

# Islamic Guidelines In Terms Of Utilizing & Preserving The Natural Resources: Moving Towards A Sustainable Environment

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## Abstract

Since the destruction of nature and the natural environment is one of the greatest challenges of the world today, this article endeavors to review this important issue from an Islamic perspective. A review of Qur'anic verses and Islamic narrations regarding the environment and natural resources suggests that in one view these teachings have been divided into the following two parts: how to utilize and how to preserve these two Divine blessings. We have investigated this topic utilizing a qualitative research method in form of content analysis. The law of abstaining from incurring loss and causing harm to oneself and to others is among the laws that direct us in regards to the management and engineering of exploitation and preservation of the environment.

Another part that has been discussed in this article is attention to Divine wisdom in the formation of nature and the environment. In the Holy Qur'an, the environment and natural resources have been described and distinguished in a specific way. Some of the attributes that the Qur'an recounts for the environment and natural resources are the following: being the wealth and possession of God; being a Divine trust; having a serious responsibility in respect to divine possessions and trusts; being a factor of beauty and adornment; eye-catching and being a blessing of Allah. Another aspect of the Qur'anic depiction of the

environment includes the sanctity of nature, its worshipfulness, its instructiveness and the necessity of contemplation regarding the subtleties of nature and the environment.

Yet another part of Islamic teachings regarding the development and preservation of the environment is its harmony, the two-way connection between the well-being of human beings and the environment, the relation between pursuing extreme comfort and luxury and ruining nature, and human motivation in the destruction of nature and the environment. In the ethical aspect regarding this issue, Islam invites towards the development of nature and environment and encourages conformity and convergence in enjoying nature.

Another part and the last aspect of Islamic teachings discussed in this paper is the necessity of a replacement-creation plan when destroying the environment, encouragement in planting fruit-bearing trees instead of trees that simply provide an aspect of beauty and greenery, doing a good job in planting trees and greater correlation between attaining greater benefit and efforts to preserve and develop nature. The final part of this paper is a report of a new and Islamic idea regarding a spiritual natural environment and the factors that can make this environment lasting and enduring.

**Key Terms:** Islamic teachings, utilizing and preserving nature and the natural environment, Islamic standards of the natural environment, spiritual natural environment, hygienic, lasting preservation and development of the natural environment.

## INTRODUCTION

### Conceptualization Of The Key Terms

In a simple and universal description, the natural environment refers to the collection of waters that we drink and use for washing, hygiene, agriculture and other purposes; the air that we breathe; the soil that we plant in and cultivate and from which we obtain our bread and strength and nourishment; the various animals that complete the circle of nature and natural environment, some of which are becoming extinct; the forests that create vitality and are the breathing lungs of our earth; all of these

are parts of nature and the natural environment which will be reviewed and studied from an Islamic overview in this paper.

### **Categorization Of The Discussion**

The material in this paper has been pursued in two parts of preservation and employment of nature and natural resources.

### **Environmental Teachings In Islamic Narrations**

Referring to prophetic narrations in this regard shows us that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his household) has given a command in some instances to bury hair that has fallen off, nails, blood, trash, fallen teeth etc. He has also in other instances commanded to hasten in burying the dead and building secure graves which are examples of Islamic rulings in the preservation and sanitization of the environment from pollution.

### **Environment And The Law Of “No Harm Nor Abuse Of Rights” In Islam**

In Islam, the law of: “no harm nor abuse of rights” is one of the important laws of Islam which applies in the regulation and formation of human beings’ relationship to each other as well as man’s relationship with nature and the environment. The relationship of employment, preservation and development of the environment and natural resources must not result in the destruction, ruination and disintegration of these Divine blessings. Therefore, these instructive Islamic laws are like umbrellas over one’s head which curb and control man’s actions and reactions in regards to the employment and development of the natural environment. Based on these Islamic laws, anyone who causes serious and considerable harm to himself or others in destroying the environment has committed a sin.

