

Prophet Muhammad's SAW Holistic Approach towards Nature's Preservation

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Abstract: *Nature's protection involves safeguarding ecosystems and biodiversity to address these pressing concerns. The connection lies in nature's preservation serving as a proactive strategy to mitigate environmental crises. Throughout history, environmental urgency transcends time and culture. As the world grapples with an escalating ecological crisis, the imperative of preserving nature becomes increasingly critical. This research explores the holistic approach of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) towards nature preservation. Moreover it sheds light on his narrations as how he developed cognitive system of his followers as a pro protector of natural resources. The Prophet's philosophy, rooted in concepts of Tawhid (oneness of God), Khalifa (stewardship), and Amana (trust), emphasizes the wise and sustainable use of resources, as well as the kind treatment of all creatures. It emphasizes the need for responsible behavior and profound stewardship in utilizing natural resources. The article concludes that the teachings of Prophet Muhammad provide relevant guidance for preserving the environment and promoting sustainability in the modern world.*

Keywords: *Nature protection, Muhammad's SAW life, Holistic approach*

Introduction

Meanings of Environment and Nature in Islamic Perspective

In Arabic the word “*Mahawl*” use for Environment.” It is formed of with these two Arabic words “*Maa*” and “*Hawl*”. The literal meaning of “*Maa*” is “Anything” and “*Hawl*” means “Surrounding,” means anything that surrounds the human is called environment. Imam Raghīb Asfahani defined the environment in these words “the direction of something which can be surrounded”⁽¹⁾.

The term Environment describes the circumstances or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant exists or operates. This consists upon both natural and artificial elements, such as air quality, water sources, and built structures. Nature, on the other hand, refers to the natural world or universe, including all living and non-living things that exist without human intervention.

In Holy *Quran*, the word “*Fitrah*” mentioned which is translation of the word “Nature”. It is commonly

perceives that *Fitrah* word just use for 'innat nature' which means that it is just for cognitive functioning, conscious or spiritual belongings. But the matter of fact is that this word just not comprises on spiritual basis but as well as material basis. In the perspective of The Holy Quran, this word has a wide range of meanings.

If a one place in The Holy Quran mentioned the meaning of *Fitrah* for Cognitive connection to Divine spirit as:

فطرة الله التي فطر الناس عليها⁽²⁾

Humanity depends on the nature which Allah created..On the other hand it elaborates this word for "the process of whole creation" by Divine Authority (Allah).

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا⁽³⁾

I have inclusively turned my face towards that who has formed the heavens and the earth beyond comprehension and I am not from amongst the polytheists.

When we read the Surah no.30 of The Holy Quran, which name is "Fatir" that means the creator or the maker. Its whole content just illuminates the concept of *Fitrah* in a broad way. In which mentioned major all worldly and Universal things. So it is clear that such as this word represent the innate nature of human beings as well as other materialistic things.⁽⁴⁾

Muhammad Iqbal a most recognized Islamic thinker just described the connection between Nature and Tawhid in below words:

The concept of oneness serves as the cornerstone of global unification in the modern world (Tawhid). Islam as a system of beliefs is an excellent choice for rational and useful ways to incorporate these beliefs into humankind's mental and emotional development as well as its treatment of other creations. It requires devotion to God rather than to thrones. Furthermore, since God is the ultimate spiritual foundation of all existence, a person's loyalty to God is essentially a person's loyalty to their ideal nature. He quoted the Quranic verse and wrote also:

Quran says: "Your creation and resurrection are like the foundation and resurrection of a single soul."⁽⁵⁾ "A living experience of the kind of biological unity, depicted in this verse, demands today a method physiologically less brutal and psychologically more suitable to a concrete type of mind."⁽⁶⁾

Iqbal's stance regarding *Tawhid* and the unity of whole nature is indicating that the Quran just not ignore the worldly and materialistic things as considering against the spiritual matters among the God (*ALLAH*) and men. Furthermore he stressing upon re-building the emotional and intellectual connection among human beings and all other creations. So his beliefs that the loyalty to God do not restrict to be loyal to his whole nature but support it to accomplish the beautiful purpose of life.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Quran emphasized the importance of environmental stewardship and sustainability. The Prophet taught that humans should ponder the creation and understand the wisdom of nature, which is a masterpiece of balance and harmony. The Quran mentions ten things that have a direct relationship with the environment, including the sky, land, day and night, shipping and sea, rain, land fertility, animal life, wind rotation, and cloud suspension. The Quran also states that all of these things are created and embellished with precise management, postulation, stability, and modesty. All these things mentioned below verse:

The creation of the earth and the heavens, the alternating night and day, the ships and vessels that sail

the ocean carrying profitable cargo for the people, the rain that Allah pours down from the sky, the reviving of the earth after it dies, and the earth in which He has scattered animals of all kinds are undoubtedly among the many signs of Allah's power for those who apply their intelligence. Other signs include the shifting direction of the wind and the clouds that trail between the sky and the earth, duty bound under Allah's command.”⁽⁷⁾

“Praise the name of your Lord, the Highest. He who has made (everything in the universe) and then (fulfilling all requisites) equipoised it to its exact proportion.⁽⁸⁾ And He Who has established law, and guided (it to its). And He Who has created for verdant pastures on earth.

