



# The Environment from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Divine Teachings

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Received 2022 November 29; Revised 2023 March 18; Accepted 2023 March 31.

## Abstract

**Context:** "Environment or living location" includes the environment and earth views. Modern human activities to achieve prosperity and economic and social development have destroyed the environment. Changes have occurred in the climate and the habitability of the earth, and human health and life have faced severe risks. However, Islam has declared purity and a healthy living environment as the fundamental principle of life.

**Evidence Acquisition:** This study discussed the environmental significance, environmental problems issues, and views of religion and the Quran about the environment. The primary purpose was to prevent environmental destruction based on Islamic and Quran guidelines and provide solutions for improving the environment and reducing pollution. The study was based on documentary and library study methods.

**Results and Conclusions:** Defending the natural environment and the moral teachings of religion should be applied through effective enactment and implementation of laws and standards. People with self-control in undesirable situations are better considered in cases where conscience lacks positive motivation than those who have been raped and violated.

**Keywords:** Islam, Quran, Environment, Divine Teachings

## 1. Context

No holy book has spoken about nature and the earth as much as the Quran. Many Surahs of the Holy Quran have been read in the name of one of the elements of nature, Such as Najm, Fajr, Lail, Qamar, Nur, and Shams. The Qur'an has much guidance on maintaining the health of nature and the rest of God's creations so that Quranic inspirations establish deep connections with the sanctity of nature (1). Complete Eco-theology (reflective theology), as a result, specifies that Islamic spirituality is determined by its characteristics. Qur'an and prophetic hadiths reveal a reservoir of ethics and behavior related to the environment, always with social-economic and political divisions (2).

Corruption in the environment affects all of humanity. Some countries and nations are safer than others, although no country is entirely safe. The biggest polluters are unresponsive to the harm caused. There is something derogatory about these societies being best equipped

to prevent damage to their economies and individuals. Responsible considerations and ethical protection can never be ignored in the responses to adverse predicaments and problems when the need to protect and repair the natural environment is demonstrated. New environmental problems are in the material dimension, and their moral and spiritual dimensions are also essential (3).

Evaluating aspects of the environment from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Divine Teachings.

## 2. Evidence Acquisition

This study was designed based on a classical review. Therefore, a literature search was conducted to find the perspective of the Qur'an and divine teachings about the environment. Popular databases and scientific engines such as Scopus, PubMed, Open Access Journal Directory, Google Scholar, and Science Direct were investigated to

search for relevant articles. The search used English keywords such as Islam and environment, divine teachings on environment, and environmental perspective of the Qur'an. The collected articles and books were reviewed in answer to the Islam perspective on the environment.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Divine Unity (Monotheism)

Believing in God is one of the fundamental laws of the Islamic religion, which the Qur'an has repeatedly emphasized (4). The nature of the Qur'an implies men and women and the whole world. The oneness in nature and the existential world is narrated in the "Wherever you look, you see God," which means God is omnipresent. He surrounds everywhere and penetrates the natural world and the human environment. From this point of view, human is a members and part of the universe's balance that should not be destroyed. Efforts should be made to balance the material and spiritual conditions of life. Nature is a part of Qur'anic inspirations (5). The sense of common destiny and common predicament in the rest of the existential world appeared in the number of suras of the Qur'an. A total of 114 Suras and names with which they are known to show the diversity and remembrance of the high names and attributes of God and the prophets and the earth, fruits, and blessings of the world, plants and animals, trees, mountains, insects, and the vast landscape of creatures and beyond. The origin and old characteristics of Quranic messages harmonize humans and the world, emphasizing human's internal connection with the natural world. Certain verses of the Qur'an refer to life forms as human beings, while God has created human members such as plants, animals, the sun, and stars to testify to other verses about his creatures (6).

