

Moreover, one should not take lightly the issue of killing, without any justification, even if the victim is a very small animal or bird. 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amr reported that the Prophet [S.A.A.S] said:

"No human being kills a sparrow or [something] larger, without right, except that God will ask him about it (hold him responsible!) on the Day of Judgment" It was said: O Prophet of God! What is its right? He said: " Its right is that you slaughter it and eat it, not that you decapitate it and through it!"^[14]

Another hadith to the same effect was narrated by Ahmad, Al-Isa'i and Ibn Habban from the report of Al-Sharid [May God be pleased with him], he said: I heard the Prophet [S.A.A.S] saying:

" If you kill a sparrow senselessly, it will hasten to God on the Day of Judgment saying : O Lord! So and So killed me for play and not for use!"

Commenting on the previous two narrations and what could be deduced from them, Dr. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi said:

"The Jurist [faqih] deduces from the them the prohibition of the killing of an animal except for food. That is why Imam Al-Mundhiri included both of them in his book al-Tarhib wa al-Tarhib, in order to warn people against mutilating animals, and killing them except for food.

Animal rights groups deduce that it is imperative to respect these living beings, to protect their life, and not to touch them except for a need.

The ecologists see in these two narrations the necessity to preserve the components of the environment, and not to allow [destructive] playing which will lead to the annihilation and extinction of these components without any reason.

In fact, Islam went beyond any expectations when the Shari'ah demanded that the psyche of the animal should be taken into consideration. Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal narrated from the report of 'Umar that the Prophet [S.A.A.S] made it imperative to sharpen the blades and to hide them from [the sight of] animals. This ethos is reiterated in another context. Ibn 'Abbas reported that a man [kept] a sheep laid down while he was [still] sharpening his blade; the Prophet [S.A.A.S] said [to him]:

"Would like to it to die twice? Why didn't you sharpen your blade before laying it down?"^[11]

The protection of animals in Islam includes the notion of hunting. While hunting is permitted in principle, it might become prohibited depending on the conditions the surround it. Ibn Taymiyyah, the Hanbalite medieval scholar, said that "hunting out of necessity is permitted; if it is for fun and playing, it is detested; and if it causes injustice to people, by destroying their fields and property, it is prohibited."^[12]

People should be behave with great responsibility regarding hunting. Hunting should be out of necessity; where necessity is defined in terms of need for food, where other means are not possible. One should also take into consideration the authorities determination of hunting seasons and the kind and number of animals and birds allowed to be hunted. Also, hunting tools that cause great pain should be prohibited. The latter include traps that lock on the leg of the animal causing pain and bleeding until the hunter returns which could be for days!

The following story shows that the Prophet [S.A.A.S] did not tolerate any "hunting" which was not out of necessity. Ibn Mas'ud said: " We were traveling with the Prophet [S.A.A.S] when he left [us for a while]; we saw a bird with its two chicks and we took the chicks. [Their mother] started spreading its wings [in protest]. When the Prophet [S.A.A.S] came [and saw what happened] he said: "Who caused her to become bereaved [by taking away] her two children? Return her two children to her!"^[13]

One can appreciate the position of the Prophet [S.A.A.S] much more when one realizes the choice of words used in the hadith. Instead of chicks [farkhiyha], he used children [waladayha] which, reflect the a very humane perspective.

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and that of the "other" in Europe. The best case is that of the "other" as a Jew!

There are ways and means to protect the life of the human being in Islam. There is a broadly stated principle in the Qur'an which prohibits all harm:

"And make not your own hands contribute to (your) destruction; but do good; for God loveth those who do good." Qur'an, 2:195

This verse highlights the dangers that fall within the responsibility of the individual towards oneself. They include taking drugs, alcohol, or any activity which is contrary to natural disposition such as homosexuality. Islam is amongst the minority (the Catholic church condemns the act but not the homosexual) that condemns homosexuality; some reformed synagogues and some Protestant churches allow marriages between the members of the same sex. Taken to an extreme, homosexuality leads to the annihilation of mankind!

Add to this gloomy picture is adultery and common use of needles in drugs. As such, the number of people contracting AIDS is mushrooming. Against this background, the Islamic way of life provides a safety valve which, if accepted, can save humanity.

