

Inter-relationship of Islam and Eco-criticism

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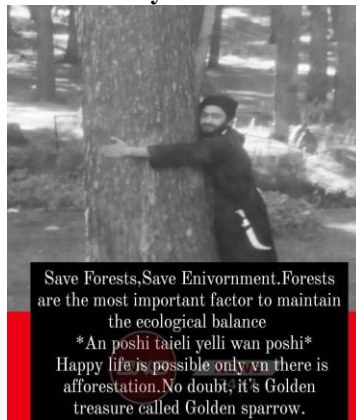
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Abstract: The interrelationship between Islam and Ecocriticism has become an increasingly relevant topic in recent years. It is a literary and cultural theory that examines the relationship between humans and the natural world. Islam, as a religion and way of life, has a deep respect for nature and emphasizes the importance of environmental supervision. This paper explores the intersection between Islam and ecocriticism, examining how Islamic beliefs and practices can inform and enrich our understanding of environmental issues. Exploring how Islamic values intersect with ecocritical principles also provides insight into the potential for Islam to contribute to the development of environmental ethics and practices. Ultimately, it argues that a deeper understanding of the interrelationship between Islam and Ecocriticism can lead to a more holistic and sustainable approach to environmentalism.

Introduction: Kashmiri Quotation (Aan Poshi Teli Yeli Waan Poshi) means Food will thrive only till the woods survive.



Save Forests, Save Environment. Forests are the most important factor to maintain the ecological balance

An poshi teli yeli wan poshi

Happy life is possible only when there is afforestation. No doubt, it's Golden treasure called Golden sparrow.

”

The inter-relationship between Islam and Ecocriticism is an emerging field of study that explores the intersection between religion and environmental issues. Islam, as a faith tradition, has a deep reverence for the natural world and emphasizes the importance of environmental supervision and conservation. Ecocriticism, on the other hand, is an interdisciplinary field that examines the representation of nature and the environment in literature and cultural texts. Through an ecocritical lens, Islamic texts can be interpreted as offering a framework for understanding the relationship between human nature and the responsibility of humans to care for the environment. This interpretation is grounded in the concept of Tawhid, which emphasizes the unity and interconnection of all creation and highlights the importance of preserving and protecting the natural world. Moreover, Islamic environmental ethics are grounded in the concept of Khalifa, which highlights the role of humans on the earth. This concept emphasizes the need for the responsible and sustainable use of natural resources and the importance of protecting the environment for future generations. The subject of literary and cultural studies known as “ecocriticism” looks at how people interact with the natural world and what that interaction means for culture, society, and politics. Islamic architecture is an interesting subject for eco-critical analysis, as it represents an important aspect of Islamic culture and also has significant environmental implications and the gradual “ecological genocide” of our times demands not only a transnational critical investigation but an ecumenical and interreligious query as well. Ecocriticism is concerned with the relationship between literature, culture, and the natural environment. Ecocriticism provides a framework for examining how human beings interact with the natural world and how cultural attitudes and practices affect the environment. Islam, as a religion, has its perspective on the natural environment. It fosters ties between nature, humans, and the divine rather than focusing on dominance.

Ecocriticism, as a discipline, offers a lens through which we can analyze cultural representations of the environment, highlighting the impact of human activity on the natural world and the need for sustainable practices. By applying an ecocritical lens to Islamic texts and practices, scholars can explore how Islamic environmental ethics can inform and shape contemporary environmental discourse and policy. The central text of Islam is the **Quran**, which contains the revelations received by the Prophet Muhammad.

Green Prophet

The Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) of Islam at times referred to as a “green Prophet,” an “environmentalist” In *Islamic Bulletin News Letter* in Issue (23) there is “When doomsday comes if someone has a palm shoot in his hand, he should plant it.” (6) “He also counsels caution and restraint when using water,” even if one is standing on a flowing river.”(7) He believed it to be sinful to deny thirsty someone water. The hurmah ideas of harim and hima are safeguards for the environment to save forests, lands, and animals, “the Prophet created inviolable zones known as *hima* and *haram*, in which resources were to be left untouched. Both are still in use in nowadays: *haram* areas are often drawn up around wells and a water source to protect the groundwater table from overpumping Hima appleis particularly to wildlife and forestry and usually designates an area of land where grazing and woodcutting are restricted, or where certain animal species are protected.”(48)

Conservation of Water

In the harsh desert environment where the Prophet Mohammad (SAW) lived water was synonymous with life. Water was a gift from God, the source of all life on earth as is testified in the Quran “**We made from water every living thing**” (21:30). The Quran constantly reminds believers that they are but the guardians of God’s creation on earth and

that they should never take this creation for granted, “Consider the water which you drink, was it you that brought it down from the rain cloud or we? If we had pleased, we could make it bitter”. (56: 68-70)

Those who walk softly on the earth are the faithful workers of the good. (*Quran*, 25:63). The Quran and the sunnah, or Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) tradition, serve as the foundation of the Islamic code of ethics. These two sources are woven together with the adab, or social mores, that are emphasised in both poetry and prose literature. The holiness of the natural world and all animal species is mentioned in the Qur'an. It states unequivocally that everything-including the heavens and the earth-glorifies God. (Qur'an, 17:44). Guidelines for the proper treatment of plants and animals as well as natural resources have been established by all schools of Islamic law and the declaration that contaminating the water is a sin as per the *Shariah*.

Islam and the Environment

Islam places a great deal of emphasis on the natural environment. The Quran describes the environment as a manifestation of God's power and as a source of sustenance for human beings. Muslims are encouraged to take care of the environment and avoid wastefulness. In Islamic tradition, natural resources such as water, air, and land are considered to be God's gifts to humanity, and their conservation is seen as a religious duty.

