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Islam's Perspective on Environmental Sustainability: A Conceptual Analysis

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Abstract: This paper shows that environmental protection, a primary aim of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) set forth by the United Nations in 2015, is embedded in Islam and was practiced by Prophet Muhammad centuries ago. In this study, we examined Islam's perspective on sustainability and its relevance to these SDGs, with a particular focus on community and individual development. In this research, we address how the emphasis on the Islamic view of the contemporary environmental problems (such as depletion of natural resources, pollution, and poverty) can help improve the ethical and practical conduct toward the environment. We also elaborate on the role of education in the Islamic tradition and its connection to environmental efforts. Finally, we discuss the examples and models of environmental sustainability arising from Islamic tradition. Therefore, this paper aims to encourage consideration of Islam's perspective in solving environmental problems, activating the role of religious and scientific institutions in preserving the environment, and providing appropriate solutions. We conclude our investigation with some findings and recommendations in this area.



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1. Introduction

The need for broad social policies and actions that would assuage rapid depletion of resources is becoming a number one priority of global governance institutions. Sustainability, broadly defined as ensuring that the needs of the future generations are met without compromising the needs of the present, is the central principle of many initiatives and the guiding principle of the United Nations *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, which was adopted by all of its member states in 2015. The *Agenda* articulates 17 goals for safeguarding the wellbeing and security of life through human, animal, plant, and soil health, in addition to the optimal performance of infrastructure, cities, and communities. Such critical and far-reaching goals require participation of the largest possible number of actors, extending beyond governmental and non-governmental agencies. As sustainability needs many drivers, appealing to religious principles and rules that support it represents an important motivational force for environmental participation.

Moral standards related to consumption and preservation, postulated by religion, have potential to be useful drivers of sustainability (Johnston 2013). Including the perspectives of religion—in this case, Islam—on the conduct of human beings toward the environment can be an essential tool for the strengthening of sustainable policies and actions through improved ethical and moral relationship toward nature and with each other. R. Gottlieb notes the analogous functioning of religious and environmental sustainability in that both movements focus on ensuring the continuity of “the physical and social solidity”; therefore, sustainability must be considered not only a physical issue, but also a central moral and religious one. The religious imperative to examine our impulses, which often include overconsumption driven by greed and desires, is aligned with the sustainable thinking

about providing only for our needs and avoiding excesses (Gottlieb 2008). Yet, according to Gottlieb, “devout Christians, committed Moslems, and Orthodox Jews continue to drive their gas guzzlers, pay taxes to militaristic governments, and store their pension funds in oil and chemical companies.” (Gottlieb 2008, p. 165).

Conversely, a study by researchers from the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), has found a direct correlation between less religious countries and increased overconsumption and pollution (Skirbekk et al. 2020). This article traces a close correspondence between crucial teachings in the Qur’an and the Prophet Sunnah/traditions, and the requirements for environmentally sustainable living. The Islamic teachings can be closely compared with the principles and goals of the UN’s agenda, especially in regard to the eradication of poverty and hunger (Agenda Goals 1 and 2) and responsible consumption and production (Goal 12). The exploitation of natural resources is included in a number of hadiths, discussed below, that stipulate preservation and stewardship of those resources. According to the Qur’an, preserving the environment is a religious duty in addition to a social obligation, and is not considered an optional matter.

The Prophetic traditions and their teachings dealt extensively with many environmental aspects, such as preserving natural resources, reclamation of land, and maintaining the cleanliness of the environment. Sustainable behavior is promoted through criticism of overconsumption, as Prophet Muhammad forbade extravagance in consumption or any other form of luxury. He urged moderation in all aspects of life, led by example, and this is what the Qur’an emphasizes (al-Qattan 1996, pp. 71–73). The focus on such teachings could spread the awareness and willingness of the large Muslim populations worldwide toward environmental sustainability as an essential principle of conduct.