2. Animals:

Islam has enjoined upon Muslims right relationship with animals. They are asked to treat animals well, and they are not allowed to kill animals except for food. The latter permission has to be carried out in accordance with the Shari'ah. Only in limited cases some animals are allowed to be killed when they endanger the life of the human.

To slaughter an animal, one has to use sharp object that will save the animal the pain associated with the use of a blunted object. Shaddad Ibn Aws reported that the Prophet [S.A.A.S] said:

"...and excel in slaughtering; sharpen your blade [so you may] relief your slaughtered [animal]"^[10]

(فقہ المعاملات کا مطالعہ کرنا، فقہی معاملات پر غور کرنا اور فقہ المعاملات پر لکھنا وقت کی ضرورت ہے)

of various colors. Those truly fear God, among His Servants, who have knowledge: for God is Exalted in Might Oft-Forgiving." Qur'an, 35:27-28

Those who know will appreciate the differences; those who are ignorant do not. There aren't many races; there is one human "race" reflecting many prisms. The beautiful different colors and shapes of flowers do not invite us to damage all but one. They are there as gifts and Signs from God to help us remember Him. As such, they should be appreciated and preserved.

The only legitimate differentiation in Islam is based upon moral, not physical character:

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (Not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)." Qur'an, 49:13

The compendiums of hadith are full with reports that reflect the spirit of brotherhood regardless of the physical appearances. The companions of the Prophet himself reflect a rainbow of colors: they comprised Muhammad the Arab, Suhayb the Roman, Suleiman the Persian and Bilal the Ethiopian.

In addition, Islam was pluralistic in its relationship with the "other" from the outset. It is already established that if the "otherness" is based upon differences in color, it does not generate a conflict. In addition, if the "otherness" is based upon a different belief, such as the Jews and the Christians, it is also tolerated in the Islamic world-view. Tolerance is emphasized in the Qur'an and in the Sunnah in many contexts:

"God forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for God loveth those who are just." Qur'an, 60:8

Where other systems of belief and communities failed to deal justly with the "other" who lives amongst them, Islam succeeded. One may compare the history of the "other" in the Islamic state

world, only concerted efforts on a global level might bring some relief and hope. While one prays for an end to armed conflicts, one should remember that killing the enemy during war is not an end in itself.

The fact the Muslims are subjected to different forms of attacks that range from ethnic cleansing to discrimination in the work place, should not be used by Muslims as a pretext to behave in the same way as their enemies:

"O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from Justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear God. For God is well-acquainted with all that ye do." Qur'an, 5:9

Many of the conflicts around the world were/are fueled by inhuman ideologies that stress the supremacy of one "race" over the other. This form of social Darwinism was translated into a systematic program by the Nazis to annihilate other races. The Serbs performed some of the most heinous crimes against humanity in Bosnia and Kosova, despite the fact that the "race" is the same! It is clear that Muslims in these cases were victimized because of their faith.

The Islamic world view does not permit any ideas of negative value judgment regarding the biological differences in terms of color and shape. They are to be perceived positively as Signs pointing to God:

"And among His Signs is the creation of heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colors: verily in that are Signs for those who know." Qur'an, 30:22

The differences in the colors of people function exactly like those between animals, plants and inanimate objects:

"Seest thou not that God sends down rain from the sky? With it We then bring out produce of various colors. And in the mountains are tracts white and red, of various shades of color, and black intense in hue. And so amongst men and crawling creatures and cattle, are they

of collective punishment

Accordingly, all weapons of mass destruction are unacceptable from an Islamic perspective. All chemical, biological and nuclear weapons should be prohibited world wide without any exceptions. It is not enough to have nuclear non-proliferation treaties that exempt certain countries because they did not sign. If the super powers only head to the fact that humanity needs a safer and cleaner earth! No country should be able to stock weapons of mass destruction or non-conventional weapons.

Here I find myself at odds with a statement of Dr. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi. He said, in one of his most recent books, that "regarding the kinds of weapons that are used in fighting, how to make them and how to train [soldiers] how to use them, etc., is not an issue to [be settled by] religion; it is the business of the ministry of defense and the headquarters of the armed forces."^[9]

I do believe that Dr. Al-Qaradawi is troubled by what is happening to Muslims around the world, and that he aims at allowing room for decision makers in the Islamic world to consider measures that would deter aggressors from attacking them with weapons of mass destruction. I think that this is a legitimate concern, yet the statement is very broad and it might be misinterpreted by those in office. On the other hand, Muslim scholars should voice their concern about these issues and not to give a free hand to the military apparatus which could waste the resources of the Ummah in compiling weapons, rather than investing them in the re-establishment of a leading Islamic civilization.

