



Integration of faith and environment: A pragmatic approach

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Abstract: The cutting down of forests and the depletion of natural sources through destructive technology resulted in the warming of the climate and the diminishing of the ozone layer is a matter of great concern for modern man. Many efforts were taken at the international level to overcome the environmental crisis but all in vain. Divinity has the potential to overcome all such crises at all levels. The Muslim community is charged with the religious responsibility of protecting all aspects of the environment and the protection of the earth and its ecosystem is the first and foremost responsibility. Due to human activities, global warming is a serious threat to the world because of the environmental crisis which has a huge impact on not only humans but all creatures across the globe and raised serious challenges for the future. It seems that this problem started when a modern man stopped understanding himself as the vicegerent of God and trustee of the All-Merciful God and stopped understanding nature as a sacred sign and valuable trust from God. Environmental protection is an important aspect of Islam. This paper aims to understand the significance of religious teachings as a driving force for the majority of human beings. Islamic guidelines are worth to be implemented to protect the ecosystem and ecology for a better future. Islamic teachings in this regard not only serve in academia but its spiritual values mold human behaviors and restrict large-scale politico-colonial engagements, to safeguard the environment.

Keywords: environment, faith, Islam, legal protection, science

Abstrak: Penebangan hutan dan penipisan sumber daya alam melalui teknologi yang merusak mengakibatkan pemanasan global dan berkurangnya lapisan ozon merupakan masalah yang sangat memprihatinkan bagi manusia modern. Banyak upaya yang dilakukan di tingkat internasional untuk mengatasi krisis lingkungan hidup namun semuanya sia-sia. Keilahian memiliki potensi untuk mengatasi semua krisis tersebut di semua tingkatan. Komunitas Muslim dibebani tanggung jawab agama untuk melindungi seluruh aspek lingkungan dan perlindungan bumi serta ekosistemnya adalah tanggung jawab pertama dan utama. Akibat ulah manusia, pemanasan global menjadi ancaman serius bagi dunia karena krisis lingkungan hidup yang berdampak sangat besar tidak hanya terhadap manusia namun seluruh makhluk di seluruh dunia dan menimbulkan tantangan serius di masa depan. Nampaknya permasalahan ini bermula ketika manusia modern tidak lagi memahami dirinya sebagai khalifah Allah dan wali Allah Yang Maha Penyayang serta berhenti memahami alam sebagai tanda suci dan amanah Allah swt. yang berharga. Perlindungan lingkungan merupakan aspek penting dalam Islam. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk memahami pentingnya ajaran agama sebagai penggerak sebagian besar umat manusia. Pedoman Islam layak diterapkan untuk menjaga ekosistem dan ekologi demi masa depan yang lebih baik. Ajaran Islam dalam hal ini tidak hanya berfungsi di bidang akademis tetapi nilai-nilai spiritualnya membentuk perilaku manusia dan membatasi keterlibatan politik-kolonial skala besar, untuk menjaga lingkungan.

Kata Kunci: ilmu pengetahuan, iman, Islam, lingkungan hidup, perlindungan hukum

Introduction

Divine trust handed over to Humans is the environment and it serves as an indicator to know activities in the most judicious form and are directed to preserve it for future generations. In this way, humans are declared responsible beings all creatures to maintain the ecosystem judiciously and never pollute it or destroy it. To achieve the objective of environmental protection, an analytical methodology is applied to minutely observe faith-oriented teachings largely Islamic teaching which act as guiding principles and driving forces to protect the depletion of the environment.

A full attempt is made to rely on the originality of the available material secondary as well as primary so that essence of research may remain intact in this field and may help to understand the significance of the environment in their life. The progress of science and industry has given rise to many pollutions along with easy lifestyles. The industrial revolution and materialistic economic development whose desire has destroyed the power of the earth and the ecological system to a certain extent. Scientific and technological progress has spoiled the naturalness of the environment. This situation is very serious and alarming for

the survival of man and all other creatures found on the planet. Millions of people die every year due to environmental pollution. Therefore, it will not be an exaggeration to say that environmental pollution is a contemporary and global problem.

