

MARINE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION: A SURVEY OF ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES TOWARDS ACCOUNTABILITY AND PROPER GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

The concept of stewardship of the environment is not alien to Islam for many verses in the Holy Quran speak of the Earth and all natural resources being a gift from Allah to mankind and that man is a khalifah (trustee) of all these divine gifts. The Quran also mentions that man will be tested in these gifts thus, underlining the concept of accountability to Allah in the administration of land and the environment generally. This paper seeks to identify and elaborate on Islamic concepts relating to accountability of man in environmental management and showing their relevance to contemporary governance and administration. It will be demonstrated that there is rich Islamic jurisprudence relating to environmental management that can be relied upon to create a harmonious balance between development and conservation in environmental management in the contemporary world today.

Keywords: Marine, Environmental, Conservation, Management, Islamic, Accountability.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Islam, as a religion that has been revealed to mankind, is the most complete religion that expresses God's will. Allah says:

“...this day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen Islam as your religion.”²

Environment, in its widest context, is the creation of God that reflects all His Names and attributes to perfection. Both, Islam and the environment are among the Signs (*ayat*) of God. For the believers and good muslims, the environment is not only a place to live and to obtain all his worldly needs but it is a trust (*amanah*) that is to be utilised as best is possible in line with his duty as God's vicegerent (*khalifah*) on earth.³

Although the relationship between man and his environment is a fundamental concept in Islam, awareness of this concept and religious discourse on how this relationship is to be translated into practice by Muslims is lacking. What is more worrying is that there is a seeming lack of commitment amongst Muslim nations in regard to environmental conservation. Although Islam clearly advocates the importance of cleanliness and the avoidance of harm, it is

¹ Ph.D, (IIUM, Malaysia), LL.M (O.A.U, Ile-Ife, Nigeria), LL.B (Ilorin, Nigeria), BL.

² Surah 5 (*Al-Maidah*): Verse 3.

³ Muhammad 'Uthman El- Muhammady (2000), 'Islam dan Alam Sekitar', Chapter 2 in *Pengurusan Bijak Alam Sekitar*, Abu Bakar Abdul Majid, and Abu Bakar yang, (eds.), Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia, Malaysia.

unfortunate that issues relating to sanitation and public health as well as man-made harms to the environment are still perpetuating in Muslim countries. It is therefore proposed in this paper to highlight the various guiding principles available from the Holy Quran and *Ahadith* on environmental conservation which are available for the muslim governments to assume the needed responsibility of conserving the environment through accountability and proper governance.

2.0 DUMPING OF GARBAGE AND SEWAGE

Garbage and sewage from ships have usually been dumped into the sea as a matter of routine and in relation to the amount of similar wastes poured into the sea each year from the land. In recent times, there is excessive growth of substances especially non-bio degradable object such as plastics once thrown into the sea. Throwing of plastics in to the sea are extremely persistent and potentially harmful if ingested by sea and marine animals. The facial quality of coastlines and beaches has also been degraded by the accumulation of such wastes. It is no doubt that the amount of wastes generated by ships can be phenomenal. It has been stated that recent studies carried on Nigerian coastline showed that metal drums, 300 bottles, 500 plastic beer-can holders, 190 plastic bags, ten plastic drums and certain quantities of toxic wastes were found at the sea.⁴ It was also reported that certain members of merchant ships screw dumped overboard about 600 cardboards and paper boxes.⁵ All these show unfriendly and unruly behaviors of human beings to marine and environmental conservation.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

In the context of environmental conservation, the word 'environment' is meant to refer to the natural physical environment. The earth that we live in is a biosphere, a unique and indivisible ecosystem and all of its diverse constituent parts are interdependent.⁶ The biosphere is the part of the earth where life is possible and includes the atmosphere (air), lithosphere (land) and hydrosphere (water). Hence, the word 'environment' has been legally defined under Malaysia's Environmental Quality Act 1974 as 'the physical factors of the surroundings of the human beings including land, water, atmosphere, soil, vegetation, climate, sound, odour, taste, the biological factors of animals and plants and the social factor of aesthetics.'⁷