According to the teachings of Islam, the essential elements of nature—earth, water, fire, forests, and light—belong to all living things and not only to the human race. Islam has emphasized the importance of preserving the environment and protecting natural resources. Samira Idlallène, among other scholars, indicated that if Muslim scholars activate *ijtihad*/independent legal reasoning as an idea to address current issues such as environmental issues, Islam can provide practical and comprehensive solutions to humankind’s many current environmental challenges (Shihatah 2001, pp. 13–15; Hasan 2020, pp. 91–92; Idlallène 2021, pp. 61–62; Ignatow 2007, pp. 37–38).

The Qur’an and the Prophet Sunnah/traditions are considered a guiding light in promoting the concept of sustainable development in Islamic countries, and throughout the world. The Qur’an refers in many chapters/*surahs* and verses to the concept of the environment and essential principles for preserving it, as it sets general rules that determine the extent to which humans benefit from various natural resources (Attir 1994, p. 10). God Almighty commanded human beings to avoid misusing natural resources and abstain from any action that would destroy and degrade the environment. The Almighty has made the human race the guardian over natural resources; this falls under the guarantee of the right to use resources, provided they are not abused or destroyed (see Kamali 2002, pp. 21–22; Boisard 1983, pp. 85–92).

The first principle that directs Islamic teachings towards environmental sustainability is the concept of guardianship. The fact that a person is considered the caliph or “guardian” implies that he can benefit from what God has created without overindulgence, because it is not for him alone but for society and future generations. He must take all the necessary steps and measures to ensure the preservation and maintenance of these properties and should pass them on to succeeding generations in the best way possible. This aligns with the Bruntland Commission’s conceptualization of sustainable development as,

development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Afgan 2011, p. 459; Purvis and Grainger 2004, p. 6; World Commission on Environment and Development 1987).

Therefore, sustainability is embedded firmly in Islam, and man is the entrusted guardian of nature and must coexist in harmony with all other creatures. Therefore, all humans must respect, care for, and preserve the environment (Boisard 1983, pp. 48–54). The

mismanagement of natural resources is often portrayed in the Qur'an and clearly marked as a corruption (*fasād*). Human beings who mismanage natural sources, including excessive environmental exploitation, resulting in industrial pollution, damage to the ecosystems, recklessness, and mismanagement of natural resources, are abhorrent to Almighty God, as appears in explicit verses of the Qur'an:

And they strive throughout the land [causing] corruption, and Allah does not like corrupters. Q. 5: 64.

So give just measure and weight, do not defraud people of their property, nor spread corruption in the land after it has been set in order. This is for your good if you are 'truly' believers. Q. 7: 85.

Do not seek to spread corruption in the land, for Allah certainly does not like the corruptors. Q. 28: 77.

An essential characteristic of the Islamic approach to preserving the environment is to highlight the values of rationalization in consumption through moderation, moderation in all actions, and, hence, sustainability. As the Qur'an verse reads:

O Children of Adam! Dress properly whenever you are at worship. Eat and drink, but do not waste. Surely, He does not like the wasteful. Q. 7: 31.

The Qur'an also forbade extravagance in many places, where the Almighty said:

He is the One Who produces gardens—both cultivated and wild—and palm trees, crops of different flavours, olives, and pomegranates—similar 'in shape', but dissimilar 'in taste'. Eat of the fruit they bear and pay the dues at harvest, but do not waste. Surely, He does not like the wasteful. Q. 6: 141.

Islam has debated and highlighted the hazards of wasteful consumer habits, and irresponsible attitudes and habits, as a religion. Water, which is the source of life of all the living creatures, is also a means of purification, as detailed in the Holy Qur'an:

Moreover, He is the One Who sends the winds ushering in His mercy, and We send down pure rain from the sky. Q. 6: 48.

Pollution is an unpleasant impurity that humans must purify themselves from because purification is half-faith in Islam. Pollution is a dangerous consequence of unsustainable activities, from which humans must abstain. The Almighty said,

Surely, Allah loves those who always turn to Him in repentance and those who purify themselves. Q. 2: 222.

The term "purify" and its derivatives are referenced more than 30 times in the Holy Qur'an, and the word "purify" is used to describe the act of purifying.¹ Keeping one's body clean and the surroundings safe is a common theme in many Islamic teachings.