We should remember that the American use of atomic bombs against Japan, during World War II, is a much protested and regretted act. The increase in ecological awareness is making it difficult for governments to continue its nuclear programs. There was a global protest against the French nuclear tests that took place in the French Polynesian Islands. Though it is not good enough, it appears that the French government pledged an end to nuclear tests

Not only weapons on that scale should be prohibited, but also weapons such as anti-personnel mines should be banned. There is nothing that could justify the killing or the maiming of human beings by these mines. Millions of them are spread around the

"...Nor kill (or destroy) yourselves: for verily God hath been to you Most Merciful!" Qur'an, 4:29

Moreover, a fetus has a life which should be preserved. Abortion is prohibited unless for a permitted reason (ex. the life of the mother is endangered). In Islamic jurisprudence, there is blood money to be paid by a person who kills a fetus intentionally or accidentally.

Wars remain a major factor in killing human beings and in the destruction of the environment. The Islamic position, which is quite to the contrary of the picture depicted by the western media, states in clear terms that peace is the norm and war is the exception. The Prophet [S.A.A.S] prohibited that a Muslim wishes to confront the enemies in the battlefield.^[7] I understand that the raison d'etre of this hadith is to give priority to peaceful solutions whenever conflicts surface between Muslims and other fellow humans. In fact, the first thirteen years of the history of Islam in Makkah reflect passive resistance. Nevertheless, self-defense is permitted to protect Islam and Muslims. If Muslims have to go to war, then they have to abide by Islamic codes of conduct during warfare:

"Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for God loveth not transgressors." Qur'an, 2:190

The essential limits that should not be transgressed are best expressed by Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, in his address to Yazid Ibn Abu Sufian, the commander of the army that went north to Sham [i.e. Greater Syria]:

"...And I instruct you [to fulfill the following] ten [orders]: Do not kill a woman, nor a child, nor an old man; do not cut down fruitful trees; do not destroy [land or housing] in use; do not kill a goat or a camel unless for food; do not flood palm trees [with water] nor burn them down ..."^[8]

Such a quotation, which reflects the ethos of the Shari'ah, defines the norm that the life of those who do not engage themselves directly in war should be spared. Protection is also extended to animals and plants; they should not be used as part

This verse is a proof that positive moral behavior, which is in line with the Islamic world-view, leads to a better physical environment; God willing, of course.

The Islamic Protection of The Environment:

This section provides detailed accounts from the Qur'an and the Sunnah regarding the protection of the following areas: human beings, animals, plants, land, water, and air.

1 Human Beings:

Despite the differences regarding the inclusion of human beings as a part of the environment, this paper consider humans to be part of the ecological system. I have adopted this position though I know that the rest of the ecosystem is subservient to humans.

Islam called for the protection of the human being. The Shari'ah specifically called for the protection of five things pertaining to humans: life, religion, offspring, intellect, and property.

Islam emphasized the sanctity of human life in the strongest possible terms:

"On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person-unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land- it would be as if he slew the whole people. And if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people..."
Qur'an, 5:35

The rulings of the Shari'ah aim at preserving the life of the human being including murderers. It is a well established fact that punishment for murder is death penalty. Nevertheless, the Qur'an encouraged the family of the murdered person to forfeit their right that the murderer be executed:

"Nor take life-which God has made sacred-except for just cause. And if anyone is slain wrongfully, we given his heir authority (to demand Qisas or to forgive): but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life; for he is helped (by the Law)." Qur'an, 17:33

For the same reason, committing suicide is prohibited:

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In addition, committing sin generates corruption everywhere:

"Mischief has appeared on the land and sea because of (the meed) that the hands of people have earned, that (God) may give them a taste of some of their deeds: in order that they may turn back (from Evil)." Qur'an, 30:41

Corruption [fasad] in this context covers all kinds of material and spiritual damage. One should be thankful that God did not hasten punishment whenever humanity erred. Had punishment been simultaneous, life on earth would have been interrupted long time ago:

"If God were to punish people according to what they deserve, He would not leave on the back of the (earth) a single living creature: but He gives them respite for a stated Term: when their Term expires, verily God has in His sight all His servants." Qur'an, 35:45

