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ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION AND THE BREAKDOWN OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AS AN AFTEREFFECT OF DEFILEMENT OF THE HUMAN INTERIOR

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Abstract: *Today, the world needs more than ever for an elevation and advancement of spirituality, for a non-abuse of the sacred, so that we do not have pollution of the environment and pollution of interpersonal relationships. This article will analyze the defect of the crisis in general and the spiritual crisis in particular. As known, man, is between two decisions: to decide to sacrifice himself for the good, or to think only about the realization of his own desires, that is, to sacrifice the other to realize his desires. Therefore, the reflection of man towards the environment is an unfolding of what he has inside him.*

When the Qur'an defines man, it shows that he is essentially the main cause of problems, disorders, perversions, crises, etc.. This is understood from the terms with which man is defined in the Qur'an: haluan (Man was created not calm, unbearable), dhaluman jahula' (... he is unjust, barbaric), etc.. The ecological crisis and the lack of interpersonal relationships, which above all is an after-effect of the defilement of the soul, also show the general condition of humanity and the planet, regarding the extreme threat to the natural human environment, including air, land, water, and plant and animal species.

This paper will analyse the compactness and distinction between the idea and behaviour of man, with special emphasis on the believer, which reflects on the personality of man, as well as his influence on having an attitude towards others and the environment. While writing this paper, investigative and comparative methodology and analytical methods will be used to compare the various ideas written in this field with the Scriptures. So, the main point is the critical approach to attitudes of man towards others and the environment.

Keywords: *Environmental pollution, crisis of faith, ecological crisis.*

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Introduction

Viewed from a primordial, anthropological, or cultural perspective, the human being, specifically, the believing human, has continually faced the threat of evil in relation to the self, the environment, others, and God. (Qur'an, Al-Fatir, 6; Bible, Revelation, 12:9). At the same time, he or she has also been, and continues to be, a serious challenge to evil. Faith has introduced, and continues to introduce, the dimension of sacrifice for the sake of goodness, value, beauty, aesthetics, and ethics.

Today, unfortunately, we are living in an environment that lacks goodness, value, beauty, aesthetics, and ethics; in other words, we live in a polluted world, both locally and globally. We all live in this polluted environment, and we are all searching for someone to blame. In truth, we believe we are all responsible. Some are directly and actively guilty; others are indirectly or passively guilty. And some, though they may have no means to act differently, remain guilty as long as they are alive and do not raise their voice. The only entity that is not guilty in this situation is nature itself, yet it continues to be attacked, polluted, and destroyed by human beings. Quite rightly, Professor Gulzar Haider, in an interview given to Professor Ziauddin Sardar, would express the following: "Nature, for example, would have liked to have the right not to be violated and abused unnecessarily. Nature would not like to have its ecological cycles disrupted. I am sure the forest does not like acid rain". (Sardar, 2017, p. 142).

Man is the one who determines the purity or pollution of nature and the environment. Nature, by its very essence, is pure, immaculate, and unpolluted. It is inherently in harmony with beauty and goodness. Similarly, the human being considered the most perfect and responsible of all creatures is born pure, free from hatred and destructive convictions. Yet, over time, by misplacing priorities, favoring greed, lust, and insatiable desires over reason, conscience, and faith, one becomes corrupt. This corruption is even more damaging when it is pursued through the instruments of power, wealth, or authority. In such cases, the individual becomes a force of destruction and pollution, not only to the environment but also to human relationships. Therefore, it is always essential for a person to return inward, to truly know oneself, and to recognize the profound responsibility one bears toward God, the environment, and fellow human beings. (Nasr, 1984, pp. 119-123; Nasr, 2001, p. 17).

