

# Harnessing Islamic Wisdom to Catalyze Sustainable Development

## تسخیر الحکمة الإسلامية لتحفيز التنمية المستدامة

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# Harnessing Islamic Wisdom to Catalyze Sustainable Development

## تسخير الحكمة الإسلامية لتحفيز التنمية المستدامة

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### Abstract

Industrialization-driven water pollution has become the most critical barrier to achieving UN Sustainable Development Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and related targets under SDGs 12 and 13. This study establishes that Islamic eco-theology, articulated fourteen centuries ago in the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah, offers a comprehensive, ethically robust, and spiritually motivating framework for sustainable water governance that significantly complements and strengthens contemporary global efforts. Core principles of Khilāfah (vicegerency), Amānah (trusteeship), Mizān (ecological balance), 'Adl wa Iḥsān (justice and excellence), and the categorical prohibition of Isrāf and Tabdhīr frame water as a sacred communal trust (ni'mah) rather than a commercial commodity. Drawing on primary Islamic sources and historical practices (Qanāts, Aflāj, Ḥima protected zones, and Waqf-funded water infrastructure), the paper demonstrates remarkable continuity between traditional Islamic water management and modern sustainable technologies. It further explores the transformative potential of Islamic finance — particularly green ṣukūk and waqf-based crowdfunding — in financing large-scale water treatment, recycling, and rainwater harvesting projects. While secular SDG frameworks provide technical targets, they often lack the spiritual and moral impetus that religious consciousness uniquely generates. The study identifies cultural, institutional, and perceptual barriers hindering integration of Islamic environmental ethics into national policies and proposes actionable pathways for policymakers, religious scholars, industries, and development agencies. Ultimately, a faith-sensitive, Qur'an-centered paradigm offers a culturally resonant, ethically compelling, and practically viable roadmap toward equitable water security and a pollution-free planet for present and future generations.

**Keywords:** Islamic Eco-theology, Water Conservation, Industrial Pollution, Sustainable Development Goals, Qur'ānic Environmental Ethics, Islamic Finance.

### Introduction

The concept of sustainability explores the relationship among economic development, environmental quality, and social equity. This concept has been evolving since 1972, when the international community first explored the connection between quality of life and environmental quality at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. However, it was not until 1987 that the term “sustainable development” was defined as “development that can meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own

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needs”<sup>1</sup> (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987.) Sustainable development has three dimensions: economic, environmental, and social. This balance becomes obvious when each component is examined individually. The extreme focus is environmental pollution a worst result of industrial development especially water pollution.<sup>2</sup>

Sustainable development is not merely a technical or economic challenge; it is deeply rooted in ethical, moral, and social values<sup>3</sup>. Although, scientific advancements and policy interventions are crucial, they alone cannot ensure long-term sustainability without a strong ethical foundation. Sustainability is actually a shift of mind set, it is a sense of responsibility you feel towards the environment and the world. <sup>4</sup> Ethical values like justice, equity and responsibility itself produces a sense of duty for our coming generations.<sup>5</sup> The exploitation of resources such as water and other natural assets, along with environmental pollution, presents critical dilemmas that require ethical solutions.<sup>6</sup>

Islam has given such framework fourteen hundred and fifty years. Islam's teachings on the responsible use of water resources closely align with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 6, 12 and 13 which focuses on ensuring clean water and sanitation for all, promotes responsible consumption and production to reduce waste and conserve resources and calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts through sustainable practices respectively. In Islam, individuals and corporations are seen as stewards of Earth, tasked with preserving resources for future generations, much like the goals of sustainable development. By integrating sustainable innovations and CSR initiatives, industries can contribute to a healthier planet and society. This holistic approach ensures that economic progress does not come at the expense of environmental integrity and public health, paving the way for a sustainable future.

Islam's principles of environmental stewardship align strongly with global sustainability efforts, particularly in the responsible use of natural resources. By addressing the intersection of Islamic ethics and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our great holy book the Holy Qurān and our religion has always played role as a best manual for spending a sustainable life. Islamic teachings, in particular, emphasize

<sup>1</sup> Rogers, P. P., Jalal, K. F., & Boyd, J. A. (2012). *An introduction to sustainable development*. Routledge. Glen Educational Foundation, Inc., 2008,42.

