



Environmental Protection in the Sacred Texts of Islam and Christianity

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Received: 2025/03/25 • Revised: 2025/05/25 • Accepted: 2025/06/25 • Available Online: 2025/07/10



Abstract

The continuation of life on our planet requires a set of essential elements, including water, soil, air, trees, and plants, making environmental protection our duty. Environmental preservation has long been a pressing concern throughout human history, but it has now evolved into a major challenge. Indeed, it forms the very basis and foundation of human life. Significantly, the Sacred Texts of Islam and Christianity recognized this issue centuries ago and offered their followers guidelines on environmental protection. These directives encompass various aspects such as preserving trees, promoting agricultural development and afforestation, safeguarding water resources, counseling against waste and pollution, and avoiding the restriction of access to these resources,

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* Sahaaf Kashani, M. (2025). Environmental protection in the sacred texts of Islam and Christianity. *Theosophia Islamica*, 5(2), pp. 377-404.

<https://doi.org/10.22081/JTI.2025.72151.1098>

Article Type: Research; **Publisher:** Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy

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especially during conflicts. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on sustainable development and the cleanliness of lands and habitats, preventing the pollution of our surroundings, and the importance of clean air for the sustenance of life. Muslims and Christians, recognizing their human and religious duties, are called upon to actively defend their surrounding environment and refrain from harming it. The aim of this research is to conduct a comparative study on the Sacred Texts of Islam and Christianity regarding environmental protection, clarifying their shared teachings and insights on this vital subject. The scope of this research is limited to the Sacred Texts of Islam and Christianity and is executed as a case-by-case comparison of environment-related issues.

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Theosophia Islamica

Vol. 5, No. 2, 2025

Keywords

Environment, Water, Soil, Trees, Scriptures, Islam and Christianity.

Introduction

The environment encompasses a complex interplay of essential elements and processes that directly and indirectly affect the well-being of all living organisms. These elements include vital components such as water, soil, air, and plants (Kiss, 2000, p. 6). Environmental protection necessitates the implementation of diverse measures aimed at preserving, maintaining, and preventing the degradation or destruction of natural ecosystems. However, in our modern era, marked by significant technological advancements, the increasing demands on land, water, energy, food, and infrastructure by a growing human population have led to undesirable consequences for the environment. Recognizing the urgent need for environmental preservation, governmental bodies and public institutions have made substantial investments in resources and efforts to reduce and curb activities that pose serious risks to the environment.

Environmental agreements have a rich history, with their origins dating back to 1910 (Mitchell, 2003, pp. 429-461). The 1960s marked the emergence of environmental movements, which played a pivotal role in raising awareness and advocating for environmental protection. Consequently, the United Nations convened a significant milestone, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, in Stockholm in 1972. This conference introduced the groundbreaking concept of the right to a healthy environment, emphasizing the importance of preserving and maintaining ecological well-being (United Nations, 1972). Subsequently, the United Nations Environment Program was established later that same year to address global environmental challenges. Important international agreements were then reached, including the Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1997 and the historic Paris Agreement in 2015. Notably, on October 8, 2021, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a

resolution recognizing access to a clean and healthy environment as a universal right, further underscoring the global commitment to environmental protection (United Nations, 2021). These milestones demonstrate the continuous progress and growing recognition of the importance of environmental preservation on a global scale.

In order to ensure effective environmental protection, a comprehensive approach encompassing moral guidance, education, and appropriate legal frameworks is crucial. With approximately half of the world's population identifying as adherents of Islam and Christianity, the role of these two religions in fostering environmental awareness and action is of significant importance. The sacred texts of Islam and Christianity contain valuable recommendations and teachings regarding environmental stewardship, which can greatly influence the followers' attitudes and behaviors towards protecting the environment. By emphasizing these environmental recommendations, both religions have the potential to inspire collective contemplation and recognition of the importance of environmental conservation. By leveraging the teachings and moral principles present in these sacred texts, Islam and Christianity can play a vital role in instilling a sense of responsibility and encouraging active engagement in environmental protection efforts.

