

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا مِنْ
دَابَّةٍ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ جَمْعِهِمْ إِذَا يَشَاءُ قَدِيرٌ.
وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
مَنْ عَرَسَ عَرَسًا لَمْ يَأْكُلْ مِنْهُ آدَمِيٌّ وَلَا خَلْقٌ مِنْ خَلْقِ
اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ صَدَقَةٌ.

WHAT DOES OUR LORD TEACH US THROUGH THE ENVIRONMENT?

Honorable Muslims!

One day, Abu al-Darda, one of the most prominent of the Companions, was planting a sapling. Someone who saw him, thinking that this meant a fondness for worldly affairs, said, “Is this what you are doing even though you are a friend of the Messenger of Allah?” Then, Abu al-Darda reminded him of the following hadith of our Prophet (saw): **“When a Muslim plants trees or cultivates land, and birds or a man or a beast eats out of them, that is a charity on his behalf.”**¹

Dear Believers!

The universe is a blessing that Allah (swt) has created out of nothing and bestowed upon us. It is an entrustment in Allah’s (swt) possession and sovereignty, and He has assigned us with the responsibility to develop and improve it. It is a book of truth showing the existence and oneness of Allah (swt). Our Lord informs us of this fact in the Holy Qur’an as follows: **“And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and all living beings He dispersed throughout both.”**² The Almighty Allah (swt) teaches us that the universe, which He has created in a delicate balance and order, is His creation. He (swt) reminds us that it is He Who has created this world and all that is in it, Who sustains it and rules over it.

Dear Muslims!

People who look at their environment through the lens of wisdom will see many wonders in the heavens having no pillars to stand on, in the earth being made suitable for life, in short, in the perfect functioning of the universe. They will find much wisdom in the growth of different kinds of plants in the soil that revives with the rain falling from the sky, in the beautiful sights of our dear friends the animals, and in the countless benefits that they provide for us.

Dear Believers!

Human beings make sense of themselves as they discover the universe. The more they get to know about the world, the better they realize the purpose of their creation.

As they understand the nature, they can comprehend where they have come from and where they are going. When one considers that water is the source of life and that they themselves are created from a drop of water, they become humble and free from arrogance. Just as they open their homes to the light and warmth of the sun, when they open their hearts to the transcendent light of Islam, they make the good dominate the world. Just as they realize that the lush green valleys, the deep blue seas and the star-studded skies are the ornaments of the universe, when they realize that modesty and chastity are the ornaments of the soul, they will be endowed with good morals, they will attain peace, and they will attain true happiness.

Dear Muslims!

Our Almighty Lord (swt) states in the Holy Qur’an as follows: **ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ**

“Corruption has spread on land and sea as a result of what people’s hands have done.”³ Today we all clearly see the truth stated in the above verse. Today’s environmental disasters are caused by neglecting our responsibilities. Every day we hear news of another species going extinct. The natural habitats in nature have diminished to the point that they are only the theme of photographs. Our negligence and faults have led to the disappearance of forests, the desertification of land, and the depletion of water resources. However, every creation around us is valuable in the sight of Allah (swt) and glorifies Him in its own language. Our Almighty Lord (swt) informs us about this as follows:

“تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ The seven heavens, the earth, and all those in them glorify Him.”⁴

Dear Believers!

Let us cherish each and every being for the sake of the Creator. Let us read the book of the universe through the lens of reason, contemplation, and wisdom. Let us use our resources in moderation, and not waste them. Let us observe and protect the delicate balance that Allah the Almighty (swt) has established on earth. Let us fulfil our responsibility to our environment with a consciousness of worship. Let us keep in mind that our Lord (swt) is the sole owner of the universe and we are the trustees. Let us not forget that our environment is an inheritance from our ancestors and a unique entrustment that we will leave to our children.

¹ Ibn Hanbal, VI, 443.

² Shura, 42/29.

³ Rum, 30/41.

⁴ Isra, 17/44.