

## Environmental Protection in the Light of Islamic Da'Wah: Purposes and Values

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### Abstract

Environmental pollution has become a threat to all living species both on the land and on the sea. No longer there are people or countries far away from this pollution, everyone is affected by pollution. Unfortunately, many people, especially Muslims, are not aware of the danger of this environmental catastrophe that hit our planet, which threatens everyone. Ruining the environment reflects an imbalance in the relationship between the environment and mankind, causing many scholars to believe that human behavior is the fundamental problem causing impairment of the environment by visible widespread pollution. As many Muslim societies are not aware of Islamic da'wah cultural values. These values stress Muslims' role and importance in purifying and preserving environment from pollution. However, they are not aware of the nature and function of man in his capacity as a vicegerent of Allah in the land in accordance to the solemn pledge which Allah made them testify of themselves. This shows the importance of this paper, which seeks to define the environment in accordance with the concept of Islamic da'wah and analyze the purpose of mankind therein. The study highlights the purposes of the Islamic da'wah and values on environmental cleanliness and the elimination of pollution. The paper adopts descriptive and analytical approaches in dealing with protecting environment through the empirical treatment of references and sources of the original Islamic da'wah, which promotes all sharia purposes and values in protecting the environment from all destruction. The study concludes with a number of important recommendations and findings, such as the necessity to employ da'wah approach in environmental protection in accordance with the purposes and values of Islamic law; formation of a scientific da'wah committee specializing in da'wah, law and environmental sciences through developing legislation necessary for the environment protection; formation of an Islamic association globally to take advantage of the rules established by Islamic Da'wah; set up an Islamic da'wah media campaigns to raise awareness of pollution and damage to the environment by applying principles like: preventing mischiefs is better than bringing benefits,

Islamic da'wah, hisbah doctrine and virtue promotion and vice prevention to environment restoration.

**Keywords:** *Protection, Environment, Purposes, Values, Islamic da'wah.*

### Introduction and Definitions

The word for Environment in Arabic language is derived from an Arabic word meaning 'settlement', 'refuge', and/or 'abode' (Abadi, n.d). It is also derived from the verse: "And [also for] those who were settled in al-Madinah and [adopted] the faith" (Surah al-Hashr: 9). Settlement means living in a house, being familiar with and staying in it.

In the terminology we find that there are several definitions. The Environment is "the surrounding human factors and elements affecting his composition and lifestyle" (Abu Zuraik, 1416AH), "it is a framework in which humans engage in various activities; the land they live on, the air they breathe, the water they drink, and living beings that surround human beings (animals and plants) or inanimate objects. Alternatively, it is the place where appropriate factors living organism or group of organisms are available" (AbuGhuddah, n.d).

The environment in Islamic Da'wah is the "Islamic humanitarian da'wah activity which makes individuals aware of the environment and the relationships between components, and composition of environmental values and skills through their development on the basis of the principles and notions of Islam about the purpose for which Allah created man, and balanced human progress demands" (Sulaiman, 2011).

Through the previous definitions, we find that the concept of environment in Islamic da'wah is characterized as follows:

1. **Comprehensiveness:** The environment contains the Earth, the sky, human beings and Jinn, as well as different phenomena of storms and the instincts. Allah hath made all that subservient unto human beings, "It is He who sends down rain from the sky; from it is drink and from it is foliage in which you pasture [animals]. He causes to grow for you thereby the crops, olives, palm trees, grapevines, and from all the fruits. Indeed, in that is a sign for a people who think. And He has subjected for you the night and day and the sun and moon, and the stars are subjected by His command. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who reason. And [He has subjected] whatever He multiplied for you on the earth of varying colors. Indeed, in that is a sign for a people who remember. And it is He who subjected the sea for you to eat from it tender meat and to extract from it ornaments which you wear. And you see the ships plowing through it, and [He subjected it] that you may seek of His bounty; and perhaps you will be grateful. And He has cast into the earth firmly set mountains, lest it shift with you, and [made] rivers and roads, that you may be guided. And landmarks. And by the stars they are [also] guided" (Surah Al-Nahl: 10- 16).
2. **The Positive interaction between human and the environment:** This comprehensive interaction is not limited to a particular time or a particular place. This also leads to unifying human effort and using it historically and culturally in the light of the civilizational purposes of Islamic da'wah.
3. **The environment is characterized by the concept of the unity of the universe in the Islamic da'wah:** In terms of creation and interaction between the elements of the universe. Allah says in Surah al-A'raf verse 189: "It is He who created you from one soul and created from it its mate that he might dwell in security with her. And when he covers her, she carries a light burden and continues therein. And when it becomes heavy, they both invoke Allah, their Lord, 'If You should give us a good [child], we will surely be among the grateful'". Regarding the water cycle in the universe, the Almighty Allah says in Surah al-Zumar verse 21:

“Do you not see that Allah sends down rain from the sky and makes it flow as springs [and rivers] in the earth; then He produces thereby crops of varying colors; then they dry and you see them turned yellow; then He makes them [scattered] debris. Indeed, in that is a reminder for those of understanding”.

**4. There is a strong correlation between the different components of the environment through the universe:** The Almighty says in Surah al-An‘am verses 95-99: “Indeed, Allah is the cleaver of grain and date seeds. He brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living. That is Allah; so how are you deluded? [He is] the cleaver of daybreak and has made the night for rest and the sun and moon for calculation. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing. And it is He who placed for you the stars that you may be guided by them through the darkneses of the land and sea. We have detailed the signs for a people who know. And it is He who produced you from one soul and [gave you] a place of dwelling and of storage. We have detailed the signs for a people who understand. And it is He who sends down rain from the sky, and We produce thereby the growth of all things. We produce from it greenery from which We produce grains arranged in layers. And from the palm trees - of its emerging fruit are clusters hanging low. And [We produce] gardens of grapevines and olives and pomegranates, similar yet varied. Look at [each of] its fruit when it yields and [at] its ripening. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who believe”.

The history of preserving the environment in the light of the purposes of the Islamic da‘wah began in the days of the Prophet S.‘A.W, as he took this duty by himself. Abu Hurayrah narrated that: the Messenger of Allah S.‘A.W happened to pass by a heap of corn. He thrust his hand in that (heap) and his fingers felt wetness. He said to the owner of that heap of corn: “What is this?” He replied: “O Messenger of Allah! These have been drenched by rainfall”. He remarked, “Why did you not place this (the drenched part of the heap) over the corn so that people might see it? He who deceives is not of us” (Al-Naisaburi, n.d). Then the Rightly Guided Caliphs did that themselves and did not assign this mission to others, despite being overwhelmed with jihad and equipping armies.

### **The Basic Elements of The Environment as Indicated By Islamic Da‘Wah**

The following are the most important elements of the environment:

- i. Place (Earth): The first element of the environment, notably and the closest to its lexical meaning;
- ii. Time (climate): It is considered the movement of the place;
- iii. Water: It is one of the necessities of life;
- iv. Air: It fills space, also it affects, is affected and permeates every space in earth;
- v. Minerals and energy sources: Human inherently cannot do without them;
- vi. Plant: The first source of livelihood for people; it is influential and influenced by the environment;
- vii. Animal: The companion of human on this earth; are sources for human food, and are influential and influenced by the environment; and
- viii. Human: Are considered element of their environment in terms of the relationships between cohabitants in the environment and mutual influence between them.

Upon considering these elements, we note that they consist of two main dimensions which share a mutually beneficial relationship based on balance. These two dimensions are ‘the physical environment’, which are non-living things, and ‘the biological environment’, which consists of all living creatures including humans (Sulaiman, 2011).

