

Violence Against the Earth in the Abrahamic Religions

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“I used to think the top global environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, and climate change. I thought that with thirty years of good science we could address the problems. But I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed, and apathy, and to deal with these we need a spiritual and cultural transformation, and we [lawyers and] scientists don’t know how to do that.”

—Gus Speth

“A New Consciousness and the Eight-fold Way towards Sustainability,” Earth Charter podcast, at <https://earthcharter.org/podcasts/gus-speth/>.

In Antiquity every tree, every spring, every stream, every hill had its own *genius loci*, its guardian spirit. These spirits were accessible to men, but were very unlike men; centaurs, fauns, and mermaids show their ambivalence. Before one cut a tree, mined a mountain, or dammed a brook, it was important to placate the spirit in charge of that particular situation, and to keep it placated. By destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects.

—*Lynn White, Jr.*

White, Lynn. (1967). The historical roots of our ecological crisis. *Science* 155(3767): 1203-1207.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and **subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.**

—Gen. 1:28 (KJV)

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ
אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וּכְבֹּשְׁהָ וּרְדּוּ בַדְגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל־חַיָּה
הָרֶמֶשׂת עַל־הָאָרֶץ:

God blessed them and God said to them, “Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and **master it; and rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth.”**

—Gen. 1:28 (JPS 2023)

כָּבַשׁ *heb.* to subject, subdue, force, keep under, bring into
bondage

(Qal) to bring into bondage, make subservient to, subdue, force,
violate to subdue, dominate, tread down



Rabbi Ellen Bernstein z"l

We are not God. The earth was here before us and it has been given to us. This allows us to respond to the charge that Judaeo-Christian thinking, on the basis of the Genesis account which grants man “dominion” over the earth (cf. *Gen* 1:28), has encouraged the unbridled exploitation of nature by painting him as domineering and destructive by nature.

This is not a correct interpretation of the Bible as understood by the Church.... [N]owadays we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God’s image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures.

—*Pope Francis*, *Laudato Sí*

The biblical texts are to be read in their context, with an appropriate hermeneutic, recognizing that they tell us to “till and keep” the garden of the world (cf. *Gen* 2:15).

“Tilling” refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while “keeping” means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving. This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature.

—*Pope Francis, Laudato Sí*

Abrahamic Religions

- Judaism
- Christianity
- Islam

- Samaritanism
- Karaism
- Druze
- Bahá'í
- Rastafari

Why study other religions?

- Studying their approaches to religious questions helps us to understand our own.
- We live side-by-side with people of other faiths and their thinking, especially Christian thinking, is pervasive in society. We need to see what isn't compatible with our own tradition and what is universally valid.
- This could be a productive topic for interfaith text study.
- This session will devote more time to Jewish texts than to others.
 - Some of us may teach them in a specifically Jewish setting.
 - In interfaith settings, we will be considered the experts on Jewish sources.

Judaism: Isaiah 24:1–5

Behold,
GOD will strip the earth bare,
And lay it waste,
And twist its surface,
And scatter its inhabitants.

...

**For the earth was defiled
Under its inhabitants;
Because they transgressed teachings,
Violated laws,
Broke the ancient covenant.**

Hosea 4:1–3

Hear the word of GOD,

O people of Israel!

For GOD has a case

Against the inhabitants of this land,

Because there is no honesty and no goodness

And no devotion to God in the land.

[False] swearing, dishonesty, and murder,

And theft and adultery are rife;

Crime follows upon crime!

For that, the earth is withered:

Everything that dwells on it languishes—

Beasts of the field and birds of the sky—

Even the fish of the sea perish.

Deuteronomy 11:12–17

It is a land that the ETERNAL your God looks after, on which the ETERNAL your God always keeps an eye, from year's beginning to year's end. If, then, you obey the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day, loving the ETERNAL your God and rendering service with all your heart and soul, I will grant the rain for your land in season, the early rain and the late. You shall gather in your new grain and wine and oil— I will also provide grass in the fields for your cattle—and thus you shall eat your fill. **Take care not to be lured away to serve other gods and bow to them. For GOD's anger will flare up against you, shutting up the skies so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its produce; and you will soon perish from the good land that GOD is assigning to you.**

Christianity: Revelation 11:16–18

Then the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, singing,

“We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty,
who are and who were,
for you have taken your great power
and begun to reign.