Due to human evolution on this earth and the rapid acceleration of science and technology, man is now in the position where he can transform the environment in countless ways. If done wisely, such knowledge and technology would bring benefits of development to the human race. However, where such knowledge and technology is wrongly or heedlessly applied, the same can wreak havoc and harm to human beings and the environment.⁸ The term 'environmental conservation' is no longer widely used in the context of protecting the environment as the quest for the last 3 decades is now 'sustainable development'. This is borne from the recognition that man needs development in order to thrive and sustain a good quality of life on this earth. In this

⁴ See Oni S.I, "Onwards Sustainable Coastal Hazard Management in Nigeria", *International Conference on Estuaries and Coasts*, (November 9-11, 2003), (Hangzhou, China), p.185.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The Earth Charter, 1995.

⁷ Environmental Quality Act 1974, Malaysia Act 127.

⁸ The Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment, 1972.

quest, notions such as upward movement of the entire social order, eradication of poverty, reduction of inequalities, removal of regional imbalances and above all environmental concerns invaded the notion of development. This resulted in the addition of the word ‘sustainable’ to development.⁹ Indeed, Islam itself is not adverse to the idea of development as the Holy Quran has in many verses expressly stated that man is too inhabit the earth and should establish a balanced way of life without excesses and deficiencies. This is the concept of *I’mar* in Islam which includes spreading and settling in all parts of the earth and engaging in positive activities that could bring about prosperity.

What then is sustainable development? The most widely accepted definition is that sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.¹⁰ In this paper, the term ‘environmental conservation’ shall include the quest towards sustainable development.

In discussing the idea of accountability and proper governance in environmental conservation in Islam therefore, a viable method is to start from the available framework and to build from this by incorporating the guiding principles into the national framework. This method of establishing an Islamic world view is referred to as Islamization of Knowledge and in the context of laws and policies, comes within harmonisation of law and the *Shariah*. This is the approach taken by this paper.

3.0 INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

At the international level, various efforts have been made to govern the relation between sovereign states in respect of environmental conservation. These efforts are relevant as Muslim countries are part of the international landscape and should play important roles in contributing towards environmental conservation. Although it is difficult to describe a permanent and solid legal international framework for environmental conservation at the global front, nonetheless, the evolution towards a desired legal framework can be shown in the table below:

	International Instruments	Description
1.	The Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment 1972	It is the first international document proclaiming the need to take concerted efforts to protect the environment, advocating the need to balance development with environmental protection.
2.	The World Charter for Nature 1982	Proclaimed 5 principles for conservation of nature.
3.	The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21 1992	Established sustainable development in an international framework and proposed a comprehensive plan of action at international and national levels

⁹ Zubair Hassan (2006), “Sustainable Development from an Islamic Perspective: Meanings, Implications and Policy Concerns”, Munich Personal Re PEc Archive (MPRA), available online at <http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/2784/>

¹⁰ Brundtland Report, 1987.

		through Agenda 21.
4.	Millenium Declaration of the United Nations General Assembly 2000	Contains a declaration on protecting 'our common environment'.
5.	The Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002	Recognised the importance of good governance at international and national levels as crucial to achieving sustainable development.

The above meetings and dialogues have recognised certain norms concerning man's obligations towards environmental conservation such as 'no harm', 'strict liability', 'polluter pays', 'precautionary principle', 'public trust', 'common but differentiated responsibility and respective capability' and sustainable development' – the principles that regulate the behaviour of sovereign states when crafting Multilateral Environmental Agreements ('MEAs').¹¹

3.0.1 The Notion of Good Governance and Accountability under the International Framework

The idea of good governance often refers to the duty of running the Government of a given state in an effective manner. The notion has been said to be qualitatively and conceptually superior to a mere good Government.¹² The concept of good governance also presupposes the right to a legitimate and accountable government, the right to ensuring a socially and economically equitable society that is inclusive in nature, promotion of a society where the Rule of Law and fundamental human rights are respected, etc. Therefore, good governance depends largely on various factors. In discharge of its sovereign functions, a state has to discharge many constitutional obligations and it should be capable of utilising the power of the state for sustainable human development. The concept is generally a package to strengthen the institutions of Government and civil society with the goal of making governments more open, accountable, transparent, as well as democratic and participatory.¹³