<sup>2</sup> Abdul-Matin, I. (2010). *Green Deen: What Islam Teaches about Protecting the Planet*. United States: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.85

<sup>4</sup> V. Sulimin, V. Shvedov, and M. Lvova. “Sustainable Development Principles: International Aspect.” *E3S Web of Conferences*, January 1, 2021. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/8ea2e4b0da610e2026973876e63ca44f986153f6>.

<sup>5</sup> S. Abdulrachman. “Integrating Spiritual Dimension in Sustainable Development Strategy an Islamic Perspective.” *O&M: Firms & Other Social Institutions eJournal*, December 30, 2011. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/41daa6d14ae74e932b357e9031b29256a4360cc3>.

<sup>6</sup> Brendan Durkin, Ryan Grimes, Lance Hamilton, and Sienna Robinson. “Ethical Approaches to Sustainable Water Resource Solutions.” *2024 Systems and Information Engineering Design Symposium (SIEDS)*, May 3, 2024. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/217f53fe42bbddb454170153d4e4285fafed8027>.

balance (Mizan), trust (Amanah), and the prohibition of wastefulness (Isrāf), making them highly relevant to sustainable development.<sup>7</sup>

UN' SDGs although provide frameworks to achieve the target of sustainability but they lack the spiritual emotion and the motivation that a religion can provide in terms of Faith-based religious instructions towards sustainable practices. Integrating the modern sustainability efforts with religious wisdom can create a holistic approach that could appeal to diverse communities. A faith based religious framework can foster accountability, urging individuals and institutions to act responsibly toward people and the planet.<sup>8</sup>

### Aim of the Research

The current research paper explores the environmental dimensions of sustainability what is the way to achieve environmental sustainability with respect to industrial development. The industrial pollution is one of the major contributors of the climate change. To achieve environmental sustainability in industrial development, it's crucial to address the impact of industrial pollution, particularly on water resources. The aim of this research is:

- a. To explore ethical, moral, and legal principle serve as a catalyst for addressing the global shortage of clean water and promoting sustainable water management.
- b. To explore the Quranic verses and Hadith emphasizing water as a sacred gift from God (*Ni'mah*) and a fundamental human right.
- c. Explore the Islamic principles of *Amanah* (trust), *Mizān* (balance), and *Masālah* (public good) in ensuring fair and sustainable water use.
- d. To dig the Islamic teachings related to *isrāf* an *Ihsan* with respect to consumption of water. Traditional Islamic water management systems will be evaluated (e.g., *Qanats*, *Aflaj*, *Hima*, *Waqf* for water resources) and their relevance to modern water scarcity challenges.
- e. We will get to know how Islamic banking can support the water purification and conservation projects.
- f. In the context of SDG 6, it is required to seek the Islamic values that will complement the global water sustainability policies.
- g. To find the barriers and promote the awareness to hinder the integration of Islamic wisdom in water conservation strategies.
- h. To provide doable and practical recommendations for policymakers, religious leaders, and development agencies to harness Islamic ethical teachings in addressing global water scarcity.

<sup>7</sup>Aqsa Tasgheer and Tehreem Fatima. "Sustainable Development and Natural Resource Management for Environmental Stability: An Islamic Approach." *International Research Journal on Islamic Studies (IRJIS)*, January 1, 2022.

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/8860b05a3de697d347c87572941ea621c2df64e9>.

<sup>8</sup> Valentina-mariana Manoiu et al., "A qualitative exploration of the holy Quran's environmental teachings," *IJAEDU-International E-Journal of Advances in Education* 2, no. 5 (2016)..

This can be accomplished by adopting efficient water management practices, implementing advanced pollution control technologies, enforcing strict regulatory frameworks, and promoting sustainable industrial practices. These measures will help preserve water resources, reduce the environmental impact of industries, and contribute to mitigating climate change.