For example, it has been narrated from the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) that he stated: in a battle with a people or nation, never destroy or contaminate their water or water sources and do not use polluting or poisoning water as a weapon against your enemies.<sup>1</sup>

It has also been mentioned in Islam to never leave trash and rubbish behind the houses as these acts are not only a type of harassment of others but also pollutes the environment which

causes discomfort to others and destroys their safety and health in social life. Similarly, it has been emphasized in one of the religious teachings that Muslims should not keep dogs or animals that pollute human life in their houses or everyday living quarters and not make them part of their lives. Although, the teaching regarding guard dogs whose place of living is separate from that of people has a different ruling and judgment and if preventive and inhibitive measures are adhered to, they can be present in everyday life.

Other hygienic and Islamic rulings like the prohibition of urinating in flowing water, urinating or passing stool at the roots of fruit-bearing trees, not throwing away fruit skins in roads and pathways particularly the skin of fruits like bananas and melons which might cause people to slip and bring harm to them, are all examples of Islamic teachings in the optimal employment and preservation of the natural environment. These rulings are sometimes explained with such emphasis and precision that if God forbid, our neglect results in harm to others and dysfunction in their wealth, body or life, the persons who brought about such situations with their carelessness are held responsible and are obligated to take responsibility for their actions.

It is interesting to know that if a person places the drainpipe and place of waste-water flow of a building or house in a place that leads to pollution and harm to others and the environment, according to Islamic teachings such people are responsible in regards to this act and are obligated to pay the compensation for the damage that this act has incurred. In another example in Islamic jurisprudence it has been emphasized that Muslims must be careful to preserve distance between the pits or places where public and private sewage or waste-water collects and drinking water wells and sources.

Regarding general hygiene and jobs, it has been emphasized in Islamic jurisprudence that it is obligatory in jobs that are related to the well-being and general hygiene of people's lives to adhere to protective and preventive laws. For example in bakeries, the kneaders and bakers must cover their mouths with protective covering while baking and kneading in order to prevent the transfer of germs to others when they sneeze. In one of his illuminative sayings, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his household) has said: Islam and its teachings have been founded on cleanliness.<sup>2</sup>

### **Recognizing The Divine Wisdom In The Natural Environment**

God's Wise Actions in the Creation and Regulation of the Natural Environment:

God, in His wise creation has illuminated and provided energy to our earth through sunlight. The shining of the sun upon seas and water-rich bodies of land results in the creation of vapor and its spread and transfer to far-away and dry areas. The rise and condensation of water vapor leads to the formation of clouds and fertilization, waves of water molecules and life-giving and delightful rainfall in different parts of earth. In this process, winds have an important role in cloud fertilization, creating waves and storms in seas and oceans and fertilization of trees and crops. Studying and reviewing this wise circle on earth shows God's wisdom in the management of the earth and various life-giving phenomenon, actions and reactions.

Another part of Divine wisdom in the wise creation of nature and the natural environment is the creation of animals or factors that bring about purification and sanitization of the natural environment in a wise circle like creating scavenger birds that do away with contamination and dead bodies, marshes, and bodies of animals that have died and decayed. This same wisdom has also been pursued in a different way in seas and oceans; the creation of the whale and scavenging sharks in the sea results in the purification of this great water source from pollution, putrefaction and contamination. Fruits that are protected from decay and from losing their nutritional value by their skins are also another example of this continuing wisdom. Thus, placing some fruits in protective skins is an aspect of Divine wisdom in the endurance and protection of a great part of the natural environment from harm and damage.

### **The Qur'an And The Natural Environment**

A study and review of Qur'anic verses also guides us to aspects of Divine wisdom in the protections and endurance of the natural environment and natural resources. For example, in verse 168 of the chapter al-Baqarah, God states:

**“O mankind! Eat of what is lawful and pure in the earth.” (2:168).**

In another verse he states that man should look to his food in order to discover the process of its creation and how it was attained so

that through this too he is thankful to God for providing us with these blessings; therefore, we should be careful that our food and intake is permitted and pure. Watching what we eat and attentiveness to that impels us to not violate Divine commands in securing sustenance and food:

**“Then let man look to his food” (80:24).**

In another verse, God commands man to abstain from destroying and polluting the earth whether it be the material and apparent aspects of it or in relational disturbance and corruption:

**“So eat and drink of the sustenance provided by Allah, and do no evil nor mischief on the earth” (2:60).**

It is noteworthy to know that Divine commands for the preservation and sanitation of the environment also include places of servitude to God like mosques and places of worship. Muslims have been commanded to be clean and orderly when entering mosques:

