

"Do not strut arrogantly about the earth: you cannot break it open, nor match the mountains in height."

(QUR'AN 17: 37)

The Equilibrium of All Life

Muslims believe that the creation of God, including animals and trees, glorify God in their own way.

"Do you not realise [Prophet] that everything in the heavens and earth submits to God: the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, and the animals."

(QUR'AN 22:18)

Islam also teaches humans that all creatures of God, whether it be the tiny ant or the huge lion, serve a certain purpose in the larger scheme of God's world:

"All the creatures that crawl on the earth and those that fly with their wings are communities like yourselves."

(QUR'AN 6:38)

Irresponsible deforestation and wanton killing of even the tiniest of God's creatures is strongly censured in Islam.

God reminds us in the Qur'an not to tamper with His divine balance,

"He has raised up the sky. He has set the balance so that you may not exceed in the balance: weigh with justice and do not fall short in the balance."

(QUR'AN 55:7-9)



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Islam & Nature

INFORMATION GUIDE



Environmental stewardship is deeply rooted in Islamic tradition. Islamic religious tradition speaks directly on many issues that are pertinent to nature and conservation.

There is an abundance of sayings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh*) concerning plants, trees, land cultivation, irrigation, crops, livestock, grazing, water distribution and treatment of animals.

The Qur'an contains over 700 references to ecology as well as important principles which are able to be applied to the environment.

The Qur'an calls on us to recognise the importance of our impact on the earth:

"But do not be wasteful: God does not like wasteful people."
(QUR'AN 6:141)

Related to this idea is the concept of vicegerency. In the Qur'an, God says:

"Later We made you their successors in the land, to see how you would behave."
(QUR'AN 10:14).

The behaviour of those who cause corruption on earth is well noted:

"When he leaves, he sets out to spread corruption in the land, destroying crops and live-stock – God does not like corruption."
(QUR'AN 2:205).

According to the Qur'an, God made everything with proficiency:

[God] "Who gave everything its perfect form."
(QUR'AN 32:7)

And we are commanded to keep it that way:

"Do not corrupt the earth after it has been set right."
(QUR'AN 7:56)

Rights of all Living Things

The Prophet (pbuh) declared and protected the rights of all living beings, prohibited killing living beings for frivolity, guided his companions to conserve water even in washing for prayer, forbade the felling of trees in the desert, ordered a man who had taken some nestlings from their nest to return them to their mother, and when he came upon a man who had lit a fire on an anthill, commanded, "Put it out, put it out!". In another incident, a dog and her puppies were in the path of a marching army and the Prophet diverted the army, not only giving orders that they should not be disturbed, but posted a man to see that this was done. He stated, "Verily there is heavenly reward for every act of kindness done to a living animal," and, "Fear God in your treatment of animals."

Conservation

The principle of conservation is illustrated by the following rule: while washing the limbs in preparation for prayer we should be conservative in the use of water even if we have a river at our disposal. Muslims following this rule cultivate due regard for water and other natural resources as divine provisions.

The Sanctity of Planting Trees

The planting of a tree is regarded as an act of continuous charity, the most desirable of good deeds. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said that if one plants a tree then whatever is eventually eaten from it whether by humans or animals counts for the planter as an act of charity. The importance of planting trees as a good deed is highlighted in another tradition which says that if one has in their hand a sapling ready to be planted and the Day of Judgment arrives, one should go ahead and plant it.

* (pbuh) 'peace be upon him' is a conventionally honorific phrase that is said after the mention of Prophets names. An extended variant 'peace & blessings be upon him' is a phrase used after mentioning the name of Prophet Muhammad to show respect and honour to him.