#### 3.2. Caliphate

Caliphate is derived from the verbal root Caliph, a person born after another person inherits or wins. The Caliph means maintaining a position of power, trust, and responsibility that can be achieved harmoniously with the rules. One of the real examples of humans on the earth is the succession of God on the planet. "I will create a caliph in the land" One of his missions as the deputy of the right with specific rules and lines is the development of the land. The caliphate has been granted to human beings, individually or socially, with a mission and responsibility to build the earth, harness its resources, and reform and protect its ecological equilibrium. The caliphate, in turn, is guided by the laws of trustworthiness, moderation, and justice. In verse, "He created you

from the soil and forced you to resettle in it," the Holy Qur'an specifies humans' duty to build and beautify their surroundings. Beauty and the creation of beauty include all dimensions, from the mental health and health of the person to the surrounding environment. More details of human beauty and creation can be seen in the source (7). Construction and development, along with physical and nonphysical branches, is another aspect of the caliphate expressed by Islam and Sharia's higher goals and objectives. In addition, the sources emphasize observing the worldly equilibrium of divine oneness, greening the land through plants and agriculture, and purification. A series of "belief-practical" relationships between man and his environment are born from his worldview based on the complex decision-action process. Accordingly, the principles of environmental protection in Islam are divided into two areas of environmental belief and practical environmental foundations, which are considered together. The basis of their discovery is the monotheistic worldview of Islam.

#### 3.3. The Argument for Order in the Environment

From the most significant celestial system to simple subjects, like the lines of the human fingertip mentioned in the Quran, "Yes we can make his fingertip regularly," they are all evidence of the lordship of God's existence.

The environment is merely a tiny part of the creation system. Darwin, a leading figure in the theory of progressive evolution, presents the existence of order in nature as the best reason to prove the existence of God. The environment is an exquisite and extraordinary exhibition of the architect of the universe and realm of creativity and his appearance, in which beauty and wonder ripples and surprises scholars and scholars.

#### 3.4. Existence of Order in the Environment

There is an environment and surrounding system, which can be explained in line with many other topics, such as the developmental guidance of environmental elements, the succession of God on earth, and the conquest of environmental factors (8). Islam considers all aspects of humans, the environment, and the cosmos in a harmonious and balanced relationship in the divine path to creating a connection. Therefore, Islam considers the environment an indivisible unit, does not differentiate between humans, the environment, and the universe, and considers them complementary (9). Accordingly, the atmosphere is part of the creation system, rooted in a monotheistic worldview. According to the monotheistic worldview, the environment is inscribed in the spiritual world, so after death, a human from the

environment bids farewell and steps into the spiritual world. This interpretation of the Qur'an that God is omnipresent over everything is essential in explaining Islam's environmental protection basics. In other words, God surrounds humans, and his presence should be recognized in the environment to understand everywhere (10).

### 3.5. Islam and Laws

Islam and divine religions are characterized by laws and obligations essential to respect and obey. Therefore, as a guidebook for humanity and a book of Muslim rule, the Qur'an emphasizes honoring covenants and keeping [your] covenant because the covenant will be questioned." God says that the necessity of fulfilling the covenant is not devoted to the covenant of God, but it can refer to a specific covenant. Therefore, reverence and implementation of all social, economic, legal, and even environmental laws are mandatory for individuals with Islamic policies (7).

### 3.6. Environmental Culture Combined with the Position of the Human's Divine Caliphate

The beauty of humans, aside from the systematic organization of their existence, which is found in any other creature, however weak, depends on their dignity. The sacred holy texts, especially the Holy Qur'an, have honored human existence, considered them a precious beings, and said the following about their dignity, "We highly cherished the children of Adam and made them ride on the sea and the land and gave them sustenance from the sublime ones and superiority over many of our creations." Human dignity is owed to the divine caliphate because the successor of the noble being has dignity, and this dignity is not for non-human beings. Therefore, this interpretation was made about humans and any other creature. That distinguished interpretation is the same famous hadith, "Whoever knows himself knows God" (11).

The knowledge of the human soul will end in the knowledge of God because being the caliph of God is an evolution, not arbitrary. The lack of knowledge of God indicates that man is not well understood. Therefore, a person's dignity is in the light of his caliphate, and the "caliph" is the one who is subordinate to his successor in all his scientific and practical affairs, thinks according to his knowledge, and is motivated according to his will.

