messenger said: "It is not illicit to kill five offenders the serpent, the raven and the rook, the mouse, the dog that bites, and the milan." ⁽¹⁾

Hudayya is the diminutive of hidala.

"The dog that bites" refers to all wild animals likely to pounce on people and to harm them, for example, the lion, the tiger, and the jackal.

Anyone concerned about the environmental issues in the modern world and about their repercussions on our health can but acknowledge that pests and vermins threaten people's well-being, health, and food supplies. They transmit the plague, cholera, diseases caused by bacteria, without mentioning yellow fever, malaria, and other such diseases. They consume a sizeable portion of people's food supplies, they ruin crops both in the fields and the warehouses, etc.

It is therefore a noble necessity, and one of the fundamental principles in islamic law, to fight back disorder, whatever its origin, and to put an end to it, especially when the civilisation of mankind is concerned.

As for the second fundamental principle that aims at keeping the environment clean and making it increasingly better, it too is established in the Islamic code. Indeed, it is part of the divine design behind the eternal revelation of Allah's messages, of His

(1) Al Boukhari, As Sayd 4/34. Muslim, 1198. An-Nissai 5/188. Ibn Maja, 3087.

holy Book, to all sensible human beings. Almighty Allah had Shuaib, one of His prophets, say: *"I seek only to reform you: and to do this, I shall strive with all my power. Allah will guide me. In Him, I have put my trust and to Him, I have turned in repentance"* (surat "Houd," verse 88.)

Allah further said, in surat "Al Aaraf" ("The Heights,") verse 56: *"Do not corrupt the earth after it has been purged of evil,"* and, in verse 85 of the same surat: *"Do not corrupt the land after it has been purged of evil. That is best for you, if you are true believers."*

"After it has been purged of evil": the "purge" in question goes back to the dawn of time. Indeed, from the very beginning, the earth was created in a state of harmony, that is to say, based on an order that is beneficial for all that which it shelters, and especially for the human being who is the noblest of the creatures which Allah placed on earth, and for whom He created everything that the earth contains. Almighty Allah strengthened this order of things by means of the laws which He revealed to us through His Messengers, through the most virtuous and the wisest of His subjects who drew much strength from His Revelations and His Sermons. He was The Source of inspiration and success to those of His subjects who taught the others how to utilize the earth's resources in accordance with the order of things which is the best shield against all harm. This original order of things, together with the laws that support it, ensure harmonious living on earth since the natural order is based on the balance of things while the laws provide for sanctions against those who threaten it.

The fact that such natural balance has existed since the mists of time makes any polluting act, any deed which ruins that which is beautiful and useful, particularly revolting. There is no excuse for such deeds; people have no right whatsoever to commit such vile actions on earth.⁽¹⁾

(1) Sheikh Mohammed At-Taher Ben Achour, in At-Tahrir Wat-Tanwir 8/174.

Therefore, the true believer will spend his lifetime improving and promoting the environment. We find this idea in many passages of the Quran that refer to *"the believer and the generous."* In its broad sense, the term "generosity" recurs in more than sixty verses of the Quran and every time, it assumes a nuanced meaning (the same applies to the term "purge") depending on which era and which geographical context are referred to. Allah assured us that the benefactors' good deeds, regardless of when and where they take place, will not remain unrewarded. Our Lord has also promised that He will not forsake the virtuous and generous nations, that is, those who make up for the damages done in their bosom and who rebuild themselves. Allah promised continuity to those who strive to better their existence and show goodwill; to those who strive for the Great Beyond, Allah guarantees The Reward. As for those who strive for both, in accordance with the quranic prescriptions, Allah will give them the best of the two worlds and will grant them eternity as long as they remain on the path of eternal reform. On this matter, Allah said: *"As for those who are righteous, their reward shall not be lost"* (surat "Al Aaraf" ["The Heights,"] verse 170.)

In surat "Houd," verse 117, Allah said: *"Your Lord would not have ruined those cities without a just cause, had their inhabitants been righteous men."*

The prohibition of all acts that are harmful to man's natural environment, and the urge to improve and to promote it, constitute a moral imperative that is inherent in the islamic viewpoint from which it cannot therefore be distinguished. The basic idea of the Islamic viewpoint is that the human being is part and parcel of the whole, and that Allah created him from the earth: *"From the earth We have created you, and to the earth We will restore you; and from it We will bring you back to life"* (surat "Taha," verse 55.) The earth is our mother who keeps us together, and on whom we depend for our livelihood and our survival. Based on this principle,

the Islamic code of law in the Sunna -and others- stresses the necessity to cooperate and to live in harmony with the environment. We are bound to nature's elements --such as the rivers, the trees, the valleys, the skies, the winds, the mountain passes, etc-- by a union and friendship bond that aims at making man succeed in the mission which he was created to fulfill.

When he looks up to the sky and observes the infinity of its distant expanse and of its horizon, the movements of its stars, the alternating course of its days and nights, and the change of its seasons and its climates, the Muslim exclaims: "O Allah Who governs our hearts, confirm mine in Your religion."

And when the moon crescent rises up in the sky, he cries out: "O Allah, let the new moon be the harbinger of security, of faith and of good health --let it be the herald of the strengthening of Islam, of goodness, and of righteousness. Allah is my Lord and yours."

When it is nighttime, the Muslim says: "O Allah, Who has created the heavens and the earth, Who knows that which is hidden and that which is visible, Master of the whole universe, I beg of You to protect me against my own wickedness and that of Satan."