The sacred texts of Islam and Christianity have long been ahead of their time in addressing the importance of environmental protection. Centuries before the establishment of modern environmental laws and regulations, these texts provided their followers with effective laws, guidelines, and recommendations to safeguard the environment. These ancient teachings anticipated the need to preserve and respect the natural world, emphasizing the responsibility of individuals to care for and protect the environment. By instilling these principles within their respective religious frameworks, Islam and

Christianity promoted environmental consciousness and advocated for sustainable practices well before such concerns became widespread in human societies. The enduring relevance of these teachings underscores the wisdom and foresight embedded in these sacred texts regarding the significance of environmental stewardship.

The Christian Bible is comprised of two main sections: The Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament consists of 39 books categorized into three parts: historical books, sermons, wisdom literature, and prophetic writings. These writings provide a historical account of the Israelites, convey moral and ethical teachings, and contain prophecies concerning future events.

On the other hand, the New Testament consists of 27 books and treatises. It begins with the four Gospels, which narrate the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Following the Gospels is the Acts of the Apostles, which details the early Christian church's formation and expansion. The majority of the New Testament is comprised of the Letters of the Apostles, consisting of 21 letters addressed to various Christian communities, providing guidance, encouragement, and theological insights. Lastly, the New Testament concludes with the Revelation of John, an apocalyptic text unveiling future events and emphasizing the ultimate victory of God's kingdom.

Together, these diverse books and treatises in the Christian Bible offer a comprehensive account of religious history, teachings, and prophetic revelations. The Holy Quran holds a central position as the primary sacred text for Muslims. However, it is not the sole holy book within Islam. Muslims also recognize a second source known as Hadith, which is considered a significant text of religious importance. The Hadith comprises the recorded sayings, actions, and approvals of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, that have been transmitted in written form. In accordance with the teachings of the Quran, all the

sayings of the Prophet are regarded as divinely inspired revelations. Together, the Quran and Hadith form integral components of Islamic scripture, guiding Muslims in matters of faith, practice, and ethical conduct.

In Surah Najm of the Holy Quran, Allah affirms that the words spoken by the Prophet Muhammad are not of his own desire but are revelations that have been revealed to him. The verse states: "وَمَا يَنْطَلِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ" Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed, Taught to him by one intense in strength" (Al-Najm: 3-5).

Additionally, Allah has commanded Muslims to obey and follow all the orders and guidance of the Prophet. In Surah Al-Hashr, it is stated: "مَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا" And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from" (Al-Hashr: 7).

Moreover, Muslims are instructed by Allah to obey the Prophet, for in doing so, they are obeying Allah Himself. The verse in Surah An-Nisa declares: "مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ" Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah" (Al-Nisa: 80).

Imam Reza, a revered figure in Islam, has affirmed that the narrations and teachings are transmitted from Almighty God and the Prophet Muhammad. He stated: "إِنَّا عَنِ اللَّهِ وَعَنْ رَسُولِهِ نُحَدِّثُ" Indeed, we narrate hadith from Almighty God and the Prophet of God" (Kashi, 1983, p. 224).

These verses and the statement by Imam Reza highlight the significance and authority attributed to the words and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad within Islamic belief and practice.

Islamic teachings regard the Hadith, which includes the sayings and teachings of the Prophet of Islam and Ahl al-bayt (the

family of the Prophet), as sacred and divinely inspired. These traditions hold immense importance within the Islamic faith and are considered a significant source of guidance for Muslims.

In the realm of environmental protection, there have been notable studies conducted within the contexts of both Islam and Christianity. Some noteworthy works include "Islam, Christianity, and Environmental" and "Religion and Pro-Environmental Behavior: A Comparative Analysis Towards Environmental Protection". While there have been comparative studies examining Islam and the environment, this particular research aims to specifically focus on the sacred texts of Islam and Christianity, analyzing the data and teachings they offer concerning environmental protection. By exploring the scriptures of these two religions, valuable insights can be gained regarding their respective perspectives on environmental stewardship.

2. The perspective of Islamic Scriptures:

Islamic scriptures encompass numerous directives concerning the protection and preservation of trees, plants, water, earth, and air. These teachings emphasize the significance of environmental stewardship and the responsibility of Muslims to safeguard these vital elements of creation. The scriptures guide believers to respect and care for trees and plants, recognizing their importance in sustaining life and ecosystems. They also emphasize the conservation of water, discouraging wastefulness and pollution, and promoting responsible usage. Similarly, Islamic teachings emphasize the sanctity of the earth and the need to maintain its cleanliness and purity. Additionally, attention is drawn to the significance of clean air for the well-being of all living beings. Collectively, these scriptures serve as a comprehensive

guide, inspiring Muslims to actively engage in protecting and preserving the natural world around them.