**“Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer” (7:31).**

In another verse, God commands two of His prophets - Abraham and Ishmael - to clean Masjid ul-Haram. Muslims have been advised to choose white for clothing so that they appear both beautiful and neat and also so that they promptly realize when their clothes get dirty and tainted. In another command it has been stated that in cases where they do not have access to water and are obligated to perform tayammum in place of wudhu (ritual ablution) or ghusl (ritual bath), the earth or dust that they use should not be from alleys or places of public passage which is probably dirty.<sup>3</sup>

In another verse of the Holy Qur’an, God warns and threatens those people who destroy God’s blessings or change them from their natural and original form<sup>4</sup> and through their manipulation cause Divine blessings to be damaged or ruined<sup>5</sup>: If they continue to change and waste in employing blessings, we will destroy and annihilate them<sup>6</sup>. Destroying and harming the natural environment and blessings on this earth has been given so much attention in the Holy Qur’an that it is mentioned in a verse that on the Day of Judgment the earth will complain about those who corrupted and ruined it.<sup>7</sup>

In another verse the Qur'an states that man's ownership of a part of the blessings of this earth does not give him license to change them from their original form. One of the main problems of the inhabitants of earth is that in many cases they have used their utilization and benefitting from the earth and its natural resources as an excuse to change them and this has led to the ruination and wastage of these blessings. Thus, it has been emphasized repetitively in the Qur'an that man's employment of natural resources must not lead to their corruption, loss and destruction.<sup>8</sup>

In yet another verse of the Qur'an it has been mentioned that kings and those who possess wealth and power seek power and are greedy whenever they gain power in a country and act in such a manner that they cause its destruction and deterioration.<sup>9</sup> In some verses of the Qur'an it is mentioned that all the creations of the heavens and the earth have a purpose and nothing has been created without a purpose or in vain.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Nature And The Natural Environment: God's Wealth**

In a group of its verses, the Holy Qur'an considers nature and natural resources as God's and His Prophet's wealth, the maintenance and circumstances of utilization of which must be paid attention to.<sup>11</sup> Attention to this point goes so far that in one of the verses of the Qur'an it has been said that nature and the environment are one of the great Divine trusts and man must strive to protect and preserve it.<sup>12</sup>

#### **Nature And The Environment: Godly Trust And Blessing**

It has been stated in a verse that nature is a blessing and one must make the best and gratuitous use of it and if a person misuses this blessing or destroys it, he will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment and he will face Divine punishment in case of ungratefulness for these blessings or their rejection.<sup>13</sup> In its teachings, the Qur'an leads people towards the belief that even though they strive for the development and prosperity of the earth, it is God who brings out water and different types of plants and trees from the earth.<sup>14</sup>

Alongside the verses of the Qur'an, the teachings of the infallible leaders also remind us that the earth has a variety of blessings and adornments, all of which provide for a part of the various needs of human life. For example, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) has said:

cold water is a blessing for people in summer which quenches the thirst and one enjoys it upon drinking it. This direction in man's thinking towards blessings goes so far that in another tradition it has been narrated that the infallible leaders are blessings themselves and one must make the best use from them.<sup>15</sup> Not only the earth and the resources that exist within it are Divine blessings, but they also give the earth a beautiful and attractive appearance so that man experiences its beauty and finds peace in observing and utilizing it.<sup>16</sup>

### **Responsibility To Nature And The Environment**

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) has narrated that life on earth and using its resources brings about responsibility for man and he will be questioned by God on the circumstances of its use on the Day of Judgment. He adds that man is not only responsible for the dry land and seas of the earth but also for the animals and on the Day of Judgment he will be questioned as to how he used these blessings.<sup>17</sup>

### **Warmth And Strengthening Of The Man's Sight On Gazing At Nature**

In a tradition for Imam al-Kadhim (peace be upon him) it has been narrated that nature increases and corrects the sight. In this same tradition he says that three things brighten the eyes: looking at greenery, at running water and at a beautiful face.<sup>18</sup>

### **Nature – A Class In The Lessons Of Life**

In the Qur'an educational approach, it pulls man's attention to the fact that nature and the environment are themselves a class and have many educational and educative messages for man's positive and monotheistic outlook. One of the verses states:

**“Will they not then consider the camels, how they are created?” (Qur'an, 88:17).**

This animal has been created in such a way that it can survive in the difficult and severe conditions of the desert and its meat is also strengthening and energizing for man's nourishment.