In Surat Al-Nahl [Bee], the same notion is reinforced again:

"God sets forth a Parable: a city enjoying security and quite, abundantly supplied with sustenance from every place: Yet was it ungrateful for the favors of God: so God made it taste of hunger and terror (in extremes) (closing in on it) like a garment (from every side), because of the (evil) which (its people) wrought." Qur'an, 16: 112

It's clear that not thanking God for His bounty led to its disappearance. For hunger means that there was a Divine order that led to the interruption of the normal function of the environment which led eventually to less sustenance, in a way commensurate with the sin that people have committed. Had they been thankful, the situation could be reversed:

"And remember! Your Lord caused to be declared (publicly): "If ye are grateful, I will add more (favors) unto you..." Qur'an, 14:7

☆☆☆ گستاخ رسول کو سر کا خطاب قابل مذمت ہے ☆☆☆

"When the word went forth: "O earth! Swallow thy water, and O sky! Withhold (thy rain)!" and the water abated, and the matter was ended. The ark rested on mount Judi, and the word went forth:" Away with those who do wrong!" Qur'an, 11:44

The Qur'an is full with stories that reflect the correlation between wrong doing and Divine punishment which lead to a certain measure of destruction. The chapter of the Cave [Kahf] include a story about two separate owners of two fruit orchards with water flowing in between. One of them faithfully and humbly put his trust in God, but the other did not have the proper relationship with God; he arrogantly alleged that his garden will always be the same without invoking the Will of God [i.e without saying: "Insha'Allah"]. How did this parable end?

"So his fruits .(and enjoyment) were encompassed (with ruin), and he remained twisting and turning his hands over what he had spent on his property, which had (now) tumbled to pieces to its very foundations, and he could only say, "Woe is me! Would I had never ascribed partners to my Lord and Cherisher!" Qur'an, 18:42

The same criterion could be applied to the story of the owners of the garden in the chapter of Pen [Qalam]. The owners wanted to gather the fruits very early in the morning so that no needy people would have a share. The result was that before they went to the garden, and in the course of the night, there came a visitation from God which swept away all around. When they saw that their garden looked like a dark and desolate spot, they were reminded by one of them that they have transgressed:

"They said:" Glory to our Lord! Verily we have been doing wrong!" Qur'an, 68:29

As a general rule, there is a direct relationship between wrong doing and calamities:

"Whatever misfortune happens to you, is because of the things your hands have wrought, and for many he grants forgiveness." Qur'an, 42:31

The Qur'an shows that there is a correlation between the behavior of people and the conditions of the environment. The right and moral behavior yield positive results:

"If the people of the towns had but believed and feared God, We should indeed have opened out to them (all kinds of) blessings from heaven and earth..." Qur'an, 7:96

"And o my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him (in repentance): He will send you the skies pouring abundant rain, and add strength to your strength: so turn ye not back in sin!" Qur'an, 11:52

The opposite is also true. Disbelief and swerving from the right path that God has designated for humanity will result in negative impact on the environment:

"But whosoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a life narrowed down ..." Qur'an, 20:124

In addition, there are verses that establish a correlation between natural disasters and disbelief, immoral behavior, or a combination of both:

"...He flingeth the loud-voiced thunder-bolts, and therewith He striketh whomsoever He will ..." Qur'an, 13:13

"Do ye feel secure that He will not cause you to be swallowed up beneath the earth when you are on land, or that He will not send against you a violent tornado (with showers of stones) so that ye shall find no one to carry out your affairs for you? Or ...a heavy gale to drawn you because of your ingratitude..." Qur'an, 17:68-69

The end result of disbelief or immoral acts, when they become prevalent, is the total destruction of the environment. Such is the story of prophet Nuh (Noah) and the flood which destroyed every thing except the Ark and its load of people and animals. The order that came to end the flood show that the water gushed and abated at God's command:

"Seest thou not that it is God Whose praises all beings in the heavens and on earth do celebrate, and the birds (of the air) with wings outspread? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise. And God knows well all that they do." Qur'an, 24:41

"...It was Our power that made the mountains and the birds celebrate Our praises, with David..." Qur'an, 21:79

It is rather obvious that both animate and inanimate objects celebrate the praises of God. As such, the destruction of the habitat of any species means the extinction of a Sign that, not only leads people to remember God, but also participates in praising God. With just a little imagination, one can see the universe in a constant circle of dhikr. Excluded of course are those whose hearts are not sensitive enough to see the need to join the rest of the universe.

