



## ENVIRONMENTAL TEACHINGS IN HADITH: AN ECO-THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

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## **ENVIRONMENTAL TEACHINGS IN HADITH: AN ECO-THEOLOGICAL APPROACH**

Masood Ahmed

### **ABSTRACT:**

This paper discusses the eco-teaching of Islam based on the sources of Islam known as the Hadith, with the focus on the eco-theological teachings of the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Through the analysis of major Hadiths, the article summarizes Islamic environmental ethics, with emphasis on the ideas of Tawheed (Oneness of God), Khalifah (stewardship), and Mizan (balance) that are the components of an eco-theological model. The article points to the teachings of the Prophet on the conservation of water, planting of trees, minimization of waste, and ethical treatment of animals, which provide a viable approach to the sustainable way of life. Its applicability to modern environmental problems, e.g. climate change and pollution, are addressed, and the role of incorporating the Islamic principles into the modern environmental policies is emphasised. The article ends by considering the possibility of Muslims to help in sustainability initiatives of the world, advance a vision of mercy, balance and responsibility to the creation, as was the case of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

**KEYWORDS:** Stewardship, Sustainable Consumption, Natural Resource Conservation, Environmental Ethics, Hadith Guidance

### **I. Introduction:**

#### **Background History:**

#### **The Crisis of Environmental Problems in the World:**

The world today is in a crisis of unprecedented proportions, which is posing a threat to the very place of human civilization. Climate change,

deforestation, and pollution of the environment are accelerating and with disastrous consequences including extreme weather, habitat destruction, loss of biodiversity, and endangered food security. In particular, climate change is now listed among the major issues in the contemporary world, and United Nations has reported that the level of global temperatures are rising at a rapidly disturbing pace, and it is because of this that the natural calamities, including hurricanes, droughts, and wild fires, have been increasingly frequent today, in comparison with the past<sup>1</sup>. Industrialization, urbanization and agriculture are the main drivers of deforestation, which in turn increases the impact of climate change, and at the same time, various essential ecosystems that support life on Earth are lost<sup>2</sup>. Air, water, and soil pollution have been on the increase and this has had an impact on the health of both human beings and the wild animals as well<sup>3</sup>.

This pollution of the environment is not only a scientific and economical problem but also a moral and spiritual one. But how can human beings as custodians of the Earth be in accord with their duty to nature, when such crisis are unfolding? A very special and valuable insight into this problem is afforded by the religious traditions, especially those which have a comprehensive conception of creation. The interaction between man and nature in Islam is presented in a theological context which focuses on

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, *Climate Change: The New Economy* (New York: United Nations Publications, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> A. K. Barrow, *The Ecology of Deforestation in the Developing World* (London: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> M. A. Al-Shehri, "The Role of Islam in Environmental Ethics," *Islamic Studies Journal* 23, no. 2 (2021): 45-60.

stewardship, balance and ethical responsibility<sup>4</sup>.

**Purpose of the Article: Environmental Ethics by the study of Hadith Literature:**

This paper aims at discussing the abundant corpus of Hadith literature within Islam, which has immense practical advice on the ethics of environmentalism. The Haddiths, the written words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), offer Muslims realistic and spiritual direction in every life circle including their connection with the surrounding world. Although the Quran offers a general and rather generalized manner of perceiving the world and human belonging in it, the Hadith expands on the practical side of the given concepts by providing concrete guidance on how to take care of the Earth and its creatures. With the present environmental challenges, studying these teachings would be of great help in the solutions to the ecological crises that the world is experiencing today.

The present article is expected to systematically examine the Hadiths that directly or indirectly teach the environmental challenges like conservation, pollution, and animal welfare, and sustainable consumption. This analysis will show how the teachings can be used to establish the foundation of an Islamic theological approach- a framework that incorporates Islamic theological concepts with ecological ethics and how it can be used to move Muslims toward becoming more responsible towards the environment.

**What is Eco-Theology?:**

Eco-theology is an interdisciplinary topic that focuses on the question of

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<sup>4</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1997)

the relationship between religious traditions and environmental problems. It tries to utilize the theological principles in order to interpret and respond to ecological crisis. In Islamic terms, eco-theology is based on the perception that everything created, the earth and all its ecosystems, were a testament to the will of Allah and a tribute to his qualities. This worldview is supported by the notion of tawhid (the Oneness of God) and is also based on the idea that all the things in the universe are interrelated and should be treated with respect and reverence. Human beings are khalifah (stewards or vice-gerents) of the Earth and charged with the responsibility of ensuring that a balance (mizan) is maintained and that the environment is not damaged. The Islamic eco-theology therefore focuses on the moral necessity to conserve the natural environment as a holy trust of Allah<sup>5</sup>.

Islamic thinking perceives the environment not as a resource that can be exploited and put to human use, but as something that has value and rights of its own. Muslims have the responsibility to make sure that their activities do not harm the Earth, its ecosystems and people. This idea is supported by the Hadith literature that includes a great number of teachings that emphasize moderation, conservation, and moral treatment of animals and natural resources<sup>6</sup>.

### **Why Hadith? The Significance of Hadith in Muslim Ethics:**

The second thing important in the Islamic jurisprudence and ethics is the hadiths, which comes second after the Quran. They give a comprehensive explanation of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and give

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<sup>5</sup> Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, trans. Abu Khaliyl (Cairo: Dar al-Salam, 1998)

<sup>6</sup> M. E. S. Azmi, *Islamic Environmental Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

real life teaching on how the wider teachings of the Quran can be applied in our daily life. Hadith literature, in contrast to the Quran, which is a divine revelation, is the sayings, actions and approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which were compiled by his companions. These books act as a source of knowledge of the example of the Prophet and they further guide Muslims to act as a moral compass in their endeavor to live according to the will of God.

The Hadith has a central role to play in one of the environmental ethics aspects of translating the Quranic concepts of stewardship, balance, and justice into practical action. To illustrate, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), was recorded to have promoted planting trees, prudent use of water and good treatment of animals, which are directly applicable to the contemporary environmental issues. The literature of the Hadith also provides the subtle insight into how these ethical principles would apply to the present day challenges of climate change, pollution and sustainability in resources management<sup>7</sup>.

