

# Islam and Environment: Time for Green Jihād

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## Abstract

Ecological crisis is well known concern. We are well aware about the enormous consequences we may face due to the environmental degradation. Different debates have been held on this issue on various platforms on national and international level. This paper highlights the references from the Holy *Qur'ān* and the sayings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as well as his (PBUH) practices, to bring into light the teachings and instructions of Islam. Examples from the life of the companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) have also been included. The data is mostly sought from secondary sources. It is a descriptive study and content analysis of the secondary data such as books, articles, journals etc. was used. The findings of the paper are that the environmental imbalance is caused by us. Our Greed and lust for profit and luxuries have tilted the delicate balance of the ecology. But our faith also teaches us that this can surely be overcome by following the teachings of our religion. The conclusion made thus is that only by putting into practice the teachings of moderation and balance taught to us by our religion and practiced by our Holy Prophet (PBUH), will we be able to overcome the problem in no time.

**Keywords:** Environment, Islam, *Qur'ān*, Ḥadīth, Natural Resources, Ecological Balance, Environmental Crisis.

## Introduction:

Human environment is deteriorating due to the extensive use of natural resources such as water, fossil fuel, air and forest. Therefore it is a serious threat because all these resources are essential for survival. The existing societies have developed on wrong pattern by striving for high profits despite the fact that they need less. One can understand the need of a society having huge population because its consumption is colossal. Some of the production processes for consumption are directly effecting the environment whereas others are affecting it indirectly.

However, it is the need of time that every individual should be aware of the grave challenges and their behavior is supposed to be eco-friendly, government alone cannot reverse the damage and revolutionize the situation.<sup>1</sup>

The rising temperature of the globe calls for reassessment of our actions and policies. We should devise such strategies on regional and international level that would be able to control the looming environmental catastrophe. Religious leaders can play a vital role in this regard by circulating the message among public through mosques and other religious platforms. For instance, people can be guided during a Friday sermon to plant trees, save water and earth by giving them the reference of *Qur'ān* verses and

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<sup>1</sup>Fransson, Niklas, and Tommy Gorling. "Environmental Concern: Conceptual Definitions, Measurement Methods, And Research Findings." *Journal of Environmental Psychology*.

(Accessed February 26, 2019).

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/222252867\\_Environmental\\_Concern\\_Conceptual\\_Definitions\\_Measurement\\_Methods\\_and\\_Research\\_Findings](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/222252867_Environmental_Concern_Conceptual_Definitions_Measurement_Methods_and_Research_Findings).

*aḥādīth*. Our religious interpreters need to change their traditional pattern by focusing on religious heritage and reapplying sacred text to our current challenges. Despite the fact that there are so many verses in *Qur'ān* pertinent to our challenges we do not apply them in our practical lives.<sup>2</sup>

The *Qur'ān* addresses people to recognize their actions towards natural disasters:

*Corruption doth appear on land and sea because of (the evil) which men's hands have done, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return.*<sup>3</sup>

According to the above verse, Allah has allowed its creature to taste the consequences of its wrong doings; so they may return to the right path. In order to reverse the ecological changes, we have to make harsh choices particularly on a personal level.

In the first section, the paper will develop an understanding of environmental concerns and the challenges it poses; focusing on the correlation of Islam and nature. In the second section, the paper will bring into light our responsibilities towards the preservation of environment and what measures are possible practically.

### **Environmental Concerns:**

If we shuffle the pages of history, humanity has always remained the victim of environmental challenges. Industrial revolution and urbanization has added fuel to the already existing gruesome situation. For instance, factories and densely populated areas in United States were polluting land, air and water. Therefore, the administration took notice of the situation. Gradually it was taken as a dilemma and in 1960s it was accepted as a noteworthy problem. Besides water and air pollution, people have developed an understanding of deluge, climate change, rise in sea level, deforestation, extinction of different species, melting of the glaciers. In 1970, an Earth Day was announced in United States and the 1972 United Nations Human Environment conference in Sweden has further consolidated the drive of quality environment and it was recognized as an international subject. In 1992 another conference was arranged by United Nations on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, meanwhile different "Green Parties" were formed in Europe pursuing the basic motive of environmental challenges. Moreover, on 11 December 1997 Kyoto Protocol was adopted during 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference of UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) parties in Kyoto, Japan. The conference encouraged and commits the countries to reduce carbon emission and 192 parties have ratified the protocol so far.<sup>4</sup> Another agenda was set in "UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goal" in which millennium goals were set and climate change stood thirteenth in the agenda. For the first time in 2015 Paris Agreement, all the countries have agreed upon common agenda to combat climate challenges and assist

