

Ecological issue in the light of Holy Quran

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Abstract

As the topic is related to the subject of 'Islam and science, therefore the main objective of this article is to understand the different terminologies related to the environment and to see how the teachings and instructions of Islam in keeping the health and environment health have been violated In Muslim societies and how Islam guides in this regard based upon both the Quran and the hadith. A sub objective of research is to reveal the pollution problems seen worldwide and their causes in order to link them with the instructions given in the Quran about ways of living. The project also reflect the verification of the question that apart from the immense progress and modernization of the technologies, can the problems generated for the society be solved by acting upon simple rules of Islam?

The **Universe** is all of time and space. This includes planets, stars, galaxies, the contents of intergalactic space, the smallest subatomic particles, and least 10 billion light years in diameter and contains a vast number of galaxies; it has been expanding since its creation in the Big Bang about 13 billion years ago.

The system of the universe is working regularly and punctually. According to Muslim belief Almighty ALLAH is the creator

Punjab University Lahore of all its items, organisms and particles and all these things have been created in a very balanced way. Consequently all these are bound to obey His orders.

According to Muslim belief everything in this universe, has been assigned a clear duty and purpose. Man is the superior of the all the creatures. He has been sent as VICEAGERENT (KHALIFA) by the ALMIGHTY ALLAH, therefore he has the responsibility to carry out and implement God's orders. He has been bestowed the power to manipulate the world resources and utilize them for his ease and comforts. There is definite relation between man and his environment that covers a variety of aspects. This is the relationship of utilization of resources and development of new and beneficial things. Man has been provided with complete awareness of the resources present in the earth. All matter and energy, the majority of which are most likely in the form of dark matter and dark energy. So

all existing matter and space considered as a whole the universe. It is believed to be at

وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَامَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ ۖ سَوَاءً لِّلسَّالِئِلِينَ ۝

(And He has set within it mountains standing firm, and blessed it, and ordained in it its diverse sustenance in four days, alike for all those seek.)

Man, in this universe, is bound to work as a manager. It is his responsibility to use the resources on the earth in a balanced and friendly manner. Any danger provided to other species would lead man to have loss in his own interest. Man is not provided with the right to threat, endangered, or exploit the world resources. In Islam the attitude towards the world is to use the environment with all the sources of life and his resources of nature in such a wise way as to prohibit the abuse and focus on the construction and sustainable development.

All the creatures including human beings, animals and wildlife, have the right to use and share the resources of earth. Therefore any abuse of any resources, like water, air, land, and soil as well as other living creature such as plants and animals by the man is forbidden, and the best use of all resources, both living and lifeless, is approved.

وَنَبِّئُهُمْ أَنَّ الْمَاءَ قِسْمَةٌ بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ كُلُّ شَرِبٍ فَحُتَّصَرٌ ۝

(And tell them that the water shall be shared between them)

In many ahadith, the Prophet (P.B.U.H) ordered the Muslims to share in these three things: water, pasture, and fire. (Muslim)

Extravagance in using water is forbidden at private use as well as public, whether the water is scarce or abundant.

Ecology is the study of organism's population and communities as they relate to one another and interact in the ecosystem they comprise. The sun and planets constitute a system called solar system. Each one of them has unique characteristics which are usually formed on the basis of the type of mass, its composition and the distance between the planets and the sun. Earth is only the planet where life exists. The environment of our earth consist on four types of layers; the Atmosphere (air), the Hydrosphere (water), the Lithosphere (soil and rock), and the biosphere (life). The first three comprises the abiotic or nonliving component of the ecosystem, whereas the biosphere is its biotic component of

living component. It is important to recognize that the living and nonliving component of an ecosystem interact with each other.

The layer that surrounds the earth is called atmosphere. Atmosphere consists of different layers i.e. TROPOSPHERE (6-20km) STRATOSPHERE (50 km) MESOSPHERE (85 km) THERMOSPHERE(100km).

The Allah , The Glorified says in the Holy Quran;

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ ۗ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥١﴾

(He it is who created for you all that is in the earth, then turned toward the heaven, then formed seven heaven correctly and He knows all and everything.)

On another occasion it is said:

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا تَحْتَ الثَّرَىٰ ﴿٥٢﴾

To Him belongs what is the heavens on the earth, and all between them, and all beneath the soil.

Allah ,The glorified and The Exalted says on the other place;

وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيحَ لَوَاحِجًا فَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَسْقَيْنَاكُمُوهُ ۖ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ لَهُ بِخَازِنِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

And We have sent the fertilization winds and sent down water

From the sky and given you drink from it. And you are not its retainers.*

As allah says in the voice of Quran;

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُّبْرَكًا فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جِبْتٍ وَجَبْتٍ ۖ وَالْحَصِيدِ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَالنَّخْلَ لِيَسْقِيَ لَهَا طَلْعٌ نَضِيدٌ ﴿٥٥﴾

We sent down water from the sky , blessed water whereby We caused to grow gardens, grains for harvest, tall palm-trees with their spathes, piled one above the other – sustenance for (Our) servants. Therewith we gave (new) life to a dead land. So will be the emergence (from the tombs).