### **The Sanctity Of Nature**

It is very educative and directive that God considers nature and the environment to be holy and exalted and He swears by it in one place where He wants to draw attention to its dimensions and aspects. For example, He says:

**“I swear by the fig and the olive” (95:1).**

In another place alongside other oaths, He says:

**“By the earth and Him who extended it” (91:6).**

In Qur’anic culture, oaths are sworn upon things that hold a special sacred position in God’s eyes.

### **Nature And Worship And Servitude Of God**

In one verse the Qur’an states that nature and its various manifestations are in state of servitude and worshipfulness. For example, He states in a verse:

**“And the herbs and the trees do prostrate (to Him)” (55:6).**

In another verse He says:

**“There is not a thing but that it celebrates His praise, but you do not understand their glorification” (17:44).**

The language of their praise and servitude differs from ours. The glorification and praise of nature and the environment are also similar to our praise of God - the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all creations; all of creation glorifies and praises God.

### **Natural Catastrophes, A Sign Of Divine Wrath And Retribution**

Some verses of the Qur’an show that great and destructive natural phenomena like floods, earthquakes and the destruction of nature and natural resources are a sign of God’s wrath in relation to the corruptions that men show to one another or in response to their ingratitude of God’s blessings. Aversion to religion, subjugation, opposing Divine prophets, financial corruption and abusing the rights of others are some examples of human actions that can lead to the destruction and decline of Divine blessings including nature and natural resources. According to this view, the destruction and ruination of natural blessings and the environment is a sign of God’s wrath.

For example, in the Qur'an God states that as a result of the disobedience and oppression we sent a destructive flood upon a nation<sup>19</sup>; or in recounting the story of the destruction of the people of Aad, He says that after opposing their prophet and shunning the signs of God's guidance, We sent down a violent and burning storm upon the people of Aad, which destroyed their living environment.<sup>20</sup> Alongside these warnings, the educative method of the Qur'an is such that it makes human beings understand that every calamity or loss that they face in their earthly life is caused by their own corrupt behavior and oppressive and destructive actions. For example, in the chapter of al-Shura He states:

**"Whatever affliction that may visit you is because of what your hands have earned" (42:30).**

### **Contemplation And Reflection Upon Nature And The Environment**

In regards to contemplation about natural resources and the environment, in the chapter al-Waqi'ah, the Qur'an asks us to contemplate upon the wisdom of the creation of trees, which despite all their benefits and beauty can be destroyed by God and turned to dust. In this same chapter it asks if we reflect upon our farming and cultivation and whether it is we who make things grow or God; if He wishes He can turn them all into nothing. If such a phenomenon takes place in our living environment everyone would be astonished and perplexed.<sup>21</sup> In regards to the great blessing that is water, in verse 70 of this same chapter God asks us to contemplate about the drinking water of our environments which He could make bitter, foul and undrinkable if He wished.<sup>22</sup>

### **Measured And Sufficient Creation Of Nature And Natural Resources**

The creation of nature is measured and calculated. In some verses of the Qur'an the idea and view that each and every part and aspect of nature and natural resources has been created precisely and calculatedly has been addressed. For example, in the chapter al-Mu'minun, it has been stated:

**"And We send down water from the sky according to (due) measure" (23:18).**

Or in al-Furqan, God states:

**“And Who created everything, then ordained for it a measure.”  
(25:2).**

### **A Healthy Life In A Healthy Environment**

Nowadays in environmental studies it has been proven that a healthy environment leads to a healthy life and a polluted environment leads to illnesses and contamination. Therefore, all the inhabitants of the earth are responsible for developing and improving the environment. In the chapter of Hud, verse 61 it has been said that God has created man from the heart of the earth and has asked him to develop and build it. Thus, developing and building the environment is a religious responsibility that all inhabitants shoulder.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Self-Indulgent And Destroyers Of Nature And The Environment**