Under International Law, a consensus on what good governance implies seems to be taken shape. The concept of good governance entails accountability, transparency and participation, hence all these are considered to be among its core principles. In fact, the requirements of good governance is considered a matter of the age-old adage of *patere legem quem ipse fecisti*, (comply yourself with the laws you made for others). It is against this backdrop that some international organisations like the International Monetary Fund ('IMF'), the World Trade Organization ('WTO'), etc. are preaching good governance to their member states¹⁴ to enable them benefit from the available international aids. Commenting on the principles of good governance,

¹¹ Amritsar Dialogue Statement, 2013.

¹² See "Good Governance in International Law: An Indian Perspective" ILA Regional Conference, South Africa, 27th - 29th August, 2007 (Pretoria).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ See Jan Wouters and Cedric Ryngaert, "Good Governance: Lessons from International Organisations", Institute for International Law Working Paper, 2004, at 4

Michel Camdessus said:

“Promoting good governance in all its aspects, including ensuring the rule of law, improving the efficiency and accountability of the public sector, and tackling corruption... [is] an essential element of a framework within which economies can prosper.”¹⁵

Also, Kofi Annan, a former UN Secretary-General while commenting on good governance and transparency now being a global demand maintained that:

“What is encouraging about recent developments in Africa is that the pressure for good governance is no longer coming from one side or the other, but from peoples and leaders alike. The spirit of democratic empowerment is challenging all leaders to live up to the ideals of independence, and to deliver the freedoms, the rights and the opportunities that their peoples deserve.”¹⁶

To this end, Article 8(4) of the Partnership Agreement between the Members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and the European Community and its Member States which was signed in Cotonou (known as Cotonou Agreement) on the 23rd June, 2000 provides thus:

“The [political] dialogue shall also encompass a regular assessment of the development concerning the respect for human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance.”

From the 9/11 insurgence perspective and the global panic engendered as result of the 2003 outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) to the bird flu in 2005, the interdependence of our globalised world has become painfully evident in recent years. It is no doubt that national governments alone cannot address a range of critical issues bothering on good governance, to wit trade liberalisation, infectious diseases, terrorism, economic integration and worldwide environmental issues like climate change.¹⁷ It is against this backdrop that scholars advocated the need for international policymaking for years and the theoretical logic of organising collective action on a scale proportional to all these threats.¹⁸ Reservation was however expressed that the nation-state still remains the dominant structure in international relations, hence skepticism about "global governance" runs deep, especially the approach of the United States.¹⁹

From the foregoing, it is apparent that the idea of good governance has become a global phenomenon and leaders or governments of state parties have been urged to dole-out dividend of good governance on their citizen through the promotion of basic rights, economic development, economic integration, environmental awareness programme, national security and democratic practices.

¹⁵ Michel Camdessus, “The Role of the IMF in Governance Issues: Guidance Note”, approved by the Executive Board of the IMF on 25 July 1997.

¹⁶ Kofi Annan, “Africa’s New Spirit of Democratic Empowerment: Continent’s Sobering Challenges”, an address at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, on 24 April 2002.

¹⁷ See Daniel C. E, “Good Governance At The Supranational Scale: Globalizing Administrative Law”, Yale Law Journal, 115:1490, (2006), 1493.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

4.0 ISLAM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Much divine wisdom exists in Islam concerning environmental conservation that can primarily be found in the Holy Quran and the *Ahadith*. The Almighty, in many verses of the Holy Quran, beckons man to observe the ‘Signs’ or ‘Messages’ (*Ayaat*) in His creations. In *Surah Ar Rum* Allah says:

“And from His Signs is the creations of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your languages and your colours, surely in that are Signs for those who possess Knowledge.”²⁰

