

Islam and The Environment

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Human beings are representatives of Allah:

Allah, the almighty appointed human beings as his representatives in this world and he made them responsible for the safety and security of everything around them. Be that they are human beings, animals, insects, birds, or within nature such as plants, trees, and water.

Allah the Almighty said in the glorious Quran:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

((And remember when your Lord said to the angels: "Verily, I am going to place mankind as my representatives generations after generations on earth.))

Al-Baqarah:30

Human beings have been sent with responsibilities:

Allah the Almighty created human beings and he sent them to this world with numerous responsibilities. Every individual is responsible within his own depth and field.

The following statement of prophet Mohammed PBUH will clarify the matter:

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ، وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، فَالْأَمِيرُ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ، وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ عَلَى أَهْلِهِ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ عَلَى بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا وَهِيَ مَسْئُولَةٌ، أَلَا وَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ، وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ.

On the authority of Ibn Umar that prophet Mohammed PBUH said:

((All of you are shepherds and each of you is responsible for his flock. A man is the shepherd of the people of his house and he is responsible. A woman is the shepherd of the house of her husband and she is responsible. Each of you is a shepherd and each is responsible for his flock))

Al-Adab Al-Mufrad

So, we are obliged to protect the environment around us which includes each and every single creation of Allah the Almighty on this earth.

2. Wastage of water:

Generally, wasting, spending or consuming anything excessively is extremely discouraged in Islam.

The Noble Quran says:

وَأَنْتَ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا

Do not spend wastefully your wealth in the manner of a spendthrift (extravagance).

Verily, spendthrifts are brothers of the devils.

Al-Israa: 26

Water is one of the most precious blessings and valuable creation from Allah the Almighty. Everything on this planet depends on water and cannot survive without it. Allah the Almighty said in the glorious Quran:

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

And We have made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?

Al-Ambiah: 30

Many people in this world tend to waste water and use it excessively especially when it is available generously. However, the value of water can only be realised when it runs dry or becomes unavailable due to the lack of rain in some parts of the world.

The holy prophet Mohammed PBUH trained his noble companions to use the water economically and accordingly. The following prophetic statement can be a source of evidence:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - مَرَّ بِسَعْدٍ وَهُوَ يَتَوَضَّأُ فَقَالَ " مَا هَذَا السَّرْفُ " . فَقَالَ أَفِي الْوُضُوءِ إِسْرَافٌ قَالَ " نَعَمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ عَلَى نَهْرٍ جَارٍ .

((On the authority of Abdullah Bin Amr:

The Messenger of Allah passed by Sa'ad when he was performing ablution, and he said: 'What is this extravagance?' He said: 'Can there be any extravagance in ablution?' He said: 'Yes, even if you are on the bank of a flowing river))

Sunan Ibnu Majah

So, Muslims are taught to not waste their water in their religious activities, let alone wasting it in other forms.

3. Planting in Islam:

Islam is a comprehensive religion which doesn't only ensures the spiritual wellbeing of a human being but also safeguards the physical and environmental wellbeing too. We rely on plants and trees tremendously as we are in great need of the oxygen generated by them.

The holy prophet Mohammed PBUH highly motivated us to plant the trees on the earth of Allah the Almighty. The following hadeeth is a clear evidence.

عَنْ أَنَسٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَغْرِسُ غَرْسًا أَوْ يَزْرَعُ زَرْعًا فَيَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ
إِنْسَانٌ أَوْ طَيْرٌ أَوْ بِهِمَةٌ إِلَّا كَانَتْ لَهُ صَدَقَةٌ

((On the authority of Anas Radiallahu Anhu:

that the Prophet PBUH said: "No Muslim plants a plant or sows a crop, then a person, or a bird, or an animal eats from it, except that it will be reward of charity for him))

Sunan At-Tirmizi

On the other hand, the holy prophet Mohammed PBUH instructed us to be productive human beings as long we are living in this world.

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: إِنْ قَامَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَفِي يَدِ أَحَدِكُمْ فَسِيلَةٌ، فَإِنْ
اسْتَطَاعَ أَنْ لَا تَقُومَ حَتَّى يَغْرِسَهَا فَلْيَغْرِسْهَا.

((Anas ibn Malik reported that the Prophet PBUH said: If the day of judgement is about to occur while you have a palm-shoot in your hands and it is possible to plant it before Qiyaamah (Judgement Day) comes, then you should plant it))

Al-Adab Al-Mufrad

4. Treating animals:

Islam is a religion of excellence, compromise, gentleness, and love and affection. The compassionate and gentleness must be applied in all our dealings and conducts. The noble Prophet Mohammed PBUH said:

عَنْ أَبِي يَعْلَى شَدَّادِ بْنِ أَوْسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَتَبَ الْإِحْسَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ، فَإِذَا قَتَلْتُمْ فَأَحْسِنُوا الْقِتْلَةَ، وَإِذَا ذَبَحْتُمْ فَأَحْسِنُوا الذَّبْحَةَ، وَلْيُجِدْ أَحَدُكُمْ شَفْرَتَهُ، وَلْيُرِخْ ذَبِيحَتَهُ.

((On the authority of Abu Ya'la Shaddad bin Aws (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Messenger of Allah PBUH said:

Verily Allah has prescribed ihsasn (proficiency, perfection) in all things. So, if you kill, then kill with kindness and gentleness; and if you slaughter, then slaughter with kindness and compassion. Let each one of you sharpen his blade and let him comfort his animal while slaughtering))

Al-Muslim

Animals, birds, and insects are an important creation of Allah, hence they must be dealt with carefully and gently. We benefit from animals in many different ways starting from what we eat to what we wear. E.g. Eating the meat of Halal (permissible) animals, and using their husk to clothe ourselves. They are also an important source for the pharmaceuticals and medical industry.

The noble prophet Mohammed PBUH confirmed the entrance of a woman to the fire of hell due to her cruelty with a cat:

- عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " دَخَلَتْ امْرَأَةٌ النَّارَ فِي هِرَّةٍ رَبَطَتْهَا، فَلَمْ تُطْعِمَهَا، وَلَمْ تَدْعَهَا تَأْكُلْ مِنْ خَشَائِشِ الْأَرْضِ

((On the authority of Ibn `Umar:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "A woman entered the (Hell) Fire because of a cat which she had tied, neither giving it food nor setting it free to eat from the vermin of the earth))

Al-Bukhari

On the other hand, the PBUH confirmed the entitlement of a lady to heaven because of her kindness with a dog:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " بَيْنَمَا كَلْبٌ يُطِيفُ بِرَكِيَّةٍ قَدْ كَادَ يَقْتُلُهُ الْعَطَشُ إِذْ رَأَتْهُ بَغِيٌّ مِنْ بَعَايَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فَنَزَعَتْ مُوقَهَا فَاسْتَقَتْ لَهُ بِهِ فَسَقَتْهُ إِيَّاهُ فَعُفِّرَ لَهَا بِهِ.

((Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger PBUH as saying:

There was a dog moving around a well which would have died of thirst. Suddenly a prostitute from the prostitutes of Bani Isra'il happened to see it and she drew water in her shoe and made it drink, and she was pardoned because of this))

Al-Muslim

To be continued.....