

The Consciousness of Environment in the Context of Hadith: “Faith is Seventy odd Classes. And Its Uppermost Class is the Word ‘There is no God but Allah’. The Lowermost one is to Remove a Thing from the Way that Disturb People

Dr. Recep Aslan, Muş Alparslan University

Abstract

In modern times, the understanding of production and consume that spreads over the world globally brings about environmental disasters. Islamic civilization has paid serious care to environment from the beginning. And It considers the environment as not only for human being but also for all the other creatures. The clean and healthy environment is the prior condition for Islamic thought and Human life. In this presentation we try to analyze the hadith of Prophet Mohammad (a.s) in the context of environment issues: “Faith is seventy odd classes. And its uppermost class is the word ‘there is no god but Allah’. The lowermost one is to remove a thing from the way that disturbs people.

Although Islamic culture and civilization is tremendously sensitive to environment in its basic sources, today it is very hard to say that Islamic world is so sensitive to environment issues. As it is related to faith, then it is necessary to survey the historical Islamic experience regarding this issue and convey it to date. In this presentation, it is evaluated the approach of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) to environment in the context of hadith above.

KeyWords: The Prophet, Hadith, Environment

“İman Yetmiş Kusur Şubedir. En Üst Şubesi ‘La İlahe İllallah’ Sözü, En Aşağısı Da Yoldan Ezayı (Rahatsız Edici Şeyi) Kaldırmaktır...” Hadisi Çerçevesinde Çevre Bilinci

Özet

Modern zamanlarda küresel ölçütte tüm dünyaya yayılan üretim-tüketim anlayış ve pratikleri çevre felaketlerini de beraberinde getirmiş bulunmaktadır. İslam medeniyeti, başlangıcından itibaren çevre konusunda özel bir duyarlılık göstermiş, çevrenin yalnızca insanlar açısından değil, canlı-cansız bütün varlıklarla birlikte yaşanacak şekilde düzenlenmesini öngörmüştür. Temiz ve sağlıklı bir çevre her şeyden önce İslami ve insani bir yaşamın önkoşuludur. Hz. Peygamber çevre temizliği ve düzenlemesi konusunda şöyle buyurur: “İman yetmiş kusur şubedir. En üst şubesi ‘La ilahe illallah’ sözü, en aşağısı da yoldan ezayı (rahatsız edici şeyi) kaldırmaktır...”

İslam’ın temel kaynaklarında çevre konusunda üst derecede bir duyarlılık oluşturacak mahiyette uyarılar olmasına rağmen bugün özellikle İslam dünyasının çevre konusunda yeterince duyarlı olduğunu söylemek güçtür. Bu mesele Hz. Peygamber’in hadislerinde imanla ilişkilendirilmektedir. Dolayısıyla konuyla ilgili tarihsel tecrübeyi ve uygulamaları günümüze aktarmakta fayda vardır. Bu tebliğde, “Yoldan ezayı (rahatsız edici şeyi) kaldırmak” rivayetini esas alarak temiz bir çevrenin oluşması bakımından Hz. Peygamber’in çevre duyarlılığı konusundaki yaklaşımı değerlendirilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hz. Peygamber, Hadis, Çevre

* Corresponding Author: Muş Alparslan University, Faculty of Islamic Sciences, Hadith Department of Education Mus Turkey. E-mail: recep_aslan72@hotmail.com., r.aslan@alparslan.edu.tr.

I. Introduction

As it is known all living and non-living beings are in interaction with their environment. In response to impacts of animals and plants in certain measures, humans have an effective role in environment by their works in various fields. To find solution to environment problems that are one of the most important problems which our century is facing, the scientific, moral, and judicial in substantial means precautions required to be taken to leave next generations after us inheritance that is more vital. Since there is no doubt in the issue that people live in an environment where the problems are lesser become healthier, more balanced and successful. If human is willing, can turn its environment into a paradise, and also can turn it into garbage and dump. It is in human hands to protect the environment and restore the polluted environment into its former state.