Allah continues:

“And from His Signs is that the heavens and the earth stand firm by His Command, then when he summons you out of the earth, you shall come out with one call.”²¹

In the vein, in *Surah Ar-Ra’d*, Allah says:

“And there are on earth tracts of land close by one another (and yet widely differing from one another) and there are on it vineyards and fields of grain, and date palms growing in clusters from one root or standing alone, and all watered with the same water: and yet some of them have We favoured above others by way of the food (which they provide for man and beast) Verily in all these there are messages indeed for people who use their reason.”²²

The Quran also speaks of how everything has been determined in the most appropriate proportions – that there is a balance (*Mizan*) where all that is created complete one another. In *Surah Al-Qamar* :

“Verily all things, We have created in proportion and measure”²³

Surah Al-Hijr):

“And the earth We have spread out, set therein mountains firm and immovable and produced therein all kinds of things in due balance. And We have provided therein means of sustenance for you and for those whose sustenance you are not responsible for.”²⁴

There is therefore an infinite chain of mutual dependence among Allah’s creations. (Muhammad Ramzan Akhtar, 1996).

4.01 The Guiding Principles for Environmental Management & Conservation in Islam

It is crystal that the only sacred scripture that speaks about nature and earth is the Glorious Qur’an. The Glorious Quran contains numerous guidelines with regard to treatment of the earth and other creations of Allah in such a way that the revelation intimately connects itself with the idea of sacredness of nature. Obviously, as a living social creature, man has biological and ecological needs for light, air, water, food, shelter, etc. and community may utilise the resources of the earth not only to secure those needs but to also share them with other living creatures. The Qur’an often mentions the domestication of animals and plants as God’s special favours on humankind. Then comes the reminder when Allah says:

²⁰ Q 30 Verse 22.

²¹ Ibid verse 24,

²² Q 13 Verse 4

²³ Q 54 Verse 49

²⁴ Q 15 Verse 19-20

“We have willed that all beauty on earth be a means by which We put people to test,” to see how well they measure up and conduct themselves.²⁵

Bearing the above in mind, echo-theology unfolds which and thus distinguishes Islamic spirituality with characteristics of its own. A critical examination of the Qur'an and Prophetic hadith reveal a set of principles that point to a rich reservoir of environmental ethics with far reaching socio-economic and political ramifications. Therefore, in dealing with environment and all other beauty things on earth, human beings are expected to adopt the following principles:

- (i) Oneness of God (*Tawhid*)
- (ii) Service and Worship (*Ubudiyyah*)
- (iii) Man as Trustee (*Khalifah*)
- (iv) Trust and Accountability (*Amanah*)

The earth is made subjected to Man but Man will be held accountable for his use of this gift. Herein lies the concepts of subjection and accountability.

- (v) Justice (*Al-Adalah*)
- (vi) Mutual Consultation (*Syura*)

4.02 Tawhid

Tawhid is one of the articles of faith in Islam. It is used to describe belief in the absolute “Oneness of God”. Tawhid is a word derives from an Arabic word meaning "unification" or "oneness". It is also a complex term with many depths of meanings in Islam. Generally, Muslims believe that Allah is One with no equal, partners or associates who share in His divinity. Tawhid has been traditionally categorised into three. These categories overlap, but they help us to understand and purify our faith and worship. The categories are:

- i. Tawhid Ar-Rububiyah (Oneness of Lordship) - Allah (swt) is the Creator and Maintainer of all things. He is not in need of help or assistance to exercise power over His creatures. This is why Muslims reject any suggestion that Allah has partners who share in His actions. The Quran echo thus:

“Say ‘Who is it that provides you with sustenance out of heaven and earth, or who is it that has full power over [your] hearing and sight? And who is it that brings forth the living out of that which is dead, and brings forth the dead out of that which is alive? And who is it that governs all that exists?’” And they will [surely] answer: “[It is] God.”²⁶

In this category, tawhid also underlines the history of Islamic science that sought to make unicity of nature as an ecological principle and indeed a distinctive feature of environmental science. The mineral kingdom supports the vegetable, and they in turn support the animal and there is a link of mutual dependence between them. The waste of one is made the food of the other, and an innate process of cleanliness exists in the natural world. There is an infinite chain

²⁵ Quran 18 Verse 7.

