

Mithi Islam

### **Reassembling the Barrier of Penurious Stewardship**

What is stewardship and how does it affect our daily lives? Well, the term steward itself represents a person who takes care of something for someone else and is responsible for it. In the Holy Quran, the first man God created was Adam, his Khalifah which means he's responsible to look after the world and the people who live in it. We all are stewards of this exquisite Earth that Allah(SWT) has created for us and in respect and responsibility, it is our obligation to protect the Earth from any harm. In Islam, Allah's creation is pure and genuine and we must consider that. This bright idea of stewardship is very valuable and dominant in Islam because it represents a big part of our personality and leadership. We cannot let substandard stewardship take a toll on our world because it can cause many pernicious consequences on our beloved brothers and sisters and the planet by causing poverty, an increase of pollution and toxins, lack of peace, absence of freshwater, litter here and there, etc. Environmental and social justice is a major issue we face today because many people don't take care of our environment and the people in it which leads to poor environmental effects. As Muslims, we must work our way to help our brothers and sisters understand that Allah(SWT) is watching and hearing us every second and we must nurture and appreciate his beautiful creations.

In Islam, Muslims are obligated to pure and righteous actions in the environment due to Allah(SWT). Taking care of the environment should always remain our top priority because if our brothers and sisters dearth in this matter then we're failing both the world, Allah(SWT), and his glamorous creations that were meant for us. We are so blinded with our own lives that we don't seem to discern what's going on out there but most recognize and yet seem to ignore which is something we must terminate. We will be proven to be deficient stewards which is something

Allah(SWT) loathes. In the Holy Quran,(Surah 6:165)<sup>1</sup> It is mentioned that we the stewards of this elegant Earth that Allah(SWT) had created for us, is in our power and we must make a difference to prove that we are worthy enough for this power and strength that we have received. This astonishing Surah is extremely powerful because it emphasizes the importance of the chosen ones from Allah(SWT) and has given us this duty to look after the world like it's our own. We were told to make this a continuous act of good because it represents us as a person, as a Muslim, and as a good leader.

Poor environmental practices affect Muslims dearly because it proves that we cannot maintain such glorious power that Allah(SWT) has given us, his stewards. We're supposed to be caretakers of this environment so environmental conflicts like pollution/toxins, water, and air pollution, litter, etc won't overtake us and interfere with our peace. However, these environmental issues have arisen due to our lack of authority and activities we continue to prosper like the rise of pollution. Pollution is the introduction of harmful substances entering the environment whether it be greenhouse gases or something natural like volcano ash. These harmful materials are called pollutants. One cause of pollutants is industries. Industries and businesses have increased the usage of coal and burning fossil fuels ever since the Industrial Revolution in the 1700s and 1800s which developed even more in the 19th and 20th centuries. Businesses and industries are important but to prevent high amounts of pollutants from getting into our atmosphere, we could have a more efficient industry by going over materials, unnecessary processes, and reducing the amount of waste and packaging for every item. Just like industries, transportation is another complication that causes a lot of pollutants into the air since

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<sup>1</sup> (Surah 6:165) For He it is Who has appointed you vicegerent over the earth, and has exalted some of you over others in rank that He may try you in what He has bestowed is upon you. Indeed your Lord is swift in retribution, and He is certainly All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.

it uses a major amount of energy, fossil fuels, and burns a high amount of petroleum. People use cars, trains, airplanes, trucks, etc to get from one place to another every day and that's understandable but our brothers and sisters need to see that this is a worldwide conflict that needs to lessen for our safety. To avert this issue, we should start walking more or even biking because it reduces and saves the earth bit by bit. Just as there is air pollution, water pollution is a dominant matter we face every day because of litter and waste people are dumping into our beautiful oceans. Oceans suffer from a mixture of metals, plastics, unwanted chemicals, runoff, and sewage water. I've discerned a lot of people toss their junk on the ground/ocean which is unacceptable and only causes harm to ourselves. I've seen chip bags, candy wrappers, plastic bags/bottles, and even masks being thrown on the ground in this current pandemic we are in known as Covid 19 or Corona. Therefore, Muslims have to take all of these negative actions into deliberation for their behalf and their brothers and sisters even if they're not the ones committing this sin. This is the beauty of Islam. We look after each other and try to fasten our world's conflicts which count as good deeds. In the Quran(Surah 7:31)<sup>2</sup>It indicates that it is haram and forbidden to waste any water or food since many people who are facing poverty aren't as lucky as we are to receive these natural resources. Allah(SWT) doesn't appreciate the people who waste and this interconnects with the idea of littering and all the environmental quandary we face because of our lawful acts.