When the sun sinks below the horizon, the Muslim greets nightfall with these words: " O Allah, You have made the night fall and the day vanish; I hear Your calls, forgive my sins. O Allah, let this night do me good, and protect me from the evil of this night and of those that will follow. Protect me from laziness."

At day-break, he says: "Morning has come, and its power belongs to Allah, praise be to Him. Allah has no partner in His kingdom: there is no other lord but He, and He alone has the power for our resurrection." "O Allah, I beg of You to give me the goodness of this day, its blooming, its glory, its light, and its blessing. And I beg of You to protect me from the evil which this day and the ones that will follow have in store."

When he goes on a journey, the Muslim says: "Glory to Allah Who makes this journey possible; to Him we shall return. O Allah, may our piety, our faith, and our good deeds be pleasing to You all along the way. May You make this trip pleasant for us and give us the strength to stand being a long distance away from home. O Allah, may You be with us during the whole journey and look after our families. Protect us from the strain of the journey, the desolate landscapes, and the misfortunes that could hit us, our families, and our children."

When he halts somewhere for the night, the Muslim thus addresses the land on which he puts down his luggage: "O land, Allah is my Lord and yours. I beg of Allah to protect me from the evil hidden in you and in the creatures you shelter, from the evil which He has created in your depths and in those that crawl upon your face. I implore Allah to protect me from the attacks of the lion, of the serpent, of the scorpion, and from those of the inhabitants of this place, of those who procreate and are procreated."

When strong winds are blowing, he says: "O Allah, I beg of You to give me the goodness of these winds, the goodness of that which they contain and carry, and I implore You to protect me from the evil in them, the evil of that which they contain and carry."

And when he sees the clouds gathering, he says: "O Allah, may they be the harbingers of Your mercy, not of your wrath. O Allah, I beg of you to protect me from the evil in their bosom."

When he sees a village or a town where he would like to stay, the Muslim says at once: "O Allah, Master of the seven heavens and what they hide, of the earth and what it shelters, Lord of the devils and their sinful deeds, Master of the winds and that which they carry, I beg of You to make this village and its dwellers hospitable and generous to me, and I beg of You to protect me from the evil of its dwellers and of everything it contains."

And when he tries a date for the first time, he says: "O Allah, may You bless our dates and our city," and he offers the date to the youngest child he meets.⁽¹⁾ And when he has a meal or a drink, or when he goes to bed, ...and when, and when,...: in everything he does, the Muslim feels at one with the earth, the environment, and the whole creation.

All these examples, among so many others, indicate that, every time he contemplates nature, the Muslim displays some of that wisdom which the Quran and the Sunna have instilled in him and which allows him to fit into the great expectations and the vast perspectives of the earth and of life in an active and harmonious way.

Thus, the holy Quran commands that all human beings ponder the meaning of all the ways that open up in existence, of all the life-forms on earth, and to draw the greatest possible benefit from them by cooperating with them, by contemplating and preserving their beauty, their perfection. To that effect, Allah said: *"In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are signs for men of sense"* (surat "Al Imran" ["The Imrans"] verse 190.)

Allah also said: *"Blessed He Who decked the sky with constellations and set in it a lamp and a shining moon. He makes the night succeed the day: a sign to those who would take heed and render thanks"* (surat "Al Furqan" ["Discernment,"] verses 61-62.)

And, in surat "Al Anaam" ("Cattle,") verse 99: *"He sends down water from the sky, and with it brings forth the buds of every plant. From these, We bring forth green foliage and close-growing grains, palm-trees laden with clusters of dates, and also vineyards, and olive groves, and all manner of pomegranates that mix together yet are different. Behold their fruits when they ripen. Surely in these there are signs for true believers."*

(1) Excerpts from some Hadith.

Also, in surat "Al Ankabut" ("The Spider,") verse 20: *"Roam the earth and see how Allah conceived Creation. Then Allah will create the Second Creation."*

And, in surat "Al Hijr," verse 16: *"We have decked the heavens with constellations and ornated them for those who can contemplate."*

Allah said further: *"So that man may have food, We pour down the rain in torrents and cleave the earth asunder; then We bring forth the corn, the grapes, and the fresh greens; the olive and the palm, the thickets, the fruit-trees and the green pasture, for you and for your cattle to delight in"* (surat "Abasa" ["He Frowned,"] verses 24-32.)

And, in surat "Al Aaraf" ("The Heights,") verse 185: *"Can they not see the super-kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and everything that Allah has created?"*

Also, in surat "Ar-rum" ("The Greeks,") verse 50: *"Behold then the tokens of Allah's mercy; how He gives fresh life to the dead earth."*

In many other verses, Allah the Mighty and the Glorious said: *"Roam the world and contemplate it,"* or *"They roam the world but they do not contemplate it."*

Therefore, the teachings of the Quran and the Prophet enlighten us on Almighty Allah's great design which is that the Muslim become attached to the immediate surroundings in which Allah has placed him. Once, upon returning from a journey and while scrutinizing the horizon up from Mount Uhud, the Prophet (PGAUH) saw Al Madina, the Enlightened City, and he exclaimed: "Here is Taba, and here is Uhud, the mount which loves us and which we love." What is Taba, after all, if not just a few houses, some loose stones, some trees, and some sand? Yet, the Muslim is bound to it by a love relationship, the same way he is bound to everything that surrounds him.