In some verses of the Qur’an it has been cautioned that destroying and corrupting the environment and natural resources is the work of the transgressors and tyrants. Tyrants and those who have power have been considered as the most defiant enemies of humanity; these power-seekers end up performing destructive and corruptive actions in their greed. But these efforts lead to the destruction of the environment and its resources and as a result of this destruction the descendants of the inhabitants of this environment cease to exist and suffer from poverty and destructive and deadly deprivation.<sup>24</sup> In one verse the Qur’an states that you are from one another and every type of action, whether positive or negative will have the same effect on the lives of others. In the chapter of al-Nisa, verse 25, it states that you are from one another and are equal.<sup>25</sup> In verse 195 of al-Baqarah, it is mentioned:

**“And do not cast yourselves with your own hands into destruction.” (2:195).**

This means that all types of defects and deficiencies in man’s life and in the preservation of the environment stem from voluntary or involuntary actions and consequences of the very actions that humanity has performed.<sup>26</sup> Elsewhere, the Qur’an has warned that human beings must not share in oppression and sins in the process of their coexistence<sup>27</sup> because the result of every type of action will ultimately come back to us. If our behavior is good and

proper it will lead to goodness and if it is improper and oppressive it will lead to ruination and corruption. In the Qur'anic teachings of Islam it has been emphasized that God the Compassionate demands that human beings build their environment and place of living and make it refreshing and delightful.<sup>28</sup>

This law depends on wise and just action in relation to the environment. Even in places when man did not know how to prevent the contamination and pollution of his living environment upon first entering into this earth, God educated him on how to do so through miraculous forms. For example, when Cain killed his brother Abel because his sacrifice was accepted by God whereas Cain's was not, and he did not know how to get rid of his dead body which would soon start to decay and decompose, God sent down crows and in his presence one of the crows buried the dead one in the earth.<sup>29</sup> Upon seeing this scene, Cain admonished himself saying, are you less than these crows? You too bury your dead brother in the ground. This education is a way to put the environment into the carbon and recycling circle if a part of it becomes polluted in the process of life. By sending down the crows, God taught man this correct and quick way of recycling before using the process of trial and error.

### **Motivation For The Destruction Of Nature And The Environment**

After recounting the various blessings of the environment and natural resources, the example of which were mentioned above, the Qur'an enters into a new and pathological discussion of the environment and reveals the motivations and malefic and satanic thoughts of some of the corrupt and arrogant people. In this part of the paper we will indicate some of the motivations and thoughts that lead a group of people to ruin and destroy nature and the environment. Profiteering; endless avarice and greed; seeking excessive luxury and striving to live a flashy life; selfishness and ignoring the plight of other human beings and living creatures which share man's life on this earth; self-indulgence; incompetent and unsound management; delegating work to incompetent and wrong people and extreme indolence and comfort-seeking are some of the factors and motivations that leads a group of people to destroy and ruin the natural environment. A list of these motivations is presented as follows:

1. Profit: changing the application for income like transforming farm lands to residential and industrial areas.
2. Greed: "Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought" (Qur'an, 30:41).
3. Excessive luxury and using natural resources for self-adornment, one's clothes, place of residence and moving towards a flashy city life are some of the main factors of the ruination of nature and the environment.
4. Killing animals to use their tusks or skin.
5. Self-indulgence: "And should the truth follow their low desires, surely the heavens and the earth and all those who are therein would have perished" (Qur'an, 23:71).
6. Trusting incompetent people with public wealth: "Do not give the feeble-minded your property" (Qur'an, 4:5); this is so that they do not destroy and waste it through their ignorance.
7. Indolence and seeking comfort: they do not control their pollution due to their indolence; it has been narrated that a believer bears physical hardship and suffering so that other can be in comfort and live a comfortable life<sup>30</sup>. In contrast to this act are the actions of those who destroy and ruin others and the environment so that they live in comfort and tranquil complacency

#### **A Universal Responsibility Towards Nature And The Environment**

In a part of its teachings, Islam encourages all to consider themselves responsible to one another and to the environment and to feel compassion for each other and the environment. It has been narrated that a true Muslim is one from whose hands and tongue other Muslims are safe.<sup>31</sup> In another tradition it has been said that the nobility of believers is in standing for prayer in the middle of the night and their respect and power is in that they don't oppress and harass other people.<sup>32</sup>