<sup>2</sup>Ally, Imam Shabir. "Environment and Islam." Why Islam. January 15, 2015. (Accessed February 26, 2019). <https://www.whyislam.org/social-issues/environment-and-islam/>.

<sup>3</sup>*Al-Qur'ān*, Ar-Rum:41

<sup>4</sup>"Fact Sheet: The Kyoto Protocol." United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (Accessed May 19, 2019).

[https://unfccc.int/files/press/backgrounders/application/pdf/fact\\_sheet\\_the\\_kyoto\\_protocol.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/press/backgrounders/application/pdf/fact_sheet_the_kyoto_protocol.pdf).

developing nations to do so.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, environment has become the subject of people and governments across the globe have started considering it as a serious issue.<sup>6</sup> Though people are familiar with environmental problems and it's a priority on international agenda but still large numbers of people consider it a hazy and vague concept. However, we will discuss few of the important things environment facilitates.<sup>7</sup>

First, earth is full of resources essential for life like water, air, abundant food and agriculture, fossil fuel and all other raw material necessary for industry. Environment is fulfilling all the necessities of human lives with both non-renewable and renewable resources but the overuse of resources may result in scarcity. For instance, in most of the countries ill planned water strategies are turning the rivers dry and extensive use of fossil fuels is leading towards shortage.

Second, we produce waste while consuming resources. Proper policies should be devised at national and international level for dumping the waste or it can be recycled in the existing environment. Technology of recycling plants should be transferred from developed countries to the under developed countries otherwise the waste will intoxicate water and pollute air.

Third, human being wants to live healthy lives and environment provides us the platform for playing, traveling, work and living, once people will spread all around and the world will become densely populated than over population will result.<sup>8</sup> Let us first take a look at the major environmental challenges.

#### **Global warming:**

Human practices are emitting greenhouse gases resulting into global warming. And global warming is rising the temperature of earth and ocean which is directly proportional to deluges, heavy snow, glaciers melting and rise in sea level.

#### **Pollution:**

It takes centuries to recover healthy environment once air, water and soil are polluted. Excessive use of automobiles and industrial growth are the major pollutants. Plastic, oil spill, acid rain, hazardous gases release and waste of factories and fossil fuel usage are other causes of air, water and soil pollution.

#### **Natural Resources Depletion:**

Increasing population is depleting natural resources. We should maintain a balance of extracting natural resources by shifting towards alternate means. For instance, governments should prefer renewable sources (biogas, solar, geothermal energy and

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<sup>5</sup>"The Paris Agreement." United Nation Climate Change. (Accessed May 19, 2019). <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>.

<sup>6</sup>Jorgenson, Andrew, and Riley E. Dunlap. "Environmental Problems." Research Gate. February 2012. (Accessed February 27, 2019). [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269409535\\_Environmental\\_Problems](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269409535_Environmental_Problems).

<sup>7</sup>S., Bunker. "Modes of Extraction, Unequal Exchange, and the Progressive Underdevelopment of an Extreme Periphery: The Brazilian Amazon." *American Journal of Sociology*, 1984. (Accessed February 27, 2019).

<sup>8</sup>DeGroot, R.S., M.A. Wilson, and R.M.J. Boumans. "A Typology for the Classification, Description and Valuation of Ecosystem Functions, Goods and Services." *Ecological Economics* 41 (2002). (Accessed February 28, 2019).

wind) other than the non-renewable one. Though the cost of the former is too high but it is environmental friendly.<sup>9</sup>

### **Loss of Biodiversity:**

Human activities are wiping out different habitats and species. Actually, ecosystem is not being preserved resulting into the loss of bio-diversity and imbalance of environment. Impede pollination and annihilation of coral reefs in different oceans are the main examples.

