The Concept of Human Stewardship (*Khilāfah*) and Climate Responsibility: A Quranic Response to Global Environmental Crisis

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Sometimes a person lifts a physical burden, measures its weight, and soon begins to feel tired. Much of what we carry in life belongs to the material world, and we have learned to live while carrying these loads. Yet there is another burden, one that grows quietly in the mind and rises from the heart, and this burden can make a person inwardly exhausted and unable to do anything at all. Allah Almighty points toward this burden in his Book. When the Day of Resurrection (qiyamah) is established, the world will be shaken by a great earthquake, and on that day, mankind will see the Earth throwing out its burdens. Some interpreters said these burdens are gold, silver, minerals, and hidden treasures. But many others explained that whatever we speak, hear, and even think slowly becomes part of the Earth itself. Our words, our thoughts, and our private reflections gather over time and turn into a heavy weight. When Allah commands the Earth to bring forth its burdens, the ground on which we live and walk will begin to reveal what it was carrying, and things once spoken in solitude will suddenly come forward. At that moment, a person will stand confused and distressed, asking himself, "What was I, and what have I become?"

Seen from this angle, the Glorious Qur'an presents a striking contrast. (Apparently) it is a small book, one that can be held easily in a single hand, made up of only a few pages, yet Allah declares that within it lies the foundation of all knowledge until the Day of Judgment. There is no thing that is not mentioned in it. One naturally wonders how a single Book can outweigh millions of books in the world, and how it is possible that one Prophet (ﷺ), whose life was only sixty-three years long, could give guidance that remains sufficient for all generations. Allah sent His Last Prophet (ﷺ) to all races, all tribes, all colours, all languages, and all who speak those languages. As Allah Almighty says, "We have sent you with the truth as a conveyor of glad tidings and a warner. And there was not a

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nation, but a warner had gone amongst them." Slowly the wisdom becomes clear: Allah declared that this one Messenger and this one Book are enough for humanity. In them there is the remedy for every ailment and the cure for every grief, not just for one time or one person, but for everyone who will walk on this Earth until the Day of Judgment.

Since the Prophet (ﷺ) was sent to the entire world, all of the world's cultures, civilizations, habits, and practices were, in one way or another, communicated or made known to him. In his sixty-three years he clarified every essential point, and each one of those points is so rich that it opens the door for entire books. This universal aspect is often forgotten when we talk about culture today. The ancient past, in reality, is not as far away as we sometimes imagine. There was a time when swords, arrows, spears and lances were actually used in battles, and even today popular films remind us of how those battles looked. Whenever a sword became bent, or an arrow failed, or a spear was damaged, it was taken to a skilled person who would correct it, hammering it back into shape. This act of correcting was called culture, or saqāfat. It was said that someone had saqāfat the spear, meaning he refined it and made it useful again.

As this idea of refinement developed, it slowly moved from weapons to human behaviour as well. Just as a sword was sharpened, human manners and conduct also began to be corrected and improved, and it was here that real human culture started to appear. Unfortunately, the meaning of culture that is commonly shown and promoted today has been reduced to only a few outer forms. When a cultural group visits, the media shows some dancers and singers on a stage, or at a fair a few clothing stalls are put up, and this is then called culture. But in reality, culture exists in something much deeper than this. Whenever a task that was once done in a wrong way begins to be done in the right way, that process itself fulfils the real function of culture. This is why an uneducated person is called unrefined, someone who cannot read or speak properly, while the one who learns, reflects, and improves is called refined. In this sense, culture is not a show or spectacle, it is a humane process of growth, correction, and the gradual elevation of the human being.

A tribe once came to the Prophet (PBUH) and accepted Islam, and instead of completely erasing their past, he asked them a thoughtful

question, "What were your customs? What was your identity?" They replied that even in the era of ignorance (jāhiliyyah) they used to practice certain good deeds. They mentioned five virtues and asked if they could continue with them. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was so pleased that he said, "You seem to me very wise and sagacious… you were close to reaching the rank of a prophet." He listened to them carefully and openly appreciated their customs. They explained that when life was easy, they expressed shukr (gratitude/thankfulness) when hardship came, they practiced sabr (steadfastness), when facing enemies, they upheld sidq (truthfulness/sincerity), and that they did not curse their opponents. From this, the Prophet (ﷺ) laid down an important principle: even in conflict everything is not allowed, and truthfulness and moral restraint must remain. Goodness, wherever it is found, should be acknowledged and valued, no matter which people or tribe it comes from.