In the above quotations, Allah highlights the significance and needs of all his creation, while on the contrary he warns with below words to humans that they must be questioned about these things how you used its, weather in a better or worse way.

ثُمَّ لَنَسْأَلَنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ⁽⁹⁾

Then you will surely be asked that Day about pleasure.

Prophet's *SAW* holistic approach toward nature's preservation

The Prophet Muhammad *SAW* was an inspiration as a nature's preserver. He had a holistic view of the environment, believing that all natural elements are interconnected and interdependent. He also guided that humans are stewards of the Earth and they must take care of all Cosmo-resources.

As reported in a hadith, Abu Sa'id al-Khudrir.a narrated that the Prophet s.a.w. said,

إِنَّ الدُّنْيَا حُلْوَةٌ خَضِرَةٌ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مُسْتَخْلِفُكُمْ فِيهَا فَيَنْظُرُ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ

“Indeed, The world is gratifying, green earth so He can observe your acts”.⁽¹⁰⁾

Above quoted narration and below mentioned narration both are explicating the role and position of human being as a caretaker of whole subservient.

أَلَا فَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ

“Be alert, each and every one of you is a shepherd in charge of his flock”.⁽¹¹⁾

The Prophet's environmental legacy based on three key principles: *Tawhid*: The oneness of God. This means that there is one Creator of the universe and that all things are interconnected. *Khalifa*: Stewardship. Humans are stewards of the Earth and have a responsibility to care for it. *Amana*: Trust. God has entrusted humans with the care of the Earth. The Prophet taught that humans should use the Earth's resources wisely and sustainably. He also taught that we should treat all creatures with kindness and respect. The Prophet Muhammad's environmental is holistic, recognizing the fundamental interconnectedness of all natural elements. Based on the Qur'anic teachings of *tawhid* (oneness of God), *khalifa* (stewardship), and *amanah* (trust), his philosophy emphasizes the responsibility of humans to care for the Earth and its inhabitants. The Prophet's teachings on environmental protection are remarkably prescient, given the contemporary challenges we face. His holistic approach and emphasis on stewardship and responsibility offer a valuable framework for

addressing the environmental crisis of our time. It is of utmost importance to recognize that while Allah grants humans the power of utilization of resources, but He does not grant the ultimate ownership to humans as he they use it in the exploiting and destructive ways. He also expects responsible behavior and a profound sense of stewardship. As He said in the Quran:

It is thought that God has given humanity the right to use resources because God is the owner of everything.⁽¹²⁾

Abdullah ibn Amr (narrates that on one occasion, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) passed by Hazrat Sa'id who was performing ablution (wudu). At that time, Hazrat Sa'id was using more water than necessary. The Prophet PBUH remarked, "What is this excessive usage of water?" Hazrat Sa'id inquired if there was also extravagance in performing ablution. In response, the said, "Yes, even if you are at a flowing river.

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "لا تسرفوا الماء وإن أنتم على نهر جار"⁽¹³⁾

The Prophet Muhammad PBUH once said: "Even if you take your ablution beside a river that flows freely, do not waste water."

The Holy prophet PBUH forbade urinating in the stagnant water"⁽¹⁴⁾

These hadiths emphasize the importance of conserving and not wasting water, even in situations where water may seem abundant, highlighting the Prophet's concern for responsible and mindful water usage. Seeding trees is a most reward able act, one that supports many sides of the ecosystem and helps to save the environment. The Prophet s.a.w. had highly appreciated the planting of trees and stated it as a charity. As narrated in a hadith, Anas ibn Malik (R.A) reported that the Prophet s.a.w. said,

"None of the Muslims cultivate trees or spread seeds that are later eaten by a bird, a person, or an animal, but are instead considered a kind gesture".⁽¹⁵⁾

The significance of planting according to Holy Prophet SAW elucidates by this narration in a best way:

ان قامت الساعة وبيد احدكم فسيلة فان استطاع ان لا يقوم حتى يغرسها فليفعل.⁽¹⁶⁾

There are numerous narrations of Prophet Muhammad SAW regarding animals' protection, as he said: If the Hour (of Judgment) were to come while someone has a plant in his hand, and he is able to plant it before the Hour comes, let him do so. This hadith is a reminder that we should always be prepared to do good deeds, even in the face of death or other adversity. It also teaches us that we should be mindful of our impact on the environment, and that we should struggle to leave the world a better place than we found it.