Environmental care goes hand in hand with social justice because the environment we live in can affect our social lives tremendously. The negative environmental change affects groups differently because some are impacted harder than others like in 3rd world countries

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<sup>2</sup> (Surah 7:31) Children of Adam! Take your adornment at every time of Prayer;and eat and drink without going to excesses. For Allah does not like those who go to excess.

compared to the United States today. For instance, Bangladesh and India are successful countries in their ways but they are known as 3rd world countries because of their high rate of poverty, lack of resources, industries, corruption, pollution, etc. The United States today and other finer first-world nations have more superior resources and items which assist with faster growth and expansion. This allows these countries to have more social justice because of their higher rates of opportunities than in Bangladesh and India. If these two inferior countries want to be able to develop into wealthier countries then we would have to share our resources and make groups who can promote education and professions, etc. In the Quran, (Al Imran 3:187)<sup>3</sup> I've read this one Ayah(verse) that has mentioned that many people will come your way and try to test your capabilities but it is you who has to move on and act right to show strong determination and bravery because that is the way you will flourish by Allah(SWT) by your side. This relates to social justice because the aim is for everyone to be treated equally and receive no less than someone. The people with deprivation need great assistance from their neighbors and Allah(SWT) will guide them if they act in the virtuous term.

Environmental justice is the fair treatment of involving everyone in society with esteem whether they're a different color, race, ethnicity, religion, etc, so everyone can evolve the same. The chief objective is to have identical levels of protection and shield from environmental issues that we face today and to be able to have expeditious access to natural resources to blossom at once. Regardless of the circumstances, the Muslim community must ALWAYS fight for environmental justice because we must look after one another and make certain that no one is getting left behind in this remarkable world that Allah(SWT) has created for us. In the elegant

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<sup>3</sup> (Al Imran 3:187)“You shall surely be tried in your possessions and in your persons and you shall surely hear many hurtful things from those who were given the Book before you and from those who set upon equals to God. But, if you show fortitude and act righteously that indeed is a matter of strong determination”.

religion Islam, there have been events that represent justice whether it be with animals as well. Abu Hurairah(May Allah be pleased with him) was a companion with Allah's (SWT) Messenger, Prophet Muhammed (S.A.W). He declared that the Prophet had once portrayed that, "A man felt very thirsty while he was on the way, there he came across a well. He went down the well, quenched his thirst, and came out. Meanwhile, he saw a dog panting and licking mud because of excessive thirst. He said to himself, "This dog is suffering from thirst as I did." So, he went down the well again, filled his shoe with water, held it with his mouth, and watered the dog. Allah appreciated him for that deed and forgave him." Later on, the companions had asked the Prophet if there was any reward in serving animals and he replied with," There is a reward for serving any living being." This outstanding incident has represented what environmental justice is and how it can be served. The man who was devastated and highly dehydrated came across a well on his journey that Allah(SWT) has led him to so his thirst can lessen. When he perceived the dog who was parched and needed some water, he didn't just leave the dog to suffer like people would today but instead, he assisted him because he knew what the dog was feeling so he took the time to go back and get some water and that's the beauty of the people of this world. If he was able to aid an animal and end its suffering while he was in the state of undergoing pain so can you, my brothers and sisters. I live in an area where vagrant people beg and suffer so much for assistance and as a good Muslim, I try to help and give them the resources and money they need so I'm not the only one who flourishing at home. Environmental justice is about giving just as much as it is about accepting others based on race. It is a priority that we must continue till the end.

Muslims are the stewards of this world that Allah(SWT) has created for us and we must allow good actions to occur day by day. We are the caretakers and we have to protect the Earth and our brothers and sisters from environmental conflicts like an increase of pollution, air

pollution, water pollution, littering, etc. If we notice someone suffering, we must step in to assist in any way possible because we were sent on this glorious Earth as Muslims from Allah(SWT), and in respect, we must act towards righteousness. Allah(SWT) is listening and watching us seconds by seconds and we must prove that we are worthy for what's to come.

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