### **Research Objectives:**

The main purpose of this article is to study the environmental teachings in the Hadith and to create an eco-theological approach that would be able to lead to modern Muslim environmentalism. The article will in particular seek to:

1. **Examining Hadiths with Environmental Relevance:** Find and discuss certain Hadiths that discuss environmental concerns like conservation, pollution, water consumption, planting trees, and animal welfare<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book of Knowledge (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1997)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

2. **Develop an Islamic Eco-Theological Framework:** Prepare a theological and ethical framework grounded in the Islamic teachings that focuses on environmental stewardship, sustainability and ecological justice<sup>9</sup>.
3. **Action of Faith-Based Environment:** Add More Significance to the inclusion of these teachings in modern environmental action and facilitate active involvement of the Muslims in the global and local environmental action<sup>10</sup>.

It is through this examination of the Hadith that the article aims to prove that the Islamic teachings on the environment are capable not only of giving spiritual guidance, but also practical solutions to the ecological problems that we experience today.

## **II. Concept of Eco-Theology in Islam:**

### **Definition of Eco-Theology:**

Eco-theology simply means the study of the connection between religion as a teaching and the environment. It looks at the way in which the spiritual traditions understand the natural world, the human role towards the natural world and how theological ethics can inform the morally sound action in response to the degradation of the environmental world. Eco-theology in the Islamic context relies on the major theological ideas in Islam, especially the idea of stewardship, equilibrium, and sacredness of the creation, that highlight the necessity of an ecological consciousness based on faith. Islamic eco-theology aims at reconciling the relationship between human development and ecological sustainability by emphasizing that humanity is not a ruler of nature, but rather custodians who are

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> M. E. S. Azmi, *Islamic Environmental Ethics*, 85-87

charged with protection and preservation of nature<sup>11</sup>.

### **1.Theological Nature Foundations of Islam:**

Islamic eco-theology has a number of fundamental theological frameworks that establish the relationship between man and nature. These are Tawheed (Oneness of God), Khalifah (stewardship), and Mizan (balance) all of which lead to the holistic interpretation of ecological ethics.

### **2.Tawheed (Oneness of God) and Creation Peace:**

The Tawheed concept, which means that Allah is One, is the basis of Islamic theology. It is believed that there is a unity of all that exists in the creation--both animate and inanimate--that has a single divine origin. Quran introduces nature as an indicator of the existence and greatness of God, and all the elements in the universe are indicators of His qualities. The interrelatedness of the human being with nature and the divine order is demonstrated by the following Quranic verse: Indeed, your ally is none but Allah and his Messenger and those that have believed, those that establish prayer and give zakah and as they bow in worship (Quran 5:55). Learning this harmony enlightens a mindset that all the matters of life are the same Creator and should therefore be revered and respected<sup>12</sup>.

Human Beings play the role of Khalifah (Vicegerents).

Humanity as the Khalifah -the steward or the vicegerent- of the earth is an essential idea in the Islamic theology. Allah has given humans control over the Earth, which is not absolute. Instead, the balance of nature is a task humans can perform to preserve nature and keep it safe. Being the

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<sup>11</sup> M. A. Al-Shehri, "The Role of Islam in Environmental Ethics," *Islamic Studies Journal* 23, no. 2 (2021): 45-60

<sup>12</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1997)



vicegerents, human beings are invited to use the resources in a prudent way, offer justice and avoid corruption of the natural world. According to the Quran, He has made you heirs on the Earth, six (6) times later (Quran 35:39), which reiterates the human perspective to be nurturers and caretakers of nature instead of exploiters<sup>13</sup>.

### **3. One of the concepts in the Universe is Mizan (Balance):**

Mizan is a concept that denotes the divine balance and harmony that controls the universe. All creation, and even the natural world, is in a series of proportions which are divinely ordained. According to the Quran, the heaven He elevated and established the balance, lest you be transgressive within the balance (Quran 55: 7-8). Mizan educates that human beings should live by the natural balance of nature, without overindulgence and extravagance. This principle suggests the focus of Islamic eco-theology on sustainability and ecology. What is regarded as a breach of this cosmic order is the exploitation of natural resources or abuses to the environment, a grave breaking of the divine order<sup>14</sup>.

### **Comparison to Other Eco-Theological Religions:**

Islamic eco-theology is quite similar to other religious traditions; however, it also presents other perspectives. An example of this is the idea of stewardship which is fundamental in Christianity but has a more anthropocentric meaning about the mastery of nature by human beings. In line with this, in Judaism, tikkun olam (healing the world) and environmental stewardship are considered as human obligations.

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<sup>13</sup> Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, trans. Abu Khaliyl (Cairo: Dar al-Salam, 1998)

<sup>14</sup> M. E. S. Azmi, *Islamic Environmental Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019)

Nevertheless, the Islamic eco-theology gives an exceptional weight to Tawheed as the concept which unites human being, nature, and God. Islam emphasizes the unity of all creation and the role of a human being in the natural world is not dominion over the natural world, but rather as a guardian. The respect towards nature in Hinduism is also fundamental, whereas Islamic eco-theology is more concerned with justice, responsibility, and balance in creation, particularly, in respect of the day of judgment, where people will be answerable to their care of Earth<sup>15</sup>.

**Defining why Eco-Theology is important now:**

In the era of green disasters, the topicality of eco-theology is never so acute. Global issues such as climate change, pollution and degradation of natural resources require a moral and spiritual answer. Islamic eco-theology provides a pattern of interpreting the moral aspects of environmental protection, which in this case, the need to save the planet is a religious obligation. Moreover, in the context of an ecologically degraded world never before seen in human history, the lessons of Khalifah, Mizan, and Tawheed give Muslims a clear set of morals: to be good stewards of the Earth so that their descendants can enjoy healthy lives.

Islamic ecological teachings require a review of human activities as they demand a change towards a sustainable living that takes into consideration the natural boundaries. Regarding the current environmental alarm in the world, the knowledge gathered through Islamic eco-theology provides a strong spiritual base to contemporary ecological activism, urging Muslims

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<sup>15</sup>S. M. H. Qureshi, *Islamic Perspectives on the Environment* (London: Routledge, 2017)

to perform environmental practices that resonate with the divine command coupled with enhancing ecological health of the world at large, along with an overlaying response to the environment<sup>16</sup>

### **III. Thematic Overview Prophetic Teachings and the Environment.**

#### **Summary of Hadith as a Guide to Ethical Dicta:**

One main foundation of the Islamic ethical guidelines is the Hadiths, the documented sayings and actions as well as approvals of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Although the Quran gives the basic outline of Islamic law and morality, the Hadith gives specifications on how to apply the Quranic teachings in life. The life of the Prophet Muhammad as demonstrated by the use of the Hadith literature offers explicit moral teachings on different life areas such as relationships with nature and the surrounding environment. These lessons are critical in acquisition of the Islamic way of dealing with ecological matters. Moderation, justice and observance of the creative power of Allah that is also applicable in how the Prophet treated the natural world are some of the four features of the Hadith literature.

