

# The Holy Quran's Perspective on Environmental Protection and Climate Change

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## ABSTRACT

Climate change and environmental pollution are among the most significant challenges that contemporary humanity faces. Without a secure and healthy environment, humans cannot lead an ideal life. Therefore, supporting the environment has become one of the most crucial needs for the continuation of life, receiving considerable attention from many writers and researchers. Numerous research studies have been conducted regarding environmental conservation from the perspective of the Quran. However, what distinguishes this research from others is that the author, while examining the reasons for environmental pollution and climate change, also analyzes the role of belief in God and theology as restraining factors in environmental degradation and its impact on human life. The results of this research show that there are multiple pieces of evidence and reasons within the Quran regarding environmental conservation, water, weather, and climate change that align with solid scientific facts. The research methodology is descriptive and analytical, with data collection being library-based.

**Keywords:** The Holy Quran, Climate change, Environmental protection

## INTRODUCTION

Environmental pollution leading to climate change is not just a problem for a single country or a specific region; it is a global challenge that encompasses various issues. These include global warming, changes in rainfall and snow patterns, air pollution, rising sea levels, depletion of groundwater and lakes, destruction of plant and animal species, ozone layer depletion, deforestation, and acid rain. These issues can severely threaten the security and well-being of people and society. The majority of those who suffer from these climate changes are the poorest individuals within a community. As a result of these hardships, they are often forced to migrate in groups to other areas.

It should be acknowledged that non-industrialized countries and their impoverished populations play the least significant role in causing these imbalances and crises, yet they experience the greatest vulnerability. Unfortunately, our beloved country, Afghanistan, is also a victim of these challenges.

The environment and nature are constantly threatened by the unhealthy practices of certain groups. These problems cannot be solved solely through technology and the development of some international laws. Therefore, we need to seek behavioral and intellectual changes in people and their adoption of the teachings of the Quran and religion. These teachings elevate the general culture and transform human behavior towards nature. The profound Islamic religion, with sources like the Quran, contains instructions that perpetually guide humanity toward salvation. When individuals are aware of Quranic teachings, they do not perceive nature merely as their personal abode, and they engage with the environment responsibly.

Man, the steward of this earthly sphere, plays the leading role in the narratives of the Quran, and all things that exist on Earth are created for his comfort and well-being. Therefore, any changes or transformations in nature are carried out by him. This prominence makes man dearer and more noble than all material things. (Rahimi, 2020: 55)

The Holy Quran considers and proclaims the structural existence of man as the finest structure of the creation system: «لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَن تَقْوِيمٍ» (تین/4) “We have indeed created man in the best mold” And the ALLAH has created all the gifts of the Earth for him, appointing him as His representative and deputy on Earth: «إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً» (بقره/ 30) “I am putting a successor on Earth” And among all the creations in the world, He has bestowed upon man a special dignity and a unique status: «وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ» (اسراء/70) “We have honored the children of Adam”

According to the Quranic verses, man is the vicegerent of God on Earth and should be responsible for nurturing this divine trust, ensuring that the surrounding environment remains unharmed. (Muradkhani, 2022: 37) Climate change is a significant environmental challenge in the world, and studies of this kind can contribute to the integration of science and Quranic resources, enhancing the connection between the environment and spirituality, as well as encouraging individuals in a society to contemplate and motivate them about the importance of the environment.

This research aims to address the following questions:

- 1- Do the commandments of the Holy Quran encourage humans to protect the environment and prevent climate change?
- 2- How can Quranic verses be utilized for environmental protection?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The current research is presented in a descriptive documentary format. The information is collected through a library-based approach, incorporating literature reviews on the subject, including documentary studies conducted by other researchers. Additional data is acquired through library surveys and articles. In the library-based data collection method, the researcher compiles findings, utilizes an inductive approach to condense information through segmentation, proceeds to analyze the data, and ultimately issues a conclusion, addressing the research question based on these insights.