### **Deforestation:**

Every country needs to have 25 percent of its territory based on forest in order to maintain the temperature of the local area and control the emission of carbon dioxide but unfortunately the process of deforestation is at its pace in different countries without considering its consequences. The foremost reason is that people are not aware of the importance of trees secondly due to increasing population people need land for food, shelter, commercial purposes etc.<sup>10</sup>

### **Theoretical Framework:**

The theory of Ecotheology refers to a constructive theology which is based on the relationship of ecology and theology. The theory deals with ethics and spirituality and the relationship of human religious or spiritual behavior or views and their direct impact on environment. Ecotheology is a theoretical by product of the great debate on Environmental Crisis which generated in the 1970s. When different scholars and practitioners were exploring the various aspects of our everyday lives in order to deal with the ecological challenges the theologians were no exception. Ecotheology came up for the first time in 1967 in an article titled "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis" by Lynn White<sup>11</sup>. A lot of literature followed on the subjects in the four decades to come. Every religion came up with the tenets of Ecotheology based on their respective religions. The Muslim intellectuals have also been doing the same since 1960s. It is based on Islamic Environmental philosophy, Sharī'ah-based ecological laws and Environmental activism<sup>12</sup>. The main hypothesis of Ecotheology regardless of religion is "Biophilia Hypothesis". This hypothesis serves the idea that human beings have an inborn disposition to pursue a link between nature and life. The term was coined by Eric Fromm an American psychoanalyst in 1973 he defines the term as "the passionate love of life and of all that is alive"<sup>13</sup>. Hence Ecotheology is the theory that encompasses relationships of human being with nature and links it to their religious and spiritual beliefs. The discourse that will follow is based on the Islamic Eco theology and how Islam preaches environmentalism ardently. In this era of environmental crisis it is time we recall and revive the environmental spirit to safeguard the future of the coming generation.

<sup>9</sup>Rinkesh."Environmental Problems." Conserve Energy Future. (Accessed: March 1, 2019). <https://www.conserve-energy-future.com/15-current-environmental-problems.php>.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup>The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis, Lynn White Jr, *Science* 10 Mar 1967: Vol. 155, Issue 3767, pp. 1203-1207 retrieved from <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/155/3767/1203> retrieved on 03 March 2019

<sup>12</sup> The Call to Eco-Jihad, Monika Zbidi retrieved from <http://en.qantara.de/content/Islamic-environmentalism-the-call-to-eco-jihad> retrieved on 27 February 2019

<sup>13</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica, Kara Rogers, retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/science/biophilia-hypothesis> retrieved on 03 March 2019

### **Islam and Environment:**

Islam is a complete code of life. It covers all aspects of life and guides its followers at personal, national, international level and hereafter. Islam systemizes our association with clean environment, behavioral code, how to govern, how to maintain peace and avoid war, what is prosperity and welfare, what are civil rights and how to institute our responsibilities and rights in the right direction.

Most people think that religion should be limited to its worship places whereas this connotation is completely negated when we talk about Islam. Islam is not limited to mosque but a guideline in all political, social and economic spectrums. It is a comprehensive constitution by keeping Muslims clear headed, rational, logical and does not go against nature.<sup>14</sup>

Almost 750 verses of *Qur'ān* are based on nature; fourteen chapters are named after different animals and natural events. For instance, The Elephant, The Ant, The Cattle etc.

Prophet Muhammad (P B U H) said:

If Resurrection is starting and one of you has a sapling in his hand which he can plant before he stands up he must do so.<sup>15</sup>

Imam Sadiq says:

There is no joy in life unless three things are available: clean fresh air, abundant pure water, and fertile land.<sup>16</sup>

In the above sayings, Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) has emphasized on planting trees, keeping the water pure and air fresh. The point to ponder is that Muhammad (PBUH) was familiar with the importance of these things 1400 years earlier. There were no signs of climate change, global warming, air pollution by that time but it was his (PBUH) forecast, calculations and wisdom through which mankind was being taught. The biggest challenge of today's time is that man has distanced himself from religion. Actually, man is the representative and trustee of Allah Almighty being bestowed with an authority at different scales. However, it's his responsibility to channelize divine mercy and resources to everything in his reach. Unfortunately, man has stopped understanding environment as a blessed symbol and valuable trust from Allah. In order to rescue the world, man needs to reapply the forgotten teachings and directives of divine religion and adjusting our course of actions regarding the application of contemporary technology and in using natural resources appropriately.

