

## Protection of Environment and Natural Resources in the light of Quran and Hadith

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### *Abstract*

*Islam pays the greatest importance on environment protection. Islam is the first religion which as a religion teaches the human beings to utilize the natural resources as these are the God-gift blessings. A person who misuse or use them in wrong ways, He will punish him in Here-after. The Natural Resources such as water, air, earth, animals, plants etc are for the God's creatures. This is why, Allah has not given control of all these to man but He spread them freely in the earth so that each person can get benefits from them with her capacity. So protection of Environment is a religious obligation for every Muslim. A Muslim should make a balance to use them. He should use them according to his just requirement.*

**Keywords:** Environment, Natural Resources, Water, Earth, Air, Plants, Animals

Islamic literature such as Quran, Hadith, Fiqh and the sayings of the well-known religious personalities provide an effective and clear-cut solution to the present environmental issues faced by the human-beings. Islam is very rich in this regard to emphasize the importance of environmental protection and preservation of Natural resources morally and traditionally. In Islamic teachings basic things such as water, land, air and fire are open for everyone.

Allah says that human beings should avoid doing sins, wrong deeds and wasting natural resources because these things will demolish the building of this beautiful world. Man is just a guardian to use these things. He will be asked if he will manipulate in this regard.

### **Natural Resources and Their Importance:**

Natural Resources are naturally occurred in this world in the forms of metals, gases, solids and liquids. Allah has put some of them in the earth in the form of mines, spread them on the earth in the forms of different shapes, and grow them from the earth in the form of plants and green fields. Each man-made thing is also composed from the natural resources.

Some natural resources which are known as ubiquitous resources are sunlight and air. These are found everywhere in the world. But most resources are present in specific areas of the world. Some areas are recognized in this universe due to their particular environment. Sunlight is frequently exists in Asia and Africa but in Fijji and Polar areas of the world are deprived of it and the same-like. However, these resources are exhaustible, and are depleting day by day due to mismanagement.

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## **The introduction of environmental pollution, its beginning and evolution: The creation of the Universe:**

According to the Islamic teachings, Allah has created this universe and He is running it with strategy and planning:

Allah says:

“This is the commandment of the Dominant, the Knowing”.(1)

This wonderful world is not existed accidentally but it is created by planning and for specific purpose. This planning and strategy is viewed in planets and even all the other things. The creator of the universe says about it:

“Did the infidels not consider that the heavens and earth were closed up, then We opened them out? And we made every made living thing from water. Will they then believe?”(2)

He further says:

“Then He turned towards the heaven and it was a smoke. Then He said to it and to the earth, 'come both of you willingly or unwillingly. They both submitted,' we have come willingly”.(3)

Heaven means the whole universe and smoke means the beginning state of the matter in which , he, before the existence of the Universe, was a scattered cloud in the climate.(4)

The scientists have proved that the whole universe is created from the same matter. The similar rules are applied for it. In it at least one lac systems are present and in its one system, like our sun one billion solar systems are present. Its basic elements are same in all places.(5)

Allah has made every thing in balance and equity and this discipline is existence in everything.

The Allah says:

“Who made and perfected”.(6)

If there was not balance in things, the system was collapsed. Allah has made the world with planning and this is seen in every thing. If the size of the earth was doubled, then the gravitational forces increased and its balance with other planets disturbed. The speed of its orbit becomes slow. The length of day and night and duration of seasons have changed. The snow line in winter hes forward from its limit whereas in summer, due to melting of snow, the rivers have flooded. The endangers for human life have increased. If the length between sun and earth has decreased, the whole creatures will ruined due to increase of temperature.(7)

God has created every thing in suitable stae and measurement, it is mentioned in Quran as:

“Undoubtedly, We created everything according to an estimate”.(8)

“And everything with Him is with proper estimate”.(9)

The universe and its different things fulfill the needs of man and show the dignity and greatness of God. Every creation of God is strange and meaningful. And Allah has mentioned it as:

“Have you not seen that all who are in the heavens and the glorify Allah and so do the birds spreading their wings? Everyone knows his prayer and his way of glorifying. And Allah knows their deeds”.(10)

Allah is the most Beneficent and it is His blessing that has bestowed the man before coming in this world so that he can spend calm and better life in this world. The providing of material things is mentioned in Quran in these words:

“He Who made the earth for you as a bed and laid for you walking paths in it and sent down rain from the sky. And thereby We brought forth-varied pairs of vegetation.

