



Analysis of Environmental Sustainability in the Holy Quran: Maqasid Framework

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Abstract

The current global challenges of climate change and sustainable development are leaving the world helpless, despite numerous failed attempts to address these critical issues. Exploring the Islamic worldview of environmental sustainability and conservation is therefore even more vital in these momentous times. This worldview features a purpose-driven focus, exploring the higher objectives behind environmental sustainability as extrapolated from the Revelation. Four main themes in the Quran regarding the environment include the concepts of corrupting (*ifsaad*) and bettering (*islaah*) the Earth, as well as the key objectives of being custodians and inheritors of the Earth (*istikhlaf/isti'mar/wirathah*). The concept of utilization (*taskheer*) is coupled with the "communities like you" (*umamun amthalukum*) that share the planet and resources with us. Derivatives of the term (*fa sa da*) have been mentioned 50 times in the Quran, 36 of which reference earth. Custodianship is mentioned in the Quran more than 30 times, with direct references to the earth appearing 17 times. Facilitation includes many groups, such as the sun and the moon, which were emphasized nine times, as well as stars, sea, and cattle, each emphasized three times in conjunction with the facilitation theme. Stipulated values include knowledge, respect, preservation, humility, and responsibility. The collection of verses has been compiled, coupled with references from the Sunnah and Islamic jurisprudence, and analyzed in light of the maqasid methodology. Similarly, human groups can be further classified into reformers, corrupters, believers, non-believers, wrongdoers, and hypocrites. At the same time, other communities, such as animals, plants, mountains, and other species, fall into these groups. Environmental sustainability from an Islamic worldview is defined holistically and distinctively, combining spiritual, social, economic, moral, ethical, intellectual, and religious aspects into a single core meaning. Although some creatures are facilitated for humans on Earth, communities like humankind emphasize that bettering and preserving the balance of Earth is humankind's unique responsibility.

Keywords: *Maqasid Systems, Islamic Worldview, Environment, Sustainability, Conservation*

INTRODUCTION

The world is facing a global catastrophe due to anthropogenic activities that lead to unsustainable systems, excessive lifestyles, and consumerist economies. This climate change catastrophe has numerous environmentally, socially, and economically disastrous consequences. The industrial revolution, in parallel with an unprecedented increase in population growth rate, was coupled with a digital revolution in the 21st century and influenced all areas of life, including social, economic, and environmental trends. Since then, priority has been given to satisfying consumers' needs and desires, with little attention to environmental impacts, resource depletion, and social and economic inequalities. Due to increasingly corrupt anthropogenic activities, carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions skyrocketed, leading to ozone depletion, ecological imbalance, and abnormal natural phenomena, as described as "Climate Change".

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NASA's definition of climate change says it is “a broad range of global phenomena created predominantly by burning fossil fuels, which add heat-trapping gases to Earth’s atmosphere. These phenomena include the increased temperature trends associated with global warming, as well as sea-level rise; ice mass loss in Greenland, Antarctica, the Arctic, and mountain glaciers worldwide; shifts in plant and flower blooming; and extreme weather events.

In the dire search for solutions to combat global warming, global efforts have been partially successful. Efforts to address the threats posed by climate change were reflected in a series of international agreements, initiatives, and protocols. The Montreal Protocol, concluded in 1987, was an agreement signed by 160 countries to phase out the production and use of ozone-depleting compounds such as halons, bromine, and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). As a result, it was reported in 2019 that the ozone layer is showing the first signs of recovery and is expected to return to pre-1980s levels by the middle of the century, and the Antarctic ozone hole by around the 2060s.

In 1992, the Rio Declaration, the Earth Summit on Environment and Development, and the Statement of Principles for the Sustainable Management of Forests were adopted by more than 178 governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). A few years later, the Kyoto Protocol was negotiated in 1997 and came into force in 2005, with an agreement that required developed countries to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by 5.2% from the 1990 baseline. The results show that between 1990 and 2012, the original Kyoto Protocol parties reduced their CO₂ emissions by 12.5%, well beyond the 2012 target of 4.7% (CO₂ only, not greenhouse gases and including Canada).

The most recent landmark agreement was the Paris Agreement, adopted by 196 nations to mobilize all parties' efforts through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The contributions would focus on goals and targets that reduce greenhouse gas emissions to limit Earth's temperature increase. Following the Paris Agreement, the United Nations released the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are designed to address “an urgent extreme poverty in 2020”.