There commands and recommendations that we can take as an example in The Quran and hadiths which are the fundamental references of Islamic religion in regards to forming a clean environment. Revelation, formed such a deep and wide material and spiritual environmental consciousness in Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet left us an environmental heritage and tradition (sünnet) [1]. Since he, taken care of environment [2] and protection of environment. The relation of inheritance of the prophet with the environment that include both practical and technical solutions has such a major importance in respect to our time. In this meaning there are many recommendation and practise examples from The Prophet Muhammad. In this presentation we evaluate the environmental approach of The Prophet Muhammad based on the hadith in respect to forming a clean environment: “Faith is seventy odd classes. And its uppermost class is the word ‘There is no God but Allah’. The lowermost one is to remove the malianity out of the way (thing that disturb people)... [3]”

II. What is environment?

In general definition environment can be expressed as the totality of physical, chemical, biological and social factors in a specific time that can have direct or indirect impact at once or in time on environment, human activities and live beings [4]. As it is seen human relationship with other humans and the interaction of persons with each other in this relationship process, the interaction of human with all the other live beings outside of itself and human relationship with the non-living beings that remains outside of living beings but takes place in where the living beings sustain their life, are in scope of environment concept [5].

To limit the environment by only physical medium would be lacking, if all of the components that compose natural and artificial resources and fact and processes that occur by the interaction of these form the human environment. The social environment besides physical environment, spiritual environment besides material environment, the invisible environment besides visible environment, tomorrow’s environment besides today’s environment; appears to surround human all around. The internal environment with its sections of thought, emotion, meaning, science, art, culture and morality as much as the external environment by its social, political, economic and physical structures have indisputable impact on human [6].

According to Quran human, possess a central place and significance among all the created beings. According to this human is eşref-i mahlûkat (the most honourable of all created beings) [7]. The superiority of human over the other beings, bring about the presentation of the universe as a service to human being [8]. Although worldly blessings, technological developments are created for human beings, human is not for the world [9]. Another words human is created for the aim far beyond consuming the world that only presented to its service. Religion, positioned human to a place related to a divine sphere. However no matter how important humans themselves, their position and duty are

in conclusion he/she is not the creator but solely the created. The authority for disposal of the universe outside of himself/herself as limitless and with no rule is not given to her/him[10].

The environment portray that Quran draw, attract notice not only with its material qualities but with its spiritual aspects and even with divine dimensions as well: “*Anything in heavens and earth all belongs to Allah and Allah surround everything*”[11]. “*In the East and in the West (Whole earth) belongs to Allah. Where ever you turn to right there it is the countenance of Allah...*”[12] As it is understood from this verses it is said that one of the party between Allah-human –environment triangle is the Creator, this is to say human cannot explain environment as independent from Allah. In the last verse of Quran the environment take its holiness from Allah by being countenance of Allah [13]. As Prophet Muhammed stated in his expression as well: “*The earth has been made for me(Muslims) clean and as a mosque and a purifier*”[14] the whole universe and earth is holly. This cosmological holiness is both the foundation of universe approach and environmentalist approach in Islam and the chief principle.

In short environment means life. Because, without favourable environment there cannot be life. Unfortunately, recently the concept of environment being on the agenda generally by its negative aspects. Since as the environment problems increase, the concepts of environment and problem mentioned together[15]. This problem has solution in Prophet Muhammed’s messages as well. However before we enter into the discussion regarding environment problems in this presentation, we would like to limit the subject by environment and belief relationship in the frame of the above mentioned hadith in the title, to value this universe that Allah entrusted us and to be aware of its responsibility. .

III. Evaluation of Respective Hadith in frame of Environment-Tawhid (Belief) Relationship

Prophet Muhammed: *commands “Faith is seventy odd classes. And its uppermost class is the word ‘there is no god but Allah’. The lowermost one is to remove the malianity (thing that disturb people) out of the way. And shyness is a class from the belief*”[16]. This narration take place in basic hadith resources (d. 279/892), and it is expressed in the degree of hasen-sahih (sound-good)[17]. Definitely for this narrative in Muhakkik Şuayb el-Arnaut, Ahmed b. Hanbel’s (d. 241/855) *Müsned* (d. 261/875 stated it is authentic [18].

In hadith it is stated that faith is seventy odd classes and the most virtuous of this classes/sections is Word-i Tawhid/لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ, and the lowermost degree, “removal of an object that disturbs” إِمَاطَةُ الْأَذَى/ Shyness is also deemed a class from belief. There are different variants of this hadith. In this presentation, there will not be an analysis of the hadith in terms its origin (sened) and part of original hadith (metin)[19]. As it is seen in the narration the concepts of belief, tawhid, environmental consciousness and shyness take place.