The lessons contained in the Hadith will make Muslims treat environmental problems compassionately, respectfully, and responsibly. With the words and deeds of the Prophet, Muslims are reminded that it is not only an ecological need to safeguard and preserve nature but it is also a religious obligation. The teachings are particularly applicable in the modern global environmental situation.

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<sup>16</sup> A. R. F. Dweik, "Islamic Eco-Theology and Sustainability," *Environmental Ethics* 25, no. 3 (2020): 123-135

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**In the Hadiths, there are Environmental Themes:**

**1. Water Conservation:**

Water is considered to be one of the most valuable resources, and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also paid much attention to the need to use and preserve this resource. In some Hadiths, the prophet had told his followers not to waste even when there was plenty of resources. In one example, the Prophet once said, "Waste not of water, though you perform your ablution on the banks of an overflowing river" <sup>17</sup>. This Hadith reveals the Islamic rule of moderation in the consumption of resources and the need to conserve water. These teachings are still very relevant in a world where water scarcity is becoming a major issue of concern and where Muslims are urged to be sustainable in their use of water.

**2. Planting of Trees and keeping of animals:**

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized a lot on the keeping of animals and planting of trees. One renowned Hadith is that the Prophet had said, When a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person, or an animal eats off it, it is considered a gift of charity [sadaqah] to him. On one occasion, the Prophet had said, When a Muslim plants a tree or sows the seeds, and then a bird, or a person, or an animal, eats it, it is considered a gift of charity [sadaqah] to him<sup>18</sup>. This Hadith inspires Muslims to do the activities that promote the well being of the environment like the planting of trees and the establishment of green areas.

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<sup>17</sup>Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1997), 1:147

<sup>18</sup>Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, trans. Abu Khaliyl (Cairo: Dar al-Salam, 1998), 4:59

Planting of trees, in addition to beautifying the environment and offering food to the animals and people, is considered an act of charity, which can reward the individual spiritually.

Also, the Prophet (PBUH) provided an example that animals have rights and they should be treated in a kind and respectful manner. The Hadiths document the expressions of the Prophet to the abuse of animals, e.g. when a woman was condemned to lock a cat until it starved and died of starvation and thirst Books<sup>19</sup> 19. Those lessons also help underline the ethical treatment of all animals and support the notion of stewardship of nature.

### **3. Cleanliness and Sanitation:**

Islam is very much concerned with cleanliness and alone the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) explained that half of faith is cleanliness. The Prophet said, "Cleanliness is half of faith"<sup>20</sup>. This attention to cleanliness is also applied to the surrounding. The Prophet asked his adherents to maintain the cleanliness of their environment, eliminate toxic items in the areas, and maintain sanitation in their neighborhoods. The Hadith emphasizes the value of environmental cleanliness as a physical and spiritual duty, by connecting the concept of cleanliness and faith.

### **4. Sustainable Consumption:**

Islam teaches about the moderation in every sphere of life, and the consumption is not an exception. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) urged moderation of consumption and discouraged profligacy and wastefulness. There is a famous Hadith which says, eat and drink but do not be too

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 3:633.

<sup>20</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 1:153

much. In fact, He [Allah] dislikes the exaggerated"<sup>21</sup>. This lesson underlines the fact that the earth is a finite source whose resources should be used sparingly and this is an ethical decision on sustainability. This message can be interpreted today as an appeal to make consumption more sustainable and, in the process, less wasteful and more resource-saving.

**5. Ban on Environmental Destruction (Pollution, Wastage):**

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) always discouraged actions which led to negative effects on the environment. The Hadith literature is full of explicit restrictions against polluting the water source, causing harm to animals, and using resources in ways that waste them. To take an example, the Prophet is quoted saying, Do not do harm to yourself or others"<sup>22</sup>. This principle is extended to environmental damage, and this means that pollution of air, water or soil is against Islamic ethical standards. Muslims are taught to be caretakers of the Earth, not to do any activities that will lead to ecological degradation.

**6. Rewards (e.g., Rewarding Elimination of Things that Hurt Animals, Feeding of Animals):**

Environmental kinds of rewards were frequently discussed by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). And in another he said, a Muslim who hides a harmful object on the highway of people will be given a good deed as his reward<sup>23</sup>. This is an encouragement of Muslims to do good to the wider society by clearing the roads, keeping their localities clean and making sure that whatever they do does not endanger others or the environment. In

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<sup>21</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 7:162

<sup>22</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 7:137

<sup>23</sup> Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, 4:116

the same fashion, animal feeding, water to thirsty animals, and guarding of natural resources is also viewed as an act of charity in Islam.

#### **7. The importance of Mercy (Rahma) and Stewardship in the Life of the Prophet:**

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was merciful (rahma) in all his life affairs including with the environment. One of the teachings of his is that mercy to animals, plant and the earth is a part of the religion. The Prophet in one of his sayings said, 'Whoever is good to the creatures of God, he will be good to himself'<sup>24</sup>. This brings out the strongly entrenched Islamic doctrine that all animals, either human or non-human, are to be treated with mercy and respect. The life of the Prophet can act as a blueprint of how Muslims are able to treat the environment kindly, compassionately, with a sense of divine responsibility.

#### **IV. Examination of Environmental Selected Hadiths:**

##### **1.Planting of Trees and Agriculture:**

Among the most vivid of the Hadiths illustrating why the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was so keen on environmental conservation is the words, "Unless the Hour (Day of Resurrection) is established, and one of you was holding a palm shoot, take advantage of one second ere the Hour is established to plant it"<sup>25</sup>. This Hadith relates the significance of sustainable behavior, even when there is a crisis looming. The metaphor of planting a tree in the last moments before the Day of Judgment is the message of hope, long-term responsibility, and the ecological

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<sup>24</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 8:74

<sup>25</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1997), 1:147

sustainability in the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) message.