**The nations raged,
but your wrath has come,
and the time for judging the dead,
for rewarding your servants, the prophets
and saints and all who fear your name,
both small and great,
and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”**

Earlier, those reading Revelation were warned about certain “woes” yet to come. The first and second of these were the fifth and sixth trumpet judgments, respectively. These were far worse than the terrible trumpet judgments that came before. The third woe will be inaugurated with the seventh trumpet. Just as the seven trumpet judgments were all part of the seventh seal, the seventh trumpet will contain individual events, known as the “bowl judgments.” In the meantime, as the seventh trumpet sounds, heaven praises God for His righteous judgment on evil.

—*BibleRef*

<https://www.bibleref.com/Revelation/11/Revelation-chapter-11.html>

Islam: Quran 2:30

[Prophet], when your Lord told the angels, ‘I am putting a successor on earth,’ they said, ‘How can You put someone there who will cause damage and bloodshed, when we celebrate Your praise and proclaim Your holiness?’ but He said, ‘I know things you do not.’

The Quran, trans. M.A. Abdel Haleem (Oxford, 2004)

Midrash

Rabbi Simon said: When the Holy One blessed be He came to create Adam the first man, the ministering angels divided into various factions and various groups. Some of them were saying: ‘Let him not be created,’ and some of them were saying: ‘Let him be created.’ That is what is written: “Kindness and truth met; righteousness and peace touched” (Psalms 85:11). Kindness said: ‘Let him be created, as he performs acts of kindness.’ Truth said: ‘Let him not be created, as he is all full of lies.’ Righteousness said: ‘Let him be created, as he performs acts of righteousness.’ Peace said: ‘Let him not be created, as he is all full of discord.’

Bereshit Rabbah 8 (cf. BT Sanhedrin 38b)

Quran 6:98–99

It is He who first produced you from a single soul, then gave you a place to stay [in life] and a resting place [after death]. We have made Our revelations clear to those who understand. It is He who sends down water from the sky. With it We produce the shoots of each plant, then bring greenery from it, and from that We bring out grains, one riding on the other in close-packed rows.

Modern Texts: Judaism

Within the world of traditional halakhah (Jewish law), environmentalism has come to be understood as falling into the category of “midat haḥasidut”—extraordinary piety. Acting with compassion towards the non-human world is good and should be strived towards on a moral level. Simultaneously, because these are pious acts they are not considered essential but rather extralegal, and thus wholly voluntary.

—*Tanhum Yoreh*

Yoreh, Tanhum. "Compassion and Self-Concern in Halakhic Environmental Decision-Making", *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* 26, 1-2 (2021): 29-54, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685357-20210901>

While the relationship between religious worldviews and pro-environmental behavior is still evolving and often poorly understood, evidence points to political identity being more significant than religiosity *per se* in determining people's approaches to the environment. The more conservative one's political identity, the greater the apathy shown This is significant for Orthodox Jewish communities, because by and large Jewish orthodoxy tends towards conservative praxis.

The consumption of single use plastics has skyrocketed over the past few years but has received scant attention in halakhic discourse. Moshe Yitzhak Vorhand (2000:2:22), one of the few to address the issue from the standpoint of Jewish law claimed that to throw away disposable plastic after a single use would not be a violation of *bal tashhit* (“waste not”). For Vorhand, the *raison d’être* of single use plastics is to be used only once and then discarded. Thus, there is no legal obligation to try to prolong the life of single use plastics by washing and reusing them.

Dashu bah rabim, shomer peta'im Hashem, (Babylonian Talmud, *Yevamot* 72a and Psalms 116:6) is an expression originating in the Talmud that can be loosely translated as “many people act in this way, therefore God protects the naive.”