### **United Nations Agenda on Pollution**

Pollution is understood as the presence or introduction into the environment of substances or energy that cause adverse effects on human health, the environment or living organisms; or that exceed the quality or quantity criteria established for certain environmental media<sup>9</sup>

The third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) placed pollution at the top of the global agenda and issued a Ministerial Declaration: “Towards a Pollution-Free Planet”. Environment Ministers expressed their “commitment to working towards a pollution-free planet for the health and well-being of our people and the environment” and called for the development of an Implementation Plan”.<sup>10</sup>

### **Three Dimensions of a Unified Approach**

“A correct relation system of developed mankind is the acceptance of the fact that human-being is part of the existence of nature and relates to its ecology. Human-being should develop itself to have a higher capacity to help his fellows and other species in the natural domain; to live in a harmonious way and lessen exploitations to contribute for a happier world”. This holistic approach of human relates to cultural development in three dimensions: behaviours and lifestyles which do not harm nature. Minds in line with (Eastern) ethics, stability of mind, motivation, etc., to see other creatures as companions. Wisdom includes knowledge and understanding, attitude, norms, and values in order to live in harmony with nature.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Influential Factors on the Global Life**

The key environmental factors influencing human beings include land, air, water, and humanity itself.

- Avoid wastage or overconsumption of natural resources.
- Prevent any unlawful obstruction or destruction of natural resources, such as water.
- Ensure no harm, abuse, or distortion of the natural environment in any form.
- Promote sustainable development of the Earth, including its resources, elements, and phenomena, by enhancing and protecting natural resources. This

<sup>9</sup> Other definitions include the direct and indirect alteration of biological, thermal, physical, or radioactive properties of any medium that create a (potential) hazard to human health or the safety, health or welfare of any living species. More information here: UN InforMEA.

(n.d.). Pollution. Retrieved July 2023. <https://www.informea.org/en/terms/pollution>

<sup>10</sup> Towards a Pollution-Free Planet UNEA (2019). Implementation Plan Towards a Pollution-Free Planet: resolution 21. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/K19/011/58/PDF/K1901158.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>11</sup> Servaes, J. (Ed.). (2017). Sustainable development goals in the Asian context.p.4



also involves conserving all existing forms of life, reclaiming and revitalizing land, and rehabilitating and purifying soil, air, and water.<sup>12</sup>

Among these, water stands out as an essential resource that must be protected above all. It is vital to prevent the unlawful obstruction, overconsumption, or destruction of water resources. Equally important is avoiding any damage, abuse, or distortion of the natural environment, ensuring that water remains pure and accessible. By focusing on the responsible management and purification of water, we ensure the longevity of both the planet and its inhabitants.

In the sublime verses of Surah al-A‘rāf Allah Almighty has discussed His blessings and bounties provided to the human beings to survive in this world in a better way as:

“It is We Who have placed you with authority on earth and provided you there in with means for the fulfilment of your life: small are the thanks that ye give”.<sup>13</sup>

The gorgeous verses of surah al-Nādhī‘āt underlines this fact as:

“He draweth out there from its moisture and its pasture”.<sup>14</sup>

The glorious words of Allah Almighty in Surah Ibrāhīm explore the fact the rain sends down from the sky to grow feed of various types for the human beings.

It is Allah Who hath created heavens and the earth and sendeth down rain from the skies, and with it bringeth out fruits wherewith to feed you; it is He Who hath made the ships subject to you, that they may sail through the sea by His command; and the rivers [also] hath He made subject to you.<sup>15</sup>

The above-mentioned verses clearly imply the fact that the bounties of the Allah Almighty are no doubt for human beings. So, it is the responsibility of human as a vicegerent to protect these resources not only himself but also future generations to secure them. The rains and the river are to explore for benefit not to waste or destroy as our industrial progress has been distorting not only our water resources but polluting our environment e.g. production of electricity. It is the thing that has been clearly mentioned in the SDGs. Future at Grow but should not be at the stake of future. as we must strive to misuse water resources. Islamic teachings provide a comprehensive ethical structure that aligns with sustainability principles<sup>16</sup>:

The importance of water in making the world has been defined in the following verse of surah al- Anbiyā

We made from water every living thing.<sup>17</sup>

Water is one of the greatest blessings from Allah Almighty, and it is our responsibility to protect it. Sadly, we often overlook its value, leading to the destruction of water resources through wastage, pollution, and overconsumption.