The words of the Prophet mean that every action that brings to the environment a better condition, regardless of the size, is worthwhile and significant. The planting of a palm tree, specifically, which yields food and other advantages to humans and animals, is indicative of the larger Islamic value of giving back to nature. The symbolism of planting even in the face of the imminent catastrophe represents the belief in the potential of a positive change and sustainable development, which becomes especially sad in the era of environmental crisis.

Interpretation: This Hadith teaches us that in Islam environmental responsibility goes beyond the immediate issue of the world. It lays stress on optimism, the long-term significance of long-term ecological behavior and the sustainability of natural resources. Planting is an act of future commitment, even in a situation where the end is seemingly close, and thus it serves as a powerful reminder of the necessity of investing in the wellbeing of the Earth eventually, on behalf of future generations<sup>26</sup>.

## **2. Water as a Sacred Resource:**

The conservation of water is among the core aspects of Islamic environmental ethics and the teachings of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on this matter are very practical and spiritual. The Prophet pointed out the need to use water sparingly even at the time when it was in abundance. He also said, Do not squander water, even though you conduct your ablution (wudu) by the banks of a flowing river of plenty <sup>27</sup>. The importance of this Hadith is that it emphasizes that the practice of conserving water is not

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<sup>26</sup>Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, trans. Abu Khaliyl (Cairo: Dar al-Salam, 1998), 4:595

<sup>27</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 1:153



only an environmental task but also a religious one.

The water is a holy possession according to the Islam religiosity, which acts as both a physical sustenance and a spiritual cleansing. The prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized that water is to be used carefully and with responsibility. This teaching is very relevant in the sphere of the contemporary environmental issues, particularly in the context of the increasing concern about the water shortage. Muslims are being challenged not to waste themselves in every area of life especially when it comes to water, which is a limited and valuable resource.

### **Significance of Not Polluting Water Sources:**

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also preached against pollution of water sources. Once he was quoted saying in one part, Do not pollute the water, it is a gift of Allah)<sup>28</sup>. This commandment is further extended to the wider Islamic principle according to which the natural resources provided by Allah shall be respectfully handled and be preserved to this new generation. The pollution of water sources either with direct contamination or waste is deemed as a breach of the Islamic ethical principles.

### **3. Animal Welfare:**

Another important point of Islam environmental ethics is the welfare of animals. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) attached much importance to the humane treatment of animals, and there are numerous Hadiths which describe the moral duties of Muslims in relation to animals. A famous example is that of a woman who was disciplined because she had locked a cat as punishment in the room until it starved to death. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) reprimanded her actions and said that she would be

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<sup>28</sup> Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, 4:125

punished in Hell because of her cruelty<sup>29</sup>. This narrative highlights the fact that animal abuse is a grievous both moral and religious sin in Islam.

#### **Reward of Giving Water to a Thirsty Dog:**

Unlike the punishment of cruelty, the Prophet (PBUH) has narrated one story about a man who was rewarded because of giving water to a thirsty dog. One of the Hadith states that a man passed by a dog licking the ground out of thirst. He picked out a shoe, and filled it with water out of a well, and handed it to the dog. God thanked his action and pardoned his sins<sup>30</sup>. As pointed out in this story, kindness to animals is an activity greatly appreciated in the Islam religion and such kind deeds results in spiritual benefits.

#### **Ethical Treatment of Animals as a Divine Command:**

These are the instructions that create the foundations of Islamic teachings about the ethical treatment of animals. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advised his people to treat animals kindly, take care of them, and to ensure that they do not cause them undue suffering. Islam believes that animals belong to the creation of Allah, and hence it is their right that should not be violated by man.

#### **Reduction and Moderation of Waste:**

The teachings of Islam also stress that one should be moderate (wasatiyyah) in every aspect of life including consumption. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) told us, eat and drink, but be not extreme. Yes, He [Allah] does not take a liking to the excessiveness<sup>31</sup>. This Hadith is a reminder of the Islamic doctrine that excess consumption, be it of food,

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<sup>29</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 7:133

<sup>30</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 7:102

<sup>31</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 7:162

water or any other resources, will result in waste and environmental degradation.

The ban on extravagance (israf) is not applied only to the material consumption, but also to the spiritual consumption. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also taught that one must not waste even in the worship. An example is that when wudu (ablution) is performed with the water, or when performing a ritual sacrifice; this is to be done with moderation. This is indicative of the larger Islamic morality of sustainability, whereby Muslims are encouraged to adopt a moderate view of resource utilization whereby there is a reduction of wastage of resources and the resources are efficiently utilised.

#### **Cleanliness and Hygiene:**

The cleanliness is one of the main values in Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) once said, Cleanliness is half of faith<sup>32</sup>. This lesson emphasizes on individual and community hygiene, and environmental purity. The Prophet (PBUH) has advised Muslims to ensure that their surroundings are clean, eliminating any harmful items in their areas and to observe hygiene in their lives.

Hygiene of the Environment in the Public and the Person: Islam emphasizes the fact that cleanliness is not only a personal thing, but the community and the environment as well. Roads, markets and other places of social interaction should be kept clean of rubbish and dangerous items. The prophet Muhammad (PBUH) taught that, clearing waste substances in the streets is a charity, which does not only benefit the members of the community, but also the environment.

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<sup>32</sup>Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 1:169

Burial of Waste, Cleaning Streets as Charity: The Prophet (PBUH) described environmental hygiene as a benefit of the spirit too, saying that it was a charity to get the waste out of the streets or to bury harmful things (sadaqah)<sup>33</sup>. It is based on the Islamic realization that environmental conservation is not just an ecological responsibility, but a religious one also.

### **Green Justice and Responsibility:**

Islamic doctrines value the notion of justice (adl) and not in the social and economic domain only but also concerning the natural world. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) always reminded his followers that everything created has its rights and human beings are answerable to the manner in which they manage the creation. It is declared in one of the Hadith, that Allah will question His servant on the Day of Judgment on four points: about his life, his youth, his wealth and the way he employed his resources<sup>34</sup>. This supports the idea that humanity will be responsible in the way it manages the earth and resources.

Idea of giving nature its due rights (Haqq al-Bi'ah): Haqq al-bi'ah is an idea denoting the rights of the environment which must be met by humans. These rights are: preserving the natural resources, maintenance of biodiversity, and the welfare of the animals and plants. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) considered the environment a component of the supreme order and human behavior should be oriented to the balance of nature which is provided by Allah.