Actively pursuing a lifestyle that values environmental protection requires knowledge, desire, opportunity and financial capability. Most people balance some combination of these factors. For instance, even if people have the knowledge that eating organic is better for the environment and have the desire to do so, the (financial, geographic, etc.) opportunity might not present itself. In such a landscape it would undermine *halakhah* to categorize such individuals as transgressors.

Early rabbinic sages such as Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Eleazar understood the prohibition against wastefulness to include within it the prohibition against self-harm. This non-binary worldview asserts that destroying material goods is commensurate to destroying oneself, or framed more broadly, environmental destruction is self-destruction.

Later rabbinic sages were challenged by this worldview and created an alternative worldview of a hierarchical binary between human and non-human. They accomplish this by severing the connection between prohibition against wastefulness and the prohibition against self-harm. Instead, they suggested a new relationship between humans and non-humans, one which established the superiority of humans and created a human-non-human binary. The sages took the concept of *bal tashhit* (“waste not”) and added to it two simple words “degufa adif ” (lit. is preferred for the body) that confirm this new hierarchical relationship. When used in conjunction with each other, these words combine to mean that the prohibition against “wasting” the body takes precedence over wasting material.

How can the barriers mentioned above be overcome? Does it really make a difference which interpretation is championed and ultimately becomes the normative way to read Deuteronomy 20:19? The answer in my opinion is a resounding yes, because of the way environmental values have been incorporated into Jewish law. **The value of human life is paramount in *halakhah*. All of Jewish law can be violated in order to save a human life excepting the prohibitions against idolatry, murder, and sexual immorality (Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 74a). In other words, if environmental harm is equated with self harm, the full weight of the *halakhah* would be activated to prevent it.**

Ma'asei Yadaai L'hitpa-er: On the Mitzvah of Sustainability (2019)

Humanity's first mission upon being created is variously described in what are recognized as two distinct creation stories. In Genesis 1:28 God creates humans and says:

פרו ורבו ומלאו את הארץ וכבשוה ורדו בדגת הים ובעוף השמים ובכל חיה הרומשת על הארץ.

Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the world and subdue it. Gain control over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky and every animal that roams on the earth.

This is characterized by our sages as *yishuvo shel olam* (ישיבו של עולם), the inhabiting (or more broadly, the establishment) of the civilized world, a concept based on a verse in Isaiah,

ד' בורא השמים הוא הא-להים, יוצר הארץ ועֲשָׂהּ. הוא כוננה, לא תהו בראה, לשבת יצרה .

The Lord who creates the heavens, he is God, He who fashions the earth and makes it, He prepares it. He did not create it to be chaos, He fashioned it to be inhabited. (Isaiah 45:18)

Rabbinical Assembly
Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin and Rabbi Avram Reisner

<https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/teshuvot/1705435780.pdf?id=54578%20>

In the second version of creation the primary mission is described in Genesis 2:15.

ויקח ד' א-להים את האדם וינחהו בגן-עדן לעבדה ולשמרה .

God took the human and placed him in the Garden of Eden to work and protect it.

This, too, that is, attending to the fecundity of the earth, is described as ישובו של עולם (*yishuvo shel olam*) in a midrash in Bereshit Rabbah 13.1 to Genesis 2:5 and 2:9:

“Every plant of the field was not yet upon the earth... [since God had not caused rain to fall upon the earth, and there was no human to till it]” – Here you say “every plant of the field” and later “God caused to grow from the earth”? – Said R. Hanina: The latter verse refers to the Garden of Eden, the former to the establishment of the world (*yishuvo shel olam*).

Genesis One tells the story, step by step, of how the world was made: light emerging from the dark, the heavens from the earth, dry land from the waters; then, with the stage all set, the emergence of vegetation, animals of all kinds, and ultimately, man and woman. A refrain throughout creation, along with the unfolding of life's goodness, is life's self-generating continuity.

Life, all life, was born with the capacity of self-renewal in an environment that was created to support and sustain it. Each generation was born with the seeds that promise to bring forth the next generation. If left undisturbed, if allowed to live out the plan of the Creator, life would continue, one generation cascading into another, forever.