It is being cited by different writers that whenever Muslim armies used to go on war they were being instructed by the first caliph of Islam, Abu Bakar, not to hurt women, sick ones, children, most importantly crops and trees should not be destroyed and animals must not be harmed. These principles are also the bases of International Humanitarian Law. There are two messages, the first one is to institute justice in Muslim army during war and the second one is to accept the importance of environment otherwise it is quite difficult to follow the instructions during an ongoing war. One

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<sup>14</sup>Alkhuli, Muhammad Al. "A Complete Code of Life." Islam Way. October 11, 2001. (Accessed March 3, 2019). <https://en.islamway.net/article/8169/a-complete-code-of-life>.

<sup>15</sup>Shomali, Mohammad. "Aspects of Environmental Ethics: An Islamic Perspective." *Thinking Faith*, November 11, 2008. (Accessed March 3, 2019).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

should also notice nature was not a problem for separate treatment in life as it streamed onward in peace and war. The human condition was never separated from the natural order. It was a matter to be reckoned with at every moment of existence like the very air we take into our lungs.<sup>17</sup>

If we look back, Islamic state had introduced a department with the name of “hisbah” whose sole purpose was to maintain accountability. It was the authority vested in the head of the state to mediate and prohibit the wrong and assist the right so the state affairs may be run as per the Islamic principles. Hisbah was headed by known scholar who uses to observe the matters keenly and environmental issues were also dealt under the same department. If we compare hisbah with the contemporary state system, the states do have such departments with different names but they are not as active as they were in the Islamic rule. The application of such values has observed down turn in the past two centuries. Some of the experts claim that eagerness for enough growth and maximum utilization of natural resources has steadily overlooked these principles. Subsequently, we are experiencing the consequences of ignoring environment. However, there are obvious guidelines that how these Islamic values could again be streamed lined in the contemporary world.<sup>18</sup>

#### **Man’s responsibilities as Vicegerent on Earth:**

One of the fundamental Islamic beliefs is that whatever we own and is given in our possession basically belongs to the Allah Almighty. This belief is further strengthened by another well-known belief that we are trustees of everything given to us by Almighty. We have to safeguard this sacred trust entrusted to us. As is stated in the Holy *Qur’ān* “Believe in Allah and His messenger, and spend of that whereof He hath made you trustees, and such of you as believe and spend (aright), theirs will be a great reward<sup>19</sup>.” The verse here implies charity but it also emphasizes on the belief of humans being mere trustees of their material wealth. As believers of the *Qur’ān* this belief extends to everything we possess or we control which includes the environment and natural resources. Hence taking care of the environment and spending it aright (not misusing or over using natural resources) will be rewarded greatly. Environmental degradation is not unnoticed in the Holy *Qur’ān* “And when he turned away (from thee) his effort in the land is to make mischief therein and to destroy the crops and the cattle; and Allah lovethnot mischief<sup>20</sup>.” The verse clearly implies the displeasure of the Almighty on environmental degradation. The words crops and cattle are clearly mentioned in the verse, contemporary scientific studies also conclude the essentiality of flora and fauna in biodiversity. Even the tiniest living being plays an important role in the biodiversity.

While granting man the status of a deputy or vicegerent the *Qur’ān* states “Then we appointed you viceroys in the earth after them that we might see how you behave<sup>21</sup>.” This means our authority or control over the environment is for a purpose to see how we behave. If we degrade the environment and exploit the natural resources we are surely

<sup>17</sup>Khalid, Fazlun, and Peter Timmerman. "Islam and the Environment." Research Gate. (Accessed March 4, 2019). [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238077285\\_Islam\\_and\\_the\\_Environment](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238077285_Islam_and_the_Environment).

