

ISLAM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Each tiny detail of this universe has been created with perfection. The rising of the sun and moon, the process of photosynthesis, the life cycle of tiny insects, the food chain in the sea, in the air, in the jungle, the movement of waves along the shore, the growth of fruits and vegetables; every single aspect of the way this world works is full of perfection, but Allah has created this beautiful world with such ease. **“Be, and it is”** is a verse that occurs several times in the Holy Qu’ran, often describing the way Allah created this universe. Nothing is difficult for the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth, and with such perfection, it is something of awe for us human beings to appreciate the environment we live in.

“Behold thy Lord said to the angels: ‘I will create a khalifa on earth.’ They (the angels) said ‘Will You place therein one who will make mischief and shed blood? Whilst we do celebrate Your praises and glorify You with praises and sanctify Your (Name)?’ He (God) said: ‘I know what you know not.’”
(Qu’ran 2:30)

While the angels of Allah praise Allah continuously, humans have been placed on this earth to lead their lives in the way that has been told to us by Allah in the Holy Qu’ran. From the verse above, we can see that humans will definitely create mischief on the land, and will definitely shed blood.

So the question is, why would Allah entrust us with the responsibility of looking after the earth? With the angels so perfect, why are us humans given the honour of being a khalifa? And most importantly, do we give justice to the role?

With as harsh a life as the one Muhammad (SAWS) lived, he, even then, encouraged his family and companions to live a life without wasting the provisions. Recycling was never a query, as they would automatically conserve what they had. Flowing water in a river will most probably not run out, but the blessed Nabi (SAWS) even forbade wastage at that river. If the best of mankind fixed his shoes himself with his own two hands, then should we not attempt to follow his example?



Devote thyself single-mindedly to the Faith, and thus follow the nature designed by Allah, the nature according to which He has fashioned mankind. There is no altering the creation of Allah.

(Qu’ran 30:30)

***At least 50 million acres of rainforest are lost every year, totaling an area the size of England, Wales and Scotland combined.**

*** Only 11% of the earth’s surface is used to grow food.**

*** Every ton of paper that is recycled saves 17 trees, 2 barrels of oil, 4,100 kilowatts of energy, 3.2 cubic yards of landfill space and 60 pounds of air pollution.**

The Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said, (to the nearest meaning) **“If the Hour (the day of Resurrection) is about to be established and one of you was holding a palm shoot, let him take advantage of even one second before the Hour is established to plant it.”**, thus illustrating the importance Allah and his prophet have placed upon nature and the environment. The day of resurrection will be surreal – a sight that we cannot yet comprehend, but it has been written that **“On the Day you shall behold it, every suckling mother shall forsake her suckling babe...”** (Qu’ran 22:2). As illustrated in the aforementioned Quranic passage, we will ALL be fending for ourselves on the last day, but as hadith states, our attitudes towards nature and the environment will still be paramount in increasing our good deeds – so important in fact, that if we are holding a seed even just one second before the day of resurrection is upon us, we must plant it. The earth is Allah’s – and we are here to protect it for him.

Planting trees, or sowing seeds, acts as a way of Sadaqah-e-Jariah (continuous reward), even after we have left this world. When a bird, person or animal eats from that tree or plant, reward will continue to reach the person. Planting trees and flowers in our gardens is not difficult, but with the good intention of planting it for the pleasure of Allah, the simple act can benefit us greatly.

Recycling is also key – why throw away when we, or another being or animal, can benefit? The prophet (SAWS) was incredibly against unnecessary wastage – we should be too.