The Uppermost Degree of Belief Tawhid

Tevhid (Tawhid), derived from the root of vahd (vahdet, vuhûd) and tef’îl pattern meaning “to be the only, one and unique) it means “to unify, to accept a thing is one and only”. As a term “*To accept through reason and heart that Allah is one and only in essence and attributes and to be attached*”[20]. According to another definition tawhid, “*To accept Allah as vâcibu’l-vücûd (the obligatory being and not in need of anything to be, other than itself) , to deem Allah as the creator and governor of everything and believe that worship is only for Allah*”[21].

According to this to accept Allah as absolute being in possession of being, creating, govern the creation and in worship means a tawhid as Allah will[22]. Since Allah, need nothing at the point of possessing the existence, on the contrary everything is in need of Allah. And Allah created everything through absolute will[2³]. And again Allah the almighty govern the created existence and command them[2⁴]. Due to all this Allah, the almighty commands: “*We only worship you and we only seek help from you*”[2⁵], so worship is confined to Allah.

A human who is competent of tawhid and believe in Allah is one, first of all unify Allah’s being in hearth, thought and reason, and afterwards obliged to act according to this. Another words Muslim, shall place Allah in in every act that has individual and social characteristic, and accept Allah intervene in everything. More frankly speaking no believer can say supposing Allah has no affair with art, trade even in some particular fields. Since such a thought remove the tawhid quality of belief[2⁶].

A person able to understand tawhid, comprehend that universe is depend on Allah as a whole, and takes its existence from Allah’s being. Recognizes all the beings in the universe with their nafs are each a ‘verse’ that conceal Allah but with one aspect reveal Allah; try to reach Allah through dhikr, reflexion and worships. Recognizes that it can realize its existence by worshipping Allah; tries to be in service to Allah with its all endeavour [2⁷]. In this issue Allah the almighty commands a such:

“In the creation heaven and earth, the following of night and day one after another there are really evident eye openers for the ones having sanity. They, mention Allah while standing, sitting, lye on their side (every time), they meditate deeply regarding the creation of heaven and earth (and say that:) Our Lord! You did not create them in vain. We glorify you. Save us from perdition!”[2⁸]

In first sura of Quran the verse takes place, “Hamd (praise and being praised), is due to Allah Lord of the Universe”, it points out the whole universe of being including the environment that we take place belong to Allah. This emphasize requires looking at the conception of the environment from a broader perspective. Through remembering that the creator and owner of all the environment is also our creator, and form the consciousness of establishing a tawhid approach in the triangle of human, universe and Allah. As a Muslim we required to understand the expression of Lord of the universe, as the Lord surround encapsulate all the environment as a whole [2⁹].

Human, is limited by a specific environment and time. Human are in touch with their environment in material and spiritual terms in the location where they are by their own means always towards the most perfect to fulfil their desires, satisfy their ambitions. This situation is the sign of human deemed as the most perfect of all beings to witness regarding the existence of matter as well.[30].

God almighty, entrusted environment to human beings. Human is not the real owner of the environment, only using it as entrusted. So it is required that we should not make great disposal in regards to what we do not own in origin, and especially not to harm that[31]. Human, has no authority to harm nature, exploit it, plunder, unbalance it. Again, has no right to consume natural resources as as if exploiting. The person shall inherit this entrust to the next generation in the better position than when entrusted for successors to benefit them efficiently[32]. In this sense one should keep away from extravagancy and showy consumption[33].

Islam deemed keeping environment clean as one of the requirement of the faith and make a relation between having faith and cleanliness. In Quran the cleanliness of environment and worship place is mentioned, by stating that Allah loves who are rigorous in regards to cleaning [34]. Prophet Muhammed commands “God is clean, loves cleanliness”[35], “*Cleaning is half of the belief*”[36] draw attention to the importance of cleaning in our religion.

Islâm, give importance to spiritual cleaning besides material cleaning and stated a good deed to be done right after committing a sin and to remove that sin; and repent and praying for forgiveness spiritually purify the sin of the person. In addition to these it is point out through the verses that material and spiritual cleaning shall be done such as: “*Undoubtedly, good deeds, removes vices*”[37], “*Undoubtedly Allah loves who repent and be purified*”[38].

Prophet Muhammed expressed this situation by a representational narration as such: “*Would you tell me? If a river flow in front of the door of any one of you and that person wash oneself five times a day in that river, would there be any sign of dirt on that person at all?*” They said: “*No dirt remains from his/her dirt.*” Based on this Prophet Muhammed said: “*So the example of this the the prayer five times a day. Allah remove sins by five times prayer*”[39].