One of the essential practices in Islam connected to purification, that of ablution (*wuḍūʿ*), is a good example of a religious practice that requires moderation in the use of water and whose rules could be more broadly broadcasted. Prophet Muhammad is teaching conduct focused on propagating and creating sensible consumption practices and rational attitudes (Lawson 2020, pp. 81–87) as described, for instance:

Abdullah ibn Amr reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace, and blessings be upon him, passed by Sa'd while he was performing ablution. The Prophet said, "What is this extravagance?" Sa'd said, "Is there extravagance with water in ablution?" The Prophet said, "Yes, even if you were on the banks of a flowing river." (Ibn Majah 2008, vol. 1, p. 180).

As narrated by Anas ibn Malik in a *hadith*:

The Prophet s.a.w. would perform ablution with one mudd (half a kilogram of water) and would perform a ritual bath with one *saa* (two kilograms of water), up to five mudd (two and a half kilograms of water).²

In the calculation of amounts of water used during ablution in contemporary times, different studies have found that the water is overused, amounting to 3–7 L per ablution, double or triple the recommended amount (Roubi 2017). Water is wasted due to faucets left to run during washing, waiting for the water to warm up, or the mechanical timed-spout providing too much water. A detailed analysis of the duration of ablution, water use, and mechanical properties of various taps has led to a technical solution for specific ablution taps that would prevent the waste of precious water, while providing for the needs of the worshippers³. Drawing attention to the intended average use of water during ablution as stipulated in the Qur'an and hadiths, and providing an appropriate solution for such sustainable use of water, represents an important parallel between traditional Islamic rules and the modern goals for environmental sustainability.

As demonstrated above, humans should practice reasonable moderation and adhere to Islam's demand to do so in all circumstances; this is the best way to preserve the planet's natural balance. Most research on environmental pollution has found a strong correlation between human overindulgence in dealing with the environment's many components and environmental contamination. Extravagance causes a wide range of environmental issues that have a far-reaching impact on all living species on the planet, not just humans. Moderation and avoidance of excess and extremes are by far the most effective means of preserving humanity and the environment from the adverse effects of overindulgence and the depletion of natural resources without regard for the hazards (al-Kaysi 2015, pp. 36–37; Kamali 2002).

The call for moderation and reasonableness does not mean or indicate that man should sit back and do nothing when the ecosystems around him are in peril, or impede the work of rebuilding the confidence of the caliphate on earth. Nature and the environment must be approached so that human progress is not hampered by wasteful use of natural resources or infringement on the rights of others.

2. Islam and Protection of Natural Resources

While promoting growth, it is critical to protect natural resources to maintain their availability. Prophet Muhammad placed a high value on sustainable agriculture of the land, how humans interact with animals, the preservation of natural resources, and the protection of the natural environment in general (Musa 2002, pp. 210–12). Several sayings of Prophet Muhammad call for and incentivize environmental sustainability in essence:

No Muslim plants a tree or sows a seed and then a bird, or a human, or an animal eats from it but that it is a charity for him (Ibn Kathir 2012, vol. 11, p. 6436).

When dealing with natural resources, Prophet Muhammad emphasized the importance of conserving resources, exercising moderation, and refraining from being extravagant and excessive. Furthermore, according to the Prophet, planting trees, purifying rivers, digging wells, and other beneficial works were considered ongoing charitable acts (Morsi 1999, pp. 9–11). Prophet Muhammad was probably the first to introduce the notion of 'protected areas', and the measures for conservation that are increasingly being used today. He established protected areas known as *al-Īlām* (preservation possession) and *al-ĪmĒ* (a preservation area for environmental protection) to protect land, forests, and wildlife. Within the boundaries of these areas, natural resources would not be used during specific periods. The term *ĪmĒ*/environmental protection refers to the areas surrounding water sources set aside to protect groundwater from depletion and excessive use. For instance, specific wild animals, natural habitats, and forests were considered sacred objects, and grazing and logging were prohibited in the protected areas. Moreover, certain animals, such as camels and antelopes, were protected.⁴

It is believed that Prophet Muhammad established preservation areas to the south of Medina. He prohibited hunting during certain times in those areas within a four-mile radius and prohibited cutting trees and plants within a 12-mile radius. The establishment of these protected areas demonstrates the importance the Prophet placed on the management

and sustainable use of natural resources, and the protection of the natural environment and agricultural lands (Safa 2010; Shihadah 2005, p. 22).