A part of Islamic teachings encourage Muslims to offer the blessings that God has blessed them with to others as well. In a narration the Divine Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his household) has said that on the Day of Judgment God will not give attention to three groups and will not resurrect them as pure and adorned and they will burn in a painful punishment. One of these three groups is one who has access to water in a public road

but withholds it from the passersby. This very withholding of Divine blessings from others which is a sign of the baseness of a group of people has been given attention to in verse 174 of the chapter of al-Baqarah.<sup>33</sup>

### **Better And Increased Use Of Nature Depends On Increased Efforts And Struggle**

Indeed the preservation of nature and optimal use from the earth and its resources is laborious and requires efforts and struggle. In one of its verses the Qur'an mentions:

**“And seek of Allah's grace (Qur'an, 62:10).**

And in another verse, it is mentioned:

**“Therefore go about in the spacious sides thereof”  
(Qur'an, 67:15).**

Walk in every corner of the earth and build it so that you may attain both the benefit of this world and the rewards of the Hereafter. In a tradition it has been narrated that one who waters a cedar or fruit-bearing tree it is as though he has relieved a believer of thirst.<sup>34</sup> And in contrast, if a person cuts down a tree without cause, God will plunge his head into fire on the Day of Judgment.<sup>35</sup>

### **Lastingness Depends On Replacement**

It has been narrated in a tradition that Imam Ali (peace be upon him) cut a cedar tree down at a spot and planted a grape tree in its stead. This action of an infallible Imam shows that in Islam men have been warned to never cut down trees but if for some reason they are forced to do so, they must replace it with another fruit-bearing tree.<sup>36</sup>

### **Attention To Productive Trees Rather Than Decorative Trees**

#### **Special Attention To Fruit-Bearing Trees**

There is special attention given to planting and caring for fruit-bearing trees in Islam. Many narrations encourage Muslims to plant and care for fruit-giving trees. It has been narrated in one tradition that the date tree is a good tree. If one sells it, receiving its price is equal to receiving some ashes which are placed on a

high peak or hill and a mighty storm scatters it everywhere; unless he plants another tree in its place.37

### **Cooperating With Other Living Creatures In Using Nature And The Environment**

An important and considerable point that has been given attention to in some Islamic teachings is that benefitting from nature and the environment is not particular to humans only and other living creatures also have a share in it. This important point has been taken into consideration both directly and in the form of veiled teachings. For example, in one narration it is mentioned that there is no Muslim who plants a tree and others human beings or moving creatures or birds eat from it and gain nourishment from it but that an act of charity is recorded for him for each of these benefits.38

### **Planting Trees And Farming – A Right And Lasting Act**

In other narrations, planting trees has been given importance to the extent that this act has been considered as one of the good acts and surviving charitable works. For example, in one narration it is said that there are five groups which will die and be buried but rewards will continuously be recorded in their book of deeds. One of these five groups is those people who plant date trees.39

### **Enjoying A Spiritual Environment**

One of the innovative, outstanding and impressive points that can be obtained from amidst the constructive Islamic teachings and commands for the natural environment is that the Islamic view extends the natural environment to religious and spiritual environment too and encourages Muslims to play a special role. The concept of the environment in its present form has been limited to the natural environment and the four natural resources of water, air, earth and fire. But according to the Islamic perspective, this domain has also been extended to include wise management and construction of religious and spiritual environment. Islamic resources also have hundreds of instructions for the management and construction of the spiritual environment, and consider everyone to be responsible to it. The following are examples of some of these teachings:

1. Enjoining good and forbidding evil is an essential guideline for the preservation of the spiritual health of an environment

2. Preserving chastity and covering (hijab) and abstaining from adornment and not adequately covering oneself by men and women which lead to the occupation of the minds and hearts of the citizens with issues of uncovering one's body, depravity and vices.