Another aspect that is very important in preserving human relationships with nature and with others, as it is knowing oneself, for a human being, means understanding the position, the responsibility, and the vicegerency entrusted to him/her by the Creator, a responsibility toward God, society, and the environment. By knowing himself/herself, s/he gains a deeper understanding of others and the world around him. As the proverb says: "He who knows himself, knows his God". (Nasr, 2000, pp. 111-143; Schoun, 1986, pp. 33-35). If man is clear about his place in nature and society, a role referred to by the Creator as vicegerency (khalifah) (Qur'an, Al-Baqarah, 30), he contributes actively to regulating interpersonal relations and to protecting the environment from pollution. Therefore, the sense and awareness of individual vicegerency is essential to political vicegerency, and social-political vicegerency is essential to environmental or ecological vicegerency. (El-Attas, 2011, pp. 65-77).

Internal shaping is essential in maintaining relationships with people and preserving the environment

Ethics, in essence, is operative in the original wisdom of law. But the way it manifests itself today is not operative. We must aim for ethics that give life to environmental sensitivity, as well as the symbolic eloquence of architecture, the soft tissue of a city (of a personality), a process that must be studied and understood. We must begin to re-establish the ethical dimensions of environmental management, of environmental design. (Sardar, 2017, pp. 145-149; Çagrıcı, 2021, p. 98).

In the dimension we are referring to, knowledge forms the foundation of our personality. Knowledge encompasses the physical, the logical, the spiritual, and the religious. In truth, knowledge is a whole; it is not divided in itself; rather, we are the ones who divide it. Yet when we act, knowledge manifests as a unified whole: in how we understand the other, how we see the other, how we sense and even smell the presence of the other. It is in these interactions that knowledge takes on ‘form,’ originating from its wholeness. This is why, when we describe another person, we often hear the phrase: “This is a bad person”. And yet, that individual might be highly accomplished, elevated in their profession, career, or financial status. Unfortunately, the impression the other receives from a single, unexpected action can override all else, leading to that negative judgment. In such moments, what has no voice begins to speak the voicelessness. What is heard is only perceptible to the ear of our shared humanity. What speaks is something the actor often cannot hear, does not wish to hear, or refuses to understand. Conversely, when someone acts kindly, behaves well, and surprises others through unexpected goodness, the spontaneous response may emerge from another’s lips: “This is a good person!”.

Seen from a different perspective, lack of good relationships with nature and other people, according to Professor Rashid, “It happens that our organs of cognition lose the memory of the Face of God,” and, “when in our act of cognition/belief, seriousness, sincerity, devotion and, especially, beautiful behavior with the ‘object’ of cognition, whatever it may be and at whatever level of Manifestation it may be, disappears.” (Hafizoviq, 2022, pp. 278-9).

Good, beautiful, ethical behavior of a person indicates his wholeness; that is, it is understood that behind it lies the word, the intention, and a good and formed personality. The opposite also indicates the wholeness of a person. Professor Reshid quite rightly says that the lack of ‘beautiful behavior,’ respectively ethics and morality, spiritual value and moral virtue, namely the breakdown of relationships between humans, others and nature, is a clear sign of our carelessness, which obscures our memory of God, so that as soon as we stop remembering Him, He also stops remembering us. (Hafizoviq, 2022, p. 278). If we lack a clear understanding of the Sovereign element in our faith and knowledge, we become shallow, inauthentic, or falsely presented, though only for a short time, and without lasting effect. We may appear to dwell in the light, but we are in darkness. (Watt, 1990, p. 227). When the Sovereign, the core or, as Professor Reshid calls it, the “Memory of the Face of God,” is absent from the formation of our beliefs and behaviors, or when our inner formation lacks awareness of the Sovereign who gives meaning to our faith, knowledge, actions, and very existence, then we dwell in darkness.