In addition one of the verses that send is as such: “*O who wrap up and gird oneself (my messenger)! Rise up and warn (humans). Only know your Lord as great. Keep your clothes clean. Abandon malign things*”[40]. In these verses when draw attention to cleanliness of clothes, emphasize spiritual cleanliness by abandoning malign things. Material and spiritual cleanliness are accepted as a whole. This approach, cleaning of environment arise the idea that, any kind of spiritual and moral cleanliness is an inseparable part of human life in the manner of taken care of environment, house, roads, park and gardens in Muslim societies[41].

Another evidence of how Islâm give importance to cleanliness that the initial parts of hadith and fiqh sources to be in regards to the issue of the lustration (cleaning). Islamic religion that give importance to cleaning in this manner, imposed some cleaning principles in terms of condition and means of the period[42]. In catechism books the detail of these principles are available.

It is sufficient if we remember Islâm and Islamic civilization is a civilization of cleanliness in a sense and the reality of this is required to be considered together with worship and one of the fundamental condition of Muslims’ prayer takes place by ritual ablution command[43]. The verse of Quran “*O believers! When you get up for prayer anoint your faces, up till the elbows and your hands and -your heads- wash your feet until up till the bones of heel of the foot. If you ritually impure (junub), have a good wash and get clean...*”[44] recommending that Muslims initiate a worship through a purified body and soul five times a day.

It is seen that Prophet Muhammed take great care of all kind of cleanliness. For example the incentive and recommendation of him ritual ablution of the whole body for Friday prayer[45], usage of mistake/take care of teeth cleanliness[46], wearing nice and clean clothes[47], to wear nice scent[48], not to eat the food that disturb others such as onion and garlic are known issues [49].

What forms a part of the hadith mentioned above, “removal of an object “*Remove a thing that disturb people out of the way*” is an important recommendation in terms of the environment to be clean. There are other recommendations of Prophet Muhammad support this narration:

“*All the good and bad deeds of my ummah is presented and revealed to me. I saw the malianity removed out of the way among good deeds as well. Among the bad deeds there was also the spit that was not buried into the ground*”[50].

“A man come across with a thorn branch torment people on the way and removes that for people not to be tormented. *And placed in paradise due to this reason*”[51].

A companion of Prophet Muhammed asked the Prophet to teach him a useful deed, he commanded as: “*Remove disturbing things out of the way of Muslims*”[52].

As it is seen the word malianity is a concept that frequently found in hadiths. In mentioned hadiths; what cause people hardship on the roads, streets and in front their houses and make difficult to pass as well as words and manners are defined as malianity. In this sense it is recommended that tree, thorn branch, stone or repulsive garbage, sweepings and dirt not to be disposed into public quarters and purify these kind of places from this objects.

The acknowledgement in of in “There is no God but Allah” that is the verbal expression of tawhid belief in heart in the hadith, declares that, is the highest and the most superior of faith manifestations, and the easily performed manifestation of the same faith is “to remove *malianity out of the way.*” One of them is a spiritual and fully heart felt an expression of acceptance; the other is a material and quite easy action such as pushing a stone out of the way. But in hadith both actions

deemed as the branches of same body of faith. The relation of human behaviour to faith, the togetherness of religion and world with each other and merging of matter- meaning set forth as concisely[53].

What took place in the hadith “to remove *malianity out of the way*” another words expression of “*remove the objects that would disturb passers-by*” shall be interpreted in broad sense. In this sense the said expression, consist of throwing cigarette on the ground and any kind of waste; from coal fume to chemical disposals anything that harms environment. For this reason cleaning is not only avoidance of polluting close environment, on the contrary keeping all the nature clean with its land, sea and air. Today picnics and recreation areas are polluted due to, tin cans, plastic and glass bottles, food wastes. Our green universe, deep blue sky polluted as continuously by nuclear and petrol spills[54]. When we consider how will we live with all these pollutions, we better understand the value of the advice of Prophet Muhammed regarding the environment who Allah the almighty characterized as an example.

We should evaluate the message of Prophet Muhammed “*To remove malianity out of the way*” in terms of today: Not to throw away thorn, nail, piece of broken glass, and things that harm tyres of vehicles, not to put obstacles such as stone and etc. ; remove if the stone and similar objects in a state to pose danger, to pick them up and informing the respective authorities are required. To do these are also the right of the way. To park the car in an inconvenient place and under inappropriate conditions, the crimes of traffic such as not to obey traffic rules shall be assessed as malianity as well. It shall also be deemed also among right of the way not to put goods by house and company owners in the way to harden the passing of pedestrians and delay traffic. The driver and pedestrians following these rules shall be dealt with in scope of this rumour [55].