Solving environment problems is important from the perspective of Islamic da'wah and its objectives. As it clarifies for Muslims and non-Muslims that Islamic da'wah affirms the value of the environment for several purposes: developing environmental awareness among Muslims by providing the correct perspective of the environment and its components in order to achieve his desired role on earth as vicegerent of Allah S.W.T; development and formation of environmental values, trends and skills upon the individual Muslim, to cope with various hardships with strong will, hence its useful exploitation in order to achieve the objectives of Islam; developing Muslims ability to assess actions, programs of education and teaching related to the environment in order to achieve better environmental education; finding and strengthening the balance between the social, economic and biological elements interacting in the environment for the benefit of mankind; and understanding the social, economic, technological and natural systems, as well as Muslims relationship with issues and pollution (Sulaiman, 1432AH/2011CE).

### **Some Da'Wah Means For Preservation Of The Environment**

**Some da'wah means for the preservation of the environment from pollution include, but not limited to:**

**1. Educating the younger generation:** The first of these means are education and teaching, especially for the children in nurseries and schools, at different levels up to university level. It should instill the idea of caring for the environment, conserving it, and dealing perfectly with it, as Allah S.W.T commands, and prescribes in all things, as stated in the hadith: "On the authority of Abu Ya'la Shaddad bin Aws (R'A), that the Messenger of Allah S.'A.W said: Verily Allah has prescribed ihsan (proficiency) in all things" That Allah is Forbearer and loves forbearance in all matters. Whenever forbearance is added to something, it adorns it; and whenever it is withdrawn from something, it leaves it defective (AbuDawud, 2009). As well as moderation, which makes human benefit from environmental blessings with paucity. Allah S.W.T says in Surah al-Furqan verse 67: "And [they are] those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or sparingly but are ever, between that, [justly] moderate)". The environment is a blessing from Allah, and appreciation for the blessing causes it to be preserved, grown and nourished. The believer shall, as Allah S.W.T says about Prophet Sulaiman 'A.S in Surah al-Naml verse 40, say: "This is from the favor of my Lord to test me whether I will be grateful or ungrateful. And whoever is grateful - his gratitude is only for [the benefit of] himself. And whoever is ungrateful - then indeed, my Lord is Free of need and Generous".

**2. Awareness and education for adults:** through cultural institutions that work to elevate Muslim's awareness, transcend mental and psychological tastes and views, as well as correct wrong perceptions and perverted thoughts, cooperating with awareness-oriented purposeful media outlets. This will create a new environmental knowledge and perception derived from Islamic general views of Allah the Almighty, mankind, universe, life, and existence. Da'wah media must do its part in raising awareness, guiding and informing, based on Qur'an, Sunnah and footsteps of the righteous forefathers through attending the Friday Prayer, classes at mosque and religious lectures.

**3. Monitoring public opinion:** The collective conscience of the Islamic nation, that carries the duty of the Propagation of Virtue and Prohibition of Vice. Allah S.W.T. distinguishes the Islamic nation with this duty, and says in Surah Aal-'Imran verse 72: "You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah". It is one of the basic descriptions of the community of men and women of

faith, as described by Allah S.W.T. in Surah al-Nur verse 72: "The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those - Allah will have mercy upon them". Undoubtedly, rehabilitation and care for the environment are virtues. On the other hand, corrupting, polluting and assailing are vices. This means that every Muslim has a collective responsibility for environmental safety and restoration, if a Muslim sees anyone polluting, damaging or corrupting it, s/he should prevent that.

**4. Power to legislate and punish:** The Quran indicates in Surah al-Hadid verse 25 that: "We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in justice. And We sent down iron, wherein is great military might". He who is not afraid of scripture and balance will be set on the right path with iron, wherein is great military might. Ibn 'Umar (R'A) reported the Prophet S.'A.W as saying: "All of you are guardians and are responsible for your subjects. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects". The third rightly guided Caliph Uthman Ibn affan said: "Allah affects great change by power of rulers rather than Quran" (Abu Dawud, 2009). If the Quran fosters faith and conscience, creates incentives, the ruler will deter anyone who tries to corrupt the environment.

**5. Cooperation with regional institutions in Islamic and other countries:** To preserve the environment, and to resist everything causing its unravelling like depletion, pollution and corruption, as well as disruption to cosmic and natural balance. Hence, one of the researchers was motivated to write a book titled 'Oh people of Earth unite' against major hazards that threaten mankind unspeakable evil unless Allah saves mankind with His mercy. Humans must step up to work together to bridge the imbalance, to restore the environment, and reform what were corrupted. "Allah's Hand is with the Jama'ah (group)".