### **V. The Environmental Role Model of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH):**

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<sup>33</sup> Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, 4:118

<sup>34</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 8:121

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### **His Life: Minimalism, Naturalism:**

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) led a life that is an exemplar of plainness, humility and appreciation of nature. The Islamic principles of moderation and ethical treatment of all creation are shown in his life. The Prophet (PBUH) was a modest man despite having been the leader of the increasing Muslim community. He was not given to much luxury or extravagance, where he could have easily afforded it. His garment was not fancy, his food basic, and his house not luxurious which was a continuation of his belief in reducing waste and not over consumption.

The Prophet used to appreciate nature in his day to day activities. He would take strolls in gardens, he would sit under trees and would ask his companions to appreciate the beauty of creation as an indication of the strength of Allah. To illustrate, the prophet (PBUH) is said to have once sat in a garden and commented on the beauty of the plants and flowers saying, "In the making of the heavens and the Earth and in the alternation of the night and the day are signs To those of understanding" (Quran 3:190). This demonstrates that the Prophet (PBUH) identified nature as something divine, which needs to be taken care of and adored. He had shown his followers by example that such a life was in harmony with nature, that the real wealth of life was in simplicity and awareness of the creation<sup>35</sup>.

### **Environmental Ethics in the Governance of His (Medina Charter, Market Regulations):**

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) made environmental ethics part of how

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<sup>35</sup> M. E. S. Azmi, *Islamic Environmental Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 75

the government of Medina was run. Since he was the political leader, it was his responsibility to make sure the well-being of the community and the environment was preserved by law and social norms. The Constitution of Medina (also referred to as the Medina Charter) is one of the major documents that resonated with this, as it was a document that defined the rights and responsibilities of the different communities in Medina, including the Muslims, the Jews, and others. The charter spelled out the principles of the social justice, mutual respect and protection of the natural resources.

Market regulations were also established by the Prophet (PBUH) that encouraged fairness, honesty and ethical utilization of resources. The Prophet forbade hoarding and price manipulation of goods that would result into wastefulness or exploitation. He also stated that business men are supposed to transact business in a way that is honest and fair and he urged Medina people to embrace ethics in their economic dealings. The aim of these regulations was to minimize wastage, extravagance, and misuse of natural resources, and the economic practices of the community were to be equated with the Islamic principles of moderation and sustainability<sup>36</sup>.

#### **Natural Reserves (Hima and Harim) Protection:**

The creation of Hima (protected areas) and Harim (sanctuary areas) by the Prophet is one of the first examples of Islam in regard to environmental conservation. Certain areas were declared by the Prophet (PBUH) as sacred areas, which would not be exploited in terms of hunting and cutting

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<sup>36</sup>Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1997), 5:203

down of trees. The Prophet (PBUH) as an illustration created the Hima that was surrounding specific pastures and forests to avoid over-grazing and to protect the sustainable utilization of resources. He mentioned, There is a Hima to the Messenger of Allah, And there is a Hima to the ruler, and there is a Hima to the people<sup>37</sup>.

The idea of Hima refers to some of the earliest Islamic conservation patterns of nature in which specific regions were considered not to be exploited to conserve biodiversity, water catchment zones, and ecosystems. By conserving these lands, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) made sure that the resources contained in these lands were regenerable and sustainable to be used by future generations. A different Islamic empires subsequently adopted the Hima system, which remains a significant notion in Islamic environmental law at present.

**Agriculture and Animal Husbandry to be encouraged with compassion:**

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was also a huge proponent of agriculture and animal husbandry and preached their ethical and sustainable use. He dismissed the idea of clearing the land, farming it and raising animals humanely and kindly. The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said, When a Muslim plants a tree or sows the ground, and then a bird, or a person, or an animal feeds on it, it is considered to be a charitable gift [sadaqah] to him<sup>38</sup> [38] This Hadith does not only highlight the significance of agriculture towards the welfare of the community, but also highlights the spiritual significance of such practices.

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<sup>37</sup> Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, trans. Abu Khaliyl (Cairo: Dar al-Salam, 1998), 4:555

<sup>38</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 1:147

The teachings of the Prophet gave an extension to the care and moral treatment of the animals. He pointed out that animals must be treated with compassion and respect and they must not be overworked or abused. He taught Muslims to take care of the simple needs of animals and not to inflict any unnecessary suffering on them. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was a compassionate person towards animals and his example has influenced the Islamic doctrine of animal welfare over the centuries<sup>39</sup>.

### **Prevention of Over-Consumption and Advocacy of Recycling/Upcycling:**

According to the concept of moderation, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to preach against excessive consumption and wastefulness constantly. The Prophet (PBUH) stressed the need to conserve resources even when performing a worship activity such as taking a shower in water. He replied, "Waste not water, although you may be at a running stream<sup>40</sup>[(40)]. This lesson is indicative of a wider Islamic view of sustainable consumption whereby moderation is promoted in all aspects of life, including food, water, and other things.

In addition, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advocated recycling and re-using of the items. In one of the instances, the Prophet (PBUH) took an old garment and made it into a new mat, which is an example of the Islamic value of upcycling, or how to make old or used items into new and useful items. This was not only a waste reduction measure, but also an expression of the Islamic ideology of using the resources available without waste. The example of the Prophet in the reuse of things established a precedent of

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<sup>39</sup>Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, 4:601

<sup>40</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 7:161



ethical handling of resources in which we need to save the things we have instead of falling into a culture of disposability<sup>41</sup>

#### **VI. Eco-Theological Framework based on Hadith:**

The environmental ethics of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which are inherent in the Hadith literature can provide a deep understanding of the environmental ethics and give the basis of an eco-theological system in Islam. This model incorporates major principles that are inspired by the teachings of the Prophet on nature, care and accountability to the planet. The most important principles that can be induced out of the Hadith literature include:

##### **Sacredness of Nature:**

According to Islam, nature is considered as a manifestation of the Allah who created it, based on his power, wisdom and mercy. It is highlighted that nature is sacred with a lot of Hadiths where the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) reminded people on the necessity to respect and preserve nature. The Quran alone states that the Earth and its resources have been made available by God to the human race but merely as a trust (amanah) to be taken care of in responsible ways. The Prophet (PBUH) exemplified this reverence by promoting sustainable trends, like planting of trees, water conservation and the treatment of animals in a humane way<sup>42</sup>. The conception of nature being sacred gives expression to the larger Islamic perception of the universe as a unified, divinely made system. In this respect, it is the responsibility of human beings to preserve and take care of this holy creation instead of destroying it.