Cause of the fading light of knowledge also fades from our cognitive capacities. This comes as a result of the fading of the memory of the Face of God, as Professor Reshid says. As a result, they can no longer penetrate to the cores or primordial essences of the objects they seek to know. When the light of knowledge begins to disappear along with the Face of God, who is the sole source of light in the heavens and on Earth, our faculties of understanding, along with our entire personality, shift from a state of light to a state of darkness. We move from a reality centered on essence, on the nuclei of things that are subtle, transparent, and luminous, to one dominated by mere forms, the ‘masks’ of things that are dark, opaque, and obscured. (Hafizoviq, 2022, p. 279). In this situation, one cannot expect any opportunity to have good relations with nature and with others in society to emerge.

Only by looking at man in the ontological dimension can we understand that inner power, or rather spiritual power, is the power that directs man’s thought, idea, behavior, and attitude. For this, the power of the inner self is man’s true essence, his reality. It is from this inner source that he draws strength, and from it, his thoughts and behavior are manifested. As Professor Reshid emphasizes: “The ‘prayer of the mind’ (fikir) now strengthens the ‘prayer of the heart’ (dhikr), while the latter, in return, deepens and makes the ‘prayer of the mind’ even more perceptive,…” (Hafizoviq, 2022, p. 279).

We are also experiencing a time when freedom is misused, resulting in the pollution of interpersonal relationships and the environment. We always talk about freedom as an elementary human value, but in fact, we face complete freedom for someone and impose it on someone else. The one who is 'stronger' authoritatively, career-wise, always has full rights. While the one who does not possess these opportunities does not enjoy this freedom. And, even worse, this type of action is called the right of freedom, whether it is to live, to express, to believe, to earn, etc. Meanwhile, freedom cannot be deprived of the good, the beautiful, the aesthetic. If freedom were autonomous from these, it would not be called freedom. Therefore, with full right, the professor and politician of the Far East, M. Mahathir says: "...I believe in freedom of the press, but what if the 'freedom' of one journalist causes the loss of the freedom to live an honest life for many other people?..." 'I agree with freedom of the press, but only as long as it is not used to steal the freedom, dignity, and well-being of others. Modernization of the mind was a prerequisite for modernization of the economy.' (Muhamed, 2004, p. 46). Therefore, the preservation or purity of both the environment and interpersonal relationships cannot be thought of differently, except for these dimensions, from which it can never be deprived. The reflection of man towards the environment is an unfolding of what he has inside, namely, his faith/belief, which is reflected in the environment.

When the Holy Book defines man, it shows that he is essentially the main cause of problems, disorders, distortions, crises, etc. This is understood from the terms with which man is defined in the Qur'an: Haluan (Qur'an, Al-Maarij:19) (Man was created impatient and anxious), *zalūman jahūla'* (... deeply unjust and profoundly ignorant) (Qur'an, Al-Ahzab:72), etc. But on the other hand, the Qur'an also calls him, the human being, '*ahseni takvim'* (We created man in the best of forms). This is so when the human being has complete clarity and conviction and is aware of his vicegerency and the priorities of his responsibility. (Qur'an, At-Tin: 4). The first shows his character, according to which he can decide, act, etc., while according to the second, it is understood that he was created as the best and most perfect creature, which has the power to control, shape, and educate the first, namely his character. Man, therefore, is the best creature created by Him, but in character, he is selfish, egoistic, rude, uncouth, and impatient. He is carved by faith, conviction, and the sacred. Only the divine power/of faith, of the sacred, has the possibility of advancing him to the dimension of a 'perfect' man; a man who will be careful of himself, society, and the environment in which he lives. Because a person with sincere conviction, that is, with a pure interior, is dominated by the conviction that for every word, thought, and action he is observed, recorded, and evaluated by others and his Creator.

