

THE CLIMATE CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAM WITH OTHER
RELIGIONS: CAUSES AND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

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Abstract

Climate change, an unprecedented global challenge, has raised urgent concerns regarding environmental degradation and its impacts on humanity. In Islam, environmental stewardship is deeply embedded in the faith, with the Quran and Hadith offering guidance on the relationship between humans and nature. This paper explores the Islamic perspective on climate change, examining its causes and reasons through the lens of religious teachings and Islamic ethics. It highlights how human actions such as overconsumption, deforestation, and pollution, driven by greed and disregard for nature, contribute to the disruption of ecological balance. The study also discusses the Islamic duty of *khilafah* (stewardship) and the moral imperative to protect the Earth. Furthermore, it proposes practical solutions rooted in Islamic principles, including sustainable resource management, the promotion of environmental consciousness, and the adoption of green technologies. By aligning contemporary environmental practices with Islamic values, the paper argues that Muslims can play a significant role in mitigating climate change and fostering a harmonious relationship between humanity and the planet.

Keywords: Climate Change, Islam, Environmental Stewardship, *Khilafah*, Sustainability, Pollution, Green Technologies, Ethical Responsibility.

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INTRODUCTION

Climate change is one of the most critical challenges facing humanity today. With rising global temperatures, melting ice caps, rising sea levels, and an increase in extreme weather events, the world has been forced to confront the devastating impacts of human activity on the environment. Climate change is not just a political or scientific issue but a moral and ethical one that touches on the responsibility of all individuals to care for the earth.

From an Islamic perspective, environmental preservation is not merely a matter of policy or technology but a religious and spiritual duty. Islam teaches its followers that the earth is a trust (Amanah) from Allah, and humans are appointed as caretakers (Khalifah) to protect and preserve it. The Quran and Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him) emphasize the importance of living in harmony with nature, avoiding excess, and using resources responsibly.

This article explores the causes of climate change, the reasons behind it from an Islamic perspective, and the solutions Islam offers. It draws upon relevant Quranic verses and Hadith to illustrate how Islamic teachings can guide Muslims to address the environmental crisis in a way that aligns with their faith.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE

1. GLOBAL WARMING

Refers specifically to the rise in the Earth’s average surface temperature** due to increased concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O).

It is a narrower concept compared to climate change, focusing mainly on the temperature rise.

Example: The global average temperature has risen by about 1.1°C** above pre-industrial levels (1850–1900) (IPCC, 2021).

2. CLIMATE CHANGE

Refers to long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, wind patterns, and other aspects of the Earth’s climate system.

It is a broader concept than global warming; it includes not only rising temperatures but also shifts in weather patterns, melting glaciers, rising sea levels, and extreme events** (floods, droughts, storms).

Global warming is one of the main drivers of climate change.

KEY DIFFERENCES

Here’s the same comparison in a properly formatted table:

Global Warming	Climate Change
Increase in Earth’s average temperature Narrow (temperature rise)	Long-term changes in climate systems Broad (temperature + rainfall + storms + sea level rise, etc.)
Mainly greenhouse gases	Includes GHGs, land-use changes, deforestation, industrialization
Temperature data	Temperature, rainfall, storms, glaciers, ocean currents

THE VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF CLIMATE AND THE NATURAL WORLD IN VARIOUS RELIGIONS

It is deeply rooted in their cosmologies, ethics, and teachings. While modern concerns about climate change are relatively recent, most major religions have long recognized the significance of nature, the elements, and humanity's responsibility toward the Earth.

Here's an overview of how climate, nature, and environmental stewardship are regarded in various religions

1. CHRISTIANITY

Creation Care: Christianity teaches that the Earth is God's creation, and humans are stewards of it. Genesis describes how God created the world and entrusted it to humans to "work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2:15).

Moral Responsibility: Environmental damage is often viewed as a sin against God's creation. Pope Francis' encyclical **Laudato Si'** (2015) calls for urgent action to combat climate change, linking it to social justice and the moral duty to protect the vulnerable.