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<sup>41</sup> Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, 3:325

<sup>42</sup> M. A. Al-Shehri, *The Role of Islam in Environmental Ethics* (London: Routledge, 2019), 58

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### **Accountability Before God:**

The Islamic ethic of being accountable to Allah takes a central stage and it is applied to the environment. It is clear in the Hadiths that whatever one did including environmental activities will be judged in the Day of Judgment. According to one such Hadith, the servant of Allah will be questioned on his life, on his wealth and how he utilized his resources<sup>43</sup>. This involves the way one treats nature- the way he consumes Nature resources, treat animals or the way he preserves the natural habitats. According to the Islamic faith, the Earth and its resources are regarded as an amanah (trust) entrusted by Allah, and it is the duty of humans to take proper care of the resources and use them in a just manner. This duty solidifies the Islamic eco-theological belief that environmental degradation or pollution, waste and over-consumption is an insult to the divine order and will be answerable.

### **Justice and Mercy to the All creation:**

Two of the most recognizable attributes of the Islamic teachings are justice (adl) and mercy (rahma), which are shared by all of the creation, including the natural world. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stressed that human beings are required to treat animals well and they must not harm the environment. And, as an instance, he prohibited inhumane treatment of animals, saying: Whoever is merciful to the creatures of God, will he be merciful to him?<sup>44</sup>. This is applicable to all of the creatures, humankind, animals, plants, and even the non-living components of nature as they all

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<sup>43</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1997), 5:243.

<sup>44</sup> Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, trans. Abu Khaliyl (Cairo: Dar al-Salam, 1998), 4:602

possess their own intrinsic worth and rights in Islam.

The principle of justice requires the fair treatment of nature in terms of fairness and respect. In this context, justice and mercy is not only limited to human interaction but extends to the whole ecosystem. Prophet (PBUH) proved this by his words and deeds and emphasized the need to keep harmony and balance in nature. Justice within Islam, then, also implies that every type of life should be taken care of, that ecosystems are not spoiled, and Earth resources should be distributed in a fair and sustainable way<sup>45</sup>.

#### **Balance and Sustainability:**

Mizan (balance) is a fundamental principle of Islamic eco-theology. The balance of nature is frequently mentioned in the Quran where the harmony that prevails in the universe is described. The prophet Muhammad (PBUH) reflected this balance between God in his teachings and deeds. He promoted the idea of making use of resources in a sustainable way because humanity has a responsibility of preserving the natural balance and not to interfere. As an illustration, Prophet (PBUH) once said, the earth is green and beautiful and Allah has given you to take care of the earth as caretakers of the earth<sup>46</sup>.

This concept of Mizan reminds that Earth has to be utilized not to be overused or squandered. It promotes sustainable farming, water preservation and proper handling of all the natural resources. Human consumption is not the only sphere in which the principle of balance is applicable, as it also applies to the protection of ecosystems and the fair

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<sup>45</sup> M. E. S. Azmi, *Islamic Environmental Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 102

<sup>46</sup> Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 7:147

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allocation of natural resources.

**Faith and active Stewardship and Reform:**

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was a spiritual figure, but he was also a practical example of environmental protection. His life showed a proactive discussion of preserving the environment through planting of trees, water conservation or ensuring animal welfare. The Hadiths encourage Muslims to take a proactive part in environmental change, as the Khalifah (vicegerent or steward) of the Earth. Muslims as custodians have a role of ensuring that they enhance environmental justice, sustainability and preservation.

Here, as an example, the Prophet (PBUH) encouraged people to plant trees and greeneries as it was a kind of charity (sadaqah). In one of the Hadiths he said, When a Muslim plants a tree or sows, and a bird, or a man, or an animal, eats of it, it is considered a charity to him"<sup>47</sup>. This is the active participation that the Muslims are urged to take in conserving the environment-doing things that not only benefit them but also help in the welfare of the society and the environment in general.

**Communication with Contemporary Environmental Ethics:**

The eco-theological model based on the Hadith is consistent with recent environmental ethics, especially the ones focusing on the notion of sustainability, fairness, and intergenerational justice. The modern environmental movements are concerned with numerous issues, including climate change, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, and pollution. The guidance on how Muslims can resolve these problems in a moral and

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<sup>47</sup> Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, 4:586

spiritual context can be found in the Islamic principles in the Hadith. The focus on balance (Mizan), justice (adl), and mercy (rahma) helps to give a good foundation to sustainable development that would not infringe on the dignity of any life forms, whether human or non-human.

#### **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) compatibility:**

The Islamic eco-theological system discussed in the Hadiths is compatible with most of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially those dedicated to environmental sustainability and social justice. For example:

**Goal 6:** Clean Water and Sanitation is in line with the teachings of Prophet on water conservation and on the forbidding of pollution<sup>48</sup>.

**Goal 13:** Climate Action is reflective of the Islamic focus on stewardship and sustainable exploitation of natural resources<sup>49</sup>.

**Goal 15:** Life on Land is in line with the messages of the Prophet that mention the planting of trees, animal care, and protection of their habitat<sup>50</sup>. Islamic eco-theology promotes active involvement in such worldwide endeavors, and it goes to show that religious values can help in the attainment of sustainability and environmental justice both locally and at the global arena.

#### **VII. Implications of Modern Islam and the Environmental Activism:**

The teachings of the environment in the Hadith literature are not merely limited to the past but also, have great implications today towards the environmental activism of the Muslim world. Currently, Islamic

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<sup>48</sup> United Nations, *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020* (New York: United Nations, 2020)

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 45

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 66

communities and scholars are striving to incorporate the moral values of stewardship, sustainability and environmental justice in the contemporary environmental movements. These activities involve numerous eco-Islamic projects that put special focus on the overlap between faith and environmental protection.

### **Examples of Eco-Islamic Initiatives:**

#### **1-Green Mosques:**

Among the brightest eco-Islamic projects is the concept of building green mosques. Such mosques include green building methods, energy saving technologies, and green designs. As an example, Islamic values of environmental stewardship have been reflected by the use of solar energy, water conservation systems, and green spaces in the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque in Oman. Also, Malaysian and Indonesian mosques have incorporated renewable energy, water recycling and energy-efficient lighting. These not only lessen the ecological footprint of places of worship, but also act as a guide to the entire Muslim community, showing that religious institutions can be at the forefront in combating environmental sustainability<sup>51</sup>. To have a better insight into the influence of the Green Mosque Initiative, the readers can refer to the following research: (Ahmed, Basheer, and Saifullah Bhutto. "The Role of Islamic Ethical Frameworks and Organizations in Addressing Climate Change: Case Studies of Islamic Countries' Contributions to Environmental Sustainability." *Journal of World Religions and Interfaith Harmony* 3, no.