God covered the caliphate with the verse "I will make a caliph on earth" on the balanced body of the pious human." The knowledge of God's beautiful names and the restoration of the Caliphate, and the liberation of the caliphate region from the destructive influence of demons. From a scientific point of view, he said, "And he

taught Adam the names," and from a practical point of view, he said, "The only God created you from the earth and raised you above the inhabitants of the earth, so ask for His forgiveness, then repent to him. Indeed, my Lord is near and responsive."

After learning religious teachings, the most crucial element of the divine caliphate is to build the earth and save it from any destruction and darkness. The meaning of earth is the extent of human existence, including the sea's depth to the top of the sphere and sky. Therefore, the environmental culture is mixed with the status of God's successor. Air pollution destroys the earth instead of restoring it, trees are cut down instead of planted, and the sea and desert are kept healthy instead of being polluted. When he considers himself the caliph of God, he tells lies without hesitation. The meaning of earth settlement is to provide environmental principles for human life, not primarily for the plant life that some have, nor for the animal life that some have settled for, but for human life, which will include all the plant and animal stages. In other words, the earth is free from the danger of destruction. The environment is protected from moral harm so that both the body and soul can benefit from the benefits of natural medicine, and the unique gifts of the merciful breath can reach the soul (3).

### 3.7. Environment and Islamic Teachings

The creation of green space and beautification of the environment are in the spiritual space of divine religions, which is included in Islamic teachings. In a hadith from the Prophet(s), he says that "Seven things cause good for man after death" (12). Tree planting is one of these acts. According to the theme of this noble hadith, the importance and attention to green spaces and beauty are among the acts such as building mosques and teaching knowledge. In another hadith, it has been said that "watering a tree is like watering a thirsty person."

In addition, other holy religions teach divine mercy and kindness towards animals and living beings as part of the environment, which is an essential human position. In this regard, he recommended that, "Whoever breaks a branch of a tree, it is as if he has broken an angel's wing," showing the destruction of the environment and disregard for living things. Humans must honor and respect everything God has given them as his gift and blessing.

In encouraging actions for Muslims, he said, "Whoever plants a tree has done a good deed, and if that tree bears fruit, it is considered charity." According to this saying, the hope of life and the end of good deeds are encouraged. According to the Qur'an, "All beings are engaged in the remembrance of God. All creatures -both animate and

inanimate- have levels of consciousness, but a human has a higher order than intelligence and understanding." Hence, the surrounding environment, together with the living or inanimate environment, is worthy of respect and care from the point of view of the Islamic worldview (13). Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says, "God is pure and loves purity; he is pure and loves purity" (12). Therefore, the noble hadith of cleanliness includes all dimensions of human existence and the threshold of his life. This purity can be in the direction of divine attributes and the position of the human caliphate.

On the other hand, it can refresh and refine the human soul. In another hadith, the Prophet(s) explains the condition of entering the Religion of Islam as the purity of human nature in all aspects. He also said, "Three things make the heart clear: looking at greenery, flowing water, and a good face" (12). The example of this precious hadith is a human's inner desire for a beautiful environment and happiness and refinement of the human soul in the light of Islamic teachings (14).

### 3.8. *Beauty and Purity*

The Qur'an and Hadith emphasize purification in all personal hygiene and the environment.

Therefore, the Prophet(s) made it clear that, "purity is a part of religion (for every Muslim).

He also said, "God does not accept prayer without ablution."

Personal hygiene, clean clothes, and bathing are among the normal daily practices of Muslims. Some topics have been discussed in the Quran and Hadith, such as bathing, brushing teeth regularly, cutting hair and nails, washing hands before and after meals, and drinking water from wells and springs. Personal hygiene should be observed when attending congregational prayers, such as maintaining and cleaning the environment of the mosque. This hadith also forbids urine or human excrement in stagnant or flowing water near public bathrooms and mosques and throwing trash and garbage in public crossings that could harm people. The Shariah laws describe the customs of going to the toilet, pouring water, and wearing clothes that may or may not be correct for ablution and prayer. However, the teaching of religion should take place. "God rightly loves those who turn to Him and insist on purity."