²⁶ Quran 10 Verse 31.

of gradation and interdependence that point to a common destiny and ultimate unity of the existential world.²⁷

- ii. Tawhid Al-Uluhiyah/'Ebadah (Oneness of Worship)-This means that Allah is the sole Creator and Maintainer of the universe and to Him alone that we should direct our worship. It is on record through Islamic history that people have engaged in prayers, fasting, invocation, supplication and sacrifice animals for the sake of nature, people, and false dieties. Islam teaches that the only BEING worthy of worship is Allah (swt). Allah says in the Glorious Quran as follows:

"Say: 'Behold, my prayer, and (all) my acts of worship, and my living and my dying are for God [alone], the Sustainer of all the worlds, in whose divinity none has a share: for thus have I been bidden -and I shall [always] be foremost among those who surrender themselves unto Him.'" ²⁸

"Said [Abraham]: 'Do you then worship, instead of God, something that cannot benefit you in any way, nor harm you? Fie upon you and upon all that you worship instead of God! Will you not, then, use your reason?'" ²⁹

- iii. Tawhid Adh-Dhat wal-Asma' was-Sifat (Oneness of Allah's Attributes and Names)-The glorious Quran is filled with descriptions of Allah's nature and this is done most often through attributes and special names. Thus, phrases like "the Merciful", "the All-Seeing", "the Magnificent", etc. are all names which describe Allah's nature and should be accorded to Him alone. Allah (swt) is distinct from His creation, hence human beings must strive to understand and emulate certain values of Allah.

The Quran says:

"And God's [Alone] are the attributes of perfection; invoke Him, then, by these, and stand aloof from all who distort the meaning of His attributes, they shall be requited for all that they were wont to do!" ³⁰

Generally speaking, understanding Tawhid is essential to understanding Islam and the fundamentals of a Muslim's faith. The idea of setting up partners with Allah is an unforgiveable sin in Islam. Allah says:

"Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with him in worship, but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He pleases" ³¹

4.03 Amanah

Amanah is a composite word and in a place where it appears in its plural form in the Qur'an.³² Allah commands the believers to render the trusts (amanat) to whom that they belong.³³ The

²⁷ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrine*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964, 4-5. See also Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Environmental Care in Islam: A Qur'anic Perspective*, Paper presented at the International Conference on "Environment in Islam," organised by the Aal al-Bayt Foundation for Islamic Thought, Amman, Jordan, 27-29 September 2010.

²⁸ Quran 6 Verse 162-163

²⁹ Quran 21 Verse 66-67

³⁰ Q7 Verse 180

³¹ Quran 4 Verse 48

³² Quran 4 Verse 58

³³ See Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Environmental Care in Islam: A Qur'anic Perspective*, Paper presented at the International Conference on "Environment in Islam," organised by the Aal al-Bayt Foundation for Islamic Thought, Amman, Jordan, 27-29 September 2010. See also, Hadith narrated by Anas b. Malik in ed. Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, *Sahih al-Jami' al-Saghir*, 4th edn., Cairo: Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1954, hadith no. 7179.

Qur'an and hadith make amanah represent integral part of the faith of a Muslim, hence, Qur'an designates amanah as a hallmark of faithful Muslims. Allah says:

“those who fulfil their trusts (amanat) and observe their promises and commitments.”³⁴

Also, prophet was reported to have said:

“One who betrays his amanah has no faith”.