<sup>12</sup> Al-Damkhi, A. M. (2008). *Environmental ethics in Islam: principles, violations, and future perspectives*. *International Journal of Environmental Studies*, 65(1), 11–31. p.28

<sup>13</sup> al-A‘rāf, 7:10

<sup>14</sup> al-Nādhī‘āt, 79:31

<sup>15</sup> Ibrāhīm, 14:32

<sup>16</sup> Nasir Hassan Wani and Areesha Azhar. “Islamic Environmental Ethics: Preserving the Sacred Balance.” *International Journal For Multidisciplinary Research*, May 22, 2024. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/52c0c628cec1713a636533cf9643317b053ae11c>.

<sup>17</sup> al-Anbiyā, 21:30

## Textile Industry and Water Pollution

Global climate change has led to significant environmental destruction and pollution, posing a severe threat to the planet. Industrial innovation, while driving economic growth, has often exacerbated these issues through increased emissions and resource depletion. The wastage of water resources through over consumption and pollution through industrial pollution is an alarming point for this planet. United Nations presented an agenda entitled as SDGs to prevent the planet and save its resources. The SDGs provide a comprehensive framework for addressing global challenges, including climate action, responsible production, and health improvements.

The textile industry is a significant contributor to many national economies, encompassing both small and large-scale operations worldwide. In terms of its output or production and employment, the textile industry is one of the largest industries in the world. The textile manufacturing process is characterised by the high consumption of resources like water, fuel and a variety of chemicals in a long process sequence that generates a significant amount of waste. The common practices of low process efficiency result in substantial wastage of resources and a severe damage to the environment. The main environmental problems associated with textile industry are typically those associated with water body pollution caused by the discharge of untreated effluents. Other environmental issues of equal importance are air emission, notably Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)'s and excessive noise or odour as well as workspace safety.<sup>18</sup>

In Surah al-'A'rāf Allah Almighty prohibits to spread mischief on earth whether it is for human or for environment with these words:

“Give just measure and weight, nor withhold from the people the things that are their due; and do no mischief on the earth after it has been set in order: that will be best for you, if ye have Faith”.<sup>19</sup>

Allah Almighty does not like the mischievous because they become the cause of the distortion of the environment. Because he created the environment and its necessities to safeguard of humanity on the globe. The theme has been presented in the undermentioned verse:

“But they (ever) strive to do mischief on earth. And Allah loveth not those who do mischief”.<sup>20</sup>

The Quran highlights humans' role as stewards of the Earth (Khalifa), entrusted with its care and protection. The verse supports the modern CSR focus on environmental sustainability, where companies are encouraged to minimize their ecological footprint.

## Electricity Production and Water Pollution

Electricity production through coal processing has emerged as a significant threat to streams, lakes, and underground water reserves. The explosive techniques employed in mountaintop coal extraction led to the burial of valleys and streams beneath vast heaps of rubble and ash.

This contamination process starts with the initial detonation of the mountaintop and persists throughout the cleaning and processing phases of coal production. Once

<sup>18</sup> Bhatia, S. C., & Devraj, S. (2017). *Pollution control in textile industry*. WPI publishing.12

<sup>19</sup> Yūnus, 10:85

<sup>20</sup> al-Māida, 5:57

extracted, the coal undergoes a washing process using chemical solutions, resulting in a by-product known as sludge. This toxic, viscous waste is then stored in artificial ponds, holding billions of gallons of hazardous material.<sup>21</sup>

Sludge samples to the UK for examination at the University of Exeter. The lab's senior scientist, David Santillo, said: "What is particularly disturbing is that the contamination has spread to the water supply - with levels of lead in a nearby well at levels well above those set by the World Health Organisation."

