



**KHUTBAH NOTES**

**for**

**IMAMS**

**Sustainable Living**

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## Sustainable Living

### Corrupting the Earth

*Corruption has appeared on land and sea as a result of people's actions and He will make them taste the consequences of some of their own actions so that they may turn back.*

(Qur'an 30:41)

### How are we corrupting the earth?

Scientists observing the changes all over the natural world, or as we would call it Khalq Allah / God's creation, have concluded that the earth is in danger of disastrous climate change that is already causing severe disruption and even extinction of many species, and producing freak weather conditions, heatwaves, floods etc.

There is a lot of evidence that this is largely the result of human extravagance in using natural resources like fossil fuels, which disrupt the balance of the gases in the atmosphere:

*He has lifted the sky. He has set the balance in order for you not to exceed it – weigh with justice – and not to fall short in it*

55:7-9

Those who corrupt the earth and pollute the seas are killing Allah's creatures who glorify Him.

What sort of actions corrupt the earth? Look into the Qur'an:

Arrogance, wastefulness, greed, hoarding wealth, miserliness.

### **Arrogance and greed**

*Tell them the parable of two men: for one of them We made two gardens of grape vines, surrounded them with date palms, and put corn fields in between; ... He went into his garden and wronged himself by saying, 'I do not think this will ever perish, or that the Last Hour will ever come—even if I were to be taken back to my Lord, I would certainly find something even better there.'*

18:32-6

### **Wastefulness**

Like the man in the parable, We take our wealth for granted, and use up resources as if they will go on forever. But they are finite and our extravagance in using them is causing pollution and damage to the lives of other people and creatures, and even to ourselves.

The Prophet (S) said: Do not waste water, even though you have the resources of a whole river.

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah (Peace Be Upon Him) forbade that a person relieve himself in a water source or on a path or in a place of shade or in the burrow of a leaving creature. These values highlight Islam's stress on avoiding pollution of critical resources and importance of cleanliness.

Yet people use precious watercourses as rubbish dumps, polluting them with poisons and plastics, sewage and industrial waste. Our plastic waste is filling whole oceans and deserts and killing the creatures that live there - turtles, albatrosses, camels and thousands more. We do the same on land, dumping waste on other people's land, even transporting it across oceans to dump it on other countries. Some governments and resistance movements use illegal and not yet illegal weapons on their

enemies, leaving unexploded bomblets and mines to kill and maim innocent people farming and playing on the land many years afterwards, and even depleted uranium dust to cause permanent deformities in unborn children.

### **Hoarding wealth**

*Riba*, or usury, is a sin so heinous in the Qur'an that God pledges to make war on anyone who refuses to abandon it (2:279). Usury makes a nonsense of money, reducing its value by inflating debts. It takes money from the poor who are forced to borrow and gives it to the rich who can afford to lend.

*God has allowed trade and forbidden usury.. (2:276)*

On an international scale, debt with usury results in whole countries having to exploit their natural resources beyond the point where they can be replenished, in order to pay interest on debts. Deforestation, intensive agriculture and degradation of the land parallel the sort of degradation and slavery forced on to individuals by interest-bearing debt.

*Woe to ...[the one] who amasses riches, counting them over, thinking they will make him live forever. (104:1-3)*

### **Miserliness**

In a Qur'anic parable, (Q.68: 17-33) the owners of a garden resolve to harvest all the produce for themselves, saying, 'Make sure no poor person enters the garden!' When they get to their garden, they find it has been devastated and ask Allah's forgiveness.

If we fail to acknowledge the power, generosity and guidance of Allah, neglecting to share the good things He has provided for us, then He is capable of taking all those good things away.

*There is the one who is miserly, who is self-satisfied, who denies goodness—We shall smooth his way*

*towards hardship and his wealth will not help him as he falls. (92:8-11)*

**The Qur'an tells us that we should 'repel evil with what is better' (41:34). So what are the virtues that counteract these vices?**

**1. Simple living**

Aishah (RA) said 'A complete month would pass by during which we would not make a fire (for cooking), and our food used to be only dates and water unless we were given a present of some meat. (Muslim)

If we don't take more than our fair share of Allah's provision, even if we are rich, there is more left for others and we can afford to give to others as well.

If we eat less meat and more raw vegetables and fruit (especially organic ones) we will increase the amount of food available for people, as much of it is fed to cattle. Meat is a good food but only if eaten rarely - once a week is enough, or even once a month as in the hadith. Most cooking uses up fossil fuels and contributes to Global Warming. Most of the nourishment we need can be derived from vegetables and fruit.

If you can grow some of it yourself it will be fresher and also save pollution and energy from having to transport it around the world. Look at the labels on the fruit and vegetable boxes in your local shop to see how far they've travelled!