The Quran contains numerous verses that emphasize the importance of the environment. For example, in Surah Al-Anam, the Quran states: “It is He who has made you successors upon the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees of rank, that He may try you through what He has given you. Indeed, your Lord is swift in penalty; but indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful.” (6:165) this verse highlights the idea that humans have been made stewards of the earth and they will be held accountable for the environment.

Similarly, in Surah Ar-Rahman, the Quran states: “And the earth He has laid out for the creatures. There is a fruit and palm tree having sheaths of dates. And grain has husks and scented plants. So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?” (55:10-13). This verse emphasizes the idea that the environment is a source of sustenance for human beings and that it should be treated with respect and gratitude.

Ecocriticism and Islam

Ecocriticism provides a framework for analyzing literary and cultural texts from an environmental perspective. The field emphasizes the relationship between human beings and the natural world, and how cultural attitudes and practices affect the environment. Islam, as a religion, has its perspective on the environment and can be analyzed through an ecocritical lens. One way in which ecocriticism can be applied to Islam is through an analysis of Islamic literature. Islamic literature, such as the Quran and Hadith, contains numerous references to the environment and can be analyzed from an ecocritical perspective. For example, the story of the Prophet Ibrahim (AS), who was commanded by God to sacrifice his son, contains references to the natural environment. In the story, Ibrahim takes his son to a mountain to sacrifice him, and as he is about to do so, God replaces the boy with a ram. This story can be analyzed from an ecocritical perspective, as it highlights the relationship between humans and animals, and how God's intervention can change the course of events in the natural world.

Environmental Crisis as a Spiritual Crisis

Seyyed Hossein Nasr described the ecological issue as the spiritual crisis of contemporary man rather than one of sustainability or resource depletion. According to Nasr, the crisis is reflected in the fact that nature is no longer regarded as the great theophany and that people have lost sight of its spiritual value. He was of the view that environmental degradation is a betrayal of the Creator as well as a failure on our part to live up to our potential as human beings. “The seven heavens and the earth and all that is therein praising God,” the Qur’an declares, “and there is nothing but that hymns God’s praise, but you understand not their praise...” (Qur’an, 17:44) Nasr, like White, cites industrialisation and mechanisation as the causes of the crisis. Theologians from the 19th and 20th centuries, J, Bruce McCallum in his article *Modernity and the dilemma of natural theology: The Barth-Brunner debate, 1934* says that like Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, who were the forerunners of a new theology that held that “nature can’t teach a man anything about God and is therefore of no theological and spiritual interest,”(1) are those with whom he associates the process instead of the Christianity of the Middle Ages. Philosophy stopped being the arbiter and critic of scientific findings and techniques and began to reflect science. To exploit nature, it had to be reduced to a meaningless artificial background for the life of modern man. Not only modern science, but also attention to the metaphysical knowledge, or *scientia sacra*, about nature, might repair the harm that has been done to the sacred and spiritual significance of nature. The Minangkabau culture can be used as an illustration of how nature shapes culture in Muslim South East Asia. This culture is built on interactions that are neither anthropocentric nor andocentric and are not centered on dominion but rather on developing ties between nature, humans, and the divine.

Here are some different ways in which ecocriticism can be applied to Islamic architecture:

Sustainable Design

Islamic architecture is known for its innovative use of materials and designs that allow for natural cooling and ventilation. For example, traditional Islamic buildings often feature courtyards, wind towers, and water features that help to regulate temperature and airflow. By analyzing these design features, ecocritics can identify principles of sustainable design that can be applied to modern architecture and urban planning.

Cultural and Ecological Heritage

Islamic architecture is deeply connected to the natural environment and reflects the cultural and ecological heritage of Muslim societies. By studying Islamic architecture, ecocritics can gain insight into how people have interacted with the natural world in different historical and cultural contexts. This can help to build bridges between different cultures and promote environmental stewardship.

Symbolism and Meaning

Islamic architecture is also rich in symbolism and meaning, and many buildings incorporate elements of nature and the environment into their design. For example, the Islamic garden, or paradise garden, is a common motif that represents the ideal of the natural world as a place of harmony and balance. By examining the symbolic meanings of Islamic architecture, ecocritics can explore how people have understood and valued the natural world in different historical and cultural contexts. Overall, ecocriticism offers a valuable lens through which to analyze Islamic architecture and its relationship to the natural world. By exploring the ecological, cultural, and symbolic dimensions of Islamic architecture, ecocritics can contribute to our understanding of the complex interconnections between humans and the natural world.

Conclusion

The inter-relationship between Islam and Ecocriticism offers a unique perspective on the complex relationship between humans and the environment. By exploring the intersection between religion and environmental issues, scholars can develop a deeper understanding of the importance of environmental stewardship and the role that cultural representations and practices play in shaping environmental discourse and policy. The first humans, religion was a sacred cosmology and a holy order of the natural world. The study of authentic biophilic thought, design, and action in many religious traditions and cultures, along with comparative eco-theology and religious ecocriticism, can pave the way for resolving the mental issues that cause misery for the earth and everything on it. As we face the effects of pollution and over-exploitation, desertification and water scarcity in some parts of the world and floods and violent storms elsewhere, it is perhaps time for world community as a whole Muslims, Christians and Jews, Hindus and Buddhists, atheists and agnostics, to take a leaf out of Prophet Mohammad's (SAW) book and address the current environmental crisis seriously and wisely.

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