Allah's Messenger (PBBUH) has established a correspondence between man and the tree and made the most useful tree a symbol of excellence for the Muslim to follow. With regards to this, Ibn Omar (ABH) narrated the following: "Once, we were gathered at the Prophet's house -Peace and Blessing be upon him-- when he brought out a palm core, and said to us: 'Of all the trees on earth, there is one tree that never sheds its leaves and resembles the Muslim. Tell me, which tree is that?' Everybody thought of the desert trees, and Abdallah said: 'I think it is the palm-tree, but I dare not say so.' They asked Allah's Messenger to tell them which tree that was, and he answered them: 'It is the palm-tree.'" (1)

Everything about the palm-tree is beneficial. The palm-tree does not harm any other plant, and it requires little sustenance: so does the Muslim.

Once, Allah's Messenger (PBBUH) turned to his Companions, who listened to him with both ears, and asked them: " 'If one of you had a river close to his dwelling-places, in which he would wash up five times a day, do you think that there would still remain the slightest trace of dirt on him?' 'No,' they answered" (the Hadith.)

Allah's messenger (PBBUH) has emphasized the relationship and the similarity between the revelations which Allah sent to his heart and the realities of earthly life, so deep were his awareness of the environment and his understanding of how important its impact is. To this effect, he said: "The fact that Allah has invested me with knowledge and shown me the right path in order for me to fulfill my mission is as refreshing as a shower on dry lands. Most of these lands absorb the water and with it give birth to silage and many pastures. Other lands remain barren but, because they retain water, they constitute reserves of that water which is a blessing from Allah and which people can use to drink and to

(1) Al Boukhari, Fath Al Bari, 1/145.

irrigate and cultivate their lands. Yet, some of those watered lands will remain barren: they will not absorb the water and nothing will sprout up from them....(the Hadith.)"⁽¹⁾

The Muslim's relationship with the earth, with the environment, and with life is not limited to some aspects only; it embraces the entire earth and the entire nature for, being Allah's servant, his conception, is that "The earth belongs to Allah Who bequeathes it to His subjects and will reward the believers." The Muslim addresses the earth thus: "O earth, Allah is my Lord and yours."

Islamic law views the earth in its entirety as a mosque in which the Muslim can cleanse his soul and pray. Such is the idea conveyed in the following hadith of the Prophet (PBBUH): "The earth was created to be a place of worship and purification for me."⁽²⁾ Hence, the Muslim is prompted to love the whole humanity, as indicated to in the noble hadith of the Prophet (PBBUH): "Have mercy on those who dwell on earth, and He Who dwells in the heavens will have mercy on you."⁽³⁾

In the Islamic mind, faith, and law, the earth is like an immense mosque of which the Muslim must take care by eliminating all the evils and dangers that may threaten human beings. He is a source of goodness that strives to preserve life in all its aspects.

I would like now to tackle a particular aspect of man's relationship with the environment based on the Prophet's Hadith (PBBUH), namely the struggle against pollution that jeopardizes the environment, or the assertion and the promotion of what is good and useful.

(1) Al Boukhari, 1/175. Muslim, 2282.

(2) Al Boukhari.

(3) Abou Daoud, 4941.

In addition to what I mentioned previously concerning the measures provided for to prevent disorder such as severe punishment of those who cause it, Allah's Messenger (PBBUH) draws our attention to some attitudes which, from the mists of time till this day, have always been potentially and seriously dangerous, and have caused great damage.

According to Abu Hurayra, Allah's Messenger said: "There are about sixty or seventy articles of faith, the most important of which is the statement that there is no other Lord but Allah, and the least one being the commitment not to litter public places."⁽¹⁾

In this context, "to litter" means to leave behind one stones, trees, bones, or stench, etc, that may be a nuisance to the passer-by.

According to Abi Darr, the Prophet (PGAUH) said: "The deeds of my community have been reported to me so that I could assess their good and their bad aspects. and I have noticed, among the good deeds, the fact of clearing away from public places anything that could be harmful to people. Among the bad deeds, I have noticed the fact of leaving spitters unburied in a mosque." ⁽²⁾

Abu Burza tells that he said to the Prophet (PBBUH): "O Allah's Messenger, I do not know whether I will pass away before or after you. So, tell me what to do to please Allah and to deserve His reward." The Prophet (PBBUH) replied to him: "You can do many things that are pleasing to Allah, but above all, avoid littering public places." We find a hadith that says: "You shall not litter the road taken by Muslims." ⁽³⁾

According to Abu Hurayra, the Prophet (PBBUH) said: "For each bone in his body, man shall give alms every day, every time the sun rises...." He added: "And clearing away from public places harmful objects is like giving alms." ⁽⁴⁾

In his hadith, Ibn Abbas, the son of the Prophet's uncle (PGAUH) said : "Removing litter from a public place is as good as a prayer." ⁽⁵⁾

(1) Al Boukhari and Muslim.

(2) Muslim, 2618. Ibn Maja.

(3) Muslim, 57.

(4) Al Boukhari and Muslim.

(5) Ibn Khouzaïma, in his Sahih.

As for Abi Darr, he said in his hadith on the Prophet: "The fact of keeping the way clear of stones, thorns, and bones is like giving alms."⁽¹⁾

Abu Hurayra reports the following account given by the Prophet: "As he was walking on a road, a man came across a thorny branch and he pushed it aside. Allah rewarded him for that and He forgave him all his sins." ⁽²⁾

According to a hadith: "A man entered Paradise after having cleared a road by pulling away a tree that had been lying across it and was potentially harmful to Muslims."⁽³⁾

Another hadith reads: "A man walked by a tree lying on a road and he thought to himself: 'For Allah's sake, I will remove this tree which is in the way of the Muslim travelers and could harm them;' he was then admitted into Paradise."