Global climate change is very similar to the COVID-19 pandemic in many ways. First, its impacts are global and cross borders. Secondly, impacts include the economy, society, environment, health, infrastructure, and governance. Thirdly, while the COVID-19 virus cannot be seen or physically observed, climate change is also metaphysical and cannot be physically touched; its signs can be observed. Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has altered lifestyles, and its repercussions will remain deeply rooted for decades. Similarly, bold lifestyle changes are required to transform into sustainable communities.

While these past studies and articles introduce the relationship between Islam and environmental sustainability, a full, comprehensive model that articulates the environmental principles inspired by Islam remains missing. Therefore, the research gap lies in the absence of a holistic model employing a robust methodology to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Islamic worldview on environmental issues, sustainable development, energy, and natural resources. Inspired by [Al-Masri \(2021\)](#), this paper provides a thorough analysis of Surah Al Baqarah to formulate an Islamic worldview from an environmental sustainability perspective, using the Maqasid methodology ([Auda, 2021](#)).

The novelty of this paper lies in applying the comprehensive Maqasid methodology to analyze the Quran and Sunnah through an environmental and sustainability lens. Surah Al Baqarah is explored in more depth as a case study. Furthermore, the paper's main objective is novel, as it aims to formulate a comprehensive paradigm of the Islamic worldview on environment, energy, and sustainability.

The specific objectives of this paper are the following:

1. To analyze the Quran and Sunnah from an environmental lens using the Maqasid

- methodology.
2. To extract environmental sustainability concepts, values, proofs, objectives, groups, commands, and universal laws.
 3. To develop a comprehensive and articulate Islamic worldview on the topic of environment, energy, and sustainability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Quran and Sunnah have introduced a constitution of the mission and commands that regulate the relationship between human beings themselves and between humans and all things in the universe. These regulations implement effective solutions to end poverty, reduce selfishness, preserve and care for the environment, and seek a balance across environmental, economic, and societal aspects.

Surah Al Baqarah (The Cow) contains various codified constitutional principles governing Muslim society. It also features redundant mentions, highlighting numerous environmental and sustainability-related components that constitute this constitution's environmental aspects. In fact, 41 verses in Surah Al Baqarah explicitly mention the term "environmentally sustainable".

In fact, [Al-Masri \(2021\)](#) proposed a model in which Surah Al Baqarah (The Cow) contains the constitution for humanity and called it "the constitution of custodianship". This comprehensive set of codified principles and fundamentals spans environmental, economic, social, and other important areas. [Zafar \(2019\)](#) highlighted critical aspects of Islam's rich tradition, emphasizing the importance of environmental protection and natural resource conservation. The concept of "taskheer" was highlighted, in which humans were given the privilege of exploiting natural resources responsibly without causing harm or damage.

Furthermore, the concepts of trusteeship (*istikhlaf*) and corruption in all its forms, and their references in the Quran, were explored. Further prophetic traditions were also analyzed, especially those that took a stance against the overexploitation and abuse of natural resources. [Smith \(2002\)](#) conducted a thorough literature review of various aspects of Islam related to sustainable development, environmental stewardship, and conservation. [Daud et al. \(2015\)](#) analyzed the Islamic worldview of the environment and nature, stating that everything in Allah's creation is intended for humankind. Simultaneously, Islam encourages its followers to cultivate, conserve, and exploit nature with moderation so that it benefits humans.

Consequently, people are required to preserve and maintain the natural environment and embrace sustainability. In Islam, while the preservation of the environment should be understood as a religious obligation that everyone must uphold, it remains an economic, political, and national development imperative.

The authors have also analyzed the importance of forestation, water conservation, maintaining ecological balance, and animal rights in Islam. They also addressed the educational values in environmental management from an Islamic perspective. [Al Jayyousi \(2013\)](#) proposed a novel and comprehensive Islamic worldview model for the environment and sustainability that revolves around four key concepts: wisdom (*hikmah*), justice (*adl*), public interest (*maslahah*), and innovation (*ijtihad*). The model also emphasizes sustainability as a process rather than a project or a product.

The level of awareness among Muslims regarding climate change and the importance of maintaining environmental balance is evident in eco-Islamic movements and initiatives. Green Muslims, for example, is a group that engages in a variety of community activities focused on conservation and sustainability.

METHODOLOGY

The current Islamic scholarship is limited in its ability to methodically and comprehensively understand and interpret the Revelation. This limitation results in a determinate, partialistic understanding of the Quran and the Sunnah. Furthermore, this drawback is deeply rooted in Islamic scholarship institutions, highlighting the need for reform in the methodologies and frameworks of the Islamic worldview to truly reflect the integrated, comprehensive aspects of the Revelation. The traditional Maqasidi approach begins by observing and analyzing the purpose and objectives behind matters. This method is enhanced by [Auda \(2021\)](#), who proposed an interconnected cycle of five steps that start with identifying the purpose (qasd) or the intent (niyyah) behind matters. The proposed method is inspired by the Revelation itself and its comprehensive, integrated, and composite features. [Hussain \(2017\)](#) also proposed a similar paradigm, inspired by the thematic analysis of the Quran, in which similar words or themes compose a web of meanings and intertwined links that yield a comprehensive and holistic understanding.