In the words of Nahmanides:

“God created species in the world... giving them the power to give birth so that those species should continue forever, as long as He wished the world to continue.”

This does not mean we were given unrestrained access to the world. Our curiosity and appetite were reined in by the limitation that plants and trees alone were to be the source of our food. And the work-free zone of Shabbat, following immediately after our creation, reminded us to Whom the earth truly belongs. These constraints limited our disruptions and manipulation of nature and re-oriented our sense of awe and appreciation for all that lay before us. Earth was not just a panoply of resources for our use but God's glorious creation to be appreciated in and of itself.

Still, the big take-away from Genesis One over the generations seems to have been that given the puniness of humanity in relation to the grandeur and potential dangers of the earth, and the blessing of God along with the indefatigable, self-regenerative capacity of the world, that humankind had great latitude to work the earth as we saw fit.

But that was then. We are, in many ways, past that now. Though we are still individually small and at the mercy of nature's power (storms, illness, earthquakes, infections still plague us), collectively we are neither few nor insignificant nor innocent. Our footprint is larger than it ever was. Over the last 150 years we have already profoundly altered elements of the world's operating systems in ways that are irreparable in any meaningful human timeframe.

Genesis One was the story for the first era of human development. But having fulfilled that promise, that mandate, we need another story to guide our next steps. And we have that story in the very next verses of the Torah: Genesis Two.

While Genesis One is anthropocentric, Genesis Two places humans deeply embedded within, and as an essential contributing part of, earth's complex operating system.

Our job in Genesis Two is not to consume and subdue the world's goodness so that we may thrive, but to bring the earth into its own full fecundity and manage its richness and resources wisely. We were created for the Earth's sake; humanity and earth are meant to be a dyad, mutually reinforcing the well-being of each other, and all the creatures who depend upon Creation.

This yields not just a different literary reading but a different theological charge.

Genesis Two begins with an explanation of the condition of the earth, which immediately speaks to humanity's purpose in God's design. "No plant of the field was yet upon the earth and the grass of the field had not yet grown, since God had not caused rain to fall upon the earth, and there was no human to till it."

Here, unlike in Genesis One, the world is not presented to humanity as a smorgasbord set out for our use and hegemony. **Whereas in Genesis One the bounty of the earth predates the arrival of man and woman, in Genesis Two the bounty of the earth awaits the contributions of the human whose presence is necessary for the development of earthly goodness.**

Earth begins as a place of desolation, awaiting humanity's input and efforts, so that it may be brought to its fullness and fertility. In Genesis Two we are not the unconditional beneficiaries of the earth's pre-existing bounty but its nurturers and co-creators. **We are not sovereigns as we seem to be in Genesis One but caretakers; concerned for the needs of the place in which we live and upon which we depend. We are active partners in God's design....**

From the very start, we humans were instructed that there were limits to our reach, which, if breached (as they were) would cause devastating consequences.

The language of the halakhah is often binary in its formulations. It is often described, correctly, as a system of *issur v'heter* (prohibition and permission), determining if behavior is *mutar* or *asur*, obligatory or not, kosher or not.

In seeking halakhic guidance for the matter of sustainability, it will often not be possible to formulate such clear binary halakhic rulings. Once we determine that the use of fossil fuels contributes to climate change and is not sustainable, are we to determine that all use of such fuels must stop immediately because it is prohibited to use them, despite whatever dislocation might follow? Can we reasonably, in short order, demand that we change the vehicles we drive, the ways that we heat our homes and the manner in which industry and our economy function?

To require that everyone immediately switch to electric vehicles powered by sustainably generated electricity might seem to be the very definition of a *gezeirah she-ein hatzibbur yakhol la'amod bah* (a decree that the public is unable to abide by) which we are bidden not to enact.