If we buy fewer products containing harmful chemicals, and use only eco-friendly products, waste less and recycle more, we can reduce the amount of pollution we cause and encourage companies to produce only eco-friendly products.

If we keep our car-use to a minimum, walk or cycle more, or get eco-friendly cars, we can pump out fewer polluting gases into the atmosphere that cause global warming and climate change.

## **2. Humility, thankfulness to Allah**

Here we turn to another parable of two men and a garden in Sura 18 *al-Kahf*:

*The (rich) man's companion retorted, 'Have you no faith in Him who created you from dust, from a small drop of fluid, then shaped you into a man? But, for me, He is Allah, my Lord, and I will never set up any partner with Him.*

18:37-8

[He refused to make his material possessions more important than Allah who had given them to him - ]

He went on

*'If only, when you entered your garden, you had said, "This is Allah's will. There is no power not [given] by Allah." Although you see I have less wealth and offspring than you, my Lord may well give me something better than your garden, and send thunderbolts on your garden from the sky, so that it becomes a heap of barren dust; or its water may sink so deep into the ground that you will never be able to reach it again.'*

18:39-41

*And so it was: his fruit was completely destroyed, and there he was, wringing his hands over what he had invested in it, as it drooped on its trellises, and saying, 'I wish I had not set up any partner to my Lord.' He had no forces to help him other than Allah—he could not even help himself. In that situation, the only*

*protection is that of Allah, the True God: He gives the best rewards ...*

18:42-44

If we forget our gratitude and service to Allah, we run the risk of losing all that makes us feel superior to others.

*The most honoured of people in the sight of Allah is the one most aware of Him.*

49:13

### **3. Generosity**

Sharing wealth is obligatory in Islam, through *zakah* and *sadaqah*. *Zakah* is a minimal charge on anyone who can afford it and *sadaqah* additional giving, which brings additional reward to the giver. Muslims are people who give out of what Allah has provided for them *mimmā razaqnāhum yunfiqūn* (2:3).

*They ask you what they should give: say, 'Give what you can spare.'* 2:219

*Those who spend their wealth in God's cause are like grains of corn that produce seven ears, each bearing a hundred grains.*

*God gives multiple increase to whoever He wishes: He is limitless and all knowing.* 2:261

*They will receive their Lord's gifts because of the good they did before: sleeping only little at night, praying at dawn for Allah's forgiveness, giving a rightful share of their wealth for the beggar and the deprived.* 51:16-19

*Allah commands justice, doing good, and generosity towards relatives and He forbids what is shameful, blameworthy, and oppressive. He teaches you, so that you may take heed.*

16:90

“Aisha (RA) narrated that they slaughtered a goat and the Prophet (S) asked: ‘How much of its meat

remains?’ They replied: ‘Nothing remains except the shoulder piece.’ The Prophet (S) said: ‘Everything remains except the shoulder piece.’ [Tirmidhi]

Aisha (RA) had distributed the meat of the goat among poor people and hadn’t saved any of it for themselves, except for the shoulder piece. The Prophet (S) informed her that the meat given away was actually the meat that was saved for them (in their account with Allah).

#### **4. Conquering miserliness**

وَمَنْ يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

*man yūqa shuḥḥa nafsihi hum ul-mufliḥūn*

those who are saved from their own souls’ miserliness are the truly successful

#### **Du'a**

*Subḥānahu wa ta‘āla - ud‘ūhu yastajiblakum*

Glory be to him, may He be exalted – ask Him and he will answer you

**End of first half – sit (silent prayer)**

**Du'a (prayer):**

*Allahumma ja'alnā min al tayyibīn, wa-l-kirām, wa-l ghāshiyīn, wa la taja'alnā min al mutakabbirīn, wa'l-mufsidīna fi'l -'ard, wa'l-muṣrifīn, wa'lladhina yabkhalūn.*

(O Allah make us good, generous and humble, and do not make us arrogant, corrupting the earth, extravagant or miserly.)

O Allah, guide us to your straight path, make us among your righteous servants who put things right on earth and do not cause corruption. Allah, you have said in your Book, *Allāhu lā yuḥibb al fasad*, O Allah, protect us from causing corruption. You have blessed us with fresh air, and sent down pure water from the sky with which to revive the dead land and give drink to countless animals and humans that you have created. You have made your creatures in the sky and the earth of service to us. Make us grateful for all your blessings, and make us use them for benefit and not for corruption. Make us obedient to your Prophet who was the most merciful to birds and animals, who taught us that cleanliness is part of faith, who recited to us your words in the Qur'an:

*If you are ungrateful, remember God has no need of you, yet He is not pleased by ingratitude in His servants; if you are grateful, He is pleased [to see] it in you.*

39:7

Make us grateful, and make us good. Amin.

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