

## ***Rape of Nature***

Islamic responsibility demands that no damage occurs to nature in process of man's usufruct of it. Islam teaches that **nature's materials and forces are gifts granted by God to us**. The gift, however, is not transfer of title. It is a permission to use for the given purpose. The owner is and always remains Allah (SWT). As the Mesopotamian used to say: He is the Lord of the manor, and man is merely the servant. This attitude is perfectly Islamic as well. The gift then must be returned to the Creator at our death or retirement, improved and increased through our production. At the very least, it must be returned intact, as it was when received.

The "rape of nature" and her pollution which are currently plaguing industrialized societies are the result of their irresponsible usufruct of God's gift of nature. It is capitalism gone mad, inebriated as it is with its success, that leads the Western entrepreneur to dump the harmful refuse of his productive operation in the lake or river unmindful of its fatal effects upon animals, plants and humans. The land is stripped open to yield its minerals and left unfit to use, ugly to look at and causing all kinds of hazards to humans as well as to environment. "Ecological balance" and the "environment," "recycling" have become common terms in the West by the frequency of their violation. Nature is being "raped" all around us: the plankton of the sea, no less than the ozone of the stratosphere, everything stands threatened by the wasteful and irresponsible production, the "planned obsolescence" of Western industries. For the first time in human history, capitalist entrepreneurs speak of the "planned obsolescence" of their products and do so without the least bit of shame. Evidently, the victim is in the dominating ideology which is incapable of providing its adherents with the psychic mechanism needed for all discipline. It provides neither a vision of the future, not criterion, nor a conscience with which to put a brake upon the insatiable appetite for profit. Nothing is capable of standing up before this capitalist appetite determined to pursue its everfleeting objective *pereat mundus*. *Pereat mundus* is not a figure of speech, it is literally true of the Western capitalist whose product is arms, alcohol, radioactive and other harmful materials. But it is also true of the factories of many products whose production releases toxic wastes.

Such abuse of nature runs diametrically counter to the ethic of al Tawhid, and is condemned in the clearest of terms. As Islam sees it, **the production operation must be innocent and pure from beginning to end**. Neither animal, plant nor human may be hurt by it. Where damage occurs, it must be compensated. Where there is no individual citizen or group to bring the damaging entrepreneur to justice, the Islamic state, as trustee of nature, is obliged to bring the abuser to account for his deeds.

### **Compiled From:**

"Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life" - Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, pp. 176, 177