Because Allah's Messenger has made it an obligation and often stressed for us to keep all harm away from people's paths and lives in general, he insisted especially on the necessity of keeping clean those places that are very frequented, and in which polluting acts can badly affect people's lives and have serious consequences. In his hadith, Allah's Messenger (PBBUH) said: " 'Beware the two cursed ones;' people asked him: 'Who are the two cursed ones, O Allah's Messenger?' 'He who defecates on the roads taken by people or in their shelters.'"⁽⁴⁾

In another hadith, Allah's Messenger said: "To avoid being cursed, you shall not pollute with excrement the following three places : water supplies, public places, and the shaded areas where people rest."⁽⁵⁾

(1) Al Bayhaqui.

(2) Al Boukhari and Muslim.

(3) Muslim.

(4) Muslim.

(5) Abou Daoud and Ibn Maja.

This represents a serious warning against polluting usable water, especially drinking water. We find the same warning in Jaber Ben Abdallah's hadith which confirms that: " The Prophet forbids you to urinate in still water."⁽¹⁾

In a narrative, it is said that: "The Prophet recommends that you not urinate in running water."⁽²⁾ In another relation : ...in running water."

Whoever persists on the wrong path, in his refusal to do what little is asked of him, will grow even more careless and more unlikely to protect people from great dangers such as the factories' toxic fumes or any other noxious phenomenon, whatever its kind and origin.⁽³⁾

Islam expresses a strong will for cleanness in every field of life and insists on our keeping our homes clean, be they private houses or apartment buildings. The holy Hadith also orders us to keep our mosques clean, to air them and to light up incense sticks in them. Aicha (ABH) tells that the Prophet (PBBUH) ordered the construction of mosques in the villages and their being kept clean and tidy.⁽³⁾

According to Samura Ben Jundab, Allah's Messenger "urges us to build mosques in our villages, to build them and to see to their upkeep with great care." ⁽⁴⁾

A "village" means here any block of dwellings.

In his account, Saad Ben Abi Wakkas reports that the Prophet (PBBUH) said: "Allah the Majestic is Kind and He cares for kindness; He is Clean and He cares for cleanliness; He is Generous and He cares for generosity; He is Benevolent and He cares for benevolence. Lest you should become like the Jews, clean up your dirt."⁽⁵⁾

(1) Muslim, An-Nissa'i and Ibn Maja.

(2) At-Tabarani in his Awsat.

(3) Ahmad, Abou Daoud, At- Tirmidhi, Ibn Khouzaima, Ibn Hibban.

(4) Abou Daoud and At-Tirmidhi

(5) At -Tirmidhi : Al Adab, An-Nadhafa.

When Omar Ben Khattab appointed him governor of Bassora, Abu Musa El Ashaari, the Prophet's noble companion (PBBUH), addressed himself to the inhabitants of Bassora saying: "Omar Ben Khattab has appointed me here to teach you the Book of Allah, the Prophet's Sunna, and to keep your streets clean."⁽¹⁾

Then, he ordered those who stank to keep away from general meetings or, if they were already gathered with people, to leave, even if they happened to be in a mosque. Likewise, people were to get rid of everything considered to be a nuisance, be it for its stench, or its appearance, or its power to spread, so as to promote a better and healthier life and to protect people from all harms.

In order to ensure widespread and longlasting public health and well-being, Islamic law orders us to inject new life into abandoned lands. It encourages people to do so by granting those who turn deserted lands into fertile ones the right of property over those lands. According to Aisha, the Prophet (PBBUH) said: "He who works a land that has no owner is entitled to possess it."⁽²⁾

To delay, for an unreasonable period of time, the exploitation of a fertile land ready to yield fruits is against common practice; whoever does so deserves to be deprived of his right of property over the land which will be given to the one who settles it and brings it back to life. Omar Ibn Khattab wrote the following to the governors all over the country: "He who delays the exploitation of a land by three years will give up his right over the land to any other person who settles and develops it."⁽³⁾

Once, an inhabitant of Bassora said to Omar: "The lands of Bassora are not harmful to any Muslim, but they are not profitable either. I beg you to entitle me to own it so that I can plant it with

(1) Ad-Daremi, 566

(2) Al Boukhari.

(3) Established by all.

olive trees and greens." Omar then wrote to Abu Musa: "Very well, then. Transfer ownership of this land to this citizen."⁽¹⁾

Greens include vegetables and all fine herbs good for man's consumption.

The Prophet's hadiths confirm the obligation to cultivate the land, to sow and to plant everything useful and beneficial. According to Anas Ben Malik, the Prophet (PGAUH) said in this respect: "Any Muslim who plants a tree or sows a field, thereby providing food for a human being, a bird, or an animal, is credited with as many alms."⁽²⁾

According to Jaber Ben Abdallah, one day, when the Prophet (PBBUH) was visiting the lands of Um Muabid or Um Mubshar Al Ansariya, planted with palm-trees, he said: "Every time a Muslim plants a tree or sows a field, which will sustain a human being, a beast or any other creature, he will be credited with as many alms as the fruits that will have been eaten."⁽³⁾

And in another hadith, Allah's Messenger said: "Whoever plants a tree and sees to its preservation and its upkeep until it yields fruits is regarded as having given alms for every single fruit yielded."⁽⁴⁾

The Prophet's hadiths referring to this issue are plentiful and incite Muslims constantly to promote agriculture. The Prophet (PGAUH) said: "If doomsday arrives and one of you happens to have a palm-tree offshoot, if he can plant it before the appointed hour, he should do it."" The same advice is reported in a narrative: "If Doomsday arrives, and one of you has a palm-tree offshoot, let him plant it at once!"⁽⁵⁾

(1) Fath Al Bari, 5/20.