God speaks of the gathering of the Mosque of Medina and the Ka'ba with praise. "Among them are people willing to be pure, and God rightly loves those who cleanse themselves."

Purity and beauty are within the customs of religion. The Qur'an commands believers to be beautiful, just as God created you beautifully, and the reward of beauty is

nothing but beauty. The Prophet(s) said, "God is beautiful and loves beauty. Commentators say that the source of beauty goes back to the person living in neighborhoods and surroundings (3). It is mentioned in a hadith that when Abu Barza asked the Prophet(s) to teach him something that would benefit him (something to do regularly), the Prophet(s) replied, "Remove obstacles (garbage) from the path of Muslims." It has been reported that the Prophet (PBUH) ordered Muslims to build mosques in residential areas and keep them clean. Other hadiths have detailed cases, such as the prohibition of spitting and spilling bodily fluids near mosques in the shade of trees where people rest and take shelter (3).

The Qur'an warns people to take personal responsibility for their welfare and well-being. "People, the indulgence you commit will only harm you. Enjoy the (legitimate) pleasures of this world." A hadith has the same message, "A person who goes to bed with dirty hands at night should only blame himself (if he falls ill). Personal and environmental health is a shared responsibility between individuals and societies. In the former case, the responsibility is in the first place, at least in his control."

Beauty and purity indeed depend on the available financial status, just like art and other aspects of the beauty of civilization that can be applied in many societies. Therefore, cultural trends and theories are essential. Despite the complete and extraordinary ability of Islamic teachings about purity without the desire to establish interaction and generalization to the whole, it is difficult to claim that Muslim cities are superior in terms of environmental cleanliness. This may change later. However, there is a certain disconnect between the teachings of Islam and any case related to the renewal of civilization. The nature of this renewal is not a new trend and message, but it is necessary to retract what happened to it (3).

### 3.9. *Water in Islam*

Water is a critical and vital issue in the Islamic religion. Since the beginning of Islam in a desert region with arid and semi-arid lands was introduced to the world, the importance of the strategy of this divine blessing is obvious. Water shortages have always affected Muslims and shaped their behavior and attitudes related to this issue. Therefore, Islam has been a powerful tool for people's concern about the water issue since the beginning of the sacred religion. There is no general and integrated concept of water in Islam. Muslims' vision of water has been affected by various factors, time, and place conditions. Using some examples, the following analyzes the relationship between water and Islam (11).

### 3.10. Water in the Qur'an

According to several verses of the Qur'an, water is considered a critical issue in Islamic cosmology, and illustration is a recurring subject in worship and daily life. Among the most relevant verses, we can refer to this verse, "Did not the disbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together, and we separated them from each other and created every living thing from the water? Do they not believe?" Although more than 60 cases of the word "water" are mentioned in the Qur'an, this verse shows the most expert status of water in the entire life cycle. Other terms related to water and hydrology, such as sea, river, fountain, rain and hail, cloud, and wind, are frequently used.

Furthermore, expert opinion in Sura al-Anbia, revealed to Mecca's Prophet (s), is among the Makki suras. Mecca has a dry and relatively wetter climate than Medina and corruptionedina (15). Therefore, expecting a more favorable life is possible than in Medina. Consequently, one can consider an exact place occasion for them to descend this noble verse.

In other places of the Holy Book, such as Surahs of Al-Furqan, 54 and Al-Nur, 45 (It is God who created humans from water, and God formed every animal from water), there are discussions about God's creation from water, which states humans and creation of animals, plants, and flowers need water as the essential element of life. Therefore, water has been given to man as a divine gift to benefit from. This divine gift can prove the uniqueness of the nature of unity. The Holy Qur'an says in this context, "Or the one who created the heavens and earth sent you water from the sky with which we grew beautiful gardens. You never had the power to plant trees. Is there any other deity with God? No, rather, they are an equalizing group." Water symbolizes God's resurrection and paradise, representing a place with flowing and lush rivers.