3. Executing Divine penalties for those who harm the environment and natural resources is one way to preserve and maintain the environment

4. Wearing clothes that incite sexual stimulation, not speaking coquettishly, prohibiting songs and tunes that are sexually stimulating, being alone with persons of the opposite gender who are not one's family, prohibition of speaking in whispers, prohibition of backbiting, snooping, defamation and suspicions and other such things are ways of maintaining the spiritual environment and giving quality to social life

5. Forbidding the reading of books that are deviating and guide to unfaithfulness and aversion to religion, forbidding association with wrong and corrupt people, maintaining the Islamic laws in speech and actions and finally, adhering to social ethics in interpersonal relations, are all examples of laying the groundwork for providing a sound and healthy environment.

Beyond these is an instruction that the Qur'an gives in the chapter of al-Hujurat regarding removing oppression and working together in opposition to power and countries that seek to increase oppression and imprisoning the weak. In this verse all countries have been mobilized against the transgressor who destroys everything. This verse warns the Muslims that if a group of Muslims oppresses or transgresses against another group of Muslims and imprisons and deprives them, other Muslims should rise and put the oppressive group in their place<sup>40</sup>. This command is an example of laying the groundwork for the preservation of a spiritual environment and regulating the social relations of Muslims.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The authors have tried in this article to provide an overview of Islamic teachings regarding the two domains of preservation of nature and the natural environment and its utilization. Reforming human relationship with the natural environment has been one of

the projects of the Divine prophets throughout the history of human life on this earth. According to the tenth verse of the chapter of the Qur'an, al-Rahman, Allah states:

**“And the earth, He has set it for living creatures” (55:10).**

the earth is a cradle which God has set as a safe place for human beings to live, grow and elevate.

We have used a qualitative descriptive-analytic method in the framework of content analysis in our research. Islamic teachings consider the natural environment and natural resources to be a Divine blessing and gift which human beings must make flourish and develop, and aside from his own utilization, must prepare and preserve it for the utilization of future generations. The conservation and endurance of the natural environment and its resources is one of the main ideas that Islamic teachings pursue and commend in direct and indirect forms.

The findings of this paper clearly explain the reality that the normative and pathological approaches of the teachings classify the study of nature from an Islamic perspective into two main categories. Islamic Divine teachings consider the natural environment and nature to be a form of manifestation of Divine wisdom and a symbol of the Divine glory and beauty in providing the requirements for human life on this earth and for which human beings have been given special responsibility and duty in its flourishing and development.

Important concepts in various other aspects of nature study from an Islamic perspective which have been discussed and reviewed in this paper include the sanctity of nature; its sufficiency and balance; its worshipfulness and praise of God; its aspect of instruction and thought provoking effect in order to guide human beings towards Divine mercy, power and knowledge; and understanding nature as a source of benefit for all living beings. Another important aspect that we highlighted in this article is the understanding of natural calamities and catastrophes as a sign of Divine wrath as a response to human beings corruptive and destructive actions.

Similarly, in a part of this paper we indicated human beings motivation in destroying the natural environment; we pointed out some of the motivations and thoughts that some people have which leads them to destroy nature. Seeking personal gains;

endless avarice and greed; seeking excessive luxury and striving to live a flashy life; selfishness and ignoring the plight of other human beings and living creatures which share human beings lives on this earth; self-indulgence; incompetent and unsound management; delegating work to incompetent and wrong people and extreme comfort-seeking are some of the factors and motivations that leads a group of people to destroy and ruin the natural environment.

A spiritual natural environment is the management and engineering of human relations within a Divine and religious framework and Islam's perspective on resolving disputes between nations is a part of new outlooks which Islamic sources present for human beings in order to provide a spiritual natural environment. Islamic teachings consider human beings preservative and constructive actions in regards to the natural environment as a form of good actions and ongoing charity, which can be an important encouragement to preserve and develop nature and the natural environment. The last finding of this study is that Islamic teachings regarding the natural environment make sense and achieve their real status only when we view them in the triangle of Islamic beliefs, values and laws.