Amanah is the trust that Allah has bestowed upon man's shoulders by placing him on the earth, giving him freedom to choose, the power to act, upon the things of creation, and then, follow or not follow the guidance sent. Allah says:

"Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined that they should carry it, and were afraid thereof. But Man undertook it. Indeed, he was very unjust, very foolish.”³⁵

The Qur'anic exegesis on khilafah begins with Allah's momentous decision to confer a great trust (amanah) on His creatures, the angels, the heavens, the earth, the mountains and mankind, but all of them declined to take it except the mankind. This was done by mankind because of his enormous potential for the good certain audacity on his part.³⁶ Therefore, considering the combination of good and evil in man, when Allah offered the amanah to him, the angels protested saying:

“will you place on it (earth) such as will spread corruption and shed blood –
whereas it is we who extol your unbounded glory.”³⁷

However, Allah (swt) in His infinite wisdom chose mankind for the task explaining to the the angels that He knows what they know not of the enormous potential for the good of the progeny of Adam. Apparently, when inanimate objects were asked to carry the burden, they understood that it would give room for freedom of the will and consequently cringed at the idea, realising that with the freedom to choose and indeed the power to act, they might err. As excepted, man accepted to have the freedom of the will and this unarguably represents the root cause of all human catastrophes, since a necessary corollary was accountability, choosing to accept the amanah, was a foolish act of ignorance.

Amanah (trust) also means to be obligated with the precepts and injunctions of the Shari'ah and being under command to carry out these obligations. Once this is accomplished to the best of one's ability, the promise of Allah which is the eternal blessings of Jannah (Paradise) would become the abode of such believer. Contrarily, any contravention or shortcoming to fulfill or carry out amanah shall be met with the punishment of Jahannam (Hell).

Some early commentators have said that amanah (trust) refers to the capability of fulfilling the heavy responsibility placed by Divine injunctions. That is to say, something that depends on a particular degree of reason and awareness, thereby moving forward therein and deserving Divine vice-regency importantly depends on this very capability. For this reason, the species of Allah's creation that lack this capability, regardless of their position (whether high or superior), simply cannot advance from their given place. Therefore, the skies and the earth, angels, lack inherent ability to move forward from where they are designated. All things from

³⁴ Quran 23Verse 8.

³⁵ Quran 33Verse 72

³⁶ Quran 33Verse 72

³⁷ Quran 2 Verse 30

these creatures are restricted to whatever station of nearness (to the Creator) they have. Allah says:

“There is no one among us who does not have a known station”.³⁸

Given credence to the above position, Prophet Muhammad (saw) was reported to have said:

"A time will come when no sooner does a man rise from sleep, amanah (trust) will be confiscated from out of his heart leaving some of its traces behind, just like you would roll down an ember from the fire on your feet (and this ember will certainly roll away but) its traces will survive in the form of inflammation or blister - although, no constituent element of the fire itself is left out there. So much so that people will enter into mutual transactions and contracts, but no one will fulfill the obligations of amanah due against him and (there will be such a dearth of trustworthy men that) people will be found saying that there is a trustworthy man in such and such tribe!"

4.04 Ubudiyyah (Service & Worship)

Man is God's servant (*'abd* Allah) and must obey Him and be passive towards Allah and recipient of the grace that flows from the world above. Worship is an act that is outwardly considered as a type of humility, but with a deeper profundity. Worship stems from the soul and springs from transcendent insight (*ma'rifah*). It emanates from cognition which originates from piety (*taqaddus*). It radiates from adoration and derives from admiration. It also comes from seeking refuge and assistance and it arises from the love of the perfections (*kamalat*) of the Worshipped Being (*ma'bu*). Worship is the nourishment of the soul, therefore, the best food is that which is absorbed by the body. In the same manner, the best act of worship is that which is internalised by the soul, in a nutshell, if it is performed with all sincerity, enthusiasm and presence of heart. Scientifically, eating too much food is not that which is beneficial, but eating useful food. The Holy Prophet said to Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah al-Ansari thus:

“Indeed this religion is firm. Therefore, act moderately in relation to it (and when you have no spiritual readiness for worship, do not impose it on yourself) so that the worship of Allah would not be detested by you.”³⁹

In another hadith, the Holy Prophet said:

“Blessed is he who loves worship and is always fond of it.”⁴⁰

It needs be stated that the purpose of human creation is for worshipping of Allah and this was confirmed in the Holy Qur'an where Allah states:

“I did not create the jinn and humans except that they may worship Me.”⁴¹

Allah, the All-wise, has endowed man with all desires and instincts and at the same time creates outside of man the means to satisfy and meet these desires. For example, if man becomes thirsty, water is created to quench it and if there is hunger, food also exists. If man is endowed with the sexual instinct, spouses have been created for him.

