

ENGLISH

FREE
BOOK

Islam AND THE Environment



SECOND EDITION

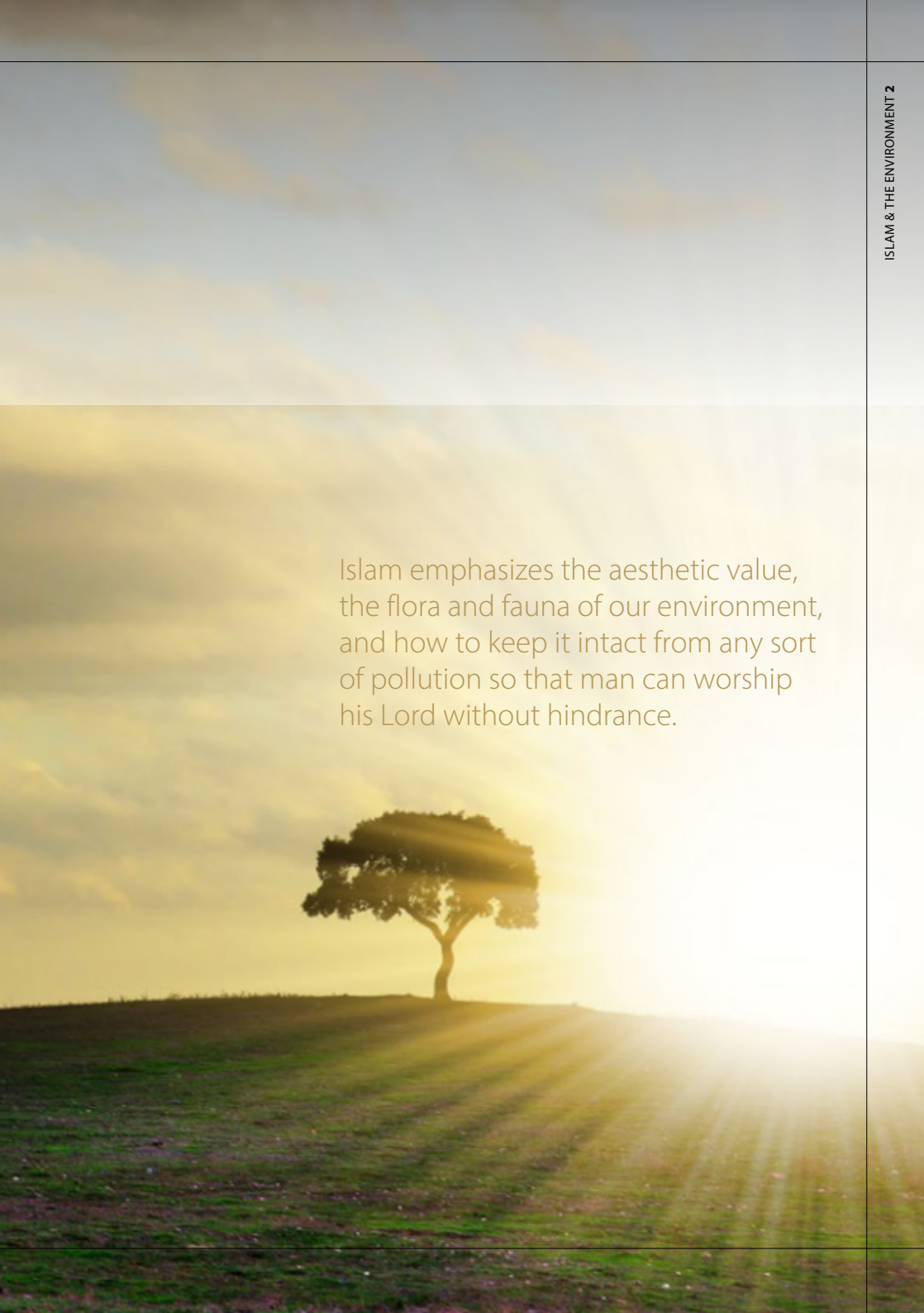


Islam places such great importance on keeping our environment safe, it is a part of faith.

The Prophet said:

“Faith has many branches; one of them is removing a harmful thing from the road.”

(Muslim and Abu Dawud)

A landscape photograph showing a single, large, rounded tree standing on a grassy hill. The sun is low on the horizon to the right, creating a strong golden glow and long rays of light that fan out across the sky and the ground. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

Islam emphasizes the aesthetic value,
the flora and fauna of our environment,
and how to keep it intact from any sort
of pollution so that man can worship
his Lord without hindrance.

To this end Islam teaches us the following:

To be grateful to Allah and to make use of our environment

The natural beauty of our surroundings is one of the signs of Allah to make us grateful to Him. It is quite striking to see how the Qur'an and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad taught us to care about the environment.



The Qur'an says:

"And it is He who spread the earth and placed therein firmly set mountains and rivers; and from all of the fruits He made therein two mates; He causes the night to cover the day. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought."

