



40 Hadiths on Social Justice

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Lecture Notes

Chapter 38: Environmentalism

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

It was narrated from 'Abdullah bin 'Amr that the Messenger of Allah passed by Sa'd when he was performing ablution, and he said: 'What is this extravagance?' He said: 'Can there be any extravagance in ablution?' He said: 'Yes, even if you are on the bank of a flowing river.'

[Sunan Ibn Majah]

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - مَرَّ بِسَعْدٍ وَهُوَ يَتَوَضَّأُ فَقَالَ " مَا هَذَا السَّرْفُ " فَقَالَ أَفِي الْوُضُوءِ إِسْرَافٌ قَالَ " نَعَمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ عَلَى نَهْرٍ جَارٍ "

[سنن ابن ماجه]

Introduction

- We've discussed almost every sector of social justice. Last class we discussed animal rights.
 - There are often extremes when we discuss animal rights and environmentalism.
 - Islamic texts initially come off as overly idealistic. How do we apply the lofty ideals given to us by the prophet (saw) when we don't even treat human being properly?
- Ihsan means excellence and beauty. It defines the overall character of a person. A person with Ihsan pays attention to things people don't typically pay attention to. You cannot be extremely beautiful in one aspect of your life and ugly in another aspect unless you are not understanding the text correctly or are selectively looking at the texts.
- We should be as practical as possible when discussing how we treat the environment.
- The Hadith tells us that when if you have an abundance of water, don't waste water even if you are using it to purify yourself for prayer.
 - Even with a noble purpose and an excess of a resource, Israf (wastefulness) is still possible. So imagine a neutral or evil purpose.

The Reward of Taking Care of the Environment

- Abu Umamah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "The superiority of the learned over the devout worshipper is like my superiority over the most inferior amongst you (in good deeds)." He went on to say, "Allah, His angels, the dwellers of the heaven and the earth, and even the ant in its hole and the fish (in water) supplicate in favour of those who teach people knowledge." (At-Tirmidhi)
 - وعن أبي أمامة رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "فضل العالم على العابد كفضلي على أدناكم" ثم قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "إن الله وملائكته وأهل السماوات والأرض حتى النملة في جحرها وحتى الحوت ليصلون على معلمي الناس الخير"
 - Ibn Rajab says that the reason for this is that the person who is knowledgeable pays attention to the rights of everything around him.
 - Those things that we deem insignificant will testify on the day of judgment for or against a person.
- Narration of Anas (rA), the Prophet (sAws) said, "There is no Muslim who plants a tree or sows a field for a human, bird, or a wild animal that eats from it, but it shall be reckoned as charity from him." (Bukhari and Muslim)
 - عن أنس بن مالك - رضي الله عنه - قال: قال رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم -: " ما من مسلم يغرُسُ غرساً أو يزرعُ زرعاً فيأكل منه طيرٌ أو إنسانٌ أو بهيمةٌ إلا كان له به صدقة"
- "No Muslim plants a shoot or sapling except that whatever is eaten or [even] stolen from it, or anyone obtains the least thing from it, except that it is considered charity on his behalf until the Day of Judgment." (Sahih Muslim)
 - The believer should optimize their stay on earth. They should find ways to be productive and make the world a better place while they are here and after they depart.
- Anas ibn Malik reported that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "If the Final Hour comes while you have a palm-cutting in your hands and it is possible to plant it before the Hour comes, you should plant it." (al-Adab al-Mufrad)

Lessons From the Ahadith.

- Even if you sell this produce, you will still be rewarded for making them available, because by their extinction they become un-purchasable.
- Cultivating the planet, and not leaving it unattended and barren also has a reward.
 - There is a Hadith, “Whoever revives a barren land, it belongs to him.”
- Intend well for others, which will help you sometimes forgo things when they are taken from you unethically.
 - The prophet (saw) said that even if a crop is stolen from you, you still have reward from it.
 - You might feel like you are at loss but in reality you are not.
- There is actually loss in hoarding and keeping people away from what you plant and cultivate.
 - The Quran likens Quraysh to the people of a garden who plotted to take their crops extremely early before the poor came to get their share.

The Trees

- Quran: Whatever you have cut down of [their] palm trees or left standing on their trunks - it was by permission of Allah and so He would disgrace the defiantly disobedient. [59:5]
 - مَا قَطَعْتُمْ مِّن لِّيْنَةٍ أَوْ تَرَكْتُمُوهَا قَائِمَةً عَلَىٰ أُصُولِهَا فَبِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلِيُخْزِيَ الْفَاسِقِينَ
- Hadith: “If the Hour is about to commence and one of you is holding a sapling - if he is able to plant it before it commences, then let him plant it.”
 - Don't be destructive even when everyone else is being destructive.
- The prophet (saw) said, “Do not uproot or burn palms or cut down fruitful trees.” [Muwatta' Malik]
- Empathize with Trees! Trees are living things.