Among the profoundest feelings of man are the desire for eternity, the yearning for immortality and love of perfection. A relationship with God and worshipping Him guarantee the fulfillment of these natural inclinations. Prayer and worship are the relationships of man with the

³⁸ As-Saffat, 37 Verse 164

³⁹ Bihar al-Anwar vol. 71, p. 212

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Quran 51 Verse 56

Fountainhead of Perfections, familiarity with the Real Beloved, and seeking refuge in the Eternal Power.

4.05 Khalifa

Khalifah comes from the verbal root khalafa, which means one who came after, inherited or succeeded another. Khalifah, thus implies holding a position of power, responsibility and trust exercisable in harmony with the will of its principal party. Khilafat refers to the Islamic institution of spiritual successorship and the concept in Islam derives its authority from the glorious Quran where Allah says:

“Allah has promised to those among you who believe and act righteously, that He will surely make them Successors (khalifas) in the earth, as He made Successors from among those who were before them; and that He will surely establish for them their religion, which He has chosen for them; and that He will surely grant them security and peace in place of their fear.”⁴²

4.06 Khilafat and Environmental Conservation

Adam, the archetypal man was appointed the first khalifah on earth and by extension, ditto to every man and woman. Every human being inherits power and responsibility vis-à-vis the planet earth and all its life forms. Vicegerency confers on human beings, collectively and individually, the mission and duty to build the earth, harness its resources with moderation and care for its ecological balance.⁴³ The Islamic view is that sovereignty over the universe belongs to God, but mankind, as Allah’s representative, is vested with authority in certain spheres, (as a trust) for which it is accountable to God. Hadhrat Zafrulla Khan wrote:

“As God’s sovereignty extends over the universe, the ultimate ideal of a state in Islam is a universal federation or confederation of autonomous states, associated together for upholding freedom of conscience, for the maintenance of peace, and for cooperation in promoting human welfare throughout the world...”⁴⁴

The role played by a khalifa is both spiritual and secular. Going by the position of Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the implication of a khalifa as the spiritual head of a confederation of states is that the khalifa, if he sees fit, may relegate most or all his secular authority to the elected representatives of the members of the confederation.⁴⁵ Thus, the concept of khilafat transcends national sovereignty and ethnic divide and forms a truly universal supra-national entity.

A khalifa as representative of Allah has the promise of divine support, in as much as he remains firmly based on the precept of prophethood, that is, the principles exemplified by prophets. He is bound to follow the ordinances of divine law and decides questions of policy after consultation with the chosen representatives of the people. The concept of khilafat is thus imbued with both secular and religious characteristics. Hence, the institution of khilafat is based

⁴² Quran 24 Verse 56.

⁴³ Q 2 Verse 30.

⁴⁴ See Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *Islamic Concept of the State*, Review of Religions, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1993).

⁴⁵ Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, *Islam’s Response to Contemporary Issues*, (Islam International Publication, Ltd., 1992).

on the precept of prophethood and for that reason, like prophethood, it can exist and flourish without a state.⁴⁶

4.07 Al-Adalah (Justice)

Al-Adalah is one of Allah's attributes. Justice is the quality of being impartial, particularly in the art of judging. Truth on the other hand, is the quality of being honest in presenting the facts. However, these definitions are almost applicable to the Islamic concept of Justice. Most often, Justice is subject to many considerations, to wit; religious, social, or personal. As far as the subject of discourse is concerned, social justice is most appropriate to the issue.