That the creation inherently point in the direction of the Creator is something widely discussed by Muslim scholars and mystics. A very beautiful and illuminating statement by Sa'id Al-Nursi (d. 1960) indicates that every creature, by its own nature, has what I would translate liberally as a Divine stamp that cannot be imitated.

"An illuminated heart is capable of seeing the stamp which help in transcending this realm to the other!"^[6]

The Impact of Faith on the Environment:

Allah [S.W.T.] provided humanity with sustenance; He only asked them not to worship or associate anything or anyone with Him:

"ye people! Adore your Guardian-Lord, who created you and those who came before you, that ye may have the chance to learn righteousness; Who has made the earth your couch, and the heavens your canopy; and sent down rain from the heavens; and brought forth therewith fruits for your sustenance; then set not up rivals unto God when you know the (the truth)." Qur'an, 2:21-22.

It has been said that there are two books; the one which is read [i.e. the Qur'an] and the one which is seen [i.e. the universe]. While it is known why the Qur'an is described as a Book, the universe is considered a book in the sense that includes signs pointing to God. A transparent heart is needed, though, in order to unveil the way these signs function. Indeed, once the person is not blocked from "reading" the signs that fill up the universe, beautiful forms of dhikr are ensued, and a correlation between many verses of the Qur'an and the corresponding "verses" of the universe are established.

Being blocked from the Signs is best expressed with the example of the large industrial or metropolitan city. The huge structures, including high rise buildings, change the horizon. Sunrise and sunset are not anymore phenomena that form a part of daily experiences; at least not for those who are trapped inside the city. One needs a lot of ingenuity to see a "sign" in concrete slabs!

In the absence of green lungs for the city, its dwellers, who only see steel and concrete growth, might not experience the natural cycles of growth stated in the following verse:

"A Sign for them is the earth that is dead: We do give it life, and produce grain therefrom, of which ye eat." Qur'an, 36:33.

Though we do not understand how, everything in the universe, including the components of the environment, participates in making remembrance [dhikr] of God:

The seven heavens and the earth, and all beings therein, declare his Glory: There is not a thing but celebrates His praise; and yet ye understand not how they declare His Glory! Verily He is Oft-Forbearing; Most Forgiving." Qur'an, 17:44

There are many verses that mention specific beings that praise God: some of which are the following:

"Nay, thunder repeateth His praises, and so do the angels, with awe ..." Qur'an, 13:13

☆ لا يؤمن احدكم حتى يكون احب اليه من ولده والديه والناس اجمعين ☆

It should be known that Islam advocates the protection of the environment, though not in name, for the word 'environment' [bi'ah], along with its connotations, evolved in recent times. That Islam has high regard for the environment is something that can be found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah as we shall discuss later in this paper. The fact that to protect the environment is considered an act of worshipping, does not mean that every component of the environment should be saved. In fact, it is sometimes to the contrary. The Prophet [S.A.A.S.] stated that a person who uprooted a tree [which formed an obstacle] in the path of people, ended up in heavens

The Islamic position forms a middle path between human behavior that has disregard to the environment and those who practically worship the environment or certain parts of it. While the Islamic world view supports the protection of environment from the greedy behavior of human beings, it allows room for sustainable development.

The Environment is the Loci of the Signs Pointing to Allah [S.W.T.]:

The environment is perceived as the place where the signs (e.g. rivers, plants, and birds), pointing to Allah [S.W.T.] exist:

"Verily in the heavens and the earth, are Signs for those who believe. And in the creation of yourselves and the fact that animals are scattered (throughout the earth), are Signs for those of assured Faith. And the alteration of Night and Day, and the fact that God sends down Sustenance from the sky, and revives therewith the earth after its death, and in the change of the winds, -are Signs for those that are wise." Qur'an, 45:3-5

As a result, any destruction occurring to the environment is tantamount to destroying these signs. If any species becomes extinct, it is considered a loss of a Sign that reflects the greatness of the Creator. It is indeed a very sad thing if we continue to destroy the environment, because we will prevent the generations to come from having a healthy relationship with the environment, where "healthy" means the chance to experience these Signs.