- Jabir ibn 'Abdullaah (rA) reported that the Prophet (sAws) used to go and stand next to a tree or palm-tree on Fridays. A woman or a man of the Ansaar said: "O Messenger of Allaah, should we not make for you a pulpit?" He said, "If you wish." So they made a minbar for him, and when the next Friday came, he was shown to the minbar. The tree cried like a small child, then the Prophet (sAws) came down and hugged the crying tree until it calmed down." Jaabir said: "It was crying because of the dhikr (remembrance of Allah) that it used to hear." (al-Bukhari, 3319).
- Reflect and Identify with Trees!
 - We were with the Prophet (ﷺ) and fresh dates of a palm tree were brought to him. On that he said, "Amongst the trees, there is a tree which resembles a Muslim." I wanted to say that it was the date-palm tree but as I was the youngest of all (of them) I kept quiet. And then the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "It is the date-palm tree."
 - In Surat Al-Hajj, Allah says, "Do you not see that to Allah prostrates whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth and the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, the moving creatures and many of the people?..."
 - Trees are given special mention as Allah created them as one of the many signs of His existence. They would often be neglected in the context of the other notable creations/signs mentioned.

Water

- Don't be excessive when making Wudu or taking a Ghusl (bath).
- Mu'adh (rA) reported that the Prophet warned, "Beware of the three acts that cause you to be cursed: relieving yourselves in shaded places (that people utilize), in a walkway or in a watering place."
 - Relieving yourself in certain areas was considered unjust
- The prophet (saw) often forbade people from urinating in still water.
 - The main reason for this is that it is unnecessary contamination.

- How do we apply this today? Do we unnecessarily contaminate water in other contexts?
- Think about how many people die because of the deliberate contamination of water in warfare.
- How Allah calls us to reflect on water:
 - 56:68 - أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ -
 - And have you seen the water that you drink?
 - 56:69 - أَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنزِلُونَ -
 - Is it you who brought it down from the clouds, or is it We who bring it down?
 - 56:70 - لَوْ نَشَاءُ جَعَلْنَاهُ أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُونَ -
 - If We willed, We could make it bitter, so why are you not grateful?
 - Ibn Umar (ra) would think about the scarcity of water on the day of judgment when reading this Ayah.
 - We are utterly in need of every single drop of water Allah (swt) sends to us.
 - The first step of being grateful for that blessing is to not violate Allah with that blessing.
 - 67:30 - قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مَعِينٍ -
 - Say, "Have you considered: if your water was to become sunken [into the earth], then who could bring you flowing water?"

The Streets

- We previously discussed the Hadith of Abu Dharr that discusses removing harm from the road being a form of Sadaqah
 - طريق means any road or path that people pass on.
 - أذى means even the lightest form of harm. For example: noise pollution, obscene sights that bother people, street pollution.

- When Abu Musa (RA) was sent to Al-Basrah as the new governor, he addressed the people saying: "I was sent to you by 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA) in order to teach you the Book of your Lord [i.e. the Qur'an], the Sunnah [of your Prophet], and to clean your streets."
- 67:15 - هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِن رِّزْقِهِ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ
 - It is He who made the earth tame for you - so walk among its slopes and eat of His provision - and to Him is the resurrection.
- 78:6 - أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهَادًا
 - Have We not made the earth a resting place?

Overconsumption and Wasting

- The prophet (saw) taught us not to overeat.
- Traditional societies were not over-consumers. Their no-brainer philosophy was Eat in order to live, not Live in order to eat, as we do today. The Western disdain for the "primitive" inherently dismisses their natural wisdom.
- وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيُبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ - 6:165
 - It is He who has appointed you viceroys in the earth ... that He may try you in what He has given you." (Surah 6:165)
 - Allah (swt) appointed us as stewards on earth which means that we are responsible for the seemingly inferior creatures around you. That doesn't just mean feeding them but making sure the environment is as beneficial as possible to everyone around you.
- 7:31 - يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ - 7:31
 - "O children of Adam! ... eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for Allah loves not the wasters." (Surah 7:31)
- 30:41 - ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ - 30:41

- Corruption doth appear on land and sea because of (the evil) which men's hands have done, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return. (Quran 30:41)
- This Ayah has both a spiritual and physical implication.
- Maymuna (rA) saw a pomegranate pearl cast on the ground so she looked at it and recited the Ayah: **إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُسَادَ**
- 55:10 - **وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنْعَامِ**
- And the earth He laid [out] for the creatures.

Conclusion

- If a believer is this careful in how much they take care of the environment, imagine how much careful they should be with the honor and dignity of the human beings around them.