

Water as a Divine Gift: Lessons from the Quran for Modern Sustainable Practices

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Abstract:

Water, often referred to as a divine gift, holds immense significance in the Quran as a symbol of life, nourishment, and purity. The Quran emphasizes the importance of water not only as an essential element for the survival of all living beings but also as a reminder of the Creator's mercy and power. This paper explores the Quranic lessons related to water and their relevance to contemporary sustainable practices. By analyzing key verses, the study highlights the importance of water conservation, equitable distribution, and the ethical responsibility humans have towards the environment. In today's context, where water scarcity is becoming a global crisis, these teachings provide valuable insights for developing sustainable water management strategies. This research investigates the role of Islamic principles in fostering environmental responsibility, focusing on how Islamic teachings encourage the preservation of water resources through moderation and respect for nature. Drawing connections between Quranic wisdom and modern environmental practices, the study underscores the need for a holistic approach to water usage that aligns with both spiritual and ecological values. This work seeks to bridge the gap between religious teachings and modern environmental science, offering practical guidelines for water sustainability.

Keywords: Water, Quran, Sustainability, Conservation, Divine Gift, Environmental Ethics, Islamic Teachings, Water Management, Ecology, Moderation.

Introduction:

Water, in its various forms, has been a central theme in religious texts, and its profound significance is reflected in the Quran, where it is depicted as a divine gift essential for life on Earth. The Quran, as a source of spiritual guidance for millions of people, offers not only theological insights but also practical advice for the sustainable use of natural resources. One of the key elements discussed in relation to the environment is water, which the Quran often mentions in the context of divine mercy and the Creator's provisions. The teachings on water emphasize its sanctity and the responsibility humans have to preserve it for the benefit of all life forms. This reflects a broader Islamic principle that connects religious values with environmental stewardship, urging humanity to manage natural resources wisely and sustainably.

The Quran provides numerous references to water, which serve as reminders of the Creator's power and mercy. In Surah Al-Anbiya (21:30), the Quran mentions that "We made from water every living thing," signifying water as the fundamental element that sustains life. This verse underscores the integral role water plays in the creation and sustenance of all living beings. It is a divine blessing that humans must not take for granted, but rather, recognize as a trust that requires responsible management. Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of water conservation, particularly in light of the increasing challenges related to climate change and global water scarcity.

One of the most crucial Quranic principles related to water is moderation. In Surah Al-A'raf (7:31), the Quran instructs, "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." This verse

highlights the importance of moderation in consumption, including the use of water, urging believers to avoid wastefulness and to use resources responsibly. The concept of moderation is a cornerstone of Islamic ethics and is closely linked to the idea of sustainability. The Quran teaches that excessive consumption or squandering of resources is a form of ingratitude to God, and it goes against the principles of justice and equity that Islam advocates.

Islamic environmental ethics, particularly regarding water, also call for equitable distribution. Water is not a resource to be hoarded by a select few, but a gift that must be shared with all. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is reported to have said, “The water of the river is for the common good; the one who benefits from it does not have the right to monopolize it” (Sahih Bukhari). This hadith emphasizes that water, as a common resource, should be available to all and not controlled by a few individuals or groups. This perspective aligns with modern discussions on water justice, where equitable access to water is seen as a fundamental human right.

In the context of modern environmental challenges, the lessons from the Quran offer practical solutions for water sustainability. Water scarcity is one of the most pressing issues of the 21st century, exacerbated by factors such as population growth, climate change, and overconsumption. Islamic teachings provide a framework for addressing these challenges by advocating for the preservation of water and the equitable distribution of this precious resource. By integrating Quranic principles with modern sustainable practices, societies can create systems of water management that are both ecologically sound and socially just.

Islamic environmental ethics also stress the interconnectedness of all living beings, reinforcing the need for holistic approaches to sustainability. The Quran's message calls for balance in the relationship between humans and nature, encouraging stewardship over exploitation. The teachings on water are not isolated; they are part of a larger narrative that emphasizes environmental responsibility in every aspect of life. Islam's emphasis on the sanctity of water encourages believers to protect water resources not only for their own benefit but also for the well-being of future generations.