These are the essential means in Islamic da'wah for preserving environment and restoring it. Islamic da'wah welcomes every way people innovate in this area provided that it is not contrary to the values of Islam and its laws. A wise word is the lost property of the believer, so wherever he finds it, he has more right to it.

### Da'Wah Purposes In Preserving The Environment

Imam al-Ghazali said in al-Mustasfa that "Shari'ah purposes from people are five: maintaining their religion, themselves, their minds, their descendants, and their money. Anything that aims to maintain these five is a virtue, otherwise it is a spoiler, and preventing it is a virtue" (Al Ghazali, 1993).

These are constants in the Islamic da'wah which every Muslim should observe in himself and nurture in his/her dependents or subordinates. These purposes are characterized as divine and mighty as they are accurate, perfect, and fine-tuned. They consider needs and primal instincts that every human is born with. Allah says in Surah ar-Rum verse 30: "[Adhere to] the *fitrah* of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion". Al-Shatibi describes it as: "a must for religion and daily life interests. If it is lost, daily life interests would deviate from the right path. Life will be corrupted with infighting and goes to waste. In the afterlife, missing salvation and bliss, the result will be evident loss" (Al-Shatibi, 2003).

And in the interpretation of the verse in surah al-A'raf verse 56: "And cause not corruption upon the earth after its reformation", "it forbids corrupting the earth, and the introduction of it into existence. It relates to all kinds of corruption on earth: corrupting souls, descendants, money, brains and religion" (Al-Alfi, n.d).



The purposes of the Islamic Da'wah appear in the preservation of the following:

**Saving the environment from damage:** Islamic da'wah prohibits all damage leading to environmental ruin and the extinction of its resources even if the consuming was for a utility. Texts forbid impairment of the environment in its two forms. Allah S.W.T, in Surah al-Baqarah verse 205, says: "And when he goes away, he strives throughout the land to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals. And Allah does not like corruption". And the Prophet S.'A.W says in relation to forbidding killing of animals; "Whoever kills a small bird for no reason, it will beseech Allah on the Day of Resurrection saying: O Lord, so and so killed me for no reason. And he did not kill me for any beneficial purpose" (Al-Nasa'i, 1406AH/1986CE). The Prophet S.'A.W said: "A woman entered the (Hell) Fire because of a cat which she had tied, neither giving it food nor setting it free to eat from the vermin of the earth" (Al-Albani, 2002). With regard to the destruction of the plant, the Prophet S.'A.W says: "If anyone cuts the lote-tree, Allah brings him headlong into Hell" (AbuDawud, 2009).

**Preserving the environment from pollution:** Environmental pollution through dumping of toxic elements is forbidden in Islamic law. Allah S.W.T orders purity in all deeds (Al-Ghazali, 1993). Allah says in Surah al-Baqarah verse 222 of depuration generically: "Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves". The Prophet S.'A.W says: "If any of you wants to urinate, he should look for a place (like this) for his urination" (AbuDawud, 2009). It means to choose a location to discharge urine that will quickly dissipate without polluting the surrounding area. The Prophet S.'A.W also says: "Be on your guard against three things which provoke cursing: easing in the watering places and on the thoroughfares, and in the shade (of the tree)" (Al-Baihaqi, 2003). In these places, feces are far more polluting to the environment because these places have a lot of traffic, and forbidding defecating and urinating in them were mentioned to prevent contamination. In this context the Prophet S.'A.W says: "You should not pass urine in stagnant water which is not flowing then (you may need to) wash in it" (Al-Albani, 2002) as this deed causes water contamination and rot.