Eat you and pasture your cattle. No doubt in it there are signs for the men of wisdom”.(11)

God has made nothing anything in this world fruitless. Allah says:

“And We made not the heavens and the earth and whatsoever is in between them in play.

We made not them but with truth, but most of them know not”.(12)

This point is depicted in a very well manner in Quran that every thing in the world is doing its duty according to the will of its Creator. The circle of death and life is in His grip. Allah says as:

“Undoubtedly! Allah is the Cleaver of seed-grain and date stone. He brings forth the living from the dead and is the Bringer forth of the dead from the living. This is Allah! Where are you going back?”(13)

The purpose of death and life is the test of man as Allah says:

“He, Who has created death and life that He might test you, as to whose work, is excellent among you. And He is the Esteemed one the Forgiving”.(14)

### **Creation of Man:**

The basic elements of man are water, soil, air and fire. God says:

“And of His signs is this that He created you from dust, then henceforth you are human beings scattered in the world”.(15)

Another place, Allah says about the creation of man:

“And it is He who created man from water then appointed for him relationship by blood and relationship by marriage. And your Lord is Powerful”. (16)  
If man thinks about the blessings of Allah, the first ones are the Earth and the Environment.

### **The status of Man in the Universe:**

Man has the greatest superiority over all other things due his vital role in this world. He is Caliph (assistant) of God in this universe.

“And We made not the heavens and the earth and whatever is between the two in vain. If We had wished to take any amusement, then We would have taken from Ourselves; if at all, We were to do”.(17)

The status of man is mentioned in Quran in these words:

“And recall when your Lord said to the Angels, I am about to place a vice-generate in the earth, they said, "will you place such who will spread disorder and

shed blood'? And We praise You commending You and sanctify You; He told, 'I know what you know not'". (18)

### **Necessities of Human Beings:**

The requirements of man in this world are food, air, water and freedom. In the earth Allah has managed these things in such a way that man just put seeds in the soil. Allah emerges them from the hard soil. Allah has created Air through which we get Oxygen. The main needs are mentioned in Qurn in these words:

“And He placed therein anchors of mountains rising above it and put blessings therein and ordained therein provisions for its inhabitants all this in four days, complete this for the enquirers”.(19)

### **The co-relation of Man and the Universe in:**

#### **Environment:**

Everything in this world is performing two functions. 1) Worship of Allah by obeying, 2) the service of His creatures. The interference in God's system, the misuse of Natural Resources and pollution are against the Allah's system. The prevention of Natural resources, to save them from Pollution and corruption are man's obligation.(20)

#### **Environment:**

Environment means all the things which are present in our surroundings in the form of people, trees, plants, animals, buildings, birds, air and all other things. In rural areas, the green fields and grass and in urban areas, the smoky vehicles and factories are also the part of our Environment. The organisms fulfill their requirements from their environment. A well balanced environment is the greatest blessing of God and in this verse, it is indicated as:

“And Who made the earth a bed for you, and the sky a structure and caused water to come down from heaven hence brought forth therewith some fruits for your food, therefore do not set up equals for Allah knowingly”.(21)

The God has managed all the necessities in the Earth in a very impressive way. God says:

“And undoubtedly, We established you in the earth, and have made therein the means of your livelihood. How little thanks you give”.(22)

The things which are necessary for beauty of the environment are mentioned in Quran as:

“And it is He who stretched the earth and made therein anchors and rivers, and He made two kinds of every fruit in the earth. He covers the night with the day. No doubt in that are signs for a people who reflect.