[W]e believe that *Bal Tashhit*, as it has traditionally been understood, has been too narrowly construed. Yet applied anew to the issue of sustainability, in light of the general positive commandment of *yishuv ha'olam*, it can offer us the over-arching guidance we need. As Rabbi Menashe Klein perceptively explains: “The law of *Bal Tashhit* is based upon [the goal of] making the world habitable for it appears that ‘[God] created [the world] to be inhabited’ and not to be destroyed.”

Conclusion and P'sak Halakhah

We are tasked with creating a habitable world for all God's creation. To fail to do so is to fail at our primary task of engaging in work that increases the “good”ness of God's world -- *l'taken tikkun haolam b'khoah ma'aseinu*.

While the discrete actions we take will vary according to our particular needs, locations and capacities, certain goals should drive our choices:

- We are in a global emergency that is already irrevocably jeopardizing the future of humankind and thousands of other life-forms on this astonishingly unique and awe-inspiring planet. The actions we choose must match this urgency.
- We must seek to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible (the urgency being guided by the consensus of the science community) and no later than 2050 , and assist nature in the re-absorbtion of greenhouse gases
- We must turn society from a linear economy to a circular one.
- We must do all this in just and equitable ways.

All of us, as individuals and institutions, must:

- 1. Respond with Urgency.** It is past the time when we can accommodate the sensitivities and restraints of political expediency.
- 2. Inform ourselves about sustainability issues.**
- 3. Talk with family, friends, colleagues and co-workers,** those in your congregations, schools and other arenas of your social orbit about the necessity and ways of living sustainably.
- 4. Make all our decisions align with the goals of sustainability.**
- 5. Advocate for sustainable practices in business and government.**

Institutions must:

- 6. Appoint someone to hold a designated sustainability portfolio.**
- 7. Develop and incorporate texts, teachings and values of Jewish environmentalism in the curricula of our formal and informal education for everyone.**
- 8. Create appropriate bodies that can guide the implementation of these tasks.**

Christianity: Laudato Sí



ENCYCLICAL LETTER
LAUDATO SI'
OF THE HOLY FATHER
FRANCIS
ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

1. “Laudato si’, mi’ Signore” – “Praise be to you, my Lord”. In the words of this beautiful canticle, **Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.** “Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs”.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא עֲשֵׂי בְשָׂמִים.

Baruch Atah H'Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei isvei v'Samim.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe, who creates fragrant flowers and herbs.

2. This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she “groans in travail” (*Rom 8:22*). **We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. *Gen 2:7*); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.**

5. Saint John Paul II became increasingly concerned about this issue. In his first Encyclical he warned that human beings frequently seem “to see no other meaning in their natural environment than what serves for immediate use and consumption”. Subsequently, he would call for a global ecological *conversion*. At the same time, he noted that little effort had been made to “safeguard the moral conditions for an authentic *human ecology*”. The destruction of the human environment is extremely serious, not only because God has entrusted the world to us men and women, but because human life is itself a gift which must be defended from various forms of debasement.

6. Pope Benedict asked us to recognize that the natural environment has been gravely damaged by our irresponsible behaviour. The social environment has also suffered damage. Both are ultimately due to the same evil: the notion that there are no indisputable truths to guide our lives, and hence human freedom is limitless. We have forgotten that “man is not only a freedom which he creates for himself. Man does not create himself. He is spirit and will, but also nature”. With paternal concern, Benedict urged us to realize that **creation is harmed “where we ourselves have the final word, where everything is simply our property and we use it for ourselves alone. The misuse of creation begins when we no longer recognize any higher instance than ourselves, when we see nothing else but ourselves”.**

13. The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change. The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Here I want to recognize, encourage and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share. Particular appreciation is owed to those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world's poorest. Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded.

Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Sí

SEE:

I. Earth, our common home, is in peril. Take care of it. God loves his creation and so must we, and “love” is an active verb.

II. Listen to the cry of the poor who are the disproportionate victims of the crisis of our common home. The ecological crisis is not only a physical problem, but also a deeply moral one.

JUDGE:

III. Rediscover a theological vision of the natural world as good news (gospel). The world is indeed “good news” that reveals the love, beauty, and glory of the Creator.

