

The Quranic Concept of Climate Change (Theological Study)

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ABSTRACT

Climate Change has now become a worldwide crisis. Afghanistan is considered the most vulnerable country in this regard; Religious teachings can play an important role in solving this problem. This study entitled "The Quranic concept of Climate Change" discusses the issue from theological perspective. The purpose of this study is raising the awareness of people about the Quranic theological concept on climate change. The research has been carried out in a qualitative-descriptive manner, the Quranic verses related to belief have been collected and the interpretation & Belief-relevant books have been utilized. The Islamic theological principles and teachings clearly approve that demolishing nature and harming the environment is an act against humanity and the theory of Ahl-u-al-Sunnah wal Jama'ah regarding predestination is accurate, authentic and convincing, because based on this, man deserves reward and punishment for his good and bad deeds towards the natural phenomenon.

Keywords: Climate change, Concept, Islam, Predestination, Belief, Protection.

INTRODUCTION

Climate Change is broadly believed to be the most complicated environmental issue that humankind has ever encountered. The essence of this issue has gone up to such an extent that it has attracted the attention of all people worldwide and hence has been the discussion gist and circle-point of many national and international organizations and associations. As a factual point, human behavior is undoubtedly influenced by Religion, because human's thoughts and actions are guided by an inner force named religion/belief (Da Raz 1997). So Religious Beliefs have deep roots in human nature. Based on the Islamic belief (theology), Allah created all beings including the natural world, Allah the Almighty says:

" الله خالق كل شئ وهو على كل شئ وكيل " (Sura al Zumar 62)

Translation: (Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the Trustee over all things)

The Quranic verse above clarifies that the universe is created by Allah alone. AL Ghaneemi says: the evidence of existence approves that there is no more than one creator for the universe, because if we consider that are two creators, the one will decide to do an action and another will oppose him, so the clash will take place between them which will cause the destruction of the world, but we do not see such thing, so this clearly proves that there is no more than one creator. (Al Ghaneemi, 1437AH). Based on the Quranic Concept, nothing in the universe was created by chance, nor did it create itself, nor was it created by anyone other than Allah. But it does not mean that human beings do not have any impact on the environment as many people have such misconception. This research rectifies the misunderstanding about human behavior towards nature which has arisen as a result of misinterpretation and wrong explanation of predestination in Islamic theology.

Objectives: The main objectives which are considered to be acquired from this study are as follows:

1. The presence of so many verses in the Glorious Quran about natural phenomenon, environment and climate change and building awareness of it among people.
2. Presenting the Quranic concept on preventing Climate Change in its accurate form and clarifying the role of Islamic belief in this regard.
3. Rectifying the misconception that has arisen as a result of wrong supposition and interpretation of predestination about preventing climate change.

Research Gaps: Now that Climate Change has become a global disaster. Afghanistan is in a miserable condition compared to other countries and thus suffers more problems in this regard. For this reason, it is

necessary to religiously make people aware of this issue and consequently take urgent and effective actions for preventing climate change.

Hypothesis

- 1- Is there any Belief-relevant concept about Climate Change in the Quranic verses?
- 2- How can the accurate interpretation of predestination (Qadha and Qadar) be made concerning Climate Change and what solution do the Islamic teachings suggest to this problem?

Literature Review: Many scholars of theology have done various writings in the explanation and clarification of the concept presented about nature in the Qur'anic verses. In these writings, the Islamic Beliefs are generally analyzed and figured out. For instance: the book (Sharh-ul-Aqeedah Al-Tahawiyah) of Ebni-Abil-Izz-Al-Hanafi, (Al Farq Bainal-Firaq) of Al-Baghdadi, (Al-Ihtijaj Bil-Qadhar) of Ibn Taymiyyah, and others are worth mentioning. But yet there has not been any special article or writing about Climate Change in which the accurate interpretation of predestination is expressed. But, the characteristic of this research is that here, the issue of Climate Change is studied from the Islamic theological viewpoint.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research has been carried out in a qualitative and descriptive manner. Primary data was collected from the Quranic verses which are relevant to the nature and environment, moreover the basic sources such as Quranic interpretation and Islamic belief- relevant books have been utilized, also the climate change issue has been analyzed in the light of the books above and has been described from the perspective of Islamic theology especially from the viewpoint of predestination (Qadha and Qadar). The Quranic theological concept regarding nature and human attitude towards nature is described as follows:

- 1. All beings worship Allah the Almighty:** The Quranic theological concept declares that nature and the elements that make up nature such as humans, animals, plants and inanimate objects, are not dead beings in the full sense, but these and all other beings are alive. Because they worship Allah and glorify him by a language which we do not hear and even if we hear that, we would not understand it. Allah Almighty says:

" يسبح لله ما في السموات وما في الارض " (Sura At Taghabun 1)

Translation: (Whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth, glorifies Allah.)

Imam Qurtubi narrated from Ibn Abbas (RA) that he said: "whatever is in the heavens of those whom Allah created, including the angels and everything on earth that has or does not have a soul worship Allah.(Qurtubi, 1427 AH)

- 2. Man has been made as Khalifah on earth:** Based on the Islamic belief, human being has preference upon all the other creatures. Because, he was made a Khalifah on earth and has been given the divine teachings in order to govern over other creatures on earth in the light of such teachings.

" وإذ قال ربك للملائكة إني جاعل في الأرض خليفة " (Sura Al Baqarah 30)

Translation: (And (remember) when your Lord said to the angles: "Verily, I am going to place a Khalifah on earth.)