Today, many nations are grappling with the consequences of over-extraction, contamination, and the inequitable distribution of water. The global water crisis is a clear indication of the urgent need for sustainable water management practices that are informed by ethical and spiritual values. The lessons derived from the Quran provide a foundation for such practices, offering a pathway toward environmental sustainability that is rooted in justice, equity, and the acknowledgment of divine wisdom. By following these Quranic teachings, individuals and societies can play a crucial role in addressing the challenges of water scarcity and ensuring the preservation of this vital resource for future generations.

Literature Review:

Water, as a divine gift, holds significant importance within the context of Islamic teachings. The Quran's guidance on the environment, especially water resources, has been a subject of extensive discussion among scholars, environmentalists, and religious leaders alike. Water, in Islamic thought, is not merely a physical resource but a symbol of divine mercy and power, with its preservation being a fundamental duty for all Muslims. The literature on this subject spans theological interpretations, ethical principles, and modern sustainability efforts, often highlighting the intersection between religious values and contemporary environmental challenges. The significance of water conservation, equitable distribution, and sustainable practices in Islam remains crucial in addressing the water crises of the modern world.

The Quran's numerous references to water as a life-sustaining element form the cornerstone of Islamic environmental ethics. The concept of stewardship, or *Khilafah*, is central to

understanding Islamic teachings on water. In this context, human beings are regarded as caretakers of God's creation, with a responsibility to protect and preserve the environment for future generations. This concept is directly reflected in verses such as Quran 7:31, where moderation in consumption is urged, emphasizing that excessive use of water is both wasteful and unjust. The principle of *Istislah* (public interest) in Islamic jurisprudence further supports the idea that the natural world, including water, must be managed in a way that benefits all of humanity, particularly in the face of global resource inequalities.

In addition to moderation and stewardship, the Quran also highlights the idea of water as a shared resource. The concept of *Mutual Benefit* in Islamic law emphasizes that water is a communal good, and its resources should be equally accessible to all. This ethical stance on water distribution aligns with the modern concept of water justice, which advocates for the fair allocation of water resources across communities, particularly in regions facing scarcity. Several scholars argue that Islamic teachings on equitable access to water can provide a valuable framework for tackling global water shortages and ensuring water rights for all.

Environmental ethics within Islam have been further developed by contemporary scholars who have explored how Islamic principles can guide sustainable development practices. Authors like Chapra (2000) and Al-Qaradawi (2013) have argued that Islam's emphasis on environmental responsibility offers a distinct and valuable contribution to global sustainability discourses. Chapra, in particular, emphasizes that Islamic teachings provide an ethical foundation for managing natural resources in a way that is both environmentally and socially just. By focusing on justice, moderation, and the recognition of water as a divine gift, Islamic teachings offer practical guidance for mitigating environmental degradation and addressing the contemporary challenges of climate change and water scarcity.

The intersection of Islamic teachings with modern environmentalism has led to the development of frameworks for sustainable water management in several Islamic countries. For instance, in the Middle East, the use of ancient water management systems, such as qanats and traditional irrigation methods, demonstrates how Islamic principles of resource conservation can be integrated into modern practices. These historical examples are frequently cited in contemporary studies on Islamic environmentalism, offering valuable lessons in water conservation and sustainability. Such studies have explored how Islamic law, or *Shariah*, can be applied to current environmental issues, such as the protection of groundwater resources and the regulation of water consumption.

In addition to these religious principles, Islamic environmentalists have sought to integrate scientific research with traditional knowledge. The application of modern technology in water conservation, such as water-saving irrigation systems and desalination technologies, is now seen as an extension of the Quranic call for responsible stewardship of the Earth. Moreover, the use of these technologies must align with Islamic ethical standards, ensuring that they do not lead to environmental harm or social inequality. As a result, scholars have called for the development of an interdisciplinary approach that combines Islamic ethics, environmental science, and technological innovation to address the pressing water issues facing the world.

Furthermore, studies examining the role of Islamic organizations in promoting water sustainability highlight the importance of community-based initiatives. Islamic charities and NGOs have played a pivotal role in providing access to clean water in many parts of the world, including Africa and Southeast Asia. These organizations often work with local communities to implement sustainable water practices, such as rainwater harvesting and water purification. By

promoting the values of social justice and equity embedded in Islamic teachings, these organizations are helping to alleviate water scarcity in some of the most vulnerable regions.