(2) Al Boukhari and Muslim.

(3) Muslim.

(4) Ahmad, 3/376.

(5) Ahmad, 3/184-191. Al Bazzar.

Af for the water, which constitutes one of the greatest concerns of mankind nowadays, it means a great deal to the Muslim who views it as an invaluable treasure from which Allah brings forth all creatures: *"Allah created every beast from water"* (surat "An-nour" ["Light,"] verse 45.)

Life perpetuates itself thanks to water: *"We made every living thing of water. Will they not have faith?"* (surat "Al Anbiyaa" ["The Prophets,"] verse 30.)

Surat "Al Anaam" ("Cattle,") verse 99: *"He sends down water from the sky, and with it brings forth the buds of every plant."*

Water is a means for cleansing and purification: *"We send down pure water from the sky"* (surat "Al Furqan" ["Discernment,"] verse 48.)

One must express our thankfulness to Allah for that precious gift of water by protecting it, by not wasting it. To save up water, not to waste it, is therefore a fundamental principle established by Islamic law. As a matter of fact, Allah said: *"Eat and drink, but avoid excess and waste"* (surat "Al Aaraf" ["The Heights,"] verse 31.)

One day, the Prophet (PBBUH) passed by Saad Ben Abi Ukkas who was performing his ablutions, and he said to him: "Why are you wasting so much water?' 'Can one speak of water waste even when one is performing one's ablutions?' Saad replied to him. 'Yes,' the Prophet said, 'one should not waste even the running waters of a river.'"⁽¹⁾

Upon seeing a man performing his ablutions, Allah's Messenger (PBBUH) said to him: "Do not waste water, do not waste it." ⁽²⁾

In accordance with the directions given in the Quran and the Sunna, the Prophet's Companions (PBBUH) and their disciples taught whole generations that: "One shall not waste water, not even that used for ablutions, and this, even if one is on a riverside."⁽³⁾

(1) Ahmad, 22112. Ibn Maja, 425.

(2) Ibn Maja, 424.

(3) Fath Al Bari 1/234.

Water preservation and saving are among the greatest principles that govern the Muslims' relationships with the environment. As for the exclusive right to use water, it is an evil against which Allah warns us, especially when it is a threat to human survival as is presently the case in some African countries. In the Sunna, it is said that: "There are three kinds of people to whom Allah will not even deign to talk, nor will He deign to look at, on the Last Judgment Day: those who lie about their goods and wrongly swear that they have given more of them than they actually have; those who raise their right hands in the afternoon and take a false oath with intent to seize the belongings of another Muslim; those who deny the others access to water."

Allah the Mighty said: *"I will deny you access to my bounties the same way you have denied the others access to something you have not even created with your own hands."*⁽¹⁾

According to Anas Ben Malik (ABH), one day, Saad Ben Ubada visited the Prophet (PBBUH) and said to him: "O Allah's Messenger, my mother died without expressing her last wishes; so, I do not know whether it will benefit her if I give alms in her memory.' The Prophet answered: 'Yes, it will, and for that, I recommend that you give water.'"⁽²⁾

Saad himself tells that he once addressed the Prophet thus: "O Allah's messenger, my mother has died; what are the best alms I could give in her memory?" 'Water,' answered of the Prophet. Saad had a well dug and said: 'This is in memory of Saad's mother.'"⁽³⁾

Al Berraa Ben Azib narrated the following: "One day, a Bedouin went to meet with the Prophet (PBBUH) and said to him: 'O Allah's Messenger, tell me which deed would open the gate of

(1) Al Boukhari, 5/43, Muslim, 1/103.

(2) At-Tabarani, in his Awsat 2/73.

(3) Abou Daoud, Ibn Maja, Ibn Khouzaïma, Al Hakem, Ibn Hibban...

Paradise to me.' The Prophet answered to him: 'As brief as your speech may be, your request is considerable : help out the needy, or pay a ransom for a captive. But if you feel unable to do so, then, you will have to feed the famished and to quench the thirst of the thirsty.' "(1)

Islamic law commands that one shall quench the thirst of not only a human being, but also that of all beast of burden and all animal capable of affection. According to an authenticated hadith of the Prophet (PBBUH): "A man was walking on a road in oppressively hot weather; then, he saw a well, and he went down into it so as to quench his thirst. When he went up again, he saw a dog panting with thirst, and he thought to himself: 'This dog is really as thirsty as I was.' So, he went down again into the well, filled his shoe with water, and climbed up again, holding it between his teeth. He made the dog drink from it, and Allah rewarded him for that and forgave him all his sins. Someone then asked the prophet: 'Are we rewarded for treating animals well?' The Prophet answered: 'All good deeds that benefit a living creature will be rewarded.'"(2)

Saraqah Ben Jaashem asked the Prophet: " 'O Allah's Messenger, if a stray beast is drinking from my drinking trough; would it be considered a good deed if I let it drink?' 'Yes,' the Prophet said, 'he who sustains life will be rewarded.' "

Ben Abdallah Ben Omar has given the same account⁽³⁾.