Social Justice has been said to mean "giving to create a more equitable distribution of power to truly reform institutions so that the need for chronic charity is eliminated". Evidently, practices of philanthropy have always been influenced by the politics of the times, the more strict the politics, the more limited the scope for institutional strategic philanthropy to flourish. For instance, under Qaddafi, Bourguiba and Nasser (Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt respectively), the historical faith-based philanthropic institution of Waqf was nationalised and brought under the management and control of the state.⁴⁷ This however marked the beginning of the death of institutional philanthropy in the region as the state lacks the trust and the credibility of philanthropic institutions. Institutionalised philanthropy was managed and controlled by the state in the like manner the state sought to control its citizens. Attempts were also made to use institutionalised philanthropy as part of the symbolic machinery projecting the progressive and democratic image of the state to the world while retaining and expanding autocracy at home.

Based on the above background, the issue Al-Adalah (Justice) in Islam tasks the governments/states with certain responsibilities in the distribution of resources of the earth placed under their control and management by Allah. In the same vein, states are enjoined by this principle to be just in dealing or conserving these resources of the earth in terms of care, distribution, preservation, etc.

4.08 (Syura) Mutual Consultations

Shura is an Arabic word which literally means consultation. It is a basic Islamic principle that calls upon Muslims (usually under a system of proportional representation) to gather and through debate, deliberation of issues, form opinions to the Khalifah which they consider important and for the betterment of the Ummah.⁴⁸ Approval for this type of arrangement in Islam is available in the Glorious Quran where Allah says:

“And those, who hearken to their Lord, and observe Prayer, and whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation, and who spend out of what We have provided for them”⁴⁹.

A critical assessment of the life and example of the Holy Prophet indicates that consultation is a factor in determining issues of public interest in Islam. The Holy Prophet found

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Sherine N. El Taraboulsi, *Al-'adalah ijtimai'iah (Social Justice Philanthropy and the Arab Awakening)*, Available at <http://www.p-sj.org/node/1578> (accessed on 23/12/13)

⁴⁸ Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II. Tafsir Al-Kabir. Pg.446.

⁴⁹ Quran 42 Verse 39.

solace in consulting his companions and sometimes the opponents of Islam on a variety of issues. Hadhrat Aisha (ra) is reported to have said:

“The Holy Prophet was most solicitous in consulting others in all matters of importance”⁵⁰.

Importantly, consultations of companions and others by the Holy Prophet is not because of lack of wisdom to address matter of public interest but because consultation is considered essential in determining matters of public importance. Prophet Muhammad was the best of the decision makers amongst Almighty Allah’s blessed creation and was importantly guided by Almighty Allah in making decisions. Commenting on the above backdrop, Baihaqi opined thus:

“Certainly Allah and His Messenger did not stand in need of the advice of anybody, but God has made it (the seeking of advice) a source of mercy for men. Those who hold consultation will not stray away from the path of rectitude, while those who do not are liable to do so.”⁵¹

In essence, in making decision concerning the earth or environmental management, conservation, environmental emission, etc Shariah encourages the ruling authorities to take preventive and remedial measures in order to avert colossal degradation of the earth’s environment that human beings is witnessing in recent times.

5.00 CONCLUSION

Due to human evolution on this earth and the rapid acceleration of science and technology, man is now in the position where he can transform the environment in countless ways. If done wisely, such knowledge and technology would bring benefits of development to the human race. However, where such knowledge and technology is wrongly or heedlessly applied, the same can wreak havoc and harm to human beings and the environment. Much divine wisdom exists in Islam concerning environmental conservation that can primarily be found in the Holy Quran and the *Ahadith*. Therefore, concept such as Oneness of God (*Tawhid*), Service and Worship (*Ubudiyyah*), Man as Trustee (*Khalifah*), Trust and Accountability (*Amanah*), Justice (*Al-Adalah*), Mutual Consultation (*Syura*), etc. are guiding principles for environmental management and conservation in Islam. It has been argued in this paper that the earth is made subjected to Man but Man will be held accountable for his use of this gift, hence, this lies the concepts of subjection and accountability.

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⁵⁰ Tafsir Al-Kabir. Pg. 2352, Ft.3629.

⁵¹ Ibid.

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