After setting the purpose and identifying the intent behind the matter, the second step involves cycles of reflection. In this step, a search is conducted for basic meanings or components that articulate the Islamic worldview. The third step, therefore, is to construct a comprehensive framework that articulates the Islamic worldview, using the seven elements of the Maqasid framework. The fourth step is to conduct critical studies of literature and reality to assess the resulting framework against past and present critical studies and findings. This leads to the final step: integrating the framework with the principles and maxims highlighted in the fourth step. Figure 1 illustrates the five steps of the Maqasid methodology used in this paper. It is important to note that the second step is considered the most vital and subjective step. The cycles of reflection are a repetitive phase in which the outcome is directly proportional to the researcher's spiritual capacity. In other words, if the researcher has a purer intention and a higher level of piety, it is expected that Allah will bless this person with a deeper level of understanding, and vice versa.

The Maqasid framework also proposes seven elements through which the researcher can develop a composite framework depicting reality. These seven elements are, namely, concepts, objectives, values, commands, universal laws, groups, and proofs. Figure 2 highlights the interconnected web of meanings among the seven elements. This framework is a model for processing and organizing information in a composite fashion. After numerous cycles of reflection, as illustrated in Figure 1, reality is explored, composed, and categorized into seven elements. This methodology enhances researchers' capacity to itemize and process input information from the Quran and Sunnah. Using this methodology, the Quran and Sunnah were analyzed through an environmental sustainability lens to extract concepts, objectives, values, commands, universal laws, groups, and proofs, thereby developing a comprehensive and holistic Islamic worldview on this critical subject.

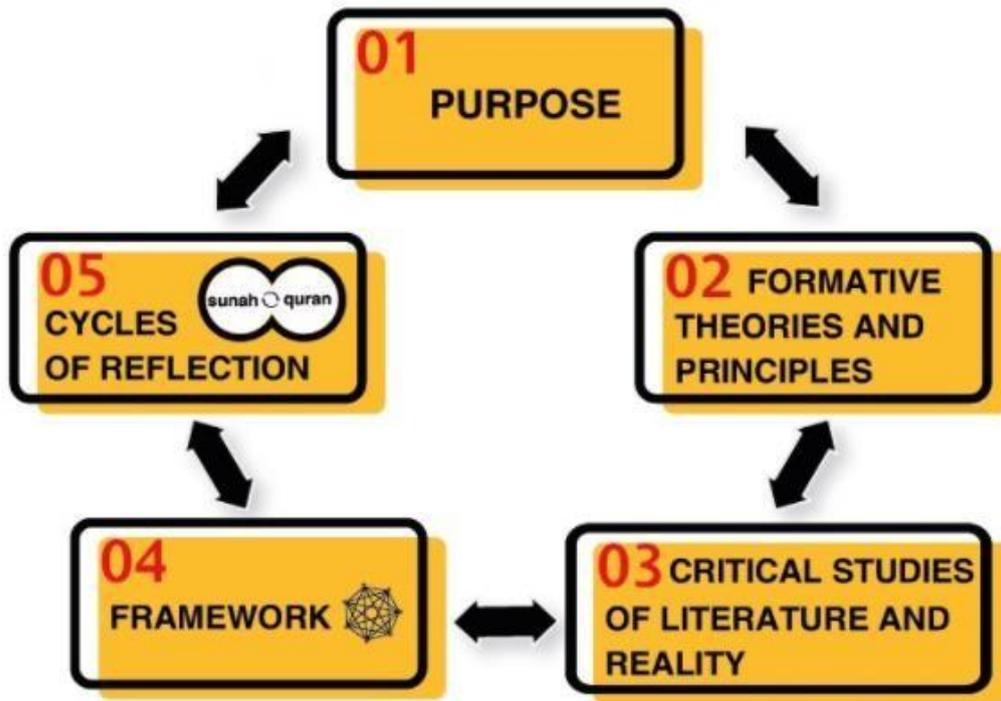


Figure 1. Five Steps of the Maqasid Methodology

The granular steps followed in conducting this research and processing data are highlighted in Figure 3. In summary, the methodology is comprehensive, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Input information, such as verses and hadiths, undergo the steps of the Maqasid methodology and are processed using the Maqasid’s seven-element framework.