## RESULTS

Climate change, as a global challenge, and the problems raised by climate change, are of great importance in alignment with the principles and teachings of the Holy Quran. Studies indicate that nearly one-fifth of the verses in the Holy Quran are related to environmental issues. The Quran refers to human responsibility as stewards of the Earth and urges them to strive for the preservation of balance in nature and the environment, as the environment is a divine gift and its protection can have highly positive impacts on human life. The protection of the environment and preventing its destruction is so crucial that prominent Islamic scholars do not even consider its destruction permissible, not even during the course of jihad for the sake of God.

On the other hand, human activities aimed at achieving prosperity, comfort, and socioeconomic development have themselves led to environmental degradation. This degradation has caused such a drastic change in the Earth's climate that it endangers the health and life of humans and other living beings. The situation has become so dire that it is now referred to as an "environmental crisis." Therefore, to escape this crisis, it is essential to turn to ethical principles and religious texts, especially the Holy Quran, as the basis for addressing the current environmental crisis, which is fundamentally a moral crisis among human beings

- Nature is sacred and reflects divine attributes.
- Nature is a continuous creation of God.
- Nature is purposeful and well-organized, managed based on divine wisdom.
- Nature is a sign of God and a manifestation of His attributes and names.
- Nature is the arena for human creation.
- Humans are stewards of nature.
- Divine laws and traditions govern nature.
- Humans are responsible for protecting nature according to Quranic teachings.
- Unrestrained and inappropriate human exploitation of nature leads to climate change.

### Religious and Quranic Foundations of Environmental Conservation

Some religious beliefs attribute spiritual value to nature, to the extent that some individuals have even worshiped certain elements of it. Islamic thought introduces one of the more moderate and rational perspectives on nature, as it considers nature to be an intelligent entity created by God for the well-being of humanity. (Ahmadi, 2013: 25). Undoubtedly, one of the factors that pave the way for the happiness and perfection of humans in this world and the hereafter is having a healthy and secure environment. It enables individuals to nurture their physical and spiritual well-being. Fundamentally, one of the vital duties of humanity, which is the preservation of life, can only be accomplished by living in a safe and healthy environment. Consequently, the primary condition for having a healthy soul is a healthy body, and a healthy body can only be achieved when

one benefits from a healthy environment. (Firouzi, 2005: 22). The Almighty God has created all natural phenomena with certain common characteristics and qualities, which are shared among all the elements of this universe. Below, we will explore some of these attributes:

### ***Protection of nature and Environment***

Land is one of the most important and vital foundations for the continuation of the human race. Unfortunately, this foundation is being eroded, destroyed, and devastated due to the negligence and irresponsible, unjust, and profit-seeking actions of some. Every year, millions of cubic meters of drinking water, the source of life, are wasted, and large portions of the soil are subject to erosion. The production of greenhouse gases, deforestation, chemical waste, and non-recyclable urban waste are putting the Earth at an increasing risk of destruction and crisis. (Khani, 1997: 41)

Now the question arises: what role does the Quran, as a complete and divine book that answers the needs of humanity, play in protecting nature and the environment ?

Allah, the Exalted, has provided comprehensive guidance in the Quran for the preservation and vitality of nature, including prohibitions against wasteful use of natural resources, such as deforestation, destruction of fields and plants, wasting drinking water, and extravagance. (Jahan Bagloo, 2006: 44) This is because extravagance and wastefulness of natural resources lead to pollution and environmental crises. Therefore, Allah (SWT) has forbidden the wastefulness of natural resources in the Quran: «وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ» (اعراف/31) «Eat and drink but do not be wasteful: God does not like wasteful people» . In the Holy Quran, taking care of one another and protecting nature and the environment are also mentioned under the title of "enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong: «وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ» (آل عمران/104) «Let there be a group among you who call others to good, and enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong: those who do this shall be successful»<sup>1</sup> . On the other hand, environmental protection has always been emphasized in Islamic teachings due to its significance. In other words, the reasons for environmental protection are derived from the foundational principles of the Quran, and most Quranic verses describe and characterize nature, which is extracted by researchers and interpreters. These descriptions and characteristics encourage people to prioritize the protection of this divine blessing in their life plans.