Professor Henry said:

"The results have devastating consequences for those living near the areas where this waste has been dumped and for the thousands who depend on crops produced in these fields<sup>22</sup>"

In Surah al Maidah the corruption of mankind has been defined with these words:

And they strive throughout the land[causing] corruption, and Allah does not like corrupters, but they (ever) strive to do mischief on earth. And Allah loveth not those who do mischief.<sup>23</sup>

Pollution is impurity and dangerous and a hinder to achieve sustainability. It can be concluded from the analysis of the discussion and facts that industries are falling short in their corporate social responsibility (CSR) obligations. Additionally, individuals are not fulfilling their responsibilities as stewards of Allah Almighty. Islam calls for the protection of Earth, viewing it as a trust (amanah) from the Creator. Acts that harm the environment, such as pollution or deforestation, are discouraged. This fosters a sense of duty toward reducing ecological harm and aligns with climate-conscious behaviour clearly aligns the SDG 13.

### **Wastage of Water a Great Impact on Environment**

Wasting water not only depletes a vital resource but also destabilizes ecosystems and communities that rely on it. When water becomes scarce, it triggers a chain reaction that affects agriculture, wildlife, and human health. The imbalance caused by water scarcity can lead to food shortages, habitat destruction, and increased competition for remaining resources. This strain on the environment disrupts the delicate balance of life on Earth, making water conservation essential for sustaining the planet's natural harmony. Safeguarding water resources is essential for maintaining environmental balance and ensuring the well-being of all living creatures, especially in relation to SDG 6. SDG 6 emphasizes the importance of ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water. Islam's prohibition on water wastage mirrors the objectives of SDG 12, which promotes responsible consumption and production, promoting responsible consumption and production.

In our routines during usage of water in Waḍū Ghusal and other activates of life it comes to know that a lot of water waste the careful attitude towards this problem or to

<sup>21</sup> Abdul-Matin, I. (2010). Green Deen: What Islam Teaches about Protecting the Planet. United States: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.126

<sup>22</sup> "Coca-Cola's 'Toxic' India Fertiliser: Waste Product from a Coca-Cola Plant in India Which the Company Provides as Fertiliser for Local Farmers Contains Toxic Chemicals, a BBC Study Has Found," BBC News, July 25, 2003, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/3096893.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3096893.stm).

<sup>23</sup> al-Māida: 5:67



save water resources for future generation we must be careful in using water resources and to train also our younger generations regarding the preserve of water and its use in a very careful manner. Waḍū Ghusal are religious duties but in the gorgeous verses of the Holy Qur'ān Allah Almighty forbade extravagance in every field of life.

But waste not by excess, for Allah loves not the wasters.<sup>24</sup>

The same theme has been underlined in the following verses of surah al Anām as:

It is He Who produceth gardens, with trellises and without, and dates, and tilth with produce of all kinds, and olives and pomegranates, similar [in kind] and different [in variety]: eat of their fruit in their season but render the dues that are proper on the day that the harvest is gathered.

But waste not by excess: for Allah loveth not the wasters.<sup>25</sup>

The probation of wastage of water resources not only mentioned in the sublime verses of the Holy Qur'ān but also in the Hadith.

The Holy prophet Muhammad's tradition also underlines the importance of water and avoiding its excessive usage. He was very careful in using water even in performing religious duties.

It was narrated that Safinah said:

"The Messenger of Allah used to perform ablution with a Mudd (half kg) (of water) and bath with a Sa'(2.5 kg)."<sup>26</sup>

If have a keen observation in our daily routines we come to know that we are wasting lot of water resources due to our carelessness in our attitude and behaviour.

It is narrated that Ibn 'Umar said:

"The Messenger of Allah saw a man performing ablution, and he said:

'Do not be extravagant, do not be extravagant (in using water).'<sup>27</sup>

Extravagance of everything has been prohibited by Allah Almighty because the water is the blessings of Allah and no one has right to waste it with carelessness and the same care has been advised by the messenger of Allah in using water even if some has a lot of water.

It was narrated from 'Abdullah bin 'Amr that:

The Messenger of Allah passed by Sa'd when he was performing ablution, and he said: 'What is this extravagance?' He said: 'Can there be any extravagance in ablution?' He said: 'Yes, even if you are on the bank of a flowing river.'

