

Religion and Environment

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Received: 6 December 2013 Accepted: 31 December 2013 Published: 15 January 2014

Abstract

The Holy Quran is a book that explains the phenomenon of fate which is hidden beneath the physical event and enables us to realize the cause of the disaster and uncover them. It is said in the Qur'an "Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by (reason of) what the hands of people have earned." We understand under the light of this verse that the tsunamis, floods and storms which destroy cities and settlements are a result of deterioration caused by human hands in land and seas. With this statement Qur'an point out a universal law in the universe and who acts opposite to it will have an equal pain. For this reason Qur'an and hadiths ordered us to treat our environment delicately and sensitively. Those who not have any awareness of these fact will be punish in the world and hereafter. So the article is looking at the problem of environmental pollution from the perspective of fate.

Index terms—

1 Introduction

Since environmental pollution has reached high levels globally, the alarm bells have begun to ring out for human beings as well as all living creatures. If people do not work together to sort out this global problem, then they will pay a huge price for this and many countries will be inundated in near future, and, as a result, the natural disasters might be nonpreventable. In order to help remind people their moral environmental responsibilities, there is a great need in teaching people religious responsibilities and duties regarding environmental issues. Therefore, this article focuses on environmental pollution and responsibility from a religious perspective and aims to draw human beings' attention to such a vital issue.

2 II.

The Qur'anic Verses Related to Environment and its Responsibility

We as muslims believe the Holy Quran is a commentator of the book of the Worlds of the Seen and the Unseen, the key to the truths concealed beneath the lines of events; the tongue of the Unseen World in the Manifest World.

What does that mean? Namely the Holy Quran is a book that explains the phenomenon of fate which is hidden beneath the physical event and enables us to realize the cause of the disaster and uncover them. For example the holy Quran says:

"Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by (reason of) what the hands of people have earned. So He (i.e. Allah) may let them taste part of (the consequence of) what they have done that perhaps they will return (to righteousness)" (Ar-Rum, 30/41)

In the light of this verse we understand that the tsunamis, floods and storms which destroy cities and settlements are a result of deterioration caused by human hands in land and seas.

Again, in other verse God clearly emphasises this truth: "And whatever strikes you of disaster-it is for what your hands have earned; but He (Allah) pardons much" (Ash-suhârâ, 42/30) So this expression in the Qur'an, tells us that there is a universal law in the universe and who acts opposite to it will have an equal pain. When we look at according to the perspective of Qur'anic holistic back ground we understand the cause of arrival of bad events whoever has. We call this secret law the law of nature.

Then these natural disasters which occur today on the earth always occur because of what we do. Nature is punishing us. Namely God is punishing us through nature for all our hands have earned.

In reality this earth was created for us. It has been adapted for our lives. We borrow the earth created by God in a way we're immaculate. We have to protect the earth as we protect our eyes. Let us know the cost of damage which we do to the earth we have to pay in both the world (as we told above) and the hereafter. Allah says.

"Do not spread corruption on earth after it has been so well ordered. And call unto Him with fear and longing; verily, God's grace is ever near unto the doers of good!" (Al-A'râf, 7/56) Dahhak's commentary on the verse is this: "Do not destroy water resources. Do not damage the fruity trees by cutting" (Al-Qurtubî, 1988: VII. 145) The commentators say in the commentary of this verse: God created the earth, laid it in order, the suitable kind according to the best interests of the people has allocated in a manner conducive to living. The benefit and damage caused by people are rather related to the detriment they cause to the development and corruption of the environment. People have been seen as responsible for its rehabilitation. Human beings do not destroy anything as harshly as they do to environment (Yaz'r, 1979 ?? III. 2195).

All of celestial religions were revealed for the happiness of man in both the world and the hereafter. As Islam is the last religion of them, it has brought a rule and a more perfect way of human life and did not leave him unattended, made him responsible for environment.

The Qur'an ordered us to use the earth's resources and opportunities in a measured way without wasting. For example the Quran says:

"Eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess." (Al-A'raf, 7/31) The order of eating and drinking but not being excessive is not related to eating and drinking only but related to all of the issues. Therefore, in any case wasting is forbidden in religion.

In the Qur'an it is said that God created the universe in a delicate balance and coherence, and therefore there are a lot of verses that order us to protect the balance and harmony. Allah says: "Behold, everything have we created in due measure and proportion" (Al-Qamar, 54/49) In another verse Allah says:

"And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance. That you not transgress within the balance and established weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance" (Ar-Rahman, 55/7-9)

From the expression of "observe the weighing and measure", it is understood that we have got to comply with all sorts of fairness among the people as well as we have to maintain the natural balance in nature. The assumptions underlying these are that the facilities and assets have been distributed to a certain extent in nature. Each one has its own place and importance in nature and has been an integral part of the existing beautiful divine balance.

In the Qur'an it is explained that in the earth there are a lot of military of Allah, and they are manipulated according to his wisdom. Allah says: "To Allah, belong the soldiers of heavens and earth. God is indeed almighty, truly wise!" (Al-Fath, 48/7) Therefore, every kind of creature on the earth is an army of God. For this reason damaging them is destroying God's army and the balance of nature. Indeed, the Prophet. Muhammad (Peace be upon him) in one hadith says:

"Do not to kill grasshoppers, because they are the largest armies of Allah." (Ahmad b. Hanbal, 1992: II.