The Arabic word for the environment is “*Bainab*” Which is derived from the root word “*Bawa*”. According to Ahmad bin Khalil; the place of a people who settled in the middle of the valley at the foot of the hill (Kitab al-Ain). The living place of every nation is defined as the environment, it is an area surrounded by mountains. Its environment is clean, the air is fresh and its environment is completely free from pollution (al-Farabi, 1939 AH). According to the lexicographers, the meaning of *Boa* is abode, a place of residence, a destination, abode, or a place to live, i.e., an environment. In the Arabic language, another word “*Maskan*” is used for it (Rani, 2002). While in the English language word habitat is used for the same. While for a living place, the word environment is also used (McHenry, 1992).

Environmental Crisis

The main cause of the environmental crisis is the distance from the environmental rules and regulations of Islam because Islam is a comprehensive and complete code of life. A comprehensive system of guidelines is embedded in the Holy Quran about the protection of biotic and abiotic environments. The whole world-class lifestyle under the patronage of scientific developments has degraded and polluted the human and natural environment. The environmental depletion and all gifts of pollution are experienced by humans in the form of deadly diseases that badly affected the human psyche. The philosophy of truth revealed in Quranic verses helps to understand the duties and responsibilities of humans towards the environment are all-inclusive and provides a baseline for the development and protection of the environment. According to Abdul Rashid Agwan: “Biodiversity is an ecological wealth which renders uniqueness to each kind of ecosystem in the biosphere. Various ecosystems, such as forests, mountains, grasslands, wetlands, deserts, marine ecosystems, etc. are enriched by their specific biotic communities which reshape based on the presence of different kinds of plants and animals required for the formation of a particular kind of ecosystem” (Agwan, 1999).

The environment is an interaction between outer causes affecting all living and non-living creatures including human beings. All such causes are triggered by rational interaction between living and non-living factors which involve abiotic elements such as oxygen, water, light, soil, and climate jointly giving rise to an ecosystem. Accordingly, the Quran guides, humans for the balance of environment and all naturally oriented systems exist based on of balance and work in complete harmony with each other as;

“Are you a more difficult creation or is the heaven? God constructed it. He raised its ceiling and proportioned it. And He darkened its night and extracted its brightness. And after that, He spread the earth. He extracted from it its water and its pasture, And the mountains He set firmly. As provision for you and your grazing livestock.” (QS. An-Nāzi`āt/ 79:27-33).”

Any attempt to destabilize the balance in the environment through wrongly planned selfish activities would result in overthrowing the equilibrium and creating an environmental disaster (Brundtland, 2012). Quran reflects on the issue with high eloquence and considers the equilibrium of nature mandatory.

All humans must work out in a judicious way of life to protect the environment and safeguard it for coming generations. Moreover, it is the duty of all faith-based humans to safeguard the environment for sustainable development but not work on unethical exploitation of the resources that imbalance nature and give rise to natural calamities. Many religions put forth their efforts to maintain an ecosystem in its originality but to a lack of scientism in their religiosity, they can safeguard it. But among all religions, Islam has the potential to safeguard the environment and in contemporary can manage it in its proper order. It observes ecological environmental trials equally a sign of moral and ethical decline which emerge due to capitalistic and colonialist extraction of resources and their utilization as greed and rejects such approaches of depleting non-renewable resources. While observing the creational scheme of Almighty God. All human beings, the service of the earth for humans and the existence of the universe are ayatollah (signs of God) act as key factors to consider divine value and significance of life. The significance of the environment and its role in human life and the responsibility of human beings towards its protection is

vehemently emphasized in the Quranic verse. People are summoned to ponder over the purpose, meaning setup and the systematic secrecies of nature.

“And in the succession of night and day, and in the provision that God reveals from the sky wherewith He gives life to the earth after it had been lifeless, and in the change of the winds: (in all theses) there are Signs for people who use reason.” (QS. Jasiyah/ 45: 5).

Islam observes the philosophy of the environment as a true representative of all creatures in the universe and rejects its heredity characteristics which influence it. The environment provides bases for development such as culturally and intellectually by providing grounds for research. The most significant factor is the variety put available at the distinct or collective level as a promotional factor for the conservation, renewal, or development of the usual atmosphere so that a mechanism against contamination (Merriam Webster Dictionary).