2-1. Protection of trees and plants

In the Qur'an, Allah states, " إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ "، أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا، We have made whatever is on the earth an adornment for it to test them [as to] which of them is best in deed" (Al-Kahf: 7). This verse signifies that everything present on Earth, including water, trees, mountains, and more, is part of its adornment. Scholars have interpreted this verse to include trees, plants, and all that exists on the Earth (Bahrani, 1994, Vol. 3, p. 612).

Allah describes these blessings as the embellishment of the Earth, مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ، and has granted them to humanity as a means of testing and evaluating their actions. Through these tests, it becomes possible to discern who performs the best deeds. The actions and tests referred to in this verse are somehow linked to what exists on Earth، مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ، and its adornment، زِينَةُ لَهَا. Therefore, protecting the land, trees, and waters can be considered acts that preserve the beauty of what is on the Earth.

Furthermore, in another verse, Allah mentions that on the Day of Resurrection, people will be questioned about the blessings He has bestowed upon them: " ثُمَّ لَنَسْأَلَنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ "، Then you will surely be asked that Day about the blessings" (At-Takathur: 8). This emphasizes the accountability of humanity for the protection and proper use of these blessings.

The Holy Qur'an explicitly prohibits corruption in the land and identifies those who destroy crops as the most severe enemies، أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ (Al-Baqarah: 204-205). It states، " وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن ...هُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ وَإِذَا تَوَلَّى سَعَى فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُسَادَ "، And of the people is

he whose speech pleases you in worldly life, and he calls Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the fiercest of opponents. And when he goes away, he strives throughout the land to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals. And Allah does not like corruption". This highlights that some individuals actively seek to spread corruption and devastation in the land, but such actions are detested by Allah.

The Qur'an also encourages tourism as a means to contemplate and study the wonders of creation. It states, "قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ" (Al-Ankabut: 20). This verse highlights the importance of exploring the Earth and witnessing the marvels of Allah's creation.

In Islamic teachings and traditions, there are numerous directives to safeguard trees and green spaces. One such recommendation is through acts of charity, with the best form being ongoing charity. The Prophet of Islam regarded planting trees as a form of ongoing charity. He stated that if a Muslim plants a tree and any creature, be it a bird, human, or animal, benefits from its fruit, it is considered an act of charity for the planter (Nouri, 1982, vol. 13, p. 26). Additionally, the rewards of these virtuous deeds are recorded and presented in the divine court for the one who plants a palm tree (Majlisi, 1982, Vol. 101, p. 97). Imam Sadiq further emphasized that one of the lasting benefits a believer receives after their death is the sapling they had planted (Majlisi, 1982, Vol. 6, p. 293).

The significance of planting trees in Islam is emphasized by the statement of the Messenger of God (PBUH), who advised, "If one of you has a sapling in his hand and the Day of Resurrection starts, let him plant it" (Nouri, 1982, vol. 13, p. 460). This highlights the importance of tree planting and nurturing, even in anticipation of the Day of Judgment.

Furthermore, the Prophet of Islam stressed the importance of watering trees, stating, "Whoever waters a tall tree and a cedar tree in need of water, it is as if he has quenched the thirst of a believer" (Salmi Samarqandi, 1960, vol. 2, p. 86). This exemplifies the value placed on caring for trees and ensuring their well-being.

In Islamic culture, the pollution of green spaces is strictly prohibited. The Messenger of God explicitly forbade Muslims from urinating under fruit trees or palm trees with dates (Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, 1984, vol. 4, p. 4). This prohibition is due to the presence of angels assigned to those trees (Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, 1984, vol. 2, p. 32). It is worth noting that the Messenger of God (PBUH) extended this prohibition to everyone, emphasizing the importance of respecting and preserving the sanctity of fruit trees (Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, 1984, vol. 4, p. 4).

Imam Reza narrated the significance of observing nature, stating that looking at a green tree brings a sense of refreshment, النَّظَرُ إِلَى الْخَضِرَةِ نُشْرَةٌ (Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, 1983, vol. 2, p. 40). This highlights the beauty and serenity found in contemplating the natural world.