عَذَبَتْ امْرَأَةً فِي هِرَّةٍ حَبَسَتْهَا حَتَّى مَاتَتْ فَلَمْ تُطْعَمْهَا وَلَمْ تَسْقِهَا إِذْ غَابَتْ عَنْهَا، وَلَمْ تَدَعِهَا تَأْكُلْ مِنْ خَشَبِ الْأَرْضِ

"A woman was pushed in Hell because of a cat which she had captured until it died. She did not offer it to eat or to drink when it was imprisoned, nor did she release it so that it might eat the insects of the earth."⁽¹⁷⁾

مَرَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِبَعِيرٍ قَدْ لَحِقَ ظَهْرُهُ بِبَطْنِهِ، فَقَالَ: " اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ فِي هَذِهِ الْبَهَائِمِ الْمُعْجَمَةِ فَإِنْ كَبُوهَا وَكُلُّوهَا صَالِحَةٌ "

When the Prophet (ﷺ) saw a emaciated camel, he exclaimed, "Fear Allah for these dumb animals." When they're in good shape, ride them, and when they're not, feed them.⁽¹⁸⁾

Cleanliness of Environment as an integral component of Faith:

This quality of the Muslims has been discussed that they like cleanliness. Quran stated about the believers of Allah:

فِيهِ رَجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَّطَهَّرُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ- 22

"There are people in it who like to remain purified (both physically and spiritually), and Allah loves those who commit themselves to purity"⁽¹⁹⁾

Holy Prophet PBUH declared purity and cleanliness the part of faith and said:

"Purity drives towards faith and faith takes away his partner to heaven".⁽²⁰⁾

Everybody desires heaven and prepares themselves with faith and deeds. But look on this revolutionized teaching of the Holy Prophet PBUH that if you want a home in heaven, you need to make your environment clean like heaven, in this way; you will be the true deserving candidate of Jannah (heaven).

عَنْ أَبِي مَالِكٍ الْأَشْعَرِيِّ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "الطُّهُورُ شَطْرُ الْإِيمَانِ"⁽²¹⁾

Narrated by Abu Malik Al-Ashari, the Prophe PBUH said, "Purity is half of faith."

This Hadith highlights the importance of cleanliness, including personal and environmental cleanliness, as an integral part of faith.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبُّ جَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ"⁽²²⁾

Narrated by Abu Huraira, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Indeed, Allah is Beautiful, and He loves beauty."

It has been much appreciated to the person who threw away any obstacle from the road.

فبِمَارِجٍ يَمْشِي بِطَرِيقٍ وَجَدَ غَصْنَ شَوْكٍ عَلَى الطَّرِيقِ فَاخْرَهُ، فَشَكَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ فَغَفَرَ لَهُ⁽²³⁾

When a person walks on the path and finds a thorny branch on the way, and he removes it, Allah thanked him, and He forgave him

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَنْ أَمَاطَ أَدَى عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ كَانَ لَهُ كَأَجْرِ صَدَقَةٍ.

"عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: عَلَى كُلِّ سَلَامَى مِنْ ابْنِ آدَمَ صَدَقَةٌ، تَسْلِيْمُهُ عَلَى مَنْ لَقِيَ صَدَقَةٌ، وَأَمْرُهُ

بِالْمَعْرُوفِ صَدَقَةٌ، وَنَهْيُهُ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ صَدَقَةٌ، وَإِمَاطَتُهُ الْأَذَى عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ صَدَقَةٌ، وَبَضْعُهُ أَهْلِيهِ صَدَقَةٌ."

In this text, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) teaches us the importance of removing obstacles from the road. He says that whoever removes an obstacle from the road will be rewarded with forgiveness from Allah. The quotation also mentions that this action is considered a form of charity. This is because it benefits others and makes the road safer and more accessible. These Hadith emphasize that Allah appreciates beauty, which can be extended to maintaining the beauty and cleanliness of the environment as an expression of faith and devotion.

In a similar vein, followers were encouraged by the Prophet to share resources on earth. "Three things that Muslims have in common are water, herbage, and fire," he stated. The principle that "Muslims share alike in three things – water, herbage, and fire" encapsulates foundational environmental ethics within the Islamic tradition. Water, as a life-sustaining resource, emphasizes responsible management and conservation, underscoring the importance of equitable access for all. Islamic teachings promote water conservation and advocate for responsible irrigation and daily usage, recognizing the finite nature of this vital resource. Herbage, encompassing vegetation and pastures, embodies ecological balance and biodiversity support. Sustainable agricultural practices are promoted, emphasizing responsible land use and animal welfare. In this context, the ethical treatment of animals and responsible farming practices align with the Islamic principles of stewardship and sustainability. Lastly, the concept of sharing fire as an energy source promotes responsible energy consumption and cleaner alternatives. Preventing uncontrolled fires and embracing sustainable energy solutions align with Islamic environmental ethics. Together, these principles underscore the need for responsible and equitable resource management, in harmony with Islamic values of sustainability, justice, and compassion for the environment and its inhabitants and He believed that refusing thirsty people water is a sin. Nobody can turn down more water without transgressing both human and divine laws."⁽²⁴⁾

The Prophet's SAW views on water conservation, sustainable land use, and animal welfare are more examples of his environmental philosophy's humility.