For the preservation of the environment bulk of the material is uploaded on the internet as a token to preserve the environment but has ethical power to control within. According to Isangedighi Asuquo et.al, “Fueling the movement is increased consumer environmentalism and concern about the many straws that end up polluting oceans and waterways” (Asuquo et al., 2018).

Moreover, Dinograndoni, is of the view, “In the face of an ongoing struggle for family farmers, Farm Aid each year serves as an annual gathering of activists focused on food issues, environmentalism and social-justice battles” (Dinograndoni, 2018). This all happened due high cost of the products and people were forced by the capitalist economy to adopt other means for fulfilling basic needs. Environmental protection and its sustainable development is a significant feature of the Islamic lifestyle without which humans cannot live in calmness. Humans are the trustee of God in this world and earth is given them as a trust to manage it judiciously. So it is the responsibility of Muslims to care for the environment in a practical method. God has created everything with a definite purpose, be it biotic or abiotic, movable or immovable products like florae or faunae. They are exhilarated and directed to maintain the rapport between biotic agencies and their ecosystem for proper maintenance and balance of the ecological system. On a priority basis, Islam upholds the thought of environmental Safeguard and directs its followers to uphold the values of humanity to serve custodians of the environment and use all available resources for its protection.

“He is the One Who has placed you as successors on earth and elevated some of you in rank over others, so He may test you with what He has given you. Surely your Lord is swift in punishment, but He is certainly All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (QS. Al-An’am/ 6: 165).

Such command gives an impression that Islam is not only a ritual system but it is a complete way of life which guides its followers to maintain a natural balance across the globe. Fundamental teachings of Islam about environmental protection reflect globe view of Islam and guide humans for being eco-friendly. People are directed to hold every distinct issue that people face in this world. Islamic worldview helps to protect the natural environment and provides baseline guidance for the preservation conservation of natural resources and denies over-exploitation of them. The Holy Quran says:

“O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid, and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess.” (QS. Al-A'raf/ 7: 31).

Plantation and agronomy of plants is a virtue in Islam and Prophet Muhammad Saw. declared plantation as a pious deed. Prophet Muhammad Saw. said: *“There is none amongst the Muslims who plants a tree or sow’s seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, but is regarded as a charitable gift for him”* (Sahih al-Bukhari).

The significant aspect of this hadith is plantation helps to provide many benefits to all creatures and natural habitat for living creatures. Destruction of plants and trees or even cutting of trees gratuitously is prohibited in Islam. According to Prophet Muhammad Saw. Abdullah ibn Habashi reported that Prophet Muhammad Saw. said: *“He who cuts a lote-tree [without justification], God will send him to Hellfire.”* (Abu Dawood).

The imbalance of biodiversity was caused due to deforestation and became the cause of natural disasters and soil erosion in many countries. So it is necessary to plant trees on a large scale so that the environmental crisis may not engulf the whole world. This green revolution may help to protect the

environment and may help to grow trees around and in barren lands place which is lacking cultivation or greenery and areas which have almost no flora. Fourth Caliph Hazrat Ali very vividly upholds the cause of proper utilization of natural resources and considered judicious use and exploitation of natural possessions. Islam upholds the judicious use of resources for human development. Accordingly, Hazrat Ali:

“Share gladly as long as you are the benefactor, not a despoiler, a cultivator, not a destroyer. All human beings as well as animals and wildlife enjoy the right to share Earth’s resources. Man’s abuse of any resource is prohibited as the juristic principle says ‘What leads to the prohibited is itself prohibited’” (Al-Banna, 2023).

Abu Musa addressed the people of Basra that I have been sent as governor to you by the Caliph to teach the Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad and was directed to clean your streets and to clean your streets (Ozdemir, 2002). Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of God forbade a person to relieve himself in a water source or on a path or in a place of shade or the burrow of a leaving creature. These values highlight Islam’s stress on avoiding the pollution of critical resources and the importance of cleanliness (Shahih Muslim).