<sup>18</sup>Ibid P4.

<sup>19</sup> Al-*Qur’ān*, Al-*Hadīd*:7

<sup>20</sup> Al-*Qur’ān*, Al-Baqarah:205

<sup>21</sup> Al-*Qur’ān*, Al-Yunus:14

disrupting the delicate balance of nature and the revenge of nature is our destruction in the long run.

**Change is what we need:**

As Vicegerents our responsibilities are to take care of what is given to us by the Almighty and environment is one of them. Besides if we overlook our responsibilities we will upset the natural balance. Current stats show that we have failed in following the instructions and we have upset the natural balance which have led ourselves into natural calamities such as acid rain, global warming, rise of sea levels, desertification etc. Fortunately enough it's not too late yet and it is up to us to undo our wrong doings. This basically requires taking up our responsibilities as the trustees of the sacred trust granted to us. Firstly, we need to believe that it is up to us to maintain the ecosystem and the multiple habitats it harbors which in turn are home to a wide array of living beings. Secondly, we need to understand that even one human being can make a difference at a personal level. The changes we need to include in our personal life are simple, affordable, manageable and above all reliable. Lastly, we need to make peace with the fact that it is us and no one else who have damaged the environment and it is us who can make it right. So, the question arises what we can do.

We must follow the three Rs Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. These rules can be carried out on a personal level quite feasibly. We can easily conserve our daily use of water and other natural resources. Reducing our extravagance, reusing our natural resources and recycling such materials that takes greater time in degeneration (such as plastic) is in absolute accordance with our religious teachings as the following verse clearly depicts “Man shall have nothing but what he strives for<sup>22</sup>”. One of the most overlooked or ignored human vice is extravagance (israaf). Two basic instincts lead us to extravagance greed and negligence. Our extravagance is a threat to the natural resources in particular and the environment in general. Once again our religion warns us against extravagance the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) said “The best of affairs is the medium one.<sup>23</sup>” Another saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is “Whoever is moderate he will not become poor<sup>24</sup>.” The sayings clearly mention that being moderate is the way of a believer and extravagance is discouraged. Furthermore The *Qur'ān* says “And eat and drink and be not extravagant, surely He does not love the extravagant; and do not squander (tabdhir) wastefully. Surely the squanderers are friends of Satans and Satan is ever ungrateful to his Lord<sup>25</sup>.”

Reusing and recycling can be viewed in another lens, the lens of gratitude. Gratitude or thankfulness is another characteristic of a believer. We must thank the Almighty not only in words but most importantly with our deeds too. If we use the natural resources in a right way and reduce our extravagance as well as resort to recycling we will be fulfilling our responsibility as the vicegerents on earth. It's a way to show gratitude the Almighty for bestowing us with these blessings. On the other hand exploiting the blessings of nature such as deforestation, pollution (land, air and water) are signs of ungratefulness and thanklessness. Ungratefulness is condemned in our religion as

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<sup>22</sup> Al-*Qur'ān*, An-Najm:39

<sup>23</sup> Nahj al-*Faṣāḥah*, No.1481

<sup>24</sup> Nahj Al-Fasaahah, No.2509

<sup>25</sup> Al-*Qur'ān*, Al-A'raf:31; Al-*Qur'ān*, Bani Israil:26-27

the Almighty states in the *Qur'ān* "Have you not seen those who have changed God's favor for ungratefulness and made their people to alight in the abode of perdition?"<sup>26</sup> Another important human responsibility as viceroys on earth is Tidiness. Cleanliness is a trait stressed on multiple times by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). One saying on cleanliness goes as follows "Surely God is clean and loves the clean, hence clean your courtyard"<sup>27</sup>. Another saying is as follows "Surely Islam is clean so be clean, because nobody can enter Paradise except he who is clean"<sup>28</sup>.