For man to understand his responsibility toward nature and others, he needs 'light'. Light symbolizes faith in God. A man who has faith has the light, and he sees the path he is walking on. The light of faith does not allow man to be harmful even to the environment (Hafizoviq, 2022, pp. 257-258; Eaton, 2024, pp. 314-315). The symbolism of divinely sourced light-darkness, which Muslim thinkers would often use in later centuries, implies that we can grasp the truth only when we reach the light. Also, thanks to this light, we can understand whether something is a shadow or the truth. Even if we have all our senses of perception open, we cannot see anything in the dark. To distinguish the beings around us, we need light. In this sense, looking is not a passive act but an active process of perception. The fields of knowledge we refer to as theoretical sciences are also not merely mental constructs; they involve perceiving phenomena of truth as if seen with the eyes. Even the Greek word "theoria" means "to look at, to observe"; what we observe presents itself to us and conveys a message about its existence and reality. To observe means to try to understand. The purpose of the theoretical approach is not to create projections of things in the mind, but to develop an awareness of their meaning. Therefore, theoretical thinking is not just a passive, abstract, and mental process, but, as Professor Kalin says, it is an attempt to grasp the reality of things. To think means to emerge from darkness into light, to penetrate the truth of things. (Kalin, 2022, p. 39). And this is how we can act successfully in the environment where we live. In the absence of this dimension, a crisis arises

in general, and an ecological and interpersonal one in particular. We are not independent of the environment. We live not only in the human world, as we are accustomed to thinking, but we live in an environment amidst nature; we do not live amidst 'dead nature' (Izeti, 2020, pp. 14-15), but in the midst of living nature, in the midst of life. It forces us to think differently, to think more deeply about our relationships, even with non-humans.

The ecological crisis and the lack of interpersonal relationships, which is, above all, a side effect of the defilement of the soul (Nasr, 2010, pp. 1-14), it also shows the overall state of humanity and the planet, in terms of extreme threats to the human natural environment, including air, land, water, and plant and animal species. The environmental crisis, namely air pollution, water pollution, global warming, and the disappearance of human moral values (Kaya, 2016, pp. 81-95; Macit, 1999, pp. 16-17), is a threat to life and living conditions on a large scale, or more clearly, a threat to nature. From mechanical pollution and depletion of natural 'resources', through more subtle, dangerous biogenic manipulations, to the endless threat of nuclear cataclysms, the manifestations of this crisis are countless and can no longer be denied even by the greatest optimists. (Izeti, 2020, pp. 14-15).

The destruction of nature by the mega-technical apparatus is based on the assumptions of modern natural science, one that lacks spirituality (Dubois, 2019, pp. 34-35) and calls for an alternative approach. This kind of science is not only anti-natural but also anti-human, because the subject of techno-scientific manipulation and economic privatization is not limited to non-human nature alone. It extends to the very foundations of human life, even to the point of threatening human nature itself—for example, by altering genetic structure. The organization of society based on technology has resulted in an ecological crisis, namely the pollution of the living environment, and even the dehumanization of humans. (Özel, 2009, p. 167).

On the other hand, 'language of humanity', which is clarified by human behavior in relation to nature and others in society, is not only virtual, but also bodily, which constitutes the identity of man. It gives meaning to identity, namely, man himself. This 'language of humanity' is just as much the 'language' of generosity, mercy, sincerity, seriousness, manliness, charity, patriotism, etc., as it is the language of envy, resentment, rejection, destruction, perversion, ignorance, jealousy, hatred, deceit, espionage, slander, etc. The 'language of humanity' is undoubtedly clear to the Almighty Creator and to man himself, as its owner. But the truth is that, for all of us, it is not heard or seen at first. (Xiaotong, 2018, pp. 278-281; Fuga, 2014, pp. 174-183). It is revealed in certain circumstances, even in circumstances when its owner does not want it to be revealed. Namely, it is understood when it takes shape in a person's behavior, attitude, actions, or facial expressions. The third, or the other, cannot understand this language without the owner showing it, or without God giving him the opportunity, for it to come out at some point. Here, it is important to emphasize the saying of Muhammad (peace be upon him), who, when asked by Gabriel: What is charity (ihsan)?, he replied that charity is "to believe in God as if you see Him, even if you do not see Him, He sees you". (*Islami nëpërmjet haditheve*, 2017, pp. 147-153). If a person is not acting or speaking in the 'language of humanity', namely in his original language, that is, if a person does not act on what he thinks, feels and desires (Sardar, 2007, p. 109), neither work, nor knowledge, nor service, nor life is worth anything to him, regardless of his craft, profession, place of residence and time. The problem is not in the craft, profession, ability, knowledge of many languages, broad culture, etc., but in the lack of the originality of man, namely the lack of the 'language of humanity', specifically the language of the body, which corresponds to the language of the heart, the soul, and the virtual one. (Qur'an, As-Saff: 2-3). Today, there are plenty of books, plenty of works of art, plenty of schools and universities, plenty of opportunities to gain knowledge, but the problems are numerous and even increasing. Why is this happening? The fundamental reason for this is that, at this time, the liar, deceiver, self-interested, swindler, mercenary man presents himself as a religious man, administrator, leader, teacher, professor, politician, etc. Meanwhile, success is not made by profession. A profession is a good tool for success. But in reality, humanity is what makes