At the international level, many Islamic Countries and organizations took measures to protect the environment. In 2000 many organization life United Nations Environment Programme Organization of Islamic Conferences (OIC), and the Saudi Meteorology and Environmental Protection Agency (MEPA) adopted and accepted the Islamic perspective and such proposals were earlier in the 1980s under discussion to examine environmental settings. This contribution played a vital role in saving the environment from degradation (Abu Dhabi Declaration, 2001). Such interaction is having double benefits one non-Muslims understood the Islamic strength towards environmental protection while on the other side, it directly involves religion in protecting the environment for future generations. The Islamic guidelines were later issued by the forum in 2001 called Jeddah Environment Declaration from an Islamic perspective (Hussain, 2004).

Moreover, The Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad quoted about the significance of plantation and declared it equal to alms giving; Prophet Muhammad said:

“No Muslim, who plants a shoot, except that whatever is eaten or stolen from it, or anyone obtains the least thing from it, is considered [like paying] almsgiving on his behalf until the Day of Judgment.” (Shahih Muslim).

While elaborating, on the worldview of Islam Prof. Al-Jayyousi defines a decent lifestyle that provides peace and serenity on Earth which is possible only through thoughtful considerations for both people and nature (Al Jayyousi, 2007). Islamic discourse offers a sense of hope and optimism about the possibility of attaining harmony between humans and nature. Earth’s balance is dependent on the activities of human beings. If they act judiciously and rethink the way of their existence and overcome their greed nature will shower its mercy upon them. The depletion is not due to the weakness of nature but it is due to the wrong practices of humans or simply it is due to a colonial mindset which corrupts others rights, as stated in the Quran:

“Corruption has appeared in both land and sea Because of what people’s own hands have brought So that they may taste something of what they have done So that hopefully they will turn back.” (Q.S Ar Rum/ 30: 41).

Islamic world view be contingent on “we all are equal as humans” and need to work for justice. A conversion towards a justifiable society and welfare economy is important through assuming accountable progress and respecting justifiable values. Bringing a constant change is directly proportional to a shift in standards and actions. It is observed that world economies through capitalistic and socialistic practices failed to give relief to the world but Islam has strength and has a strong claim of the solutions if humans symbolize an all-inclusive, spiritual view towards human beings, earth, and the universe. People who are heedless towards the protection of human progeny and their environment are directed by Quran to know what happened to correct practitioners.

“O, Prophet Muhammad Says; ‘Travel through the land and observe how was the end of those before you. Most of them were infidels.’” (QS. Ar Rum: 30: 42).

It is observed that human actions have a direct bearing on the environment. Such actions deplete the capability of production and results in environmental crisis in the form of global warming, cloud bursting and flood disasters. Bionetworks are capable to produce in large quantities things that necessitate

good life and human-friendly production such as agricultural products, aquatic life (fishes, etc.) wood (firewood and building material) jointly called 'biomass.' Such extraction exerts pressure and disturbs the ecosystem and reduces its capacity in the future. To promote the capability of growth, it is incumbent to protect nature while promoting growth, it is critical to protect natural possessions for sustainable development for future use. While commanding his followers Prophet Muhammad directed them towards sustainable growth of agricultural lands by highlighting its high need and value in society. He also declared the importance of human communication with other animals, the protection of the natural bed of the ecosystem and the conservation of the usual setting at large (Musa, 2002).

The foremost advancement and development happened in 2015 in Istanbul, when Muslims jointly through the Islamic declaration set out a plan for saving the climate and through a moral way of thinking and conduct build up a mechanism for future sustainability. The need of the hour is that faith and environmental insight must be linked together for the safety of the environment. Professor Al-Jayyousi emphasized that the "holy view of Islam calls for maintaining a natural view of the environment, the notion of harmony and in respecting balance (*mizān*) and proportion (*mikdar*) in the systems of the universe. These notions provide an ethical dimension and a mandate for all humans to respect nature and all forms of life" (Al-Jayyousi, 2019).