In various hadiths, Muslims were explicitly forbidden from cutting down trees. Imam Sadiq emphasized that it is not permissible to cut a date tree, warning of the punishment that God will send upon those who do so, لَا تَقْطَعُوا الشَّجَرَ فَيَعِثَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ الْعَذَابَ صَبًّا (Koleyni, 1969, vol. 5, p. 264). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also stated that whoever unnecessarily cuts down a cedar tree will have their head placed in the fire on the Day of Judgment (Majlisi, 1982, vol. 63, p. 113). Imam Sadiq further emphasized the prohibition of cutting down fruit-bearing trees, as severe punishment awaits those who engage in such actions (Hor AamiliAmeli, 1988, Vol. 19, p. 39).

However, it should be noted that cutting down a tree is not prohibited if it is done for a legitimate purpose and replaced appropriately. It is mentioned that Imam Kazem himself cut down a cedar tree but planted a grape tree in its place (Koleyni, 1969, vol. 5, pp. 263-264). This signifies the importance of balance and responsibility when it comes to tree management.

Amir al-Mu'minin narrated that one of the factors contributing to a longer life is to refrain from cutting down green trees unless absolutely necessary (Majlisi, 1982, Vol. 73, p. 319).

The significance of green spaces for humanity is so great that even in times of war, it is prohibited to destroy trees, fields, and the green areas of the enemy. The Prophet explicitly forbade actions such as setting fire to palm trees, redirecting water to harm the enemy, and burning their fields. He said, "Do not set fire to palm trees in war" (Hurr al-Amili, 1988, vol. 15, p. 59).

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) quoted the Holy Prophet, saying, "Proceed in the name of God, with the assistance of God, and in the path of God and the Messenger of God. Do not cut down a tree unless you are faced with an emergency" (Hurr al-Amili, 1988, Vol. 15, p. 58, H19985). This highlights the importance of preserving trees and the natural environment, even during times of conflict, unless there is a compelling necessity.

It is reported from Amir al-Mu'minin that the Prophet explicitly prohibited the cutting or burning of fruit-bearing trees, emphasizing that this prohibition applies both during times of war and in general. Such actions should only be undertaken if they are for the benefit of the Muslim community, *إِزْرَعُوا وَاغْرِشُوا وَاللَّهُ مَا عَمِلَ النَّاسُ عَمَلًا أَجَلًا*, ولا أطيّب منه (Nouri, 1982, vol. 11, p. 127 - H 12618).

In the Islamic perspective, giving attention to the environment

and engaging in agriculture is considered among the best actions. Imam Sadiq stated, "Plant and cultivate, for by Allah, people have not engaged in any action greater or purer than this" (Nouri, 1982, vol. 13, p. 461). This highlights the importance and virtue of engaging in agricultural practices and environmental stewardship according to Islamic teachings.

2-2. Water Preservation

Water is a vital component of the environment, and Islamic teachings emphasize the proper preservation and care of water resources. The Qur'an holds humans accountable for polluting the land and seas, stating that corruption has emerged as a result of their actions: "ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ", Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned" (Rum: 41).

In the Qur'an, water and seas are acknowledged as blessings bestowed by God, designated as adornments of the earth. The verse states, "Indeed, We have made whatever is on the earth an adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed" (Kahf: 7). This encompasses water as part of the blessings bestowed upon humanity for the purpose of testing their actions and determining who performs righteous deeds.

Islam also includes a religious injunction to protect and maintain watersheds. The Prophet Muhammad said, "There are seven deeds for which a person continues to receive rewards even after death, and one of them is the act of causing water to flow" (Helli, n.d., vol. 2, p. 110). This highlights the significance of preserving and ensuring the flow of water, emphasizing the importance of responsible water management in Islamic teachings.

Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of water conservation and utilization. Muslims are encouraged to store floodwaters for future use. The Prophet Muhammad stated, "Whoever prevents floodwaters from causing harm, the reward is with Allah" (Daylami, 1977, p. 175). This highlights the virtue of managing and controlling water resources during times of abundance to mitigate potential damage.