The same carefulness advised by the Holy prophet to his followers in the following tradition. The careful attitude and consciousness in this regard is even necessary when we have lot of resources same is the case of water.<sup>28</sup>

The total time used in ablution is 33–109.5 s and the amount of water used from all tap types is 0.65–7.33 L.<sup>29</sup> it can be said that even to purify one selves for religious duties it is not good to waste water. Some measures can be suggested to utilize the

<sup>24</sup> al-A'rāf, 7:31

<sup>25</sup> Al- Anām: 6:141

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Majah, Sunan, The Book of Purification and its Sunnah, Ḥadīth 267

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, Ḥadīth 424

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, Ḥadīth 425

<sup>29</sup> Zaied, R. A. (2017). Water use and time analysis in ablution from taps. *Applied Water Science*, 7(5),2331

water resources in a good manner. The amount of water used for ablution only is calculated to be about 7 L/Cap. day. Unfortunately, the water used for ablution is discharged directly to the drain without any recycle and reuse.<sup>30</sup> The water uses more than the actual need in ablution.<sup>31</sup> If a water recycling station should be present in mosques so the water used for wudu can be used to water the plants and grass outside.<sup>32</sup>

It can be said that Islam emphasizes the value of water as a divine blessing, encouraging its preservation. Such teachings support sustainable water management, echoing the goals of responsible access and availability.

### **Consumption of Water a Phenomena of Pollution**

The water is one of the blessings of the Allah Almighty on the one side it is the responsibility of the vicegerent to save the water resources on the other side to provide human beings without charging any cost. Because it has been prohibited in sublime verses of the Holy *Qur'ān* in many prophetic traditions which employs the fact that the water is not for sale and not for storage.

And We send the winds fertilizing, then send down water from the cloud  
so We give it to you to drink of, nor is it you who store it up.<sup>33</sup>

The same theme is emphasized by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in a tradition where he forbids the sale of water, as it is a necessity provided by Allah Almighty for all humanity. Humans have no right to sell it. It is the duty of the current government to ensure that people can access this essential blessing for their survival. Moreover, the government must take steps to preserve this resource for the survival of future generations.

Iya bin 'Abd, the companion of the Prophet said:

"Do not sell surplus water, for the Prophet forbade the sale of surplus water."<sup>34</sup>

While having a glance on the selling water it has been prohibited it is the one side of the picture on the other side the bottled water, we purchase the more dump we create. By treating the natural world as though it were our dumping ground, we risk disturbing the delicate balance (*mizān*) that exists in nature. Anything packaged will generate physical waste and most likely also toxic waste that eventually finds its way into the water system. We should therefore, as a responsible Deen, try to limit the amount of packaged goods.

Most bottled water is simply filtered tap water, marketed to appear safer and cleaner. In 2007, PepsiCo was compelled to admit that its best-selling Aquafina bottled water is nothing more than tap water. Even today, Aquafina remains tap water; PepsiCo merely updated the label to indicate that the water originates from a public source. Instead of empowering corporations to sell what is readily available from our faucets,

<sup>30</sup> Al Mamun, A., Muyibi, S. A., & Razak, N. A. B. A. (2014). Treatment of used ablution water from IIUM masjid for reuse. *Advances in Environmental Biology*, 558

<sup>31</sup> Labeeb Bsoul et al., "Islam's perspective on environmental sustainability: a conceptual analysis," *Social Sciences* 11, no. 6 (2022).

<sup>32</sup> Abdul-Matin, I. (2010). *Green Deen: What Islam Teaches about Protecting the Planet*. United States: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.126

<sup>33</sup> al- Hijr, 15:22

<sup>34</sup> al-Nasa'i Sunan, The Book of Financial Transactions, 4663 and in Sunan Abi Dawud 3478

we should be pressuring our governments to improve water quality standards. It's crucial that we advocate for cleaner water and encourage our governments to take enthusiastic and effective measures to ensure it.<sup>35</sup>

Do not buy bottled water to avoid dump because it is ours only 2.5 percent of earth water is ours to use<sup>36</sup>

It can be said that after the analysis of above discussion and facts that the industries are not full filling their responsibility relating to CSR and also the Human beings an individual level did not fulfill his responsibility as a trustee from Allah Almighty.