The same humane wisdom can be seen in another incident as well. A companion once asked whether they could continue a pre-Islamic practice of dum, a spiritual recitation used to treat snakebites, because it had proven to be effective. The Prophet (ﷺ) did not reject it immediately by saying that everything from the time of ignorance was invalid. Instead, he asked them to tell him what they recited, and once it was explained, he formally allowed them to continue it. This clearly shows that beneficial practices from earlier communities were not only recognized but were allowed to remain. At its core, this is the true meaning of culture: to see all people as fundamentally good human beings, rooted in the Prophet's noble saying, "All of you are from Adam, and Adam was created from dust." Humanity is one family and constantly dividing it into hostile groups is not the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ); rather, it was the way of Pharaoh, who divided people in order to weaken them and maintain their rule.

The Prophet (ﷺ) did not only speak about tolerance and culture, but rather he showed it in his own practice, even in matters of worship and everyday life. When around forty Christian scholars from Najran came to Medina, he allowed them to stay in the Prophet's (ﷺ) Mosque for almost a whole month. In doing this, he closed neither the door of his heart nor the door of his home, and ease and dignity was given to all. This same balanced attitude can also be seen in his approach toward poetry. As a

teacher of literature, it is hard to ignore that some religious voices discourage poetry and ghazal, yet the Prophet's (ﷺ) own practice gives a clear principle: if he permitted something even once in his life, then permission exists for it, within the basic limits of Sharia. When companions like Hassan ibn Thabit (R.A) and Ka'b ibn Zuhair (R.A) presented their odes, they often began with verses of ghazal, and the Prophet (ﷺ) listened to them and did not object.

His approach to music followed the same humane moderation. Some people have declared all music forbidden, while others have made everything completely lawful, but the Prophet (ﷺ) dealt with such matters according to human nature and the occasion. On the day of Eid, a woman came to him and said that she had made a vow to sing for him. He allowed her, and she took out her daf and began to sing. When Abu Bakr (RA) arrived and objected, the Prophet (ﷺ) gently but firmly asked him to sit, reminding him that it was a day of joy. From this incident it becomes clear that the use of the daf and light music on occasions such as Eid and weddings was clearly permitted. The same principle of ease also applies to dress. Even today, some people consider wearing a shirt and trousers to be forbidden, yet the Prophet's (ﷺ) Sunnah follows a clear Quranic principle. Allah sent down clothing for two reasons: to cover modesty and to serve as adornment. Reesh, the adornment mentioned in the Qur'an, refers to the beautiful feathers that enhance a bird's appearance. Any clothing that preserves modesty, looks dignified, and improves one's appearance falls within this principle. This is why different styles, including trousers that first appeared among the Turks and later travelled through Andalusia to the West and then back again, are all included within Islamic values..

Conclusion

The Prophet (ﷺ) always preferred ease. But, when it came to matters that clearly contradicted the commands of the Holy Quran, he (ﷺ) was the one who would avoid them the most. Like, when the tribe of Banu Thaqif came to accept Islam. They came to him and said, "O Messenger of Allah, we accept Islam, but there are three or four things we will not abandon. We will continue to commit robbery, drink alcohol, and commit adultery."

The Prophet (ﷺ) in response made it clear: there is not the slightest room for permission in these things, as Allah has clearly forbidden them.

Still, this strictness was also balanced with a sense of ease. A vast field has been completely opened by Allah, where nothing but ease is. If you search for its principles in the Quran and in the life of the Prophet (ﷺ), you can find a path where life becomes manageable, fulfilling, and gentle. It's a reminder that true guidance is not in unnecessary hardship, but in understanding the divine balance between clear limits and mercy of ease.