Islam forbids unethical and excessive exploitation of the environment, even during times of battles and wars; Prophet Muhammed, as the Messenger of God, always summoned his followers in any final congregation before going into battle to:

Do not kill a woman, or a child, or an old man, and do not burn palms or crops (Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr 2000, vol. 5, p. 32; al-Buyhaqi 1994, vol. 9, p. 90).

Specific legislation for environmental protection, rational use of resources, and moderation in one’s actions are necessary to safeguard the environment and sustain the economic-ecological balance (al-Siryani 2006, p. 146). In other words, Islam principles, which are centered on justice and equality, fairness among states, unity of destiny, popular participation in the decision-making process, and democracy, are the fundamental pillars of development thinking (See Al-Jayyousi 2012). Because of his guidance, people should consult with one another, and maintain and continue to meet the gathering requirements now and for future generations. The Prophet said,

If one of you has experienced the resurrection and has a seed in his hand, let him plant it (Ibn TĒjj al-‘Arfin al-Manawi 2018, vol. 3, p. 37).

Even though their goals and objectives may differ, all development projects strive to achieve and sustain human wellbeing in pursuing the advancement and growth of economic, political, and social development. However, development cannot be pursued solely for its own sake rather than for the benefit of the human being (Abu Zant and Othman 2006, vol. 12, pp. 154–55).

3. The Islamic Perspective on the Development through Alleviation of Poverty and Creation of Community

The Islamic perspective on development, in essence, views economic growth and development as the means to achieve human happiness and wellbeing now and ever after by striking a balance between individual rights to prosperity and society’s rights for social equity and fairness. According to the Qur’anic verses,

Allah is the One Who has subjected the sea for you so that ships may sail upon it by His command, and that you may seek His bounty, and that perhaps you will be grateful. He also subjected for you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth—all by His grace. Surely this is a sign for people who reflect. Q. 45: 12–13.

And

He is the One Who smoothed out the earth for you, so move about in its regions and eat from His provisions. In addition, to Him is the resurrection of all. Q. 67: 15.

Moreover, the Qur’an was revealed for the sake of man as well as the Almighty said:

And We have sent down to you ‘O Prophet’ the Reminder, so that you may explain to people what has been revealed for them, and perhaps they will reflect. Q. 16: 44.

In the modern Muslim societies, organizations such as *Ummah for Earth* and *Islamic Relief Worldwide* focus their efforts to protect both the environment and endangered communities based on the principles of Islamic tradition. The concept of *ummah* or community applies to not only shared religious values, but also a more resilient and fair future where everyone would be able to enjoy a clean, livable planet (Chapra 2016, pp. 100–2; Petersen 2016). The concept of *ummah*, when applied to establishment and promotion of environmentally sustainable living, represents a powerful mechanism for building connections within the Muslim community. The role of *ummah* should promote the goals of caring for the environment, spreading the awareness of environmental teachings in Islam, and finding solutions to urgent problems.

An important part of the development process in the human community is to provide life-enhancing material living standards and spiritual happiness, which is consistent with Allah's (the Legislator) intention for His succession on earth. The *zakat* system in Islam, which directs resources and wealth from poor to rich, is one such life-enhancing, sustainability-oriented system. Zakat relates directly to the eradication of poverty as an environmental goal that would relieve the pressure on ecosystems and ensure their optimum management. The *zakat*, in other words, can be understood as one of the top sustainability goals.⁵ The 'Islamic' definition of development that we inferred and emphasized here points toward the centrality of the human being and community in the process of sustainable development; equalized economic growth becomes an engine for comprehensive development of human capabilities and interpersonal skills, offering sustainable and equitable standards of living (see [Kamali 2002](#); [Sarea 2020](#)).

Given the above discussion of the concept of development and its goal from an Islamic perspective, it has become clear that human beings are both the center and the goal of development. Therefore, development will not be accomplished without our active participation. Qur'anic and Prophetic teachings, such as the communal responsibility of zakat, moderation, and non-pollution as the highest principles of conduct, should be used to energize the self-governance efforts to achieve sustainable development. The individual is the one who plans and implements sustainability principles. As a result, there is no better and more meaningful way to prepare humanity and qualify them to carry out this process than through education. Islamic teaching is concerned with educational development that primarily focuses on nurturing the individual quest for bettering oneself through education and following good conduct to achieve the desired development and prosperity for all.