And there are different regions adjoining each other, and there are gardens of grapes and are corn fields and palm trees growing from one base and separately, all are watered with one water and in fruits, We make one to excel the other. No doubt, in that are signs for wise people”. (23)

The earth is needed for dead as well as for alive as God has mentioned it as:

“Have We not made the earth a gathering place?

Of your living ones and dead”? (24)

In the following verse many blessings of God are mentioned as dress, survival of man, accommodation and many other things.

“He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth, then turned toward the heaven, then formed seven heavens correctly and He knows all and everything”.(25)

### **Role of Man in Disturbing the Environment:**

God has gifted man with the ability to change his environment to suit his needs. Some of these changes are directed towards improvement of the environment. However, many human activities such as excessive use of energy, over-exploitation of resources, and discharge of urban and industrial refuse into air, water and land, and cutting of forests have posed serious threat to the environment. Pollution of air, water, and land is widespread problem today. Raw materials are running out. Actions of human beings are affecting composition of atmosphere and global climate is changing. When man does not use the environment according to the teachings of Islam, its result will be as mentioned in Quran:

“The mischief has appeared in the land and sea, because of the evils earned by the hands of men”.(26)

It is a tyrannize to use natural system in selfish ways. When man do so actually he harm himself as Allah says in Quran:

“they did no harm to Us, yes they had harmed their own souls”.(27)

Allah has condemned those who spread disturbance on earth as Allah says:

“And Allah oppressed them not yes they wronged their own souls”.(28)

### **1. Excessive and unwise use of energy and resources:**

Energy is needed in production, transport and house hold. However, a lot of energy which could do useful work is wasted by man. For instance, instead of using public transport, personal cars are used which consume a lot of fuel. Similarly household appliances are left running even when no one is using them.

### **2. Resource depletion:**

Resources are things in the environment that are ready for human use or may be used in future. Oil and coal are resources as are minerals, animals and trees. All resources on earth are limited and many of them such as minerals and fossil fuels, are non re-newable. So these resources may get depleted soon if their unwise use is not stopped and they are not conserved. (29)

### **3. Industrialization:**

Increase in production is must for getting better facilities of life. For this purpose man has popularized industry. Energy is obtained from fossil fuels, many chemicals are also used. Smoke, polluted water, wastes and other effluents from factories are a major source of environmental degradation.(30)

### **4. Urbanization**

It is a world-wide trend that due to the attraction of better facilities and living conditions more people are settling in cities. Town are changing into cities and cities into mega cities. Due to this trend, many problems are increasing day by day

such as increase in vehicles on roads, pollution of dust and smoke emitting from vehicles, more houses are needed, useful agricultural land is used for residential colonies, domestic and industrial wastes cause pollution of air, water and land. (31)

#### **5. Mechanized farming:**

Machanized farming makes use of machines, fertilizers and pesticides. No doubt, it increases the production of crops and food but at the same time has deepened environmental problems. (32)

#### **6. Deforestation:**

Forests are our great wealth. Forests are important in many ways. They bring favorable change in climate. They stop storms and bring rains. They prevent soil erosion. They provide habitat to a wide variety of wild life. Deforestation has many adverse effects on environment as habitats of wildlife are destroyed, changes in climate and weather may occur, fertile soil is lost.(33)

#### **7. Green house effect and Global warming:**

Radiations coming from the sun can enter into the green hose but heat waves, which have longer wave length, cannot go out of it. This results in an increase in temperature of the green house. Because of industrialization the proportion of some gases in air such as carbon dioxide, chlorofluorocarbons and methane has increased. Presence of these gases in air in higher proportion produces green house effect. Due to the green house effect temperature of the earth is rising. This is called global warming. (34)

#### **8. Depletion of Ozone layer:**

Ozone is a gas which is present in the form of an envelope around the earth in the upper atmosphere. This layer prevents ultra-violet radiations from the sun to reach the earth. Chlorofluorocarbons are released from refrigerators, air conditioners and cans of spray. These chemicals react with ozone and cause thinning and destruction of the ozone layer. Consequently ultra-violet radiation can reach the earth. The radiations may cause eye diseases and cancer.(35)

#### **Animals Role in Environment:**

Allah has created living things on the earth and gave superiority man on them. God has made the environment for safety and benefits of man. Every living thing has performing a particular role in it. Man and animal both belong to living things.