There are usually three parts of environment; the physical environment, biotic environment and social culture environment. The physical environment which is

highly important for living being is often called natural environment and biotic environment. It consists of natural environment a complete system of nonliving like water, land, condition, air, glaciers, solar system, atmosphere, wind, mountains, river, rain water moisture, and precipitation. The biotic environment, which is also called a biological environment and organic environment included plant, animals, mammals, under water living beings and microorganisms like bacteria and fungi.

Social and culture environment is dynamic in a way that it involves life style of human being in which culture, historical, moral, political, economic aspects of human and religion of human are discussed.²⁰

Michael Allaby describes the definition of Environment in his book ‘‘ dictionary of ecology’’ as the complete range of external condition, physical and biological, in which an organisms lives, Environment social, culture, economic and political consideration, as well as the more usually understood features such as soil, climate, and food supply.

Another definition Environment defined by Bernstein, Winkler, and Zierdt_Warshaw is that ‘‘ everything that surrounds an organism is its environment and Environment science is the study of the environment in which organisms live.’’²⁹

Human beings, animals, plants, air, water, and soil are the main element of the environment. Along with them the natural forces such as storms, cyclones, and earthquakes are also a part of this environment. All things that make up the environment are inter related. The way in people animals and plants are related to one another and to their surroundings is known as ecology. The ecosystem is a complex web that links plants, animals and other organism in the biosphere. All these things hang together. The system is a stable state of dynamic balance which means that by altering any one part of the web one can affect all the other parts. For example, the destruction of forest may have serious ecological consequences on human animals. It is the responsibility of human beings to prevent the environment from being spoilt. To make life healthy and comfortable it is required to keep the environment clean and free of danger. The causes of greenhouse effect should also be monitored.³²

As science cannot be sure about the future, it does not make definite prediction. Doubt is the basics of scientific investigation however Prophet Muhammad

(P..B.U.H.), who was taught by the All- knowing, made many prediction. Most have come true already; the rest are waiting for their time to come true. Many Quranic verses point to recently discovered and established scientific facts. As pointed out earlier, the Quran mentions many important issues of creation and natural phenomena that even the most intelligent person living fourteen centuries ago could not know. Furthermore, it uses the prophet's miracles to allude to the farthest reaches of science, while originated in the knowledge of all- knowing. One does the Quran contain everything? The Quran describes humanity and the universe. I declares clearly,

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ ۗ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۗ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلْمِتِ الْأَرْضِ
وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٥٩﴾

With Him are the keys of the Unseen. No one knows them but He. He knows what is in land and the sea. No leaf ever falls but that He knows about it, and there is no grain in the dark layers of the earth, or anything fresh or dry that is not recorded in a manifest book.

Man being the vicegerent of God fulfils a very important role in this universe. It is basically the trust with which he was bestowed. Allah created the world adorned its skies with stars, moons, and sun; and the face of the earth with plants, flowers animals, rivers seas etc. now man being the supernatural of all these beauties is considered to be the vice guardian of it. Therefore man has no right to organize the world off. He is clearly told that he will be held accountable for his actions on the Day of Judgment. In the Quran god has says He has breathed His spirit into man.^{36†}

34. Zamakshari, Abu al Qasm Mehmod Bin Umar, Asual Blagah, (Beirut: Dar I'hya al- Turath al - Arbi, Libnan, 2001), p.180

35. Al_ Baqarah, 02:17

36. Badar ul Islam, dr, Islam or Maholiat, (Lahore: Idara Tarjman al Quran, April, Pakistan, 2010), 137/22-28

37. Sad, 38: 72-73

38. Al_ Ahzab, 33:72

39. Al_ Hajj, 22:18

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتَهُ وَنَفَخْتَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

When thy Lord said unto the angels: lo! I am about to create a mortal out of mire, and when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My spirit, then fall down before him prostrate.

Everything created in the world has a unique purpose, and nature of work. It is the man who needs to cope and understand the number of creatures and things which are created in the world by the Allah as the vice president of Allah and being superior to all the creatures. Therefore is his duty to look after the things in the world. For this he is required to understand the balance lying among the things. The disruption of this balance due to any negligence, and harmful activities will lead to disastrous situation.⁴⁰

الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٥٤﴾

The sun and the moon follow courses (exactly) computed; And the star and the trees _ both (alike) bow in adoration. And the Firmament has He raised high, and He set up the Balance (of Justice).

It is also narrated in the Quran.

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الْعِبَاهِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

We created not the heavens, the earth, and all between them, merely in (idle) sport.