If the natural world considers as barometer then whose measurement and reading reflects the fact that in which manner a society or civilization fulfill his responsibility assigned from his lord. A positive paradigm shift in approach, lifestyles and should refine development models is currently indispensable.<sup>37</sup>

In Surah al-Qaṣaṣ:

Do not seek to spread corruption in the land, for Allah certainly does not like the corruptors. and seek not [occasions for] mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief."<sup>38</sup>

This verse highlights the responsibility to maintain balance in the environment, warning against actions that lead to destruction or harm.

Another verse Allah Almighty says,

"He has raised the heaven and has set up the balance, so that you may not transgress the balance"<sup>39</sup>.

This illustrates the importance of ecological balance and avoiding actions that disrupt it.

As a balanced community among all nations (ummah wasat), Muslims should lead the way in moving the avoidance of over-consumption, overuse, and over-exploitation of resources especially water. It advocates for a minimalist lifestyle that respects and preserves natural resources, encouraging sustainability and environmental stewardship. They should pioneer models of renewable energy, clean production, fair trade, and localized production. These initiatives will reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the risks and potential disasters of climate change.<sup>40</sup>

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said,

"The Earth is green and beautiful, and Allah has appointed you stewards over it" <sup>41</sup>.

### Islamic water management systems for sustainability

Islamic teachings highlight how our values provide a moral and ethical framework for sustainability; they established the spiritual responsibility of everyone including individuals and institutions to enhance sustainable development. Islamic civilizations developed innovative water management systems like Qanats, Alflaj, Hima and waqf

<sup>35</sup> Abdul-Matin, I. (2010). Green Deen: What Islam Teaches about Protecting the Planet. United States: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.129

<sup>36</sup> "Water, Our Thirsty World," National Geographic, April 2010, 32.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Jayyousi, O. R. (2016). *Islam and sustainable development: New worldviews*. Gower.

<sup>38</sup> al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:77

<sup>39</sup> al- Raḥmān, 55:7-8

<sup>40</sup> Abdul-Matin, I. (2010). Green Deen: What Islam Teaches about Protecting the Planet. United States: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.162

<sup>41</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, The Book of Heart-Melting Traditions:2742

for preserving water resources to ensure fair distribution, conservation, and sustainability. According to the Modern researchers, reviving these systems can complement contemporary water management strategies in addressing global water scarcity.<sup>42</sup>

### Role of Islamic Banking in Water Conservation and Purification

Ethical investment and social responsibility based Islamic finance, offers alternative funding models for water conservation projects:

- Sukuk (Green Bonds): Shariah-compliant investment instruments can finance water purification plants and sustainable irrigation systems.
- Zakat and Sadaqah (Charity-based Water Projects): Islamic philanthropy has historically funded public water infrastructure, supporting projects for underserved communities
- Musharakah & Mudarabah (Profit-Sharing Models): Can enable private-public partnerships for water sustainability initiatives.<sup>43</sup>

Islamic financial models have successfully contributed to clean water access projects aligned with SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)<sup>44</sup>.

The UNs' SDG 6 aims to ensure universal access to clean water and sanitation. However, researchers emphasize that secular policies alone may not be enough, and faith-based approaches can enhance community engagement in sustainability.<sup>45</sup>

Despite the strong alignment between Islamic values and water sustainability, several barriers hinder their integration. Many communities are unaware of Islamic environmental ethics, limiting their application. Governments often overlook faith-based approaches in national water management strategies. Limited Islamic banking initiatives focused on water conservation. Traditional water management systems need modernization for practical application today.<sup>46</sup>

Experts recommend policy integration, community-driven awareness campaigns, and faith-based financial incentives to overcome these challenges.<sup>47</sup> Thus, we return to the Qur'an for our guidance:

<sup>42</sup> DR Imran Hayat, Lecturer, DR Muhammad, Sajad Malik, and Husnain. "The Role of Islamic Environmental Ethics in the Alleviation of Climate Challenges and the Preservation of Ecosystem." *Russian Law Journal*, May 29, 2023. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/d37c43c77135dd4c8978900f01f3f7a04337fdb2>.