The major concern in the contemporary era is the environmental crisis. To overcome such a crisis Islamic perspective of the environment has a justified claim of defining its role as a true representative which is underpinned by trustees and stewards (Khalifah). Such, a claim of Islam is underpinned by its nature of moderation and in the balance of the natural life by overcoming overeating, over manipulation and misuse of possessions.

Islam calls for the integration and protection of diversity in all forms of life. So, in this regard ecological crises are directly proportional to human ethics and values. A good number of Quranic verses have a bearing on the preservation of the Environment.

"And they strive throughout the land for corruption and God does not like corrupters." (QS. Al-Ma'idah/ 5: 64).

God believes in balance in its natural settings, and it is mandatory upon humans to maintain the natural settings for the preservation of life.

"So give just measure and weight, do not defraud people of their property, nor spread corruption in the land after it has been set in order. This is for your good if you are truly a believer." (QS. Al-Araf/ 7: 85).

"Do not seek to spread corruption in the land, for God certainly does not like the corruptors." (QS. Al-Qasas/ 28: 77).

According to Wersal that *"The Islamic view of nature has its roots in the Quran, the very word of God and the basis of Islam. The following passages from the Quran illustrate the relationship between nature and man and how this relationship inspires Muslim scholars to study the natural phenomenon, to understand God"* (Wersal, 1995).

Instead of the collective duty of humans to protect the environment human activities are responsible for the current worldwide environmental catastrophe. Pondering over ecological crises like obliteration of natural habitats, damage to biodiversity, environmental alteration, and soil erosion, everywhere human attitude and actions are responsible. Humans as a gift of God to earth acted against it, though God has created everything for him with purpose and in symmetry and balance.

"We created not the heavens, the earth, and all between them, merely in (idle) sport; we created them not except for just ends. But most of them do not understand." (QS. Al-Dukhān/ 44: 38-39)

In the contemporary era colonial mindsets at local and international levels prompted by greed and by ignorance of divine knowledge resulted in a crisis. Human responsibility is to save and protect livelihood, environment, and facilities to ensure a sustainable civilization learning from by reflecting on the fate of past civilizations.

A good number of Prophet Muhammad's, hadith explicitly discuss and pays much concern about many ecological characteristics major concern in these Ahadith is sustainable development and performance encouraged by criticism of extravagance and admonished fairness in all walks of human life.

Much attention is paid in Quran to the environmental issues and sustainable behavior of humans (al-Qattan, 1996). Islamic teachings pay much emphasis on the preservation of elements of nature, such as water, fire, forests, light and earth as common properties of humans in particular and all living creatures in general. While contemplative on Quranic verses, Maurice Bacilli classifies Quranic verses subject-wise such as astronomy, earth, formation of the universe, creation of earth and heavens, Animal and vegetable kingdom, Human reproduction, and the water cycle as essential parts of the ecosystem illustrated in the Quranic verses (Bucaille, 1977). According to him, “the word “ARZ” in Quran is conforming to the scientific biosphere. Moreover, there are verses in the surah, 25, 35 and 55 which speak about the presence of Halocline-like concepts.

Role of Islam in Overcoming Environmental Problems

Islam has the potential to help to overcome environmental challenges in a more applied way and can provide more wide-ranging positive results to overcome many current environmental challenges. From an Islamic perspective, creation is not useless and humans need to understand, whatever God created has a definite purpose because according to the Holy Book, Quran, the Whole creation is in service and serves the purpose of God. In context to the state of peace, disturbance in natural balance directly goes against the will of God and such interference leads to dire consequences. Nature is always friendly with its creation any sort of imbalance leads to natural calamities. Everyone is born free and responsible for his actions before man and God. Islam lays responsibility over its followers to uproot cruel nature which snatches the right of existence of others. Killing any animal, bird or human being or cutting trees, or disturbing the natural environment means acting against the divine phenomenon. To celebrate the work of art of life, all humans need to rejoice and safeguard biological and cultural diversity (Ansari et al., 2021). Islam preserved animal communication in the Quran, as Prophet Solomon had preserved the animal habitat:

“Your Lord inspired the bee, saying: “Set up hives in the mountains and the trees and in the trellises that people put up.” (QS. Al-Nahl/ 16: 68).