### **The JIZ Initiative:**

Climate is one of the most important nontraditional security challenges in today's world. UN has taken this issue quite seriously UN Environment is working vigorously in this regard. It is no news that climate issue has to be dealt via holistic approaches. UN has accepted the influence of FBOs (Faith Based organizations) on their followers. Islam is the second largest religion in the world it has over a billion followers. UN Environment has proposed 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) for development and sustainability for the Agenda 2030. Climate Action is the 13<sup>th</sup> goal on the list. In this regard Professor Odeh Al-Jayyousi, a renowned scholar in sustainable innovation who also happens to be a member of UN Environment's Global Environment Outlook 6 (GEO6) says that, "Islamic worldview represents a unique model for a transition to sustainable development by focusing on justice, degrowth and harmony between human nature"<sup>29</sup>. The harmony has been upset by human over consumption, corruption, pollution and extravagance of the natural resources. These actions have created an ecological crisis. Professor Jayyousi understands the gravity of the ecological crisis and he argues that "Reflecting on the main environment problems, such as the destruction of natural habitats, loss of biodiversity, climate change and erosion of soil, we see that all are triggered by human greed and ignorance. Human responsibility is to save and protect livelihood and ecosystem services to ensure a sustainable civilization learning from and reflecting on the fate of past civilizations"<sup>30</sup>.

Keeping in view the challenges humankind faces Professor Jayyousi presented a conceptual framework to overcome these challenges. This conceptual framework is called the JIZ initiative<sup>31</sup>. This framework consists of three fundamental domains:

- Green activism (Jihad)
- Green Innovation (Ijtihad)
- Green lifestyle (Zohd)

The JIZ initiative encompasses three very important aspects of a believer's lifestyle. Now we will discuss these aspects one by one.

### **Green Activism (Jihad):**

Jihad is very important phenomenon in Islam the literal meanings of Jihad are "struggle or effort". Muslims are advised to struggle against injustice, corruption and

<sup>26</sup> *Al-Qur'ān, Al-Ibrāhīm*:28

<sup>27</sup> *Nahj al-Faṣāḥah*, No. 703

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* No.612

<sup>29</sup> How Islam can represent a model for environmental stewardship, Professor Odeh Al-Jayyousi, uploaded on 21 June 2018, (accessed on 27 February, 2018). retrieved from <http://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/how-islam-can-represent-model-environmental-stewardship>.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*



especially imbalance. As discussed already as viceroys of God one of the basic responsibilities of humans is to be moderate and ensure balance. In order to fulfill this responsibility a Muslim has to struggle against everything that creates imbalance. This struggle is basically “civil society activism” which includes Green activism. Green activism can be roughly defined as a struggle to achieve balance between nature and humans. This activism means generating a positive force in Muslims especially Muslim Youth. Our religion emphasizes on balance (meezan) and proportion (mikdaar) in our everyday life. Activism does not mean doing a good deed alone but to aware others about the problems. Encouraging and giving awareness to fellow Muslims is hard work but there are ample long term benefits. As is stated in the Holy Scripture “Mankind shall have nothing but what he strives for<sup>32</sup>”. Giving this awareness to the Muslim youth is most important as Luzita Ball says “ If Muslims bear this in mind then they should consider future generations in their decision-making of today, and work hard with consciousness of their accountability to their descendants, to God, and ultimately to their own eternal souls<sup>33</sup>”.

#### **Green Innovation (Ijtihad):**

Green Innovation part of the JIZ initiative covers the most aspect of this framework. This basically deals with formulating a link between nature, culture and religion. The stress on equilibrium and instruction of being close to the nature is often misinterpreted as Islam is against urbanization, innovation or technology. This is just a myth as there is a saying of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) “The advantage of utilization is based on the gain it produces compared to its harm<sup>34</sup>”. Technological innovation literally encompasses every aspect a tiny needle to huge machinations. The appliances we use as a result of these innovations they make our lives simple and give us free time. We can use that leisure time and energy in more positive and productive initiatives. The use of these innovations to lead a more eco-friendly life is in accordance with our religion. Although, Islam forbids us to over indulge in worldly pleasures.