<sup>43</sup> Zalfa Zahirah Hiljannah, Fadlan Desfiansyah, Anggi Tryfinza Putra, and Oka Raditya Sarjono. "The Role of Green Sukuk for Sustainable National Development: Peran Green Sukuk Terhadap Pembangunan Nasional Yang Berkelanjutan." *Jurnal Ekonomi Syariah*, November 6, 2023. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/0f65da94c25bf9871c877f9e9f1291123ee9209d>.

<sup>44</sup> J. Amézaga, J. Bathurst, A. Iroumé, J. Jones, R. Kotru, LD Bhatta, and E. Springgay. "SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation – Forest-Related Targets and Their Impacts on Forests and People." *Sustainable Development Goals: Their Impacts on Forests and People*, December 12, 2019. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/c89f1bc356dfa8d102743ffd94623ebda954dd7e.V>

<sup>45</sup> J. Amézaga, J. Bathurst, A. Iroumé, J. Jones, R. Kotru, LD Bhatta, and E. Springgay. "SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation – Forest-Related Targets and Their Impacts on Forests and People." *Sustainable Development Goals: Their Impacts on Forests and People*, December 12, 2019. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/c89f1bc356dfa8d102743ffd94623ebda954dd7e>.

<sup>46</sup> J. Zarrouk. "The Role of Islamic Finance in Achieving Sustainable Development," January 1, 2015. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/4b2eeb6bf2885a977fd0c21164c116dc4948e3ca>.

<sup>47</sup> J. Zarrouk. "The Role of Islamic Finance in Achieving Sustainable Development," January 1, 2015. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/4b2eeb6bf2885a977fd0c21164c116dc4948e3ca>.

'Allah does not change what is with a people until they change what is in themselves'<sup>48</sup>

Islam clearly emphasizes the Muslim different measures to protect our nature and to clean the environment. The Prophet ﷺ also encouraged care for the environment, teaching the importance of conserving natural resources: The Holy Prophet (Upon whom be peace and greeting) (ﷺ) said,

"There is none amongst the Muslims who plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, but is regarded as a charitable gift for him."<sup>49</sup>

Plantation is not only beneficial for the whole nature in this world but also beneficial for a person to the hereafter benefits. This promotes sustainability, encouraging businesses to engage in practices that protect and preserve the environment. In essence, CSR in Islam is about conducting business in a way that is ethical, just, and beneficial to both society and the environment. These values are deeply integrated into the Quran and Hadith, guiding businesses towards responsible and sustainable practices.

### Conclusion

The most pressing global challenge of the earth is pollution, threatening both the environment and human well-being. The United Nations' agenda on pollution, particularly highlights the urgent need for sustainable environmental practices. Sustainable development is essential and a human priority, aimed at addressing the imbalanced use of resources and ethical neglect. It necessitates rethinking the relationship between humanity and nature, adopting a holistic, culturally, and ecologically rooted approach, such as that found in Islam. Islam's teachings on the responsible use of water closely align with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 6, which focuses on ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water. Islam prohibits the wastage of water, which echoes SDG 12, promoting responsible consumption and production. Furthermore, the Quran emphasizes protecting the environment and reducing harm, aligning with SDG 13 on climate action. Industrial development that causes water pollution violates both Islamic ethics and SDG principles, as it compromises clean water access and harms ecosystems. In Islam, individuals and corporations are seen as stewards of Earth, tasked with preserving resources for future generations, much like the goals of sustainable development.

Islamic finance and traditional water management systems offer viable solutions for environmental conservation. Investments in Green Sukuk and charitable water projects can support sustainable development efforts. Reviving of historical Islamic water management systems like Qanats, Hima, and Waqf can provide sustainable, equitable, and long-term solutions to water scarcity.

Ultimately, to achieve a pollution-free planet requires a shift in human behaviours, governance, and corporate responsibility from grass root level. We must adopt the lifestyles that prioritize environmental preservation, while governments and

<sup>48</sup> al-R'ad: 13, 11

<sup>49</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ al- Bukhārī: 2320



corporations must fulfill their corporate social responsibilities (CSR) by adopting sustainable practices. As the Qur'an states, "Allah does not change what is with a people until they change what is in themselves" (Surah al-Ra'd, 13:11). Therefore, a collective commitment to sustainability, inspired by both faith and science, is essential for protecting our planet for future generations.



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