One of the great interests in the Noble Qur'an among scientists and scholars is that the word 'knowledge', with its various derivations, appears in it more than seven hundred times. The development of experimental sciences had a positive impact on the scientific understanding and interpretation of the blessed Qur'anic verses. As for the alleged conflict between the Qur'an and these empirical sciences, it has no basis. The word 'science' is used in the Qur'an to have two meanings: knowledge with its specific meaning, i.e., theology, and science with its general meaning, which is absolute knowledge. If we look at the relationship between the Qur'an and the empirical sciences, we will find that it has gone through stages. The discussion of these sciences through books of interpretation was due to the spread of the translation of scientific books of other nations into Arabic, Greek, Persian, Sanskrit, and Syriac. Then came the stage of books of scientific miracles in the Qur'an, followed by books of theoretical research on the relationship between the Qur'an and science. Then, the next stage of historical research was to show that relationship. Finally, the stage of empirical research books came to explain this relationship ([Abd al-Ghafuour Muhammad Taha al-Qaysi 2012](#), pp. 39–53).

Educational progress is inexorably linked to the development of other fields and makes a significant contribution to their development, and vice versa, as a historical reality, both ancient and modern, demonstrates ([Rohaeti et al. 2016](#)). There is no shortcut to development without a skilled, well-developed, and competent labor force, which requires nations to invest significantly in the education of their people to achieve the necessary growth in human capital needed to sustain development. For example, countries need to be adequately self-reliant regarding human resources, especially in regions with acute scarcity in human competencies and skills. Those countries must prioritize education in their development plans and strategies ([Sayed 1978](#), p. 299; [Brock et al. 2006](#), p. 214; [Rothgangel et al. 2017](#), p. 57; [Kuriakose 2013](#), pp. 89–93). According to some of the applied studies carried out by John W., Kendrick et al., Wisconsin T. W. Schultz, and Simon Kuznets, improving human capabilities has an incredible impact on economic growth ([Robinson 2015](#), p. v), with 90 percent of that growth in industrialized countries attributed to improvements in human capabilities, skills, knowledge, and management ([Mandal 1967](#), pp. 96–98; [Toutkoushian and Paulsen 2016](#)).

Human capacity, rather than capital, is the primary driving factor to be considered (see [Ashford and Hall 2018](#)), and is developed through education. Islam makes it a priority in presenting and caring for it ahead of other developmental fields.⁶ It is not only by valuing self-discipline and good conduct that individual wellbeing and social welfare can be sustained, but also by setting practice as per the example of Prophet Muhammad and his companions ([Lawson 2020](#), Part II, pp. 81–87). Acquiring knowledge is a duty for every Muslim. The subsequent Islamic generations followed the Prophet's traditions in spreading and teaching science; they achieved a civilized renaissance and sound development. They relied on their abilities and competencies to achieve this ([Ibn 'Abd al-Barr 2000](#), vol. 1: pp. 149–59; [Fadili 2009](#), p. 102).

Education is the only path that can lead to the advancement of the world (particularly the Islamic world) from backwardness, deterioration, and civilized decline, and lead to the achievement of comprehensive sustainable development, whether at the level of individuals or the societal level. In all of its dimensions, education is development. Any concept of development that retreats from this understanding is a partial concept that is incapable of achieving the desired result ([Abu Zant and Othman 2006](#), vol. 12, p. 29).

Educational growth is the necessary beginning point for change, progress, and cultural renaissance, and we should consider the fact that it fosters independence in the development process.⁷ Putting education at the forefront of the development process and emphasizing its role in human development, stemming from Islam, will create generations of individuals capable of bringing development tailored to the modern world's requirements and needs, and of being guardians of the global good. In order to revive and continue the tradition of education as the central force of Islamic society, a model is needed for future sustainable development, a model that includes tenets of both intellectual and spiritual knowledge, and that brings together values of modern sustainability goals and Islamic roots and traditions.