**Save the environment from excess consumption:** Mankind is charged with the reconstruction of Earth, and excess consumption affects environmental composition, calculated in establishing and sustaining balance. Therefore, man should not be lavish or carousing. Many Islamic texts disparage excess and extravagances which is consuming water, trees or other environmental resources for no just reason. Islamic da'wah also calls for economizing and moderation between excess and frugality, especially for limited non-renewable resources. Allah S.W.T says in surah al-Israa verses 26-29: "And do not spend wastefully. Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has devil been to his Lord ungrateful. And if you [must] turn away from the needy awaiting mercy from your Lord which you expect, then speak to them a gentle word, And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck or extend it completely".

**Preserving environment by development:** While Islamic da'wah legislations advocate rational consumption and lowering waste, there were calls for investments and development. this will cause growth and compensate consumption. In this context, the Prophet S.'A.W said: "Never does a Muslim plants a tree except that he has the reward of charity for him, for what is eaten out of that is charity; what is stolen out of that, what the beasts eat out of that, what the birds eat out of that is charity for him. (In short) none incurs a loss to him but it becomes a charity on his part" (Al-Albani, 2002). This is motivated by da'wah and faith in Allah S.W.T. The Prophet S.'A.W says: "Whoever revives a barren land, then it is for him" (Al-Albani, 2002).

The Prophet S.‘A.W also says: “Whoever has land should cultivate it himself or give it to his (Muslim) brother gratis” (Al-Albani, 2002). When reclamation is the cause of land ownership this is strong motivation to achieve this innate love of ownership generally, especially land ownership (Abu Ghuddah, n.d).

### Islamic Da‘Wah Civilizational Values For Persevering The Environment

Islamic da‘wah values for preserving the environment is a “set of standard provisions based on the foundations of Islam, which serve as guidelines for human behavior towards the environment, being able to achieve the function of succession in the earth” (Abu Ghuddah, n.d).

Some da‘wah values for the preservation of the environment include, but not limited to:

1. **Preservation values:** It concerns directing the behavior of individuals towards the preservation of the environment components, which include, but not limited to maintaining the purity of the atmosphere; maintaining the cleanliness of water resources; maintaining the care of botanical booty; maintaining the care of livestock assets; maintaining the use of mineral and non-mineral resources; maintaining the cleanliness of streets; maintaining the cleanliness of the houses of Allah S.W.T and public facilities; maintaining own physical health; and maintaining and providing calm environment.
2. **Values of exploitation:** These are values which guide the behavior of individuals towards good exploitation of components of the environment. They include avoiding splurging, waste and luxury, as well as moderation and balance in everything. Islam calls for moderation in consuming environmental resources so that they will suffice needs and wants of Muslims, without excess or negligence.
3. **Adaptation and belief values:** These values guide the behavior of individuals towards adapting to their environment and to correct negative beliefs towards it. They include adapting to natural changes such as harsh weather conditions, terrain, and staying away from superstitious beliefs like: spells, amulets, seeking blessing from foliage, fortune telling, pessimism and etc.
4. **Aesthetic values:** These are values which guide the behavior of individuals towards aesthetic taste of components of the environment. **The Prophet S.‘A.W says:** “Verily, Allah is Graceful and He loves Grace. Pride is disdain the truth (out of self-conceit) and contempt for the people” (Al-Naisaburi, 1990). Allah S.W.T says in Surah Faatir verses 27-28: “Do you not see that Allah sends down rain from the sky, and We produce thereby fruits of varying colors? And in the mountains are tracts, white and red of varying shades and [some] extremely black. And among people and moving creatures and grazing livestock are various colors similarly. Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Forgiving”. Allah S.W.T, in Surah Fussilat verses 9-10, also says: “Say, ‘Do you indeed disbelieve in He who created the earth in two days and attribute to Him equals? That is the Lord of the worlds’. And He placed on the earth firmly set mountains over its surface, and He blessed it and determined therein its [creatures'] sustenance in four days without distinction - for [the information] of those who ask. Then He directed Himself to the heaven while it was smoke and said to it and to the earth, ‘Come [into being], willingly or by compulsion’. They said, ‘we have come willingly’”. The previous verses show splendor, magnificence and beauty of creation, and the greatness of the creator.
5. **Succession:** That man is a guardian and responsible creature of Allah. The purpose of succession is caring for the world and proper colonization of earth. Allah S.W.T says in Surah

al-An'aam verse 165: "And it is He who has made you successors upon the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees [of rank] that He may try you through what He has given you. Indeed, your Lord is swift in penalty; but indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful". Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (R'A) reported the Prophet S.'A.W as saying: "The life of the world is sweet and green. Allah makes you generations succeeding one another so that He may try you in respect of your actions. So, beware of the beguilements of the world and those of women. The first trial of Banu Israel was through women" (Al-Naisaburi, 1990).