Water, being the source of life, holds great significance in Islamic teachings. It is recommended to conserve water even for minor acts such as ablution and worship. The Prophet Muhammad stated that those who conserve water for ablution will be granted a place in heaven alongside him (Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, 1984, vol. 1, pp. 34-35). The prescribed amount of water for ablution is one mudd, (less than one kilo), and for full-body washing (ghusl), it is one saa, (about three kilos). The Prophet emphasized that those who adhere steadfastly to his teachings will join him in paradise (Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, 1984, vol. 1, pp. 35-34).

Furthermore, Islamic sources promote the act of looking at water. The Prophet Muhammad and Imam Kazim stated that gazing at running water brings clarity to the eyes (Barqi, 1922, vol. 2, p. 6220). The Prophet also regarded the observation of seawater as an act of worship (Majlisi, 1982, vol. 10, p. 368). These teachings emphasize the appreciation of water's beauty and the spiritual benefits associated with its contemplation.

Imam Sadiq, may Allah be pleased with him, highlighted the essentiality of pleasant and abundant water for a good life. He emphasized that among the three factors contributing to a pleasant living environment, one of them is the availability of clean and fresh water, لا تَطِيبُ السُّكْنَى إِلَّا بِثَلَاثٍ: (منها) الماء العَذْبُ العَزِيزُ (Ibn Shubah Harani, 1983, p. 320).

Furthermore, Imam Sadiq strictly prohibited the pollution of water and stressed the importance of preserving its purity. He advised against harming or contaminating the water that is necessary for people's well-being and survival, لَا تُفْسِدُ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ مَاءَهُمْ (Koleyni, 1969, vol. 3, p. 65). Additionally, specific instructions were given to avoid spitting into wells that provide water for consumption, emphasizing the need to maintain the integrity of such water sources (Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, 1984, vol. 4, p. 10).

Alternatively, it has been reported: "None of you should urinate in stagnant water" (Ibn Abi Jumhur, 2008, vol. 2, p. 187). Imam Ali also emphasized the importance of respecting the inhabitants of water and advised against disturbing them with urine and feces (Ibn Abi Jumhur, 2008, vol. 2, p. 187).

Neglecting the environment is believed to contribute to forgetfulness and cognitive decline. The Prophet of Islam regarded urinating in stagnant water as a factor leading to dementia (Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, 1984, vol. 4, p. 4).

Water is a divine blessing bestowed upon humanity and a fundamental human right. It is prohibited to deny others access to water, even during times of war. Amir al-Mu'minin, Ali, instructed one of his commanders, Jariyah bin Qudama, saying, "Even if you and your soldiers are on foot, do not deprive the rightful owners of water, and do not drink from any other source for your own pleasure" (Yaqoubi, n.d., vol. 2, p. 200).

During the Battle of Safin, Muawiya and his army obstructed the water supply to Imam Ali's army and his companions. Eventually, the Imam regained control of the water. He commanded his soldiers, "Take as much water as you need and allow the enemy soldiers to access the water as well. Although they had previously oppressed us,

denying them water would make us oppressors like them" (Ibn Athir, 1988, vol. 2, p. 365).

During the tragedy of Karbala, when Imam Hussain encountered the first group of enemy troops and witnessed their intense thirst and the scorching heat, he compassionately said, "Give them water to drink and quench their thirst so that they do not suffer from dehydration" (Tabari, 1992, Vol. 5, pp. 400-401).

In ancient warfare, poisoning the drinking water of enemies was a common strategy. However, the Prophet of Islam strongly condemned this method of warfare. In his teachings, the Prophet explicitly forbade the act of poisoning the enemy's water supply (Koleyni, 1969, Vol. 5, p. 28).

2-3. Earth Protection

In Islam, one of the religious obligations is to safeguard the land and strive to improve it. Amir al-Mu'minin emphasized the importance of divine piety regarding different territories and reminded his companions that they are responsible not only for their own lands but also for other regions of the earth (Sharif al-Radi, 1369/1990, sermon 166-167). This responsibility entails the duty of protecting and preserving the land.

Imam Ali, in his advice to Malik Ashtar, highlighted the significance of land settlement, stating that more attention should be given to cultivating and developing the land rather than focusing solely on collecting taxes. He emphasized that the provision of taxes is a direct result of successful land settlement (Sharif al-Radi, 1990, letter 53). Islamic sources also emphasize the encouragement for Muslims to settle barren lands, with Imam Ali stating that whoever settles and cultivates the land becomes its rightful owner (Tusi, 1980, vol. 4, p. 145).