4. Environmental Models Provided by Islam

One of the central non-Western models of sustainable development is provided in Odeh Rashed Al-Jayyousi's study ([Al-Jayyousi 2012](#), pp. 15–16). It outlines in specific terms the more abstract understanding of the unity of destiny and the shared future (communal aspects in environmental struggle) and, therefore, the need to prevent environmental damage. As pollution does not recognize boundaries, it is in everyone's interest to abstain from any polluting activities; this concept appears clearly in the Prophet's tradition:

The example of the one, who is based on the limits of God and the reality in them, is like a people who took a lot on a ship and some of them hit the top of it and some of them below it. against those above them, so they said, "If we had broken something in our share, and we had not harmed those above us, then if they left them and what they wanted, they would all perish, and if they were taken at their hands, we would all escape and survive" ([al-Bukhari 2021](#), vol. 2, p. 882; [al-'Ayni 2018](#), vol. 19, p. 403).

al-Jayyousi aspires to see a new Islamic discourse that affirms and links faith, reason, and empathy to ensure an ecological vision (insight). This vision calls for the revival of the Environmental Endowment Fund (waqf) concept to support the transition to a sustainable economy by encouraging innovation (ijtihad) inspired by nature and culture. It also calls for a rethink of educational systems that neglect the magnificence of nature and the universe of heritage values attached to them. He (Jayyousi) warns that the extinction of species around us, representing parallel communities like ours, may extend to humans unless we change our worldview and development models. The prospect of human survival and that humanity's future requires acting now. Al-Jayyousi has proposed a conceptual model with three domains to address climate change and sustainability ([Al-Jayyousi 2012](#), pp. 15–16): Environmental Activity (*jihad*), Environmental Innovation (Diligence), and Eco-friendly lifestyle (continence). He refers to this as the green life model, an Islamic response to climate change that embodies the concept of de-growth.

Al-Jayyousi advocates for establishing a region based on human and environmental justice that can last for generations to come. Al-Jayyousi's optimistic outlook was inspired by Prophet Muhammad (Al-Jayyousi 2017, p. 12).

Islamic legislation derived from the supremacy of the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions endorsed sustainability. It is focused on the aspect of building the Earth and preserving its natural resources and wealth through the principle of *Istikhlaf* / successor, which is a divine directive for humans to assume the role of trust in preserving the public and private interests of the environment and biodiversity at the same time. Regarding the principle of *Istikhlaf* / successor, which maneuvers development and the nature of human economic and social life towards perpetuity, the Qur'anic verse reads:

Remember when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to place a successive 'human' authority on earth." Q. 2: 30.

Based on the guidance and affirmation of Islam to link the environment and development projects throughout history, early Islamic history was replete with practical evidence and proofs of harmony with that guidance and affirmation. For example, traditional Islamic cities (Islamic architecture and planning), built using environmentally friendly resources and materials, prove that the concepts of sustainability and development underpinned these establishments. Islam harmonizes modern civil systems and legislation in strategic planning and practical, sustainable development applications (Jurji 1997; al-Jayyousi 1999). Interpretations and applications of Islam, in other words, should continue to adapt to current demands of life in the midst of environmental crises.

There has been a considerable increase in people seeking practical, operational solutions to environmental and health risks arising from pollutants and human mismanagement of natural resources. There are increasing concerns about the lack of health security when dealing with the relationship between 'environmental balance and sustainability' and 'human wellbeing and safety'. Human societies' concerns and fears are due to a lack of consideration for security, stability, prosperity, and tranquility in this relationship (Muharrem Inc. and Olcay Kaplan Inc. 2019).

A good example can be inferred from the story of the Prophet Yusuf/Joseph, who took part in preparing a development strategy for the state at the time, as narrated in the Qur'an. He dealt with the economic crisis and climatic changes through the means of a practical, innovative solution for food security at the time, cultivating wheat grains in the period of good harvest and then storing them for periods of hardship.

Joseph replied, "You will plant grain for seven consecutive years, leaving in the ear whatever you will harvest, except for the little you will eat. Then after that will come seven years of great hardship that will consume whatever you have saved, except the little, you will store for seed. Then after that will come a year in which people will receive abundant rain and they will press oil and wine." Q. 12: 46–49.