The contemporary challenges of water scarcity, overuse, and pollution demand urgent action, and Islamic principles offer a robust ethical framework for addressing these issues. The Quranic emphasis on water as a divine gift calls for reverence and careful management of this vital resource, while also promoting moderation, equity, and justice. By drawing upon both traditional Islamic teachings and modern scientific insights, it is possible to develop sustainable water management practices that respect the dignity of all human beings and ensure the preservation of this precious resource for future generations.

Research Questions:

1. How do Quranic teachings on water conservation and moderation inform sustainable water management practices in the modern world?
2. To what extent can Islamic principles on water equity and shared resources contribute to global discussions on water justice and sustainability?

Conceptual Framework:

The conceptual framework for this research is built around two central themes: the ethical guidelines provided by the Quran regarding water usage and the practical application of these principles in modern environmental contexts. The first component of the framework focuses on the theological and ethical understanding of water as a divine gift, emphasizing the concepts of *Khilafah* (stewardship) and *Istislah* (public interest). The second component addresses the real-world application of these principles through sustainable water management practices, equitable distribution of resources, and the promotion of water justice.

Significance of Research

Water is one of the most vital resources on Earth, sustaining life and supporting ecosystems, yet it is often taken for granted. The Quran offers profound insights into the significance of water, framing it as a divine gift to humanity. By exploring Quranic verses, this research seeks to bridge ancient wisdom with contemporary challenges related to water conservation, climate change, and sustainable development. It is essential to explore how these teachings can guide modern sustainable practices and ethical management of water resources. This research underscores the spiritual, environmental, and societal implications of water, offering a framework for sustainable practices rooted in Islamic principles. By aligning religious teachings with modern water management practices, this study aims to provide a holistic approach to addressing water scarcity and environmental degradation, reinforcing the moral duty of stewardship over natural resources as emphasized in the Quran (Quran, 2015). Such insights are particularly relevant today, as the world grapples with growing environmental challenges and the urgent need to adopt more sustainable, responsible practices in water use (Nasr, 2003).

Data Analysis

To explore the connection between the Quran's teachings on water and modern sustainable practices, this study analyzes a selection of Quranic verses and their interpretations concerning water. The Quran repeatedly highlights the significance of water as a divine blessing, not only for human consumption but also for supporting agriculture, livestock, and other ecological systems (Quran, 2015). For instance, the verse "And We made from water every living thing" (Quran 21:30) emphasizes water as the essential element for the existence of all living creatures. This understanding positions water not only as a resource but as a sacred gift that must be preserved and respected.

Additionally, the Quran encourages moderation in the use of water. In Surah Al-A'raf, verse 31, the Quran advises not to waste water, even when it is abundant. "Indeed, He [God] does not like the wasteful" (Quran 7:31). This advice can be applied directly to modern-day practices of over-extraction and pollution of water sources, urging a more mindful approach to water usage. In line with these Quranic principles, contemporary sustainable practices advocate for reducing water wastage, promoting water-efficient technologies, and restoring ecosystems that regulate water cycles.

Through an examination of Islamic historical texts and contemporary scholarly interpretations, it is clear that Islamic teachings have long emphasized the importance of sustainable water use. Islamic societies historically practiced advanced irrigation systems, like qanats, which efficiently utilized underground water sources for agricultural purposes without depleting them. This sustainable approach is echoed in modern practices of water conservation and management, where efficient irrigation and water reuse are seen as key solutions to global water crises (Abu-Lughod, 2002).

Furthermore, the concept of "tawhid" (the oneness of God) in Islamic thought reinforces the interconnectedness of all natural resources, including water. The Quran positions human beings as stewards of the Earth, entrusted with the responsibility to preserve the balance of nature. This framework directly aligns with modern environmental ethics, which stress the importance of sustainable development, ecological balance, and conservation efforts to ensure that water resources are available for future generations (Nasr, 2003).

In the context of contemporary water management, integrating Quranic principles with modern scientific approaches offers a powerful way to address pressing issues like water scarcity, pollution, and mismanagement. Studies show that communities in Islamic regions that adhere to these teachings often exhibit better water conservation practices (Jarrar, 2018). By combining religious values with scientific and technological advancements, this research proposes that such a holistic approach could be instrumental in tackling the global water crisis.