Imam Ibn Jareer narrated from Hassan that Allah made a Khalifa on earth to rule upon his creatures according to his instructions. (Al Tabaree 1415 AH) In addition, man has been obliged to behave towards nature and environment in a way that leads to its flourish and growth rather than resulting in its devastation and destruction.

- 3. Human action has a direct effect on nature:** Although, the entire universe is created by Allah and is under his control, but since man has been appointed as a Khalifah on earth, Allah the Almighty has made the nature subservient to him and therefore, he is instructed to interact and act towards nature as a trust and take advantage of nature to the relief, prosperity and development of human society according to the natural laws laid down by Allah,. Allah Almighty says:

" وسخر لكم ما في السموات وما في الأرض جميعاً منه " (Sura Al-Jathyiah 13).

Translation: (And (Allah) has subjected to you all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth, it is all (as a favor and kindness) from Him.)

Moreover, human has been granted the control of many things on the earth which can be influenced by what human beings do. So, the good and bad actions of man have a direct effect on nature, Allah Almighty says:

" ظهر الفساد في البر والبحر بما كسبت أيدي الناس " (Sura Ar-Rum 41)

Translation: (Evil has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned.)

As we mentioned earlier that according to the Quranic concept, all things are created by Allah and are under his control, so here arises a question that is “does man have any role in Climate Change?”

In order to answer this question, it is important to clarify that there is a misunderstanding about this topic which has arisen as a result of misinterpretation and wrong explanation of predestination in Islamic theology. In this regard, there are three theological schools of thought, they are mentioned as follows:

- 1. Fatalism, (Jabarriah):** The followers of this sect are of the opinion that all things are created by Allah Almighty, they are under his control and any change or alteration in the universe/nature occurs according to the pre-made plan. According to this theory, all events are already fixed, so man does not have any role in Climate Change and similar events, as well as his actions and deeds are done according to fate and destiny. Their arguments are those special interpretations or assumptions taken from the Quranic verses mentioned above. (Al-Qarni 2013)
- 2. Free will theory:** This theory is the opposite of the previous theory. The followers of this theory are of the viewpoint that man is completely and absolutely independent in his actions and authority, he does everything out of his own free will, and he is not forced or compelled by anyone to do anything. Their arguments are those Quranic verses in which human’s actions are attributed to himself. The group in favor of this theory is called “Qadariyya. (Al-Baghdadi 1995)
- 3. Ahl-u-Al-Sunnah Wal Jama’ah:** The theory of this school of thought is located between the two theories above, which has the characteristics of moderation and balance. Based on this theory, man is neither completely forced by fate and destiny, that he cannot make any decision nor does he have absolute authority so that he can do whatever he wants, but man has been given the choice to choose between good and bad actions, and on the basis of this choice, he is obliged to do good and useful activities and avoid doing harmful actions.(Sharistani 1992). So, man should make good use of or utilize his authority and thus fulfill his religious responsibility in preventing Climate Change. Based on Islamic Belief, God is sovereign over everything including Climate Changes, but it does not mean that human beings cannot impact the environment as many people have such misconception: they say that as all the things have been created by Allah (the almighty), he himself only controls everything and humans do not have any effect on the environment because everything is predestinated, so no matter what human beings do will not affect anything. But according to the teachings of Islam, this is nothing but a false assumption. On the contrary, Islam and its guidelines teach us that all the creatures are for the benefit and goodness of human beings and therefore human beings are ultimately responsible for how they use these things. Based on these Religious Guidelines, human beings are guided to take advantage of these creatures properly and not to do anything that will result in harming nature and creatures.

RESULTS

The important results of this research are as follows:

1. There are countless verses in the Holy Quran that talk about or discuss nature and natural phenomenon such as the earth, sky, animal, plant etc. and introduce a general concept about it. Based on this concept, Allah has subjected everything to man in order to protect it and make good use of it for their benefit.
2. The Belief-relevant principles of Islam also emphasize that human beings should accept nature as a trust from Allah Almighty, they all should work together to build and develop the earth, pay serious attention to the environment conservation and prevent anything that harms the environment and causes Climate Change.
3. The theory of Ahl-u- al-Sunnah wal Jama'ah, which says that man is not forced to do anything, is a reasonable theory corresponding to the actual facts.

DISCUSSION

1. Based on Islamic Belief, God is sovereign over everything but it does not mean that human beings cannot impact the environment as many people have such misconception: they say Allah himself only controls everything and humans do not have any effect on the environment because everything is predestinated.
2. On the contrary, Islam teaches us that all the creatures are for the benefit of human beings and therefore human beings are ultimately responsible for how they use these things.

3. Based on these Religious Guidelines, human beings are guided to take advantage of these creatures properly and not to do anything that will result in harming nature and creatures
4. I do not agree with the interpretation and explanation presented by the Qadariyyah and Jabariyya sects regarding predestination (Qadha and Qadar) because they are to extremes and are not in compliance with the human actualities.
5. The characteristic of this research is that it has been conducted on a specific topic which consists of the accurate Quranic concept.

CONCLUSION

The theological principles and teachings of Islam clearly approve that demolishing nature and harming the environment is an act against humanity. The theory of Ahl-u-al-Sunnah wal Jama'ah regarding predestination is ultimately accurate, authentic and convincing because based on this, man deserves reward and punishment for his good and bad deeds towards the natural phenomenon.

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