“And Solomon inherited David. He said, “O people, we have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given from all things. Indeed, this is evident bounty.” (QS. An-Naml/ 27: 16).

Islam is based on impartial, unbiased, and just values which govern its system for human equality, harmony and a healthy and useful way of life. Humans need to adhere to principles of moderation to safeguard the environment from corrupt and destructive practices. The scheme of divinity draws human attention towards moderation to save himself and others from lavish and colonial desires because ignoring moderation and balance leads to chaos and disorder.

“And if God were to enlarge the provision for His slaves they would surely rebel in the earth, but He sendeth down by measure as He willeth. Lo! He is Informed, a Seer of His bondmen.” (QS. Surah Ash-Shuraa/ 42: 27).

“And obey not the command of the prodigal, Who spread corruption in the earth, and reform not.” (QS. Al-Shu‘ara’/ 26: 151-152).

“And if the Truth had followed their desires, verily the heavens and the earth and whosoever is therein had been corrupted. Nay, We have brought them their Reminder, but from their Reminder, they now turn away.” (QS. Al-Mu‘minun/ 23: 71).

A good number of verses in the holy Quran emphasize the moderation process which stresses abstaining from corrupt practices like (Al-Baqarah/ 60: 204-205), (Al-A‘raf: 85), (Al-‘Ankabut: 36), (Al-Qasas: 77) and (Al-Nahl: 81).

People are directed to abstain from evil and corrupt colonial practices. Humans are meant for maintaining natural balance and work for the making world more beautiful for coming generations. World powers particularly those who achieved the states of superpowers have degraded and depleted the world

environment for colonial purposes and manufactured chemical and biological weapons which have worst hit the earth's environment. But it is observed that for cunning and unethical purposes world powers have put the whole world under nuclear threat and devastated a large number of countries into rubble whether in the Middle East, South Asia, Central Asia, or now Ukrainian. Though God has directed humans not to create tumult and chaos on the earth.

“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, so that they may return.” (QS. Al-Rum/ 30: 41).

The Islamic concept of development emphasizes the centrality of human beings and communities in the course of justifiable growth; and equitable standards of living (Kamali, 2002). As per Islamic teachings, “Green and Sustainable Development” is a challenge but for judicious use of cohesion, rational, sensible perception can help to build a more common understanding of environmental protection. Islamic Law guides its followers for commonalities between societies for peaceful existence and shrewd use of resources. Prophet Muhammad directed its followers for Growing sustainable developments and acquaintance with biodiversity, to preserve the ecosystem. Islam’s first provision towards environmentally sustainable development is divine guardianship. This concept indicates the benefits of God’s creation without extravagance since it’s not for him alone but for the whole human society and the coming generations. In this regard, Humans seek the assistance of the Creator to acquire the power and ability to make vibrant progress. Muslims’ obligation towards environmental protection lies and is bestowed upon them as a duty to protect the environment. It allows Muslims to intervene in all spheres of life for future utility as the environment serves as a unifying force for great service towards God by serving other creatures. Therefore, it has a moral link between faith and justifiable advances (Khalid, 2002).

“Prophet Muhammad has warned people regarding the damage to each other to preserve society from pollution and the results of pandemonium in any way.” (Kitab al-Ahkam).

Conclusion

The Protection of the biotic and abiotic environment and its awareness are fundamental and integral parts of the Islamic life cycle. Its protection is enshrined in its belief system. Humans as vicegerent of God on earth are duty bound to utilize the natural resources not as prodigals but as trustees. They have to develop a sustainable strategy to utilize natural resources to certify that God’s recompense embellishes unceasingly. The provisions of environmental preservation are gorgeously demonstrated by Shari’ah, even in the process of cleaning the face Islamically known as ablution. It helps to understand the moderate attitude of Islam by demonstrating the usage of water and other natural possessions. Being responsible for all actions and custodians of whole creation such as; water, air, soil, animals, trees, birds, etc. The chief aim of Shari’ah is to work out for the sustainable development of the ecosystem and lay down rules and regulations for the maintenance of a vigorous and sterile atmosphere free from all hazards of pollution.

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