Sacramental View of Nature: In some Christian traditions, nature is seen as a reflection of the divine, encouraging reverence for all life.

2. HINDUISM

Sacredness of Nature: The Earth (Bhumi Devi), rivers (like the Ganges), mountains, and forests are considered sacred. Nature is seen as a manifestation of the divine.

Ahimsa (Non-violence): This principle extends not only to humans and animals but also to the environment, supporting a lifestyle that minimizes harm (e.g., vegetarianism, minimalism).

Cyclical Time: Nature operates in cycles (e.g., seasons, yugas), and disrupting this balance (like through environmental degradation) is seen as dangerous to cosmic order (dharma).

3. BUDDHISM

Interdependence: All life is interconnected, and harming the environment harms all beings. This is central to the concept of **pratītyasamutpāda** (dependent origination).

Mindful Living: Simplicity, moderation, and mindfulness in consumption reduce one's ecological footprint.

***Compassion for All Beings:** Extending compassion (*karuṇā*) to animals, plants, and ecosystems encourages sustainable living. The book of Budha

5. JUDAISM

Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World): A key Jewish ethical principle that encourages action to improve and protect the world.

Bal Tashchit: A commandment prohibiting wastefulness, particularly of natural resources (from Deuteronomy 20:19-20).

Shabbat for the Land (Shmita): Every seventh year, the land is to lie fallow, reflecting an ancient form of sustainable agriculture and rest for the Earth.

6. INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS

Animism and Earth Spirits: Many Indigenous traditions see the Earth as alive and filled with spirits. Trees, rivers, mountains, and animals are often personified and revered.

Reciprocity with Nature: Instead of dominion, there's a focus on mutual respect and reciprocity. Climate and seasonal cycles are deeply integrated into spiritual life.

Ceremony and Stewardship: Rituals often mark changes in climate or seasons and reinforce the sacred bond with the land.

7. SIKHISM

Nature as Divine Expression: The writings of Guru Nanak and others reference the beauty of nature as a form of divine expression. For example, "Air is the Guru, Water is the Father, and Earth is the Great Mother" (Guru Granth Sahib).

Equality and Simplicity: Sikh ethics encourage living simply, sharing resources, and avoiding exploitation of people or the planet.

8. TAOISM

Harmony with the Tao: Taoism teaches living in harmony with the Tao (the Way), which includes respecting nature's rhythms and flow.

Wu Wei (Non-Interference): Encourages not forcing nature but aligning with it, which supports sustainability and ecological balance.

Yin and Yang: Balance in the natural world is essential; disruption leads to chaos and imbalance.

COMMON THEMES ACROSS RELIGIONS

Reverence for Nature. As sacred or divinely created

Human Responsibility. as stewards or caretakers

Moral Teachings against greed, waste, and overconsumption

Interconnectedness between humans and all living beings

Call to Action to protect the Earth for future generations

Islamic Perspective on the Environment

Islam's relationship with the environment is deeply rooted in the concept of **Tawhid** (Oneness of God) and **Khilafah** (stewardship). Tawhid teaches that everything in the universe, from the smallest insect to the vastest galaxies, belongs to Allah, and humanity is merely entrusted with its care. **Khilafah** refers to the responsibility given to humans to maintain balance and harmony on Earth.

The Quran, in numerous verses, highlights the beauty and majesty of creation, urging believers to reflect upon nature as a sign of God's greatness. Allah says in Surah Al-Baqarah:

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of the night and the day, and the great creatures that move in the sea, and the birds that fly in the air, are signs for people who use reason."** (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:164)

This verse emphasizes that nature itself is a sign of God's power and wisdom. It is not simply a resource to be exploited but a manifestation of divine creativity that demands respect and reverence. The environment is thus a trust given to humanity to protect and preserve.

Islam also teaches that the earth is created in balance. In Surah Ar-Rahman, Allah declares:

And the earth He has put down for the creatures. In it are fruits and palm trees with sheathed clusters, and grain with husk, and fragrant herbs."** (Surah Ar-Rahman, 55:10-12)

The divine balance (Mizan) of nature is central to Islamic teachings. Human beings are part of this balance, and their actions must not disturb it. Exploitation of resources beyond sustainable limits, causing harm to nature, or wastefulness are all viewed as transgressions against the divine order.