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<sup>51</sup>M. E. S. Azmi, *Islamic Environmental Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 119

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2 (December 2024): 247–61.)<sup>52</sup>

## **2-Islamic Eco-Fatwas**

Islamic intellectuals have also given eco-fatwas (legal rulings) to give religious guidance on environmental matters. These fatwas are based on the teachings of Quran and Hadith to provide solutions to the modern environmental issues like climate change, deforestation, and pollution. As an example, in 2008, the Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America declared that environmental conservation is a religious obligation, calling on Muslims to be wasteful and to take on sustainable practices that would enhance sustainability. Other fatwas have been aimed at decreasing carbon emissions, protecting water resources and eco-friendly agriculture. These decisions assist Muslims to make their way in contemporary environmental issues under the guidance of Islamic law and ethics<sup>53</sup>.

## **3-Community-based Conservation in Muslim Nations:**

Community-based conservation initiatives are being used to tackle both local environmental issues and comply with Islamic principles in most Muslim-majority countries. Indicatively, in Morocco communities have joined hands to conserve local forests against deforestation by adopting sustainable agricultural methods and planting trees. Local communities in Egypt have also collaborated to save the Nile River by cleaning it and promoting good waste management in their attempts to conserve the river. These grassroots activities are indicative of Islamic principles of

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<sup>52</sup> Ahmed, Basheer, and Saifullah Bhutto. "The Role of Islamic Ethical Frameworks and Organizations in Addressing Climate Change: Case Studies of Islamic Countries' Contributions to Environmental Sustainability." *Journal of World Religions and Interfaith Harmony* 3, no. 2 (December 2024): 247–61.

<sup>53</sup>F. A. Al-Shehri, "Islamic Eco-Fatwas and Their Role in Promoting Environmental Sustainability," *Environmental Studies Journal* 25, no. 2 (2021): 84-95

stewardship and common responsibility which underline the need to have community participation in environment conservation.

**The role of the Islamic Scholars and Institutions in encouraging environmental awareness:**

Scholars and institutions of Islam have a very important role to play in creating environmental awareness among Muslim communities. They create awareness of the ecological teachings in the Quran and the Hadith through sermons, lectures, and publications and encourage Muslims to coexist with nature. Particularly active is the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) which has been organizing conferences and seminars on environmental responsibility in Muslims.

Additionally, the environment ethics are now being introduced in Islamic universities and research institutions. These schools are graduating scholars who have been trained and trained in both Islamic theology and environmental science and thus the gap between the faith-based principles and environmental protection through scientific means is bridged. This amalgamation of Islamic beliefs with environmental science makes it possible to reach the global issues of ecology in a more comprehensive way<sup>54</sup>.

**Solution to Climatic change and Pollution using faith:**

The Islamic solutions to climate change and pollution are based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) focus on environmental justice, sustainable resource use, and whether we should treat all creation ethically. Islamic organizations have, in particular, spread the notion of

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<sup>54</sup>R. M. Qureshi, "The Role of Islamic Scholars in Environmental Education," *Journal of Islamic Education* 18, no. 1 (2020): 56-67



sustainable development, which is respect able of the rights of future generations and of the sanctity of the creation of Allah. Muslim bodies have also participated in global environmental movements in the fight against climate change, which include policies that minimize carbon emissions as well as the adoption of renewable energy sources. Moreover, certain Islamic organizations are drawn to the negative impacts of industrial pollution, attempting to introduce green technologies to industries and contributing to the policies to minimize environmental harm<sup>55</sup>.

#### **Incorporation of Hadith-based Eco-Teachings into School Education and State Policy:**

Incorporating eco-teachings rooted in Hadith into school syllabuses and government policy is an important action towards making sure that future generations of Muslims have an excellent environmental responsibility. Schools are starting to teach in various countries, such as Indonesia and Pakistan the environmental ethics of Islamic teachings, focusing on the concept of stewardship (Khalifah) and balance (Mizan) in their connection to the natural world. These teachings consist of practical activities, i.e. recycling, water conservation, and tree planting, placed in Islamic moral context.

In addition to that, these Islamic environment principles are influencing the formulation of policies by the government in certain Muslim-majority countries. To illustrate, the government in Saudi Arabia has incorporated into its Vision 2030 developmental plan, projects that seek to mitigate

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<sup>55</sup> S. A. Rahman, "Faith-Based Solutions to Climate Change in the Muslim World," *Journal of Environmental Ethics* 31, no. 4 (2019): 220-230

carbon emissions, conserve natural reserves and also increase renewable energy utilization. These policies are a result of the impact of Islamic teachings where the responsible handling of the natural resources and preservation of the Earth to the future generations are demanded<sup>56</sup>.

### **VIII. Opportunities and challenges:**

#### **Ignorance or Insensitivity to Hadiths:**

The absence of awareness or misinterpretation of the teachings of Hadiths is one of the main problems of implementing Hadith-based environmental teachings. Although the environmental ethics of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are fully recorded in the Hadith literature, most Muslims might be unaware of the particular environmental principles that the Hadith contains. This may be due to the fact that environmental concerns are not under a lot of emphasis in the traditional religious education which is more inclined to ritual worship, legal issues, and personal behavior.

In addition, in a few cases, the Hadiths can be misunderstood or eliminated in favor of more powerful religious or cultural customs. To take an example, the teaching contained in the Hadiths about moderation in consumption and the management of resources sustainably may be drowned by the consumerist mindset in certain Muslim-majority societies, in which the desire of achieving economic growth and material opulence may prevail over environmental issues. The difficulty is, then, not merely to make these Hadiths known, but to make people interpret them so as to

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<sup>56</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Arab States Environmental Development Report* (Dubai: UNDP, 2021)

bring them into their proper perspective in the wider context of Islamic ethics <sup>57</sup>.

### **Barriers of the Institution and Culture:**

The institutional and cultural impediments also pose a great challenge to the extensive application of environmental ethics on the basis of Hadith. Economic growth and modernization in most of the Muslim majority nations has contributed to environmental degradation because emphasis has often been directed towards industrial growth, urbanization, and mass consumption. Cultural habits that do not conform to the Islamic environmental ethics, including wastefulness, overconsumption, and nature neglect can prove dissuasive in the effort to nurture ecological awareness.