In the holy Hadith, one can read: "Allah the Mighty and the Majestic said: 'O Son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit Me.' 'O Allah, how could I visit You since You are the Lord of the Universe?' 'O Son of Adam, I have asked you for water, but you

(1) Ahmad, Ibn Hibban and Al Bayhaqui.

(2) Malek, Al Boukhari and Muslim.

(3) Ibn Hibban and Ahmad.

have given Me nothing.' 'O Allah, how could I give You water since You are the Master of the Universe?' 'My servant has bidden you to give him to drink, in vain; had you done it, you would have received the same favour from Me.' "(1)

To dig wells or canals, and to provide water to those who are deprived of it are among the deeds most blessed by Allah. The believer will be rewarded for them for eternity, during his life on earth as well as after his death: as a matter of fact, the value of his good deeds will increase, while that of his bad deeds will decrease.

According to Abu Hurayra, Allah's Messenger (PBBUH) said: "After his death, the believer will reap the fruits of all his charitable works, of all the good deeds he accomplished on earth, such as teaching and sharing his knowledge, giving children a very moral upbringing, bequeathing a Holy Book, building a mosque, or a shelter for travelers, making the rivers run with water, or giving alms from his personal fortune while in good health and alive."(2)

As many hadiths of the Prophet's (PBBUH) attest, Islamic law decreed that men shall share among themselves all staples, starting with water. One of the Prophet's Companions (PBBUH), who was an immigrant, told the following: "I have fought by the side of the Prophet (PBBUH) and, on three occasions, I have heard him say: 'Human beings are associates when it comes to three things: fodder, water, and fire.' "(3)

Bahia said that her father once said to the Prophet (PBBUH): " 'O Allah's Messenger, what is the one thing that nobody should be deprived of?' 'Water,' the Prophet replied."(4)

(1) Muslim, in his Sahih.

(2) Ibn Maja, Al Bayhaqui and Ibn Khouzaïma.

(3) Ahmad and Abou Daoud.

(4) Abou Daoud, Ibn Maja, from Aïsha and from Ibn Abbas.



"You reap what you have sown with your deeds"

In the Name of Allah, Most Compassionate and Merciful

"Whatever good befalls you, man, is from Allah, and whatever ill is from yourself. We have sent you forth as an apostle to mankind, as the ultimate witness of Allah. He who obeys the Messenger obeys Allah Himself. As for those who pay no heed to you, know then that We have not sent you to be their keeper" (surat "An-nisaa" ["Women"], verses 79-80.)

"Allah does not withhold His favours from men until they change what is in their hearts. Allah hears and knows all" (surat Al Anfal" ["The Spoils"], verse 53.)

Allah the Mighty and the Generous showers people with His favours whose beneficence is altered or decreases only due to the effects of people's deeds, those deeds whereby they break Allah's Law and disobey the divine commandments.

We shall see when and how the divine laws warn man not to spoil the environment around him because of his levity and wastefulness in his relationship with nature.

THE PRESENT CRISIS IN THE ENVIRONMENT AND ITS CULTURAL ROOTS

Dr. Ahmad EL-Kadmiri(*)

1. Definitions and General Points

What is meant by "environment" is the milieu, the background, the surroundings. Nowadays, every time one discusses the environment, one automatically thinks of the natural habitat, or of the science of the environment : "Ecology". In its scientific sense, the term "ecology" became fashionable in the Western world in 1873 thanks to the German thinker Haeckel. Initially, it referred to the study of the habitat where all non-human living organisms dwell and reproduce, and to the apprehension of the relationships between them and their natural habitat. However, thanks to scientific progress, such a narrow view had to expand and to involve man and his environment as its subject matter; the science of the environment then started to deal with all biological systems. At this point, we should ask the question, 'Why a science of the environment? Why ecology?'

The foundations of Western thought and culture from which this science sprang forth can be summed up in the following points:

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A) Hellenic (Greek) Cultural Heritage

It amounts to an antagonistic view of man's relationships with nature, to a permanent struggle between man and nature. In accordance with this principle, western thought has preoccupied itself with the domination and the taming of nature for the sole purpose of taking advantage of its resources without any concern for all the negative consequences which such an attitude could have.

B) The World Population Boom

At the end of the eighteenth century, the protestant priest Malthus expressed his deep concern for this issue when, in 1798, he expounded his theory according to which human population increases according to the "geometric progression" principle (multiplication by 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, etc.) In other words, the population increases every twenty-five years, with the result that natural resources (especially the flora) are altered and decrease all the more as they develop, says Malthus, according to an arithmetic type of progression.

C) The Total or Partial Deterioration of Production Capital

Such deterioration can be accounted for by the excessive exploitation of natural resources which has inevitably aggravated terrible phenomena such as soil drain, the decrease of woodlands, the exhaustion of the sea resources (fishes, seaweeds,) etc.

It turns out to be difficult, in some cases, to assess with precision the damages caused during distressing catastrophes like, for example, those of the Tennessee Valley and the Middle West in the USA, that of the hardening of the laterite stratum in the soils of Madagascar, the soil drain in the Rif mountain in Morocco, etc. Also, excessive use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers has caused an "insane" deterioration of natural resources, particularly that of cultivable lands.