CAUSES OF CLIMATE CHANGE: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

From an Islamic perspective, the causes of climate change are multifaceted but are ultimately rooted in the failure of human beings to live in accordance with the ethical principles of the faith. Several factors contribute to the environmental crisis, which can be understood from both a theological and practical standpoint.

1. Overconsumption and Wastefulness (Israf): One of the primary causes of climate change is the excessive consumption of resources. In the Quran, Allah says:

Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful."** (Surah Al-Isra, 17:27)

Wastefulness (Israf) is condemned in Islam. This includes not only the waste of food and water but also the overuse of natural resources such as fossil fuels, forests, and water. Overconsumption leads to depletion of the earth's resources and contributes significantly to global warming and environmental degradation.

2. Deforestation and Loss of Biodiversity: The destruction of forests and natural habitats is another major cause of climate change. In Islam, trees are seen as a symbol of life and prosperity. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person, or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as a charitable gift (Sadaqa) for him.”** (Sahih Muslim)

The destruction of forests not only contributes to carbon emissions but also disrupts biodiversity, leading to the loss of many species that are essential for ecological balance. Islam encourages the planting and preservation of trees as a way of engaging in beneficial acts for the community and future generations.

3. Pollution and Environmental Harm: Pollution, particularly from industrial activities, transportation, and agriculture, has led to the contamination of air, water, and soil. The Quran addresses the concept of environmental harm caused by human activities:

Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by \[reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of \[the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return \[to righteousness].”** (Surah Ar-Rum, 30:41)

This verse highlights that environmental degradation is a consequence of human misdeeds and serves as a warning to people to mend their ways.

Islamic Solutions to Climate Change

Islam offers a comprehensive set of guidelines to address the root causes of climate change. The solutions are deeply embedded in Islamic ethics and principles, which encourage sustainable living, moderation, and respect for nature.

1. Sustainable Consumption and Conservation:** Islam emphasizes moderation in all aspects of life, including the use of natural resources. Allah commands in the Quran:

O children of Adam! Take your adornment at every masjid, and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess.”** (Surah Al-Araf, 7:31)

This verse encourages Muslims to avoid excess and waste. It calls for the responsible consumption of food, water, and energy, and discourages extravagance. Sustainable living, such as reducing waste, conserving water, and using energy-efficient technologies, aligns with these teachings.

2. Promoting Renewable Resources:** Islamic teachings encourage the use of natural resources in a way that does not harm the environment. Solar and wind energy, for instance, are in line with the Quran's recognition of the sun, moon, and wind as blessings from Allah. In Surah An-Nahl, Allah says:

And it is He who produced for you from the green tree, fire, and then from it you ignite.”** (Surah An-Nahl, 16:80)

This verse alludes to the use of natural resources like wood for fire. In modern times, this can be seen as a call to adopt sustainable and renewable energy sources.

3. Planting Trees and Protecting Biodiversity:** The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) encouraged Muslims to engage in actions that benefit the environment, such as planting trees and protecting biodiversity. The planting of trees is not only an act of charity but a way to combat climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide and providing oxygen. In another Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

Whoever plants a tree and diligently looks after it until it matures and bears fruit is rewarded. (Sahih Muslim)

This highlights the importance of protecting natural resources and biodiversity to ensure ecological balance.

Conclusion

Climate change is one of the most significant challenges facing humanity today. From an Islamic perspective, climate change is a moral, ethical, and spiritual issue, as well as an environmental one. Islam teaches that humanity has been entrusted with the earth and is responsible for maintaining its balance. The Quran and Hadith provide a clear framework for understanding our duty toward the environment and offer practical solutions for addressing the causes of climate change.

Muslims are encouraged to adopt sustainable lifestyles, avoid wastefulness, and protect the earth's resources. By following the teachings of Islam, individuals and communities can contribute to mitigating climate change and ensuring a healthier planet for future generations.

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