### ***Respecting the Rights of Nature***

Allah, the Most High, has consistently emphasized in the Quran the importance of respecting the rights of nature, and animals, and how humans should interact with them. For example, in this Quranic verse, animals are referred to as communities, just like humans: «وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَمٌ أَمْثَلُكُمْ مَا فَرَقْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ» (انعام/38) «there is not an animal that moves about on the earth, nor a bird that flies on its two wings, but are creatures like you. We have left out nothing in the Book -- they shall all be gathered before their Lord» The consideration of the gathering of animals can serve as a reminder of human care and concern in their interactions with animals. (Nasr, 1994: 50) Animals also have a share in the banquet of the Earth, and it is not the right of humans to neglect their well-being, as Allah, the Most High, mentions in the Quran:

«وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنْعَامِ؛ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ» (الرحمن/1-10) «He has laid out the earth for His creatures. On it are fruits and palm trees with sheathed clusters [of dates]» Just as God, based on His wisdom, has established a balance in all things and maintains the order of nature with justice and benevolence, His vicegerent on Earth should also adopt a fair and benevolent approach towards animals and other elements of nature. Otherwise, human misconduct may be considered as transgression and violation. The Almighty God, in the Quran, regards transgression against the sanctity of nature, waste, and destruction of natural resources as injustice and does not include the transgressors in His mercy: «وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ» (مائدة/87) «God does not love the transgressors» Some researchers have concluded from this noble verse that according to the Quran, a person who, through corruption, transgression, and exceeding limits and boundaries, breaks the divine covenant, severs their relationship with God, and disrupts the balance between nature and the environment, becomes excluded from God's mercy, love, and compassion. The Quran, while acknowledging the right to benefit from the hidden sustenance in the Earth, prohibits disobedience in its utilization: «كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا فِيهِ فَيَحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ» (طه/81) «Eat from the wholesome things with which We have provided you but do not transgress, lest you should incur My wrath." [We said], "He that incurs My wrath shall surely be ruined»

By carefully considering the prohibition of transgression in the utilization of divine sustenance, one can interpret the prohibition and sanctity of destroying the environment and preventing others from using it. It is evident that someone who, through their transgression, destroys God's sustenance for humanity, incurs divine wrath, and this wrath will lead to their downfall. The Quran clearly expresses that trespassing on the resources of sustenance is a sin and crime that incurs the wrath and anger of the Creator and results in the downfall of humans. From the Quran, we find that violations against the sanctity of nature and environmental resources are sins and crimes that evoke the anger of the Lord, and consequently, humans should be subject to appropriate punishment in accordance with Islamic penal legal principles. Some authors have written on this topic, emphasizing that the Quranic verses clearly highlight the importance of nature, the necessity of its protection, and the obligation to address all aspects of penal law and more. Therefore, environmental destruction, land corruption, and oppression of human beings and other living beings are among the prominent forms of injustice, sin, and crime. (Khoshdel, 2019: 22) Contaminating water, soil, and air, which result in harm to humans and other creatures, should be regarded as an injustice and a violation of religious law. Appropriate punishment and methods for compensating for the damage should be deduced and presented through juristic reasoning based on the evidence and legal sources.

## CONCLUSION

The Holy Quran, as the sacred book of Islam, addresses natural phenomena and climate changes in the context of creation and divine power. This sacred book systematically refers to the creation of the world and emphasizes that the Almighty God is the creator and sustainer of everything. Climate change can also be interpreted and explained as part of nature and the order set by Allah for the world. Furthermore, the Quran bestows specific qualities upon humans and encourages them to be responsible toward the environment. As part of this world, humans must engage in constructive and sustainable cooperation with other creatures of Allah. The environment and nature are where humans are born, grow, and develop, making them their cradle. Thus, the relationship with the environment should be maintained in a way that preserves its health and sustainability while benefiting from its natural blessings. Abundant verses and narrations indicate that Allah created nature and the environment for humans, giving them the right to make use of them. However, it also emphasizes that the right to benefit from the environment is not exclusive to one generation. Therefore, the utilization of this right must be principled and just so that the present generation and future generations can enjoy a healthy life within it. Consequently, the misuse of this right, leading to pollution, environmental destruction, and creating a platform for climate change, is strictly prohibited, especially when it infringes on the rights of others, particularly future generations.

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