The Holy Quran also mentions the cleanliness and purity of water. The subject of personal purity and cleanliness has been ordered in several verses. In Sura al-Anfal 11, when a light sleep, which was comfort from God, has swept you away, he sent you water from the sky to purify you and remove the evil from you, making your hearts firm and firm and your steps firm with it." The issue of human purity is expressed with water, referring to the role of this divine gift in the position of closeness to God. Ablution is a critical issue performed before prayer and performing rituals to achieve purity. Surah al-Maidah explains the details of this divine cause: "The believers because you want to stand up for prayer, wash your face and hands up to the elbows and wipe your feet until the foot rises." In other places, he condemns the extravagance and misuse of the divine gift (11).

### 3.11. Water in the Sunnah of the Prophet

Other teachings of Islam on the water are derived from the orders and behavior of the Holy Prophet of Islam, binding on divine law. In the famous hadith of the Prophet(s), "Muslims share three things, including water, pasture, and fire." Water is a public gift. Other hadiths have been proposed following the legal view of the water and even the ability to drink and rinse it. In addition, the beloved Prophet has forbidden the excessive use of water resources even when plenty of water is available. In other hadiths, protection and preventive measures have been ordered to prevent contamination of water sources from human waste and sewage. The buffer zone around water resources and the implementation of the concept of "privacy" has been spread throughout the Muslim world. Quranic verses or the actions of the Prophet of Islam as a guide or a practical standard regarding management and health issues of water and personal cleanliness are still at the top of Muslim actions (11).

### 3.12. Violations and Abuse

The abuse of humans as God's caliphs has appeared on earth in doing evil and corruption. In such a way, instead of being the creator and protector of the planet, which is the element of her creation, "and one of the signs of God is that they created you from the soil." Human beings have become the cause of destruction, corruption, excesses, inflicting harm, arrogance, and ignoring divine guidance. These issues are described below.

### 3.13. Doing evil and Corruption (Corruption on Earth)

One violation that the Qur'an emphasizes is the dispersion of corruption and evil on earth. This text mentions that human has the potential to commit violations of divine desires. Therefore, this warning is, "Do not spread corruption on the earth." To see the result of the actions of the corrupters, i.e., the people who have spread corruption, they continue, "Do not corrupt (and pollute) the earth because God has placed suitable conditions for your discharge." After many warnings, he said, "Corruption has appeared on the earth due to human actions, on land and sea, and God gives them a taste of what they have conducted. Corruption in the Qur'anic language is the destruction of cultivated land and the fertility of crops and soil through inappropriate actions that destroy the strength and fertility of the soil and pollute it in a way that causes a reduction in yields, bringing disaster and fire (burning on land and sea). Humans are responsible for the soil and must protect this divine blessing. God says in verse 58 of Surah Al-A'raf, "A clean and fertile land grows its plants by the command of the God, but in

impure and salty lands, nothing but a small and worthless plant grows." Various forms of environmental damage through soil erosion and marine pollution can be seen today, manifesting the Quranic concept of corruption. Corruption is rampant on Earth primarily due to human opposition and diminished divine grace. The Qur'an has stated the protection of the natural environment as an extension of one of the highest goals of the Sharia, namely the protection of life (preservation of the soul). Natural pollution, depletion of resources, and destruction of ecological balance are the main threats to human life and security we are experiencing today. As long as this corruption continues, so does the risk to human life.

In many cases, the Qur'an warns rich but arrogant people against divine commands, such as the people of Ad, Thamud, Madin, Gog, and Magog, who spread oppression and corruption in the land. They have been introduced as corruptors of the earth, agents of sin and destruction. Indeed, they have abused trust and integrity and stood before people who strive for righteousness. The Prophet(s) prohibited fire ignition in the ant's nest by a person bitten by ants. They also deny killing honeybees, capturing livestock, and killing them illegally and corruptly. He ordered a person to return the chickens of a bird to their mother. The Prophet(s) also prohibited the unnecessary cutting of trees that create shade and refuge for animals and humans in the wilderness (7, 12). The guidelines of religious elders express a deep and close relationship between ethics and worship with environmental issues, including animal rights. Imam Baqir (PBUH) says, "It is obligatory to cool the thirsty liver and whoever quenches the thirst of an animal or something else. God will put him in His shadow on the day when there is no shadow except the spiritual shadow of God" (16). Islamic jurists have concluded that Islam prohibits the elimination of a living creature that poses no danger to human safety and considers it a divine duty to protect his safety and health. They have extended these restrictions on religion and obligations even during wars.