The Prophet Muhammed is command related to to pay respect to the way, not to engage on the way that supports the information above as “Avoid sitting on the side of the passing ways” Companion of the prophet said, “*O messenger of Allah! We cannot avoid sitting, we sit there and talk*” In response the Prophet command: “*If you absolutely have to sit, then pay respect to the passing way.*”The companion of the prophet asked “O the messenger of Allah what is pay respect to the passing way?” the Prophet commanded: “*take care of your eye (not to look through evil eye, not to look at whom forbidden by religion), not to disturb (passers-by), to return greeting of the one who greets, ordering good deed and forbid malignity*” [56].

Again Prophet Muhammed recommends the reality of avoiding what requires curse as “*avoid two things require curse*” when they asked, what are these two things required curse” “*disturb ablution in the ways people come and go and in the places where they rest in shade*”[57]. In another passage of hadith said as “*three things that are cursed*” and as a third of them explained as “*Avoid avoid disturb ablution at riverheads/near water sources*”[58].

These hadiths draw attention to bad deeds committed by people. As it is seen the usage of the places where everybody passes and water sources and the places where people rest in shed as toilet is an attitude that considered as require curse[59]. Therefore this kind of actions shall be forbidden [60]. In the light of said rumours, it is required that the preservation of water basins shall be deemed as a religious task and keep this sensitivity alive as a “social tradition of the prophet” In this context it is possible to make an inference from this message that address to our time that not only the release the disposal of toilet and sewage into barrages where “drinking and usage water is supplied, water basins, around river and lake; also not to establish production plants that has industrial and particularly chemical wastes, even not to give a building permission, to perform city planning in terms of this is required.

Prophet Muhammed commands in another hadith as: “*To remove malianity out of the road is almsgiving*”[61]. Talat Sakallı who evaluate this hadith, interpreted the hadith in respect of disabled people and said: ‘In frame of this “almsgiving” it is necessary to impose into human consciousness , *that to remove any kind of obstacle in front of the disabled people is in scope of the same encouragement and hence precaution and responsibility*”[62]. As a practical implementation of this when construct and build the steps and elevator of the houses, the interior house planning, pavement of

street and avenues, the flow of traffic, traffic sign and lamps, shopping malls, private and public work places; they have to be planned in a way not to inhibit all the disabled people such as old ages, visually impaired, hearing impaired, orthopedically handicapped, mentally disabled.

IV. Result

The way to be in the conscience against the environment is achieved through being aware that we are responsible against the beings outside of us. This is only possible through the believing in Allah, that Allah is the possessing everything, this universe is entrusted to us by Allah and we are responsible before Allah. The frame picture that Islam is portrayed, draw attention not only with material qualities, but with spiritual aspects even with its divine dimensions as well. The Muslim shall place Allah in the centre of every action of herself/himself in the individual and social attributes, accept that Allah intervene in everything. A person who is a believer, comprehend the universe completely depend on Allah, and owing his/her being to Allah's existence. Recognize all the beings in the universe is a verse which introduces Allah.

It is seen that also Prophet Muhammed take great care to constitute environmental consciousness in all of his life. The part of the said hadith "*removal of malianity object out of the way*" is an important recommendation in constituting environment awareness. The passage in the hadith that is the verbal expression of the tawhid belief in the heart as "There is no God but Allah" is declaring the highest and the most superior of manifestation of belief, again the easily performed manifestation of same belief taken place is "remove things of malianity out of the way.

In terms of this evaluation we need to form an environment morality in the frame of principles that mentioned in verses and recommended us by the prophet. If the idea of environmentalism desired to be imposed into the mentality of humanity and Muslims, it is fulfilled by explaining people environmentalism is one of the moral values as well and educate them. In addition, it is necessary to convey the recommendations related to environmental consciousness of Prophet Muhammed who is friendly towards environment to all parts of the society in a real sense by written, audio, visual and cultural programs; collaborate with civil society organizations, regional and international communities. Since one of the tasks of the faithful is commanding good deed and preventing malignity. We should not forget that the universe we live is in possession of Allah and is the common property of whole humanity.

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