Protection of ecosystem as a sacred duty

Various places in the Quran, warns to those peoples as highlighting them corrupt and sinful who are corrupting and demolishing the natural resources. In the context of protection of nature and environment, "Fasaad" (mischeif) refers to any human activity that disrupts the natural balance of the ecosystem. This can include things like air pollution, water pollution, deforestation, and climate change.

The Quran explicitly condemns corruption and disorder (Fasaad) in nature and society. In Surah Ar-Rum, verse 41, Allah (SWT) says:

"The sins that individuals have committed with their hands have caused corruption and chaos to spread both on land and at sea".⁽²⁵⁾

Further stated as : "After his departure, he makes it his mission to devastate every area of the country by destroying livestock and crops. Additionally, Allah (SWT) dislikes malicious behavior."⁽²⁶⁾ This verse teaches us that humans are responsible for the prosperous of the planet. When we engage in activities that harm the environment, we are not only harming ourselves, but also future generations.

The following are some examples of *Fasaad* (corruptions) in the context of nature and environment:

When dangerous gases and particles are released into the atmosphere, air pollution results. It can originate from a number of places, such as factories, power plants, and automobiles. Both the environment and human health can be harmed by air pollution. When dangerous materials are released into bodies of water, like lakes, rivers, and the ocean, it leads to pollution. It can originate from a number of places, including as industrial waste, agricultural runoff, and sewage treatment facilities. Aquatic life can be harmed and drinking water contaminated by water pollution. The removal of trees for development or other purposes, such as agriculture, is known as deforestation. In addition to providing home for species and purifying the air and water, forests are crucial for controlling the temperature. Muslims and whole human beings have a duty to protect the environment and prevent *Fasaad* (mischief). We can do this by reducing our consumption of resources, making sustainable choices, and supporting environmental protection initiatives.

And aside from communities such as yours, there is no other bird or creature on the planet that can fly with its wings. There is nothing in the Book that we have overlooked. Then they will be gathered to their Lord." (27)

Noise pollution is a major environmental problem. It is caused by loud noises that can be harmful to health and the environment. The effects of noise pollution include: Noise pollution can cause hearing loss; stress, and mental health problem, Noise pollution can affect the movement and reproduction of animals. The command to lower our voices in the Hadiths and Quranic verses is an important step in preventing noise pollution. In different places in Quran mentioned below commands:

وَأَقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاعْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ

Additionally, move at a modest pace and speak less; in fact, donkeys' voices are among the most annoying noises." (28)

وَلَا تَجْهَرْ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافِتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا (29)

In above two mentioned verses, it is cleared that having loud voice is not a good deed, rather a bad as donkey's voice as if you do it for useless means. But it is more clearly stated your voice must be moderate if you have noble cause such as praying *Salah*.

This Verse teaches us that we should not raise our voices unnecessarily.

Dr. Ahmad Al Kareem writes about Hadith:

"This Hadith addresses the hideousness of loud voice because it affects the easement" (30)

Conclusion

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a role model for all Muslims, and his teachings are a source of guidance and inspiration for people of all faiths. He was also a keen observer of nature and had a deep appreciation for its beauty and importance. He taught and developed the cognitive system as a pro-protector of nature. In the context of the environmental crisis, the Prophet's teachings can serve as a driving force for taking action to protect nature. His teachings emphasize the importance of stewardship, responsibility, and compassion. He also taught that humans have a sacred duty to care for the Earth and all of its inhabitants. Muslims can apply the Prophet's teachings to the environmental crisis in a number of ways. For example, we can reduce our environmental impact by following the Prophet's teachings on moderation and avoiding waste. We should also reuse and recycle items whenever

possible. We can also conserve water and energy by following the Prophet's teachings on simplicity and avoiding extravagance. We should only use the resources that we need and should avoid wasting water and energy. Additionally, we can protect biodiversity by following the Prophet's teachings on compassion and caring for all creatures. We should avoid harming nature and should work to protect its biodiversity. By following the Prophet's teachings, Muslims can play a leading role in protecting the environment and addressing the environmental crisis. If we follow the Prophetic teachings, we can avoid any sort of pollution.

Refrance

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