6. **The afterlife:** The principle of reward and punishment in Islamic da'wah in Islam represents an advocacy value that calls for preserving the environment. Allah S.W.T says in surah al-Qasas verse 77: "But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters". Allah S.W.T says in surah al-Kahf verse 110: "Say, 'I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is one God. So, whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord - let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone'".

7. **Raising awareness of surrounding environment through reflection and da'wah:** Allah S.W.T says in surah al-Jathiyah verse 13: "And He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth - all from Him. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought".

8. **Harmony and good dealing with the environment:** Allah S.W.T says in surah al-Furqan verses 48-50: "And it is He who sends the winds as good tidings before His mercy, and We send down from the sky pure water. That We may bring to life thereby a dead land and give it as drink to those We created of numerous livestock and men. And We have certainly distributed it among them that they might be reminded, but most of the people refuse except disbelief". Allah S.W.T also says in surah al-Israa verse 66: "It is your Lord who drives the ship for you through the sea that you may seek of His bounty. Indeed, He is ever, to you, Merciful".

9. **Maintain environmental balance:** In terms of maintaining the natural elements as the same as Allah Almighty created without causing any change to the essence of them. Any imbalance leads to spoiling and corruption. The Almighty says in surah al-Rum verse 41: "Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]". Allah S.W.T also says in surah al-Hijr verse 21: "And there is not a thing but that with We are its depositories, and We do not send it down except according to a known measure".

## Conclusions And Recommendations

In sum, the paper concludes with the following recommendations:

1- Establishing scientific da'wah committees comprising of specialists in jurisprudence, Islamic law, environmental science and law. These committees should formulate legislation and laws to protect the environment and specify the scope of applicable legal rules in jurisprudence books which relate to: forbidding harm, warding off corruption and abuse of right dangers as well as providing guarantee and responsibility for harmful acts. Although some writers felt the need to apply hirabah punishment on those who ruin the environment pursuant to what Allah S.W.T says in surah al-Ma'idah verse 33: "Indeed, the penalty for those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive upon earth [to cause] corruption is none but that they be killed or crucified or that their hands and feet be cut off from opposite



sides or that they be exiled from the land.” This should be decided by these committees as they should bear the responsibility before Allah Almighty;

2- The formation of Islamic associations in all Muslim countries, operating within the framework of a central administration. These committees carefully define the rules established by Islam for the protection of the environment, which are already mentioned herein, and follow up the legislation and laws developed by the scientific committees, and set the tables and arrangements to put them into practice;

3- An extensive media campaign action involving the media in all Muslim countries to raise awareness of the harm and risks of environmental pollution, raising awareness of members of the Muslim community concerning legislation, laws and penalties relating to this issue, as they will be aware of possible penalties in the case of violation of environmental laws. These campaigns should be based on persuasion to gain the cooperation of individuals and citizens in this area;

4- Serious and careful study of the applicable laws and regulations in industrial fields and research centers. Examining the environmental hazards, and cancelling all that would harm the environment, believing the Islamic rule “preventing mischiefs is better than bringing benefits”;

5- Compelling various authorities concerned with planning for development projects in all Muslim countries to take into account environmental factors and study the impact of these plans on the environment; and

6- The application of the ‘*hisba*’ principle in the field of environmental protection, which guarantees effective control over all executive bodies. Islam makes *hisba* a collective duty for the Islamic nation, since all Muslims must engage in promotion of virtue and prevention of vices.

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