success possible. (Kalin, 2020, pp. 357-367; Guenon, 1997, pp. 183-200). Imagine a liar, slanderer, thief, etc., who comes out and speaks or protests about ecological cleanliness. Ecological purity is not an empty word. It must come from the soul. Without spiritual purity, there can be neither ecological purity nor good interpersonal relations. (Silajdzic, 2005, pp. 174-175).

God never mentions that human destruction can extend to the heavens, because that is the realm of the angels, who can only submit to God. This helps explain why the angels protested at the creation of Adam, saying, "How can You place there someone who causes destruction and sheds blood?" (Qur'an, Al-Baqarah: 30). As angels, they were incapable of causing dissipation or destruction. Such disorder is only possible among those created from clay. If angels had been made of clay, they too could have caused dissipation, as illustrated by the story of Harut and Marut, who were sent down to test humanity and ultimately fell into error themselves. In the universal order, dissipation and destruction are uniquely human traits. Only vicegerency grants creatures the freedom to act against the will of the Creator. It is the misuse of this entrusted responsibility that explains how moral evil can exist in the universe. Even Iblis did not cause dissipation before the creation of Adam. The freedom of the jinn to disobey God is somehow related to human vicegerency. The following verse seems particularly appropriate for the modern world. (Cittick & Murata, 2000, pp. 389-399). Its significance could hardly have been fully grasped before modern technology and industrial pollution made the self-destruction of humans a real possibility: "*Dissipation/destruction has appeared on land and sea because of what human hands have earned...*" (Qur'an, Ar-Rum: 41). In conclusion, we would have said that if in ancient times man needed to be saved from nature, while in modern times nature (and others) must be saved from man, both in peace and in war. (Nasr, 2001, p. 146)

Conclusion

In short, faith or the spiritual dimension, namely the sacred, or the awareness of vicariousness and of God, is always in a reciprocal relationship with environmental pollution, the ecological crisis, and the breakdown of interpersonal relationships. Where spirituality and the sacred are strong, the ecological crisis finds no place. Conversely, where the ecological crisis dominates, it reflects a lack, misuse, weakness, or even absence of spirituality and the sacred. It is the spiritual or the sacred that is permanent and complete, and precisely because of this completeness, it supports the psychological and even physical aspects of the human being, transforming and illuminating them. Today's world needs, more than ever, a revival and elevation of spirituality and a respectful approach to the sacred, so that we may avoid both environmental degradation and the erosion of human relationships. This, in my opinion, is achieved through human awareness of the responsibility he has towards other people and towards the environment in general. Human awareness is achieved only by knowing oneself, and this is achieved through the knowledge of tradition, culture, and civilization, which are not simply technical and material, but at the core of which lie universal values such as ethics, aesthetics, morality, truth, and sincerity.

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