3 19, 210)

As seen in this word harming animals is one action that requires responsibility in the religion. Now let's listen to Bediüzzaman who the great scholar of the last century. He is says that: "The universe is a vast, constantly working factory and the globe of the earth a hostel and guest-house which is continually filled and emptied. Generally, factories, hostels and guesthouses which are thus used become much dirtied and soiled with, debris and rubbish, and putrid matter accumulates in all parts of them. Unless they are kept with care and cleaned and swept, they cannot be occupied; human beings are overwhelmed by the dirt. The factory of the universe and guest-house of the earth, however, are totally pure, clean and spotless, and completely unsoiled, untainted and fresh; there is nothing unnecessary, nothing without benefit, not a random piece of dirt to be found. Even if there is apparently, it is quickly thrown into a transformation machine and cleaned. This means that the One Who looks after this factory does so very well. And its Owner is such that He sweeps and cleans and orders the vast factory and extensive palaces as though they were small rooms. In relation to the size of the huge factory, there is no dirt or rubbish remaining from its filth and debris. Indeed, considering its size, its cleanness and tidiness are remarkable. If someone does not wash himself and clean his small room for a month, they will become extremely dirty and soiled. That is to say, the cleanliness, purity, and luminosity in this palace of the world arise from a continuous, wise, and diligent cleaning. If it was not for this cleaning, sweeping and careful tending, in over year all the hundred thousand animal species would have been choked on the face of the earth.

Furthermore, the corpses of a hundred thousand animal species and the debris of two hundred thousand plant species each year on the face of the earth resulting from the alternation and struggles of life and death would have so utterly filthied the land and the sea that conscious creatures, rather than loving and delighting in the face of the earth, would have felt disgust and aversion at such ugliness and fled to death and non-existence. Just as a bird cleans its wing with ease and a scribe his pages, so also are the wings of the aircraft of the earth and the birds of heavenly bodies and the pages of the book of the universe cleaned and made beauty of the Hereafter and think with belief become lovers of this cleanliness and beauty of the world, they worship it.

That is to say, this palace of the world and factory of the universe display a greatest manifestation of the Divine Name of Most Holy whereby it is not only the carnivorous cleaners of the seas and the eagles of the land

which obey the commands preceding from that sacred cleansing, but also its cleansing officials which gather up corpses, like worms and ants. They are impelled by a hand of wisdom" (Nursi, 20014: p. 396-397).

4 III.

5 Hadiths and their Comments on this Issue

In the same way there are a lot of words that related to the protection of the environment and its development in the hadith of the Prophet. Allah has granted on us all of nature's richness. We are going to be questioned if we wasted them and how we used those blessings. This verse clearly emphasises it: "Then you will surely be asked that Day about pleasure" (At-Takthur, 102/7)

In the Quran the people who damage the natural balance, are presented as a worse man's portrait:

"And when he goes, he strives throughout the land to cause corruption there in and destroy crops and animals. And Allah does not like corruption" (al-Bakarah, 2/ 205) Abdullah ?bn Umar narrated that the apostle of God (Peace be upon him) said: "A woman was tortured and was put in Hell because of a cat which she had kept locked till it died of hunger." Allah's Messenger further said, "Allah said (to the woman), 'You neither fed it nor gave it water when you locked it up, nor did you set it free to eat the insects of the earth (Al-Bukhari, Anbiya, 54, Azan, 90, Ahmad b. ??anbal, ??V. 351) As seen in this hadith a woman was punished because she imprisoned a cat until it died. For this reason she was doomed to Hell while she imprisoned the cat, she did not give it food or drink, nor did she free it to eat the insects of the earth. Hence mercy to animals is an obligation for every believing person. As the action of keeping animals from feeding is a cruelty and thus, this cruelty landed person in Hell. This shows us taht committing actions like this to animals is very big sin. In fact mercy, benevolence and compassion are the attributes of Allah. Namely, he is Ar-Rahman and Ar-Raheem. For this reason Muslim have to be merciful, beneficent and gracious to every creature.

In another holy hadith, Allah promises a woman a divine reward for a kindness which she had done to a thirsty dog (Bukhari, 1992: Wudu, 33; Muslim, 1992: Salam, 154).

Islam has ordered us to behave towards animals very good kind. Mercy, benevolence and compassion are the attributes of Allah. Because, He is Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim. Who reflects these attributes on himself he /she becomes nearer to Allah.

There is no escaping for a servant from being questioned about certain things.

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said: On Judgment Day, no one can move away from his tracks unless he is questioned from four thing: Where he spent his life, his actions, how he made a living, what he spent his money on, how he used his body and health (Tirmizi, 1992: K?yame, 1)Then we are responsible about our lives, our actions and use of our opportunities. We must use them in the best way. Otherwise we need to know that we have to pay a price in the world and the hereafter for the errors and mistakes we do.

As a consequence, religion gives us responsibility towards the environment we live in as well as regarding its protection. Quran clearly and openly reveals that the nature and natural resources are the result of a plan, and maintaining this valuable balance is the responsibility of human beings. However, the Holy Qur'an, in spite of this, says that the balance of nature will be destroyed by the hand of human beings and human beings will suffer from this action by themselves.

Figure 1:

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