Also, most Islamic establishments, including religious schools (madrasas) and mosques, have not traditionally incorporated environmental education in their curriculum. Religious authorities or scholars have not always been concerned with environmental sustainability and environmentalism, and this has limited the effects of Islamic teachings on environmental management. It takes a collective action to include environmental ethics in religious education and stimulate the Islamic institutions to be more engaged in supporting sustainability to overcome these institutional barriers <sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup>M. E. S. Azmi, *Islamic Environmental Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 143

<sup>58</sup>F. A. Al-Shehri, "Islamic Education and Environmental Ethics," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 20, no. 1 (2020): 102-115

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### **Digital Opportunities, Mosques, and NGOs:**

In spite of all these challenges, there exist great opportunities to spread Hadith based environmental teachings with the help of contemporary platforms and programs. Online communication platforms, such as social media, websites, and online learning platforms, present an effective channel of targeting a wide range of population, particularly young people. Islamic scholars and environmental activists can create awareness regarding the Islamic moral duty to conserve the environment through online content, that is, videos, articles, and discussions. Hadiths and Quranic verse regarding the environmental stewardship can be shared in social media, such as YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter, and form a virtual community of Muslims dedicated to environmental sustainability<sup>59</sup>.

The role of mosques as the main institutions of the community also presents a significant chance to foster the environmental awareness. Through introducing environmental education in the sermons, community outreach, and education efforts, the mosques can be made important hubs of eco-awareness among the Muslim communities. Likewise, mosques might conduct a water conservation or tree planting or waste-reduction event, and involve their congregations in practical activities related to the environment.

It is also important that non-governmental organizations (nowadays NGOs) in the Muslim world can help fill the gap between the Islamic teachings and environmental activism. NGOs may hold grassroots

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<sup>59</sup> S. A. Rahman, "The Role of Social Media in Promoting Islamic Environmentalism," *Environmental Studies Journal* 28, no. 3 (2021): 198-210

campaigns, educational activities and advocacy activities that utilize Islamic environmental ethics to foster practices of sustainability. Such organizations have the capability to collaborate with religious leaders and academics to come up with fatwas that promote sustainable growth, promote climate change, and mitigate environmental decay<sup>60</sup>.

### **Incorporating Muslim Youth into the Prophetic Environmental Ethics:**

The potential of reconnecting the Muslim youth with the environmental teachings of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is one of the most promising opportunities. Numerous young Muslims care very much about the problems of climate change, loss of biodiversity and pollution and are more likely to find solutions that can be consistent with their religion. Through environmental advocacy and encouraging the Muslim youth when it comes to schools, universities, and digital platforms, there is a chance to foster the sense of environmental responsibility based on the Islamic teachings.

Programs in schools with prophetic teachings on nature and sustainability can have an effect on creating an active generation of stewards of the Earth. Young Muslims are already taking the lead in environmental movements and pushing in the climate action across most countries. The theological and ethical model grounded on Hadith and Quran principles will help them have the instruments to confront environmental issues in a manner that helps them address them in a manner that is compatible with

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<sup>60</sup> R. M. Qureshi, *Faith-Based Environmentalism and NGOs* (London: Routledge, 2018), 67

their religious beliefs.

### **IX. Conclusion:**

We have identified in this paper the abundant and deep teachings of the environment that was in the Hadith literature and which provided the necessary ethical framework of how Muslims should treat the natural environment. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) reiterated the values of stewardship, moderation and reverence towards nature that still rings with the present environmental issues. The teachings of the Islamic eco-theological system rely on these teachings of Hadith and emphasize the role of humanity as stewards of the Earth and not exploiters. The doctrines promote environmental sustainability, like water conservation, planting trees, limiting waste and the ethical treatment of animals, all of which are in line with the overall Islamic values of Tawheed (Oneness of God), Khalifah (stewardship) and Mizan (balance).

Eco-theology is a concept that cannot be doubted in the contemporary Islam world. With the world in dire need of environmental reforms, such as climate change, pollution, and resource depletion, Islamic teachings on environmental ethics offer Muslims a moral and spiritual code that would help them to be more environmentally friendly. Tawheed teaches us that the Earth, and everything that is on it, are interconnected and are the property of Allah, and should therefore be treated with respect and care. The Khalifah position highlights the fact that human beings have been vested with the role of ensuring that the environment is preserved to serve the future generations. In the meantime, Mizan principle demands the maintenance of balance in nature, so that human activity does not upset the fragile balance of nature.

The integration of these Islamic teachings in the contemporary environmental policies will be an appealing direction towards overcoming the environmental crisis that we go through in the present times. Islamic eco-theology has offered a platform of policies that give rise to sustainability, conservation of resources and equitable allocation of the natural resources available. Islamic scholars and institutions are already starting to make fatwas and do environmental advocacy, but they must also integrate further Hadith-based eco-teachings into their policy and global environmental action. The governments of Muslim majority nations must include environmental ethics in their development strategies such that economic growth and resources are considered in line with Islamic ideals of taking care of the environment. Moreover, NGOs and faith-based organizations can be instrumental in helping address this gap between the Islamic teachings and the use of the environment to take action, to promote policies that put sustainability and justice at the forefront.

Finally, Islam as a religion provides a multi-faceted approach to the environment, based on the principles of mercy, equilibrium and accountability to the creation. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was an example of such values in his life, where he showed that taking care of the Earth is not merely a practical requirement, but also a spiritual one. The prophetic teachings can also be used to inspire Muslims in their quest to solve modern environmental issues wherein it is stated that even the smallest of actions can help preserve the Earth. The eco-theological perspective in Islam motivates Muslims to be caring custodians of the environment so that future generations can find the Earth to be a balance and a harmonious place.

To summarize, the incorporation of the teachings of Hadith in contemporary environmental work offers a distinctive chance to Muslims to make contributions to the ecological sustainability of the world. Through observing the ideals of Tawheed, Khalifah, and Mizan, Muslims can be at the forefront in dealing with the environmental crises of our time as this proves that the Islamic teachings have not lost their relevance in the current times as they were during the era of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The way to a sustainable future as suggested by Islam is one based on mercy, justice and an overwhelming sense of responsibility to the entire creation.



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