Animal plays a vital role in environment. Animals are necessary for fulfilling the requirements of man and environment. Man gets meat, leather, medicine, milk and honey from animals. These are used for transportation. Wild animals not add only in the beauty of environment but maintain the stansard and phisibility of it. They increase our economy by dispersing the seeds and in pollination of plants.(36) Allah says:

“And there is no one crawling on earth nor any bird that flies on its wings but are the communities like you. We have left out nothing in the Book. Then to their Lord they shall be raised”.(37)

God has mentioned in Quran about the growth and safety of animals as:

“And created cattle, In them, there is warm costume and there are profits, and of them, you eat.

And there is beauty in them for you, when you bring them back in the evening and when you leave them for grazing.

And they carry your loads to a city, which you could not reach but being heavily tired. No doubt, your Lord is most Kind, Merciful.

And horses and mules and asses that you may ride upon them and for adornment And He will create what you know not”.(38)

The meat of animals is the necessary and delicious element of man food as it is discussed in Quran clearly:

“Allah is He Who made for you the cattle that you may ride on some of them and some of them you may eat”.(39)

God has mentioned that all the living and non-living things bow before Allah submissively:

“Have you not seen that to Allah, prostrates whosoever is in the heavens and in the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the mountains, and the trees, and the beasts, and many of mankind? And many are those upon whom the torment is already justified. And whomsoever Allah disgraces, none is there to give him honor. Undoubtedly, Allah does what He pleases”. (40)

Since animals have a lot of benefits, so the Prophet (PBUH) has denied to harm them in any illegal and unnatural way. He (PBUH) says that:

“It is totally unlawful to kill the animal by binding it.”(41)  
He (PBUH) says:

“Punish to animal by fire is just the job of Allah”.(42)

The polluted environment has great effect on the race of panda in china. The beautiful animal panda has diminished on earth due bad environment.(43)

The most beautiful bird Eagle whose width of its feathers are 2m is found in Philippine. The rapid cutting of forests, its quantity is falling day by day.(44)

### **Importance of clean Environment:**

The clean environment is compulsory to retain the life on earth. Man directly or indirectly depends on environment to get all of his necessities such as dress, food, accommodation, air and water. The natural environment is the intense requirement of man for survival of life on earth. But at that time the most dreadful danger for natural environment is the different types of pollution. The smoke emitting from factories and vehicles, garbage, the poisonous water, the noise of aero planes and transport all are the causes of environmental pollution. To pollute the God gifted things is not the gratefulness of God. Allah has made the difference between good and worse as:

“Say you, 'the dirty and clean are not equal, even though the abundance of the dirty may please you, then remain fearing Allah,O men of understanding! So that you may get prosperity? (45)

Allah has given the concept of Flah(success) in the Quran as:

“Undoubtedly, he attained to his goal who purified.  
And offered prayer remembering the name of his Lord”. (46)

Food and grains have great importance for living things. Islam give permission to use all things except Harm(forbidden). Quran says that Moumin should use only tayyebat (halal):

“O, believers! Eat our good things provided to you, and be grateful to Allah, if it is He whom you worship”. (47)

Allah further says:

“O, Mankind! Eat of whatever is in earth lawful clean and follow not the steps of the Devil, no doubt, he is your upon enemy”. (48)

All the things which indulge man in bad habits and activities are forbidden.