IV. Recognize that the abuse of creation is ecological sin. The destruction of our common home calls for repentance.

V. Acknowledge the deeper human roots of the crisis of our common home. Repentance begins by acknowledging human responsibility for the destruction.

ACT:

VI. Develop an integral ecology, as we are all interrelated and interdependent. As every ecologist (and every farmer) knows, you cannot do just one thing.

VII. Learn a new way of dwelling in our common home and manage it more responsibly through a new economics and a new political culture. We need a new way to live on Earth, including a new economy and a new political order, focused on the common good of all creation.

VIII. Educate toward ecological citizenship through change of lifestyles. Ecological citizenship means establishing a new covenant between humanity and the natural world.

IX. Embrace an ecological spirituality that leads to communion with all creatures. The natural world is permeated with divine presence.

X. Care for our common home by cultivating the ecological virtues of praise, gratitude, care, justice, work, sobriety, and humility.

—*Fr. Joshtrom Kureethadam*

Islam: *When the Earth Speaks Against Us: Environmental Ethics in Islam*

—Afsan Redwan (2018)

- Ethics in Islam existed as a concept from the Prophet's time; developed further by later scholars.
- There is a basis for a broad application of ethics in both the Qur'an and Sunnah that has also been supplemented by works of classical scholars.
- Framework in which we can create principle standpoints for ethics in other disciplines.

<https://yaqeeninstitute.org/read/paper/when-the-earth-speaks-against-us-environmental-ethics-in-islam>

- More than 60% of the respondents claimed that the impact we are having on the planet is negative.
- The awareness of human impact could be in part, due to the amount of media attention that is given to the environment in the West and how it forms a fundamental part of the school curriculum in the UK. This exposure causes general concerns about the environment to reach the public.
- However, when asked whether they believe this is being conveyed to the Muslim public adequately enough, 85% of the responses were “no,” while more than 75% viewed it as a duty on Muslim leaders to inform them about environmental ethics. Finally, 88% expressed the desire to learn more about environmental ethics.

Three Western approaches

- Anthropocentrism: humans are obliged to preserve the environment to advance human well-being and prosperity.
 - Cf. Yoreh
- Biocentrism: our moral community should include animals as well as humans.
 - Cf. Seidenberg
- Ecocentrism: initiated by one main ethicist, Aldo Leopold. “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”
 - Cf. “creation care”

Theocentric basis

- “There is no God but He, the Creator of all things” (Qur'an 6:102).
 - Stipulates is a link between creation and the Creator.
- “There are certainly signs in the Earth for people with certainty, and in yourselves. Do you not then see?” (Qur'an 51:20-21).
 - “An outcome of removing and destroying these signs could also limit and restrict the avenues we have to access the ‘signs’ that Allah has left for us.”

Objectives of natural resources in Islam

- contemplation
- worship
- sustainable use
- enjoyment
- appreciation of beauty,
- biological needs
- ecological needs.

- We are obligated to preserve those resources:
 - quantitatively in terms of numbers
 - and qualitatively, meaning with their ideal features.
- There also exists a responsibility to avoid infringing on the rights of other people.
- Obligation to abstain from committing corruption on the Earth.
 - “Do not cause corruption on the earth, after it has been set in order, but call on Him with fear and longing (in your hearts): for the Mercy of God is (always) near to those who do good” (Qur’an 7:56).

- “When compared with Western theories, we realize that Islam also does, in fact, promote and develop further reasons why we should evaluate our relationship with the environment.
- While containing a uniqueness in why it advocates for the protection, cultivation, and proliferation of our ecological systems, at the same time, it provides a solution to the various issues of previous theories, such as establishing the boundaries and limits of human interest, including the community instead of individualistic preferences, providing a **direct link between humanity and creation in the form of our worship of Allah, not just based on “feelings” but a relationship that transcends the physical world, and emphasizing maintaining the ‘balance’ of the Earth.”**

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Articles cited have been uploaded to Sched. A PDF of this presentation will also be uploaded.

Handout:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pArW8ChU8QoepRBfQFmTopwAC SbXu8Qq/view?usp=sharing>