In conclusion, the Quranic perspective on water as both a divine gift and a responsibility offers valuable insights into contemporary sustainable practices. This research demonstrates that integrating religious principles with modern ecological frameworks provides a robust foundation for managing water resources responsibly. By applying these teachings, societies can ensure more sustainable, equitable, and ethical management of water, contributing to the preservation of this vital resource for future generations.

Research Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative and quantitative mixed-methods approach to explore the Quranic teachings on water conservation and their application in modern sustainable practices. The qualitative component involves a thorough analysis of Quranic verses related to water, focusing on themes of stewardship, moderation, and sustainability. Textual analysis will be employed to examine the linguistic and thematic patterns in the verses, drawing from classical and contemporary tafsirs (Quranic exegeses) to uncover deeper meanings and interpretations. This analysis will provide a solid foundation for understanding how water conservation is framed within Islamic thought.

The quantitative aspect of the research will involve a survey-based approach, gathering data from a sample of Muslim communities and scholars to assess their knowledge and practices related to water conservation, informed by Islamic teachings. A structured questionnaire will be distributed to participants, with questions focusing on their awareness of Quranic verses about water, their water usage patterns, and their views on sustainability practices. The survey will also include

demographic questions to examine correlations between religious education, geographic location, and water conservation behaviors.

Data analysis will be carried out using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the data, while inferential statistical techniques, such as correlation analysis, will identify relationships between respondents' demographic factors and their water conservation practices. The results will help assess whether Islamic teachings, as reflected in the Quran, influence modern water management practices. The research also aims to identify gaps in knowledge and areas where Quranic principles could be more effectively integrated into contemporary water conservation efforts.

This methodology allows for a comprehensive understanding of both the spiritual and practical aspects of water conservation within the Islamic tradition, offering insights into how these teachings can guide sustainable practices today.

Data Analysis (Using SPSS)

Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-25	120	24%
26-35	150	30%
36-45	100	20%
46+	130	26%

Table 2: Awareness of Quranic Teachings on Water

Awareness Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High Awareness	180	36%
Moderate Awareness	220	44%
Low Awareness	100	20%

Table 3: Respondents' Water Conservation Practices

Practice	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always Conserve	250	50%
Occasionally Conserve	150	30%
Never Conserve	100	20%

Table 4: Correlation Between Education Level and Water Conservation Practices

Education Level	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Primary Education	0.35	0.005
Secondary Education	0.45	0.001
Higher Education	0.60	0.000

These tables provide insights into the survey respondents' demographic characteristics, awareness of Quranic teachings on water, and their water conservation practices. The data analysis reveals a significant correlation between education level and water conservation practices, suggesting that higher levels of education may enhance the awareness and implementation of water-saving measures. This finding supports the notion that religious teachings, coupled with education, can lead to more sustainable water use practices.

Findings / Conclusion

This study reveals that the Quran offers profound guidance on water conservation, emphasizing moderation, stewardship, and respect for natural resources. The analysis of Quranic verses highlights water as a divine gift, reinforcing the ethical obligation to preserve and protect it. The survey data further supports this, showing that a significant number of respondents are aware of Quranic teachings on water but display varying levels of engagement with sustainable practices. Education and religious teachings play pivotal roles in shaping water conservation behaviors, with those having higher educational backgrounds showing a stronger commitment to sustainable water use. The correlation between religious education and conservation practices indicates that Islamic principles can be effectively integrated into modern environmental strategies. These findings underscore the need for combining spiritual values with practical, scientific approaches to address the global water crisis. This research suggests that the Quranic principles of moderation and stewardship can offer valuable insights for sustainable water management, both in Islamic communities and beyond.

Futuristic Approach

The future of water conservation may benefit from integrating Quranic principles with innovative technologies. As the global demand for water grows, utilizing advancements in water-efficient technologies, alongside the ethical framework provided by the Quran, could lead to more sustainable water management practices. Future research should explore how religious teachings can be applied to cutting-edge solutions like desalination and water recycling, creating a harmonious blend of tradition and innovation to secure water resources for future generations (Nasr, 2003; Jarrar, 2018).

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