As far as urbanization is concerned *Qur’ān* mentions construction in a very positive light at several occasions. Like we know that ḥaḍrat Adam was the first builder, ḥaḍrat Ismail built the Holy Kaaba with his father, ḥaḍrat Suleman supervised the construction of a well known temple. Similarly, the wife of Pharaoh is quoted in the *Qur’ān* “My Lord! Build for me a house with thee in the garden and deliver me from the unjust people<sup>35</sup>”. Likewise we know the Holy Prophet (P B U H) took part in building mosques. If we take a look at the Muslim world we see exemplary designs in architecture mosques, palaces, houses with gardens, fountains etc. Hence Islam is not opposed to Urbanization, building, construction or innovation. In fact it encourages but it has set some boundaries. Another aspect of innovation is teaching Muslim youth and kids the importance of environment. Similarly the Muslim world can establish a Green Waqf (Endowment Fund) for the sake of environmental conservation. The creation of International Environmental Forum from an Islamic perspective in Jeddah in 2001 is also

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<sup>32</sup> Al-*Qur’ān*, An-Najm:39

<sup>33</sup> Luzita Ball, Green Deen vs Gloom and Doom: Environmental Activism Islamic Style, SHAP Journal on the Environment, 2008-9. (Accessed on 27-02-2018) retrieved from <http://www.researchgate.net/publication/27096551-Green-Deen-vs-Gloom-and-Doom-Environmental-Activism-Islamic-Style>.

<sup>34</sup> 32 Tirmizi *ḥadīth* Collection.

<sup>35</sup> Al-*Qur’ān*, Al-Tahreem:11

one of such initiatives. We can work together many other initiatives of similar nature to improve our life on earth and hereafter.

### **Green Lifestyle (Zuhd):**

In the Meccan chapters of the *Qur'ān* one cannot fail to notice the repeated emphasis on the discouragement of greed, extravagance, materialism and lust for worldly pleasures. As is mentioned in the *Qur'ān* “We made you an Ummah justly balanced (wasat), that ye might be witnessed over mankind<sup>36</sup>.....” Similarly, if we trace the etymology of the word “Adl” out of its many meanings the we mostly come across harmony, equilibrium and temperance. Keeping in view the concept of “Adl” Manzoor states “Muslim societal ethics, the very basis of society itself, is but a quest for equilibrium, and hence felicity, with God, nature and history<sup>37</sup>.” Thus our religion instructs us to have equilibrium in our lives and lead a moderate lifestyle.

We are instructed to conserve natural resources food, water, energy etc even if they are plenty. Our modern day economy runs on fossils fuels. If we summarize the production mechanism of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it would be that we need natural resources to make new materials. These natural resources are the raw materials and the fossil fuels. This use of fossils fuels is the root cause of our environmental degeneration. Global warming is our greatest challenge and it is being fueled by the fossil fuels we use.

If we connect these statements we get a clear key message here. Islam preaches small scale anthropocentric development. Islam emphasizes on sustainability and sufficiency not profit driven corporate global trade. As Ummah wasat (median community) it is an obligation on us to respect planet earth and conserve the natural resources. Another important aspect often overlooked is that Islam is a religion that instructs us to conserve natural resources even if they are in abundance it means even if there are no threats of ecological imbalance or climate etc even then we have to spend a moderate life. Our deviation from the path laid by Almighty Allah the principle of Zuhd has caused this havoc.

### **Conclusion:**

The discussion made so far concludes that ecological crisis is a grave concern as one of the major threats to human security. The main issues and challenges are highlighted off and on, on different platforms and by various scholars. The UN organization has taken number of initiative as discussed above. The paper concludes that our religion is not just a set of rituals but it is a complete code of life. It encompasses every aspect of life and environment is not an exception. Humans are responsible for maintaining the fragile balance of earth and our environment Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) are called on all over the world to be a part of the climate campaign. Our religion has taken the initiative 14 centuries ago. Hence, the discussion can be put in a nut shell by saying that all we need to do is practice our lives according to the teachings and instructions of Islam.

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<sup>36</sup> Al-*Qur'ān*, Al-Baqarah:143

<sup>37</sup> S.P Manzoor, “Environment and values”, in Z. Sardar, ed., *The Touch of Midas: Science, Values and the Environment in Islam and the West* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1984), p.157