Wine and Gambling are unlawful in Islam because these persuade man to vices. As Allah says:

“They ask you the precept of wine and gambling. Say you, 'in both there is great sin and also some worldly profit for the people but their sin is greater than their profit and ask you what they ought to spend, say you,' that which is saved after your needs'. Thus, Allah explains to you His Signs so that you may do after reflecting.”(49)

Everything which exceeds its limit is called Israf because excess of everything is bad. Quran explains it in such a way:

“O children of Adam! Take your adornment whenever you go to mosque and eat and drink and do not cross the limit. Undoubtedly, the persons crossing the limit are not liked by Him.”(50)

### **The beginning of Environmental Pollution:**

Pollution is the changes in characteristics of water, air and soil which affect the man and other living things. The pollutants factors are chemicals, pesticides, noise, heat, temperature, light and energy.(51)

In old civilizations such as India, China, Egypt, Persia, Greek and Rome increase the supply of water to fulfill their needs. Metals and wood were used to get benefits. But at that time, these activities were less harmful. With the passage of time, because of the excess of these things, many changes were occurred due to these new things and inventions.

The British kings Edward in 1272 restricted to burn and use the sea coal because of its smoke. (52, 53)

In 1881, in America a rule was established for fresh air. In 20<sup>th</sup> century, the other states applied this rule in their regions. (54)

### **The Land Pollution:**

The Creator of the universe has created land for man and other creatures. Like air and water land is also necessary for the continuity of life as Allah says in Quran:

“And the earth, He has laid for the creatures.” (55)

Man and plants are created from this soil as Allah says:

“And of His signs is this that He created you from dust, then henceforth you are human beings scattered in the world.”(56)



Land is home for living man as well as for dead persons also as it mentioned in Quran:

“And Allah has caused you to grow from the earth like vegetation.

Then He will cause you to return there to and will bring you forth for the next time.”(57)

“Have We not made the earth a gathering place?

Of your living ones and dead?” (58)

It means land resources are used for men as well as for dead.

### **Causes of land pollution:**

There are following causes of land pollution:

The wastes which are the results of human and animals activities are barren, poisonous and harmful. This solid waste consists generally garbage, rubbish, ashes, industrial wastes, special wastes, construction wastes and mining wastes. (59)

The chemical elements consist of pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and insecticides. These all chemicals although give some benefits but these are totally dangerous for land. (60)

In agricultural pesticides, the following poisonous materials as arsenic, chlorinated hydrocarbon, hormones, carbonate, anti coagulants, organophosphates are used. These compounds damage the mental and perception system. (61)

### **Effects of land pollution:**

The land pollution affects man, environment and the soil. Man basically likes cleanliness and fresh environment. Allah also likes the clean people as He says:

“There are those who desire to be well purified and Allah loves the pure.”(62)

Tuhr (purity) is the opposite of garbage and dirtiness. No one likes the dirty and filthiness because it is the living place of mosquitoes and insects. They spread the germs and diseases in houses and living places. The use of pesticides, insecticides, herbicides and fungicides although give some benefits but their disadvantages are numberless.

### **The Water Pollution:**

Water is also a good gift for living things. Without water living life is impossible. It has a lot of benefits. Allah has made every thing by water as Allah says:

“And we made every living thing from water.” (63)

Allah has kept varieties in the universe. There is nothing the similarities in each and every thing. From the same water, many different and various things of different colours, taste and shapes are emerged from the earth. The whole universe is masterpiece of God's strategies. Allah says about the growth of plants:

“Allah sends down of water from heaven, and revives the dead earth thereby.”(64)

“And it is He who has sent down water from the heaven, then We brought forth every things of growth and out of it.”(65)

And you see the earth withered up then when We sent down water upon it, it was freshened and swelled up and grew every beautiful pair. (66)

Imam Ghazali says:

“Behold! How Allah has the greatest blessings on living things by giving them the sweet water. He made it the sole cause of human beings and plants. It is so important for man that for getting one drop of it, he will be ready to give the whole treasures of the world.” (67)

Water pollution means to impurify it by dirt and poisonous wastes and chemicals. When water is not being able to use, it is called polluted water. (68, 69) the physical and chemical change of water is called pollution. Its effects are very bad.