As human is the superior creature , therefore the rest of things and creature in the world are made to serve men.[§]

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَهُ ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً . وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٥٦﴾

40. Badarulislam, dr Islam or Maholiat (Lahore: Idara Tarjamaul Quran, April 2010) 137/27_28

41. Ar_Rehman, 55:5_7

43. Al_Dukhan, 44 : 38

44. Luqman, 31:20

45. Yaseen, 36:71

Do you not see that Allah has subject to your (use) all things in the heavens and on the earth, and has made his bounties flow to you in exceeding measure, (both) seen and unseen? Yet there are among men those who dispute about Allah, without knowledge and without guidance, and without a Book to enlighten them.

This is real blessing of Allah for man that He created the things in the universe for the man's benefit. For this great blessing man has been realized to thank Allah and has been reminded again and again to make man to think and explore. Animals, minerals, elements etc few of his blessing for which the man is reminded several times.⁴⁴

وَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِنَّا غَيْرَ آيَاتٍ أَنْعَمَّا فَهَمُّ لَهَا مَلِكُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

Do they not see that We have created for them from what Our hand have made, grazing livestock, and [then] they are their owners?

Nature has been made obedient to man, but it is as much a creature of God as man is. Neither has man creature nor is he in any way able to maintain it. It is only because God has given him the capability and capacities he can in any way do so. If the man is able to plant a tree and manage its growth or control its genetic characteristics, it is only because of the intelligence placed within him by God. Just as God has been good to man so also man must perform with the same beneficence toward nature so that he may protect himself when facing God.

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ ۗ وَلَوْلَا أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى لَّجَاءَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ ۗ وَلِيَأْتِيَهُمْ بَعْتَةٌ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

He Who has, made for you the earth like a carpet spread out; has enable you to go about therein by roads (and channels); and has sent.Natural environment with its small never_ending system is a name of complete system. Some of these system are also discussed in the Holy Quran. Universal system runs through the huge ecological balance system by via the word of (Almezan) balance in Surah Rehman.Islam has clarified that in the universe and on the earth there is a balance and a purposeful and exact measure for all kind of Things. Allah (the glorified and Exalted) says.

وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَابِي وَأُنْبِتْنَا فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَّوْزُونٍ ﴿٤٦﴾

And the earth we have spread out (like a carpet); set Thereon mountain firm and immovable; and produced therein all kinds of thing in due balance.

Furthermore, Allah (Glorified and Exalted) says:

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ ﴿٥٠﴾

Verily, all things have we created in proportion and Measure

It is also stated in the Quran:

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٥١﴾ أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٥٣﴾

And the heavens He has raised high, and He has set up the balance. In order that you may not transgress (Due) balance. And observe the weight with equality and do not make the balance deficient.

These and similar Quran verses suffice to illustrate the Islamic view on nature and the environment, and indicate the necessity to preserve the environment and the prohibition of imbalance therein Islam does not view man's relation to nature as one of conflict or contradiction. On the contrary, because the universe and life itself, just like man, are all Allah's creations, Islam treats their relation as being mutually complementary. Also, Allah has put the universe in man's service and He assigned man to cultivate the land. The Qur'an invite human beings to reflect or think about these and other phenomena and about the nature of the universe as whole:50

Dr Ahmad Shafaat describes in his article "Ecology and the Teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and Jesus", that every human activity, whether personal or public, economic or political, is subject to a moral judgement as to whether it is right or wrong or natural.

Allah (the Glorified and Exalted) states in Quran that GOD created the universe in truth and not in vain. The thoughtfulness of the universe is manifested in the final judgment :

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تُبْعَثُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

Then you are to be raised again on the Day of Judgment.

According to Islamic education institution, we can act upon following lines for use of natural resources.

- Use of natural of resources should be according to need of human beings.
- The use of natural sources should not be harmful to others creature of God.

- As man is the supreme creature of Allah, so he is to be looked for justified use of these resources, taking into thought of needs and for availability of resources?
- No other state should be allowed for its unreasonable usage which is of loss to the other.
- Islamic way of life must be adopted for safety and security of natural environment.

Keeping in view the above mentioned scenario we have to come to this conclusion that the responsibility of the protection and sharing of the environment is of the man. Today, an over view of the world and its environment at a level that it has made serious threats to many species, even man himself is not safe from the massive destruction of the environment. The better way to thank to Allah is to enhance the productivity of the soil by protection it from erosion by wind and flood preserving and farming, grazing, forestry, and mining and avoid doing its degradation by preserving and enhancing its fertility. All the acts that lead to its destruction or degradation lead necessarily to the destruction and degradation of life on earth, such acts are forbidden.

Conclusion

Now keeping in view all the details discussed in the topic it is easy for everyone to understand and to decide that it has been narrated comprehensively about ecological and environmental issues also about causes of pollution. We have also been familiarized with the technique to link all these problems with Islamic rules described in the Quran. So Islam has given great emphasis that we should keep our atmosphere neat and clean and appreciate and use natural resources carefully and try our utmost to save them.

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