There is also a lesson for addressing the practical connection between adaptation to reality and the fight against poverty, hunger, and food scarcity (Hill 2004, pp. 27–28). Competition for natural resources, in addition to technological advancements and regional and international scientific collaboration, 'presupposes that individuals and Islamic society keep pace with this acceleration.' Islam's core principle is to raise the individual to be a global citizen. In this regard, Islam's contribution to environmental preservation started centuries ago, ahead of this current movement; there is a lot to learn from if the world is genuinely interested in achieving the 17 SDGs to make the world prosperous, fair, and equitable for everyone everywhere. The logic of consistency and balance exemplifies both a value and practical perspective on environmental and economic sustainability at local, national, and global levels. The conservation of the natural environment includes the safeguarding of local resources and wealth (Al-Jayyousi 2012, pp. 213–17).

The United Nations set a target to complete the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 (DeBellis 2021, pp. 233–34). The world is not on track to achieve the targets related

to these global goals, and the COVID-19 pandemic hindered some of the progress that was made previously; hence, a new perspective is needed (Rajabifard et al. 2021, p. 466; Sachs et al. 2020, p. 89). This paper highlighted Islam's perspective concerning these goals by discussing several areas regarding the protection of natural resources necessary to sustain life on the planet. The focus seems to be more on SDG 15, which aims to:

protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss (United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2015; Schmiedeknecht 2019; Ansari et al. 2021, p. 53; Baber 2021, pp. 359–360; Sachs et al. 2021, p. vi).

By comparison, Islam presents a comprehensive ideology that applies to all of the SDGs. For example, the establishment of protected areas by Prophet Muhammed in the seventh century aligns with SDG 15. This historic pioneering case, and the lessons that can be drawn from it, deserve to be studied in detail (Ansari et al. 2021, p. 53).

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Notes

- ¹ See the special work on purification as an essential aspect of Islam by (Belamine 2014).
- ² See Bukhari “Book 1 Ablutions (Wudu’),” vol. 4, *hadith* no. 200, Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 1, p. 204, no. 224; Abū Dawuod, *Sunan*, vol. 1, p. 16, no. 59; Nasa’i, *Sunan*, vol. 1, p. 80, no. 79; Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, vol. 1, pp. 5–6, no. 1; al-Nawawi, Abu Zakariya Muhyi al-Din (d. 676/1277). *Majmu’ Sharh al-Muḥadḥab* Beirut: Dar al-Fikir al-Islami, 2000, vol. 1, p. 468.
- ³ (Roubi 2017) Zaied’s study also suggests the need for recycling of the ‘gray water’ in the ablution fountains, which is another environmentally sound, sustainable solution for appropriate ablution rituals.
- ⁴ Special Prophetic traditions, as indicated in the chapter dedicated to the virtue of planting and its benefits for mankind, known as *Bab al-Mazru’ah* (The Book of Farming, chapter on the virtue of planting and planting if one eats of it), can be found in (al-‘Ayni 2018, vol. 9, pp. 4–24).
- ⁵ (Billah 2021) in particular Part III. “How is the Strategic Mechanism of Zakat to Support SDGs?” Lessons for SDGs, and “Bridging Zakat”, pp. 375–92.
- ⁶ Islam is the first religion that declared war on ignorance and illiteracy, and called for learning and raising the status of science and its people. Moreover, Prophet Muḥammad said: ‘Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim.’ (Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr 2000, vol. 1, pp. 327–35).
- ⁷ In this regard, Ibn Abd al-Barr wrote his important book (Merit of Science). This work specifically aimed to establish the superiority of knowledge. It is divided into two parts after the Introduction, in which the Holy Prophet’s sayings against concealing knowledge are cited and the reader is urged to seek knowledge in accordance with the Prophet’s observation that seeking knowledge is obligatory for every believer. As to what knowledge should be acquired, explanations are provided for *farī* (Obligatory Knowledge) and *Farī Kifīyah* (Elective Knowledge) (Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr 2000, vol. 1, pp. 69–97).

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