D) The Rapid Technological and Industrial Development

It is the main source of all the toxic waste that is harmful for human life. This problem has turned out to be the plague of this century, at the level of the atmosphere, and is essentially manifested through all kinds of pollution.

E) Urbanization

The history of urban civilisation clearly shows the human tendency to concentrate in urban areas. This is bound to cause many problems: economic, social, psychological, environmental, etc. This phenomenon has undeniably worsened in the poor countries where the urban areas are not equipped enough to meet all human needs and to make decent living possible.

F) The Gradual Emergence of New Philosophical Attitudes

This emergence is based on the fact that man was chosen as viceroy on earth to exploit its natural resources, and that he is accountable for it to mankind.

This new conception, or this change in the Western mental attitudes, has been a springboard for the economic development that took place between 1960 and 1970, and for the development of the science of the environment that has become a favourite topic for all serious newspapers and political media. Nowadays, the word "environment" evokes several problems, such as:

- atmospheric degradation
- acid rain
- carbon dioxide and the greenhouse effect
- the hole in the ozone layer

- water and soil pollution
- the threats to ecological balance
- the threats to biological diversity
- ... etc.

2. The Present Crisis in the Environment

We cannot discuss the issue of the present crisis in the environment without going back to western mentality that has created and promoted this plague as a result of the cultural heritage previously mentioned. We have also to talk about the economic liberal thinking that opens up the demand and supply system to competition whose main purpose is to serve the interests of the producer and the consumer. Yet, there is a third party which these economic principles have overlooked, either deliberately or out of negligence: it is man who may be now a producer, now a consumer, but who has, in a final analysis, to suffer the disastrous consequences of the environmental crisis.

Against this narrow vision, some social movements developed in Europe with the aim of awakening social awareness, of putting an end to negligence, and of protecting the urban environment. This movement went through two major stages:

The first stage: it corresponds to the first and the second decades of the nineteenth century, when the use of machinery started to spread out and to replace manpower.

The second stage: it began in the second half of the nineteenth century which witnessed the extended use of machinery. At first limited, the use of machines became popular and spread out all over the European countries.

The expansion of machine use caused opposition workers' movements to emerge round a new thinking based on the idea that the problem did not lie so much in the technology itself as it did in the labour-management relations that remained to be defined (Marxist thought.) Whatever role this new thinking may have played in the changes which the Western world has undergone, it is nonetheless true that it did not bring any solution to the problem of the environment since Western Civilization based the development of its technology on the exploitation of natural resources without any regard for the environment. In other words, the Western way of life was incompatible with the principle of the protection of life on earth. And there are nowadays, Westerners from all walks, from the man in the street to political institutions and decision-making bodies, faced with the problem of the environment at all levels.

The present crisis in the environment can be felt mainly in the following fields:

2.1. Environmental pollution: to pollute is to make something turn unclear, or dirty

It includes: air pollution, water and land pollution due to the rapid growth of the industries and to men's daily exposure to those chemical sources. As a result, chemical waste has frighteningly increased and accumulated in the atmosphere in the shapes of big mushrooms filled with toxic substances such as DDT, lead, mercury, etc. Space is soaked in carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide (SO₂), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and other toxic substances that threaten human life. The heavy concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) has caused the first signs of the greenhouse effect to appear: the greenhouse effect is the cause of global warming and increased occurrence of floods due to snow melts. Therefore, one can distinguish two kinds of pollution:

a) chemical pollution: it affects the following areas of the environment

- the atmosphere and the earth crust: this kind of pollution attacks various structures of the earth environment which directly suffer from the harmful effects of the waste to be found in the atmosphere as well as in the earth crust. Such waste can take the form of gases or of solids of different sizes and weights.

As for the most spread out toxic gases, they are carbon dioxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and the components of the smokes rising from the industrial factories or the homes. The amount of sulfur dioxide that spreads out in the atmosphere every year is estimated at about 120 million tons. This gas causes many diseases that attack plants and animals as well as human beings (asthma, heart and skin diseases.)

In a similar way, the natural nitrogen found in the atmosphere is converted into nitrogen dioxide which absorbs the ultraviolet rays, thus beginning the process of photochemical reactions which cause what is known as "oxidizing smogs." Because they are made of many harmful substances, these smogs represent the greatest danger for the ozone layer which they penetrate. In addition to this, there is another gas, peroxyacetylic nitrate ("PAN") which comes from gasoline combustion by car engines. The "PAN" and the ozone are toxic substances dangerous for the flora and for humans (eye inflammation.) Thus, it is estimated that, for every 1000 litres of gasoline, the exhaust fumes emitted by car engines carry with them:

- * 290 kilograms of carbon dioxide (CO)
- * 33 kilograms of non-burnt gasoline
- * 11 kilograms of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)
- * 1 kilogram of sulfur dioxide (SO₂)

That was for the pollution of the atmosphere.

As for the earth crust, its pollution results from the mixture of the waste which it contains with particles of solid metals such as lead, copper, zinc, cadmium, etc. The destruction of plants and insects and the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers remain the main causes of the earth crust pollution. One should not forget either that natural phosphate contains radioactive metals such as uranium.

- Water pollution: most of these polluting substances (gaseous or solid) spread into the ground water, the seas and the rivers, either because of natural hazards, or because of the industries, or the hospitals, directly tipping their waste there, or because of the oil spills caused by oil tankers and other ships. Those contaminated waters contain nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K).