## REFERENCES

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- 1.Al-Kafi, vol. 3, p. 65. "Do not pollute or contaminate the water or water sources of any people".
  - 2.Nahj al-Fasahah, 1182.
  - 3.Refer to the following Verse:  
"Purify My House" (Qur'an, 2:125).
  - 4.Refer to the following Verse:  
"Those who have changed Allah's blessing" (Qur'an, 14:28).
  - 5.Refer to the following Verse:  
"So that they shall alter Allah's creation" (Qur'an, 4:119).
  - 6.Refer to the following Verse:  
"And We destroyed the extravagant" (Qur'an, 21:9).
  - 7.Refer to the following Verse:  
"The complaint of the earth against the transgressors: on that Day will she declare her tidings" (Qur'an, 99:4).
  - 8.Refer to the following Verses:  
"And when he turns back, he runs along in the land that he may cause mischief in it and destroy the tilth and the stock, and Allah does not love mischief-making." (Qur'an, 2:205).

“And if there is a party of you who believe in that with which am sent, and another party who do not believe, then wait patiently until Allah judges between us; and He is the best of the Judges.” (Qur’an, 7:87).

- 9.Refer to the following Verse:  
“Surely the kings, when they enter a town, ruin it” (Qur’an, 27:34).
- 10.Refer to the following Verse:  
“And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them for sport” (Qur’an, 21:16).

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- 11.Refer to the following Verse:  
“They ask thee concerning (things taken as) spoils of war. Say: "(such) spoils are at the disposal of Allah and the Messenger” (Qur’an, 8:1).
- 12.Refer to the following Verse:  
“Those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants” (Qur’an, 23:8).
- 13.Refer to the following Verses:  
“Whoever changes Allah’s blessing” (Qur’an, 2:211).  
“Then, on that day, you will surely be questioned concerning the Blessing” (Qur’an, 102:8).
- 14.Refer to the following Verse:  
“He brought forth from it its water and its pasture” (Qur’an, 79:31).
- 15.We are of the blessings.
- 16.Refer to the following Verse:  
“Indeed We have made whatever is on the earth an adornment for it” (Qur’an, 18:7).
- 17.because you will be questioned even about lands and beasts; Nahjul Balagha, sermon 167.
- 18.Al-Barqi, Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Khaled, al-Mahasin, vol. 2, p. 622, Qum, Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah, 2nd ed, 1371 AH.
- 19.Refer to the following Verse:  
“So We unleashed upon them a violent flood” (Qur’an, 34:16).
- 20.Refer to the following Verse:  
“And the 'Ad, they were destroyed by a furious Wind, exceedingly violent” (Qur’an, 69:6).

- 21.Refer to the following Verse:  
“Were it Our Will, We could crumble it to dry powder”  
(Qur’an, 56:65).
- 22.Refer to the following Verse:  
“Were it Our Will, We could make it salt (and unpalatable)”  
(Qur’an, 56:70).
- 23.Refer to the following Verse:  
“He brought you into being from the earth, and made you dwell in it” (Qur’an, 11:61).
- 24.Refer to the following Verse:  
“If he were to wield authority, he would try to cause corruption in the land and to ruin the crop and the stock”  
(Qur’an, 2:205).
- 25.Refer to the following Verse:  
“You are (sprung) the one from the other” (4:25).
- 26.Refer to the following Verse:  
“But do not cooperate in sin and aggression” (Qur’an, 5:2).
- 27.Refer to the following Verse:  
“If you do good, you will do good for your own souls”  
(Qur’an, 17:7).

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- 28.Refer to the following Verse:  
“A good land and an all-forgiving Lord!” (Qur’an, 34:15).
- 29.Refer to the following Verse:  
“Then Allah sent a crow” (Qur’an, 5:31).
- 30.al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 230
- 31.Al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 233
- 32.Man laa Yahduruhul Faqih, vol. 1, p. 471
- 33.Refer to the following Verse:  
“Nor shall He purify them, and there is a painful punishment for them” (2:174).
- 34.Wasa’il al Shi’a, vol. 17, p. 42.
- 35.Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 63, p. 116.
- 36.Al-Kafi, Vol 5, p. 263.
- 37.Al-Kafi, Vol 5, p. 261.
- 38.Al-Mustadrak, vol. 13, p. 26.
- 39.Bihar al-Anwar, 98/101.
- 40.Refer to the following Verse:  
“And if two parties of the believers quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to Allah's command; then if it returns, make peace between

them with justice and act equitably; surely Allah loves those who act equitably." (49:9).