### **Causes of water pollution:**

There are many reasons of pollution of water as industrial waste materials, chemical medicines, chemicals ingredients, the wastes of men and animals, the emission of liquids as petroleum and its products, the atomic wastes, sewage and sludge. (70,71)

### **Effects of polluted water:**

When polluted water passes through the earth to its down layers, it pollutes the rivers and canals. Due to it, the water life affects badly. The different chemicals heat the water and reduce the quantity of oxygen which is necessary for water living things. (72) In Pakistan 60% children died due to polluted water drinking in their childhood. Cancer and especially Hepatitis is due to dirty water. In Pakistan every third person is the patient of hepatitis. Many diseases of belly, stomach and capillaries are due to impure water. According to the physicians, the diseases in this world are the cause of dirty water.

### **The Air Pollution:**

Atmosphere is the combination of different gases. The change in natural system of air by chemical materials, solid ingredients and living things. (73)

There are many gases in the air such as oxygen, nitrogen, carbon dioxide, chlorine, ammonia gas, ozone, fluorine, bromine and boron. (74) there are many elements in atmosphere which have bad effects on plants and animals. The elements are the results of natural functions and human activities. The elements which cause the air pollution are called pollutants. These are called the primary pollutants and the secondary pollutants. (75)

### **Causes of air pollution:**

There are many causes of air pollution as motor vehicles, carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide, chlorofluorocarbon, nitrogen oxide, hydrocarbon, industrial materials, smoking, the use of fuel, the fire of solid waste.

### **The effects of air pollution:**

The polluted air causes many diseases as breathing, heart, tonsils chest problems, suffocation. The bladder cancer is the result of smoking. According to (WHO), every year 4.6 million people are dying due to air pollution. For instance, in

Multan, the fertilizer factory is the main cause of air pollution because the ammonia gas emitting from it is spreading breath and nerve diseases. (76)

Quran beware us about such situation as:

“The mischief has appeared in the land and sea, because of the evils earned by the hands of men, so that He may make them taste some of their doings, that haply they may turn back.” (77)

### **Suggestions:**

If such a disturbance exists in environment and its result may appear in the death or damage of living things, it is called the destruction of environment. This destruction may be in the form of land cut, pollution, change of climate, global warming and destruction of ozone. The main cause of environmental destruction is man and his activities. Man is utilizing the resources in more and more manner to get calm and leisure. The climate is being polluted by smoke of vehicles and factories. Wildlife is in danger due to deforestation. The temperature of land is continuously increasing due to green house effect. Domestic wastes and industrial effluents are thrown into streams, rivers, and other water bodies without treating them. This renders water of these bodies unfit for human use.

Forests are being cleared for obtaining timber, firewood and space. Unwise and excessive utilization of resources is the major cause of environmental degradation. The question arises whether we continue such activities unthoughtfully which are damaging our environment. We must think about it how we can prevent from such problems to make it safe for us and our generations. At government level some steps are put forward to make awareness among the people. It has made the part of curriculum at school and university level. Some NGO's are working in this regards.

We may adopt the following measures for conservation of our environment and resources.

1. Do not through the used and waste articles here and there. Dispose off properly.
2. Do not throw industrial and domestic refuse without treatment into air, land and water.
3. Use the fuels in vehicles which produces least pollution.
4. Minimize resource utilization.
5. Conserve resources. Switch off lights, fans and air conditioners when no one is using.
6. Recycle plastic, glass and paper articles.
7. Prefer public transport over personal cars.
8. Plant more trees and protect them.

### **Conclusion:**

In this article, it is endeavored to highlight some aspects of environment in the light of Islamic teachings of Quran and Sunnah. We have observed that Islam emphasize the most on environment and natural resources as God gifted blessings on living things especially the water, air plants and animals. In Islamic literature these articles are the basic signs of life. These things become our environment. Land is

also the sole element which is the greatest part of the Natural resources because countless resources are hidden in it.

Thus, it becomes clear that in Islam the environment is sacred and has an intrinsic value. Even if there is no threat or shortage, we must still look after natural resources, protect animals and plants and, more generally, improve and develop the environment.

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