Pollution alters the water quality; it significantly reduces its biological richness and it makes the noxious bacteria that proliferate in the atmosphere (anaerobe) multiply.

Fuel oils remain the number one polluting substance in the world: the amount of fuel oils that spread into the waters every year is estimated at 3×10^6 tons. Add to this the spills caused by oil tankers accidents, among which one could mention the Torrey Canyon one which has destroyed 100 000 tons of seaweeds and 350 000 tons of animals, the total value of which is estimated at one million American dollars.

b) Physical pollution: it includes

- noise pollution: it is caused by the industries, by civil and military planes, by deafening music, etc, and it causes several psychological diseases (psychological distress, aggressiveness, deafness, etc.)

- heat-giving pollution: it is caused by the cooling machines used in factories, whether the latter are operated by combustion power or by nuclear power. These cooling machines raise the temperature in the near surroundings of the factories and especially that of the river waters which undergo some important ecological

alterations manifest in the significant decrease of the biological resources such as fishes and seaweeds.

- pollution caused by the solid waste resulting from the mining industries and household refuse.

- that caused by toxic and radioactive waste.

- radioactivity: it represents the greatest danger looming in front of mankind. This danger is due to the fact that radioactive substances spread into all the elements of the environment, namely water, air, and land. These substances, the emitting sources of which are plentiful, are very dangerous for the human and the animal species when they penetrate the body.

One considers that radioactive pollution has reached the strata of the atmosphere that surround the earth when the radioactive substances --be they in the form of gases or of dust-- penetrate the higher layer of the atmosphere. That is, when they reach 200-3000 meters above the earth crust. The movements of these substances in the atmosphere depend on numerous factors, the most important of which is the temperature which varies in the atmosphere. Rain is among the most efficient cleaning means that clear away those substances from the air.

As for the water radioactive pollution, it is caused by the spilling of radioactive substances in the seas, the rivers, the lakes, as well as in stagnant waters. The movements of the radioactive substances in water depend on several factors, among which are: the quality and the movements of the water, the nature of the mixtures spilled, the chemical properties of the radioactive substances, and the physical properties of the water.

Regarding the radioactive pollution that affects the soils, it is due to the polluted stagnant waters, as well as to the fact that various crops absorb radioactive substances, as these latter fall on the plants' leaves. The effects of radioactive substances on the soils vary depending on several factors the most important of which are: the nature of the soils, their temperature, and their dampness.

In this respect, one has to remember the greatest catastrophe in the history of mankind, namely the dropping of two atomic bombs by the United States of America, one of which exploded in Hiroshima, and the other in Nagasaki in Japan, and also the explosion that occurred in the Tchernobyl nuclear power plant in the former Soviet Union (specifically, Ukraine).

2.2. The vegetal and animal species extinction, and the natural resources depletion:

It is very difficult to put forward exact figures when it comes to assessing the number of species that have become either extinct or endangered in the ecosystems of the areas concerned. The reason is that missions aimed at monitoring the species and collecting essential data are hardly ever carried out. Because of that, some species will become extinct before they are even discovered and listed. Others will be discovered many years after they have become extinct, all because of the lack of means of observation.

This state of things has led some of the most eminent experts to draw the conclusion that a quarter of the earth biodiversity will be endangered in the next 20 to 30 years if one does not manage to limit and define the conditions for exploiting natural resources. One could say that between 1996 and 2020, the species living in the equatorial forests, representing between 6 and 15% of all the species in the world, will have become extinct. That amounts to saying that between 15,000 and 50,000 species may become extinct every year or, in other words, between 40 and 140 may become extinct every day. The mission control center for the environment has listed about 220,000 vegetal and animal species that are seriously endangered.

The causes that endanger these species are to be found in the alterations which their natural habitats undergo. As for the major factors behind the alterations of the natural habitats and the deterioration of the environment, they boil down to human

activities and their consequences, namely the increase of intensive farming, of soil drain, of urban expansion, the constant alterations in the composition of the soils and the water streams, the building of roads, of irrigation canals, of natural gas pipelines, of dams, the digging of mines, the construction of airports and industrial installations.

The current trend is to use cultivable lands for agricultural purposes, and not to turn them anymore into areas for human settlements, or for the construction of roads and industrial or touristic installations. The excessive use of chemical fertilizers and the extinction of some insects and plants have led to soil pollution. Yet, soil drain, which results from excessive grazing and deforestation, remains the main plague that deprives the lands of their floral protection, which in turn causes the soils to degenerate since the rain waters can flow freely and inevitably carry with them the sediments which they deposit in the riverbeds and in the bottom of the dams whose waters then overflow and flood the surrounding lands. Soil drain is alarmingly manifest in the natural habitat through the increased scarcity of plants and water, and through the alterations in the chemical and the physical configurations of the earth to be seen, for example, in global warming.

Conclusion

The current environmental crisis is not a whim of fate; it is the logical consequence of the negligence and the wasting in which this so-called "developed" world revels. As previously stated, such negligence and wasting are the offsprings of a whole civilisational and cultural heritage. For this reason, excessive exploitation of natural resources and the environmental pollution which it engenders will continue for as long as our attitude to life is dominated by such considerations as material progress and the protection of industrial assets. At this stage, one should ask the question of how to get out of this deplorable situation. The answer lies in the double necessity to continue exploiting natural resources

on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to set limits to such exploitation in order to protect the environment.

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