#### 3.14. Indulgence and Extravagance

Extravagance means excessive use and many permissible cases. In other words, indulgence is the consumption of illegal things. Therefore, any person who goes beyond the limits of moderation of legitimate things is indulgent, like someone who consumes food excessively or uses water extravagantly, even for purification and ablution. In other words, the excesses of one person lead to the deviation of others and exceed the limit and waste the rights of others in the use of resources. The best guide for using resources and consumption is moderation, which prevents excesses. People should eat

and be grateful to God, but not extravagance. The Qur'an has made it clear that God does not like an extravagance. Other rulings on this matter can be seen in the hadiths that state moderation in eating and finishing food before being complete. In addition, the Qur'an has addressed the extravagances and agents of corruption (miseries and corruptors). It warns, "Do not follow the extravagances that cause corruption in the land and do not do good deeds" (3).

Involuntary destruction due to neglect, such as killing animals for hunger and disease or neglect of crops to destroy them, destruction of farms, land, or houses for long decay, and loss of valuable assets are violations of the Sharia. Mainly they are among the higher goals of property protection. These cases are since, in Islam, the owner is also a partner in the trust. The owner's responsibility is to adequately protect his property and use it to benefit himself and society. Therefore, the owner should not destroy or fire his property without any proper purpose (17).

#### 4. Limitations

The limitation of religious works mainly is directed to have an ability to adapt to the existing religious references, Quran and other religious sources and have a degree of *ijtihad* or complete knowledge of religious issues. Therefore, there are no significant changes or manipulations resulting in a mere review of the literature has been done.

#### 5. Conclusions

The relationship between man and nature has become uncoordinated, leading to environmental issues with urbanization and industrialization. Environmental protection in the Qur'an has been ordered throughout human history. The development and maintenance of the environment are one of the duties of human beings in the Qur'an. Islamic laws are rooted in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet of Islam, such as preventing harm and loss to others and respecting the rights of others. People did not have the right to pollute water and the environment, infringing on natural beauties and beaches. Public participation in protecting the environment and cleaning it prevented the spread of all kinds of pollution. The solution to the environmental crisis can only be created by considering the modern man's mental turmoil and rediscovering the mental and spiritual health that causes his response to the problem.

Environmental protection should find its proper place in planning. In environmental protection planning,

it is necessary to pay attention to the endogenous development model for third-world countries and to pay attention to Islamic laws and regulations for Iran and other countries. The planning of endogenous development emphasizes local material and spiritual resources, knowledge of the environment, and productivity. Islamic laws concern harmony and unity with nature and maintaining ecological balance. The environmental problem is universal, and improving environmental conditions depends on cooperation among countries. This is a global issue that needs to be addressed by all nations. The planet's future, humans, animals, and plants, depends on international and national environmental regulations and their proper implementation.

At the national level, environmental protection, awareness of its pollutants, and protective laws should be given at the school level early to implement appropriate educational programs in industrial centers, farms, and factories. International agreements must be established and tools prepared to protect the environment from nuclear weapons, testing, and proliferation of weapons observed in some countries. Furthermore, Islamic law on Sharia policies gives state powers to enforce technical standards of permissible laws, preparations, and political standards that encourage moderation and prevent or minimize environmental damage. Ecological developments and plans should support and nurture appropriate habitats and evoke different localities' and climates' desires. Economic growth and urban planning should always include environmental impact analysis and be designed to minimize harm. Individuals and institutions must be responsible for repairing the environmental damage caused.

#### Footnotes

**Authors' Contribution:** All authors have accepted responsibility for the entire content of this manuscript and approved its submission.

**Conflict of Interests:** Hooshyar Hossini is the reviewer of JHRT, and I declare I have no interference or influence in

the peer review of this paper.

**Funding/Support:** There is no funding for this research.

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