(Qur'an 13:3)

The Qur'an speaks of grazing livestock (camels, sheep and cattle) in order to draw our attention to the animals in our environment, animals that we make use of. This is so that they may be grateful for the Bounties of Allah. Allah says:

"...pure milk, palatable to drinkers."

(Qur'an 16:66)

Not only has the Qur'an addressed the various uses of the animals but also the people's joy and pride in leading them to pasture in the morning and bringing them back in the evening:

"And for you in them is [the enjoyment of] beauty when you bring them in [for the evening] and when you send them out [to pasture]."

(Qur'an 16:6)

"...And [We produce] gardens of grapevines and olives and pomegranates, similar yet varied. Look at [each of] its fruit when it yields and [at] its ripening..."

(Qur'an 6:99)

Universal message for the whole of creation

It is to be noticed that Islam is a mercy not only for all humans but for all creatures and creation as well.

Allah says:

“And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds.”

(Qur'an 21:107)

Being a mercy for all creatures, the Prophet of Islam has shown us, through his commandments and teachings, how to tend and care for all creatures.

“The merciful are shown mercy by the All-Merciful. Show mercy to those on earth, and He Who is in heaven will show mercy unto you.”

(Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi)

It suffices here to quote the following two hadiths which indicate the Prophet's mercy toward animals and the extent to which he was keen to protect the animal's natural rights.

Ibn Mas`ud said:

“Once we were traveling with the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and he went to do something, meanwhile (we found a bird with its young ones) so we took them. The bird came and started flapping its wings continuously. Then the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, asked: ‘Who has distressed this bird by taking its young? Return them to it at once.’”

(Abu Dawud)

Sahl ibn Al-Hanzaliyya reported that the Prophet saw a camel which was carrying a huge load, to the extent that one could neither see its back nor its belly, so he said: “Fear Allah when you deal with these beasts of burden. They must be healthy for riding and eating.”

(Abu Dawud, Ahmad, and Ibn Hibban)

Reward & Punishment

Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said:

"Whenever Muslims plant a tree, they will earn the reward of charity because of the food that comes from it; and likewise what is stolen from it, what the wild beasts eat out of it, what the birds eat out of it, and what people take from it is charity for them."

(Muslim)

The Prophet is also reported to have said,

"Muslims will always earn the reward of charity for planting a tree or sowing a crop which birds, humans, or animals then eat from."

(Bukhari and Muslim)

The Prophet related to his companions the story of a man who found a dog panting out of thirst. He narrated:

The man went down into a well, filled his shoes with water and offered it to the dog to quench its thirst. The Prophet said, "Then Allah was grateful to him and forgave him his sins." The companions asked, "O Messenger of Allah! Is there a reward for us with relation to animals?" He replied, "There is a reward with (relation to) every living creature."

(Bukhari)



Besides this wonderful image of Allah's pleasure and forgiveness, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, drew another one depicting Allah's anger and punishment.



He said:

"A woman was deemed to enter the Fire because of a cat. She imprisoned the cat and neither fed her nor set her free to eat the rodents of the earth."

(Bukhari)

Kindness to animals reaches such an extent that, when the Prophet saw a donkey with a branded face he denounced such a practice saying:

"I would not brand an animal except on the part of its body farthest from the face."

(Muslim)

In another incident, he passed by a donkey with a branded face and said:

"Have you not heard that I have cursed anyone who brands an animal on its face or who hits it on its face?"

(Muslim)

Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, saw some people practicing archery using a hen as a target, he said,

"The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, cursed anyone who took a living thing as a target."

(Muslim)

Ibn Abbas said:

"The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade that animals be made to fight each other, thus denouncing people's habit of goading animals into fighting each other until one of them was pecked or gored to death, or close to it."

(Abu Dawud)

The Qur'an condemned the Arabs of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic period) for their slitting the ears of cattle, calling this a practice inspired by Satan.

(Qur'an 4:119)

Protecting the Environment is a Religious Duty

Islam commands its followers to adhere to standards of righteous actions and good manners. Among such good behaviours is protecting the environment, which results in benefits for individuals and society.

“And the grazing livestock He has created for you; in them is warmth and [numerous] benefits, and from them you eat.”

(Qur'an 16:5)

“And it is He who subjected the sea for you to eat from it tender meat and to extract from it ornaments which you wear. And you see the ships plowing through it, and [He subjected it] that you may seek of His bounty; and perhaps you will be grateful.

(Qur'an 16:14)





Islam urges all people to protect the environment and calls them not to pollute or spoil it. An example of this would be the prohibition of urinating or defecating in the street, or throwing garbage, carcasses, industrial wastes and suchlike into water because doing so causes much harm to man, animals and the environment.

Prophet Muhammad founded a very important legal rule when he said:

"No harm shall be inflicted or reciprocated in Islam."

(Ahmad)

We can see what damage is caused to the environment when we don't look after our surroundings and respect them. By applying the faith of Islam to our lives we will see improvements being made for both this generation and those generations to come.

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