Imam Sadiq states that there are three things essential for a happy life, and one of them is having soft and arable land, *تَطْيِبُ السُّكْنَى* (Ibn Shubah Harani, 1983, p. 32). Islamic teachings emphasize the cleanliness of both the external environment and the household. It is narrated from the Prophet of Islam to "اَكْبِسُوا أَفْنِيَّتَكُمْ", sweep your sanctuaries" (Hor Ameli, 1988, vol. 3, p. 571). Imam Reza also advised that sweeping the threshold of the house will bring about increased sustenance, *كُنْسُ الْفَنَاءِ يَجْلِبُ الرِّزْقَ* (Nouri, 1982, vol. 3, p. 4560).

In Islamic sources, polluting the environment is strictly forbidden. The Prophet of Islam mentioned three groups that God curses for their wrongful acts, and one of them is those who pollute public places, shade trees, parks, and areas where passengers disembark (Hor Ameli AL-Hurr al-Amili, 1988, vol. 1, p. 325, chapter 15). Imam Kazim also emphasized the importance of avoiding the emptying of roads (Nouri, 1982, vol. 7, p. 242). The protection of communication routes is highlighted in various hadiths, and it is considered an act of charity to remove obstacles and sources of annoyance from the pathways (Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, 1989, vol. 1, p. 32).

2-4. Air and Energy Protection

Imam Sadiq emphasizes that fresh air is one of the essential components for a happy life. He states that life is not complete without three things, and one of them is the presence of clean and fresh air, *لَا تَطْيِبُ السُّكْنَى إِلَّا بِثَلَاثٍ (مِنْهَا) الْهَوَاءُ الطَّيِّبُ* (Ibn Shubah Harani, 1983, p. 320). Additionally, Islamic teachings discourage insulting or cursing the weather, even when it becomes turbulent. The Messenger of God advises against cursing the winds, as they serve various purposes such as bringing good news, warnings, and contributing to fertilization. Instead, one should seek God's blessings and protection from any

potential harm associated with weather conditions (Salmi Samarqandi, 1960, vol. 2, p. 239).

Furthermore, energy derived from the earth is another significant aspect. Imam Sadiq states that the stability and continuity of life in this world depend on three factors, and one of them is the presence of fire or fuel energy (Ibn Shubah Harani, 1983, p. 321). This highlights the importance of energy resources derived from the earth to sustain various aspects of life.

3. View of the Christian Scriptures

The Christian scriptures provide guidance on the preservation and care of trees, waters, and lands, offering instructions that we will explore further.

3-1. Tree and Plant Protection

In various passages from the Bible, trees and plants are described as blessings bestowed by God for humanity's stewardship. In Genesis 1:26, during the account of the creation of the environment, God declares: " Indeed, I gave you all the grass that bears eggs on the whole earth and all the trees in which the fruit of the tree bears eggs, to be food for you. I gave every green herb for food " (Genesis 1:26-31).

In one of the Psalms, Prophet David sings:

The trees of the LORD are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted; Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats and the rocks for the conies. He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down. Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth (Psalm 104:16-20).

In the New Testament, Jesus employs nature as a means to caution his followers about worldly concerns. He says,

And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these (Matthew 6:28-34).

This serves as a reminder of God's care for His creation and encourages trust in His provision.

Within Christian scriptures, there is a commandment not to cut down trees during times of war. This principle is also found in the Torah, specifically in Deuteronomy:

When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them. Only the trees which thou knowest that they are not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee until it is subdued (Deuteronomy 20:19-20).

This instruction emphasizes the value of preserving nature, even during times of conflict.

In a particular battle between the Israelites and the Moabites, God commanded the Israelites to engage in destructive actions. The verse states, "And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones" (2 Kings 3:19). As the attack commenced, the Israelites carried out these instructions, destroying cities and covering the fertile fields with stones, while also cutting down all the good trees: "They destroyed the cities, and each of the soldiers threw a stone towards the fertile fields until finally all the

fields were covered with stones" (2 Kings 3:25).

Furthermore, in the Gospel of Matthew and Mark, Jesus Christ performs a miracle involving a fig tree. Jesus finds a fig tree that is not bearing fruit and curses it, causing it to wither and dry up (Matthew 21:18-20). This incident serves as a symbolic act to convey a message about faith and spiritual fruitfulness.

It is important to note that these passages reflect specific historical and contextual events within religious texts and should be understood in their respective contexts. They may serve as lessons, examples, or accounts within the broader narratives but should not be seen as universal commands or teachings on the treatment of trees or the environment.

3-2. Water Protection

In the Old Testament, there is an account of a covenant made by God to preserve nature through storms, floods, and other natural phenomena, rather than to destroy these blessings so that everyone can benefit from them. This covenant is established during the story of Noah's flood. According to the Torah, the flood is a global event that engulfs the entire earth, wiping out all creatures and humans, except for those aboard Noah's ark along with his companions and family. After the ark comes to rest on dry land, God engages in a conversation with Noah regarding the preservation of nature. It is during this conversation, which marks God's covenant with Noah, that the rainbow is introduced as a sign of this agreement. God says:

And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; And with every living creature with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go

out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall the waters of a flood cut off all flesh; neither shall there be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set my bow in the cloud, which shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth (Genesis 9:8-13).

In the Bible, the seas are regarded as a divine blessing. David, in the Psalms, expresses awe and gratitude for the vastness and abundance of the sea, where countless creatures, both small and great, dwell. Ships sail upon its waters, and even the mighty leviathan, a creature made by God, frolics within it. All of these creatures depend on God for their sustenance, as He provides them with their food at the appointed time (Psalm 104:25-27).

In the Bible, one of the common tactics in warfare is to cut off the enemy's access to drinking water by blocking springs and water reservoirs. In a battle between the Israelites and the Moabites, God commanded the Israelites to halt the flow of all water springs: "And you shall stop all the springs of water" (2 Kings 3:19) The Israelites carried out this command by closing off all the springs during their attack: "They closed all the springs" (2 Kings 3:25).

Similarly, when David sought to conquer the city of Rabbah, he first took control of its water reservoirs. The commander of David's army sent him a message, informing him that they had captured Rabbah and its water reservoirs. The commander urged David to bring in additional soldiers to secure the city and achieve a complete victory. Consequently, David led his troops to Rabbah, captured the city, and took its inhabitants into captivity:

Reba and its water reservoirs are in our possession. So bring the

rest of the soldiers and capture the city so that the victory will be completed in your name. So David marched to Rabbah and captured It, and took the Inhabitants of that city into captivity (2 Samuel 12:26-31).

3-3. Earth Protection

In Deuteronomy, there is an emphasis on the importance of maintaining cleanliness in the environment as an expression of love and care.

In the Old Testament, there is a commandment that emphasizes the importance of maintaining cleanliness and purity in the camp when going to battle. It states that God is present among the people, delivering them and granting them victory over their enemies. Therefore, they are instructed to keep themselves free from any wickedness or uncleanness so that God does not turn away from them:

When the host goeth against thine enemies, keep thee from every wicked thing. For the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy command be holy: that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee (Deuteronomy 23:9-14).

Additionally, another commandment related to the environment is the law of resting the land after six years of planting. This law promotes the sustainable use of the land and encourages a period of rest and rejuvenation. After six years of cultivation, the land is to be left uncultivated for one year, allowing it to replenish its nutrients naturally. This practice ensures the long-term fertility and productivity of the land. As an example:

And the LORD spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai, saying, Speak

unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the ground keep a sabbath unto the LORD. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and thy servant, and thy maid, and thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee, And for thy cattle and the beast in thy land shall all the increase thereof be meat (Leviticus 25:1-7).

3-4. Analysis of Environmental Protection In the Holy Texts of Islam and Christianity

Both Islam and Christianity place great emphasis on the protection of the environment, recognizing it as a divine blessing that brings numerous benefits. The religious texts of both faiths contain various instructions and teachings regarding environmental conservation.

In the Islamic holy texts, there are specific teachings regarding the preservation of trees. Trees and plants are considered a blessing bestowed by God, meant to beautify the earth and serve as a test for humanity. Muslims are entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding the environment, and they will be held accountable for their actions towards the earth on the Day of Judgment. The Qur'an even describes those who destroy the earth and its resources as the most severe enemies (الخصام). Furthermore, the Qur'an encourages believers to travel across the earth and reflect upon the wonders of creation.

Similarly, in Christianity, the protection of the environment is considered important. While specific instructions regarding trees may vary, the broader theme of stewardship and responsible care for God's creation is present. Christians are called to be mindful of their actions and to act as caretakers of the earth, recognizing the divine hand behind its existence.

Both Islam and Christianity emphasize the significance of studying and appreciating the earth's creation, promoting a deeper understanding and respect for the environment. These teachings serve as a reminder of the responsibility entrusted to believers to preserve and protect the natural world.

Planting trees is considered an act of worship and charity in the teachings of the Prophet of Islam. It is believed that even after a person's death, they will continue to receive rewards for every tree they have planted. Muslims are encouraged to plant trees, even if it is just one tree in their lifetime, as the reward will extend until the Day of Resurrection. Additionally, watering a tree is seen as an act of kindness towards a thirsty believer.

In Islamic traditions, there is a strong emphasis on preserving the environment around trees. It is forbidden to pollute the surroundings or harm the ecosystem in which trees thrive. The Prophet Muhammad teaches that cutting down trees without a valid reason invites divine punishment. Protecting trees is believed to contribute to a longer and healthier life.

Looking at greenery is said to bring a sense of freshness and tranquility. Islamic teachings highlight the importance of connecting with nature and appreciating the beauty of God's creation. Moreover, agriculture is regarded as one of the noblest endeavors in the sight of God, as it involves nurturing the earth and providing sustenance for humanity.

Overall, the teachings of Islam emphasize the significance of tree planting, environmental preservation, and the positive impact it has on individuals and society.

Trees, plants, and flowers are regarded as beautiful adornments in both Christian and Islamic scriptures, although there are similarities and differences in their teachings regarding cutting down trees during war. In both traditions, it is forbidden to cut down fruitful trees, except in cases of necessity. However, in the Christian scriptures, it is permitted to cut down unfruitful trees, whereas in the wars of the Old Testament, there are instances where cutting down good trees and fields of enemies is commanded.

The protection of waters and seas is emphasized in the Quran, where God blames humans for polluting the oceans and recognizes them as blessings bestowed upon humanity. Islamic hadith texts emphasize the act of making rivers flow as an act of charity. It is narrated that those who control and restrain floodwaters will be rewarded with heaven. Looking at water and the sea is considered a source of light for the eyes and an act of worship in Islamic traditions. Clean water is recognized as one of the three essential elements for a desirable human life. Furthermore, the Islamic holy texts strictly forbid polluting and urinating in water.

Conclusion

Both Christian and Islamic scriptures underscore the importance of preserving the environment, including the protection of trees and the cleanliness of water sources. They recognize the blessings provided by nature and emphasize the responsibility of humans to steward and care for these gifts.

In the Christian scriptures, a covenant is established between God and Noah after the flood, assuring that humanity will not be destroyed by another flood. As a sign of this covenant, God creates the rainbow.

Both Islamic and Christian scriptures recognize the seas as a blessing from God. However, there is a distinction between these texts regarding the enemy's access to water during times of war. Islamic teachings do not permit the prohibition of the enemy's access to water, even in the midst of battle. It is also forbidden to contaminate the enemy's drinking water with poison. On the other hand, in the Old Testament, blocking springs and preventing the enemy from accessing drinking water was sometimes employed as a method of warfare.

In the Qur'an, God reproaches humanity for polluting the earth and emphasizes human responsibility for the planet. Imam Ali, in his writings, advised his government to prioritize land development over tax collection. Islamic teachings uphold the principle that those who cultivate barren lands become their rightful owners. The Islamic sacred texts consider a healthy earth as one of the three elements necessary for a high-quality life. It is narrated that a servant entered heaven solely by removing a thorn from the path, highlighting the significance of small acts of environmental care.

The Old Testament contains an instruction regarding the protection of the land, which is the law of resting the land after six years of planting, allowing it to rejuvenate.

Both Islamic and Christian religious texts share a common emphasis on preventing environmental pollution. Narrations in these texts condemn those who pollute the environment, roads, and parks, as they are cursed by God. In the holy scriptures of Islam, the significance of healthy air is highlighted as one of the three factors

essential for a high-quality life. Additionally, traditions in Islam forbid insulting the winds, even when they are fierce or angry.

While access to fire (energy) is recognized as a factor in life's stability, the Christian scriptures do not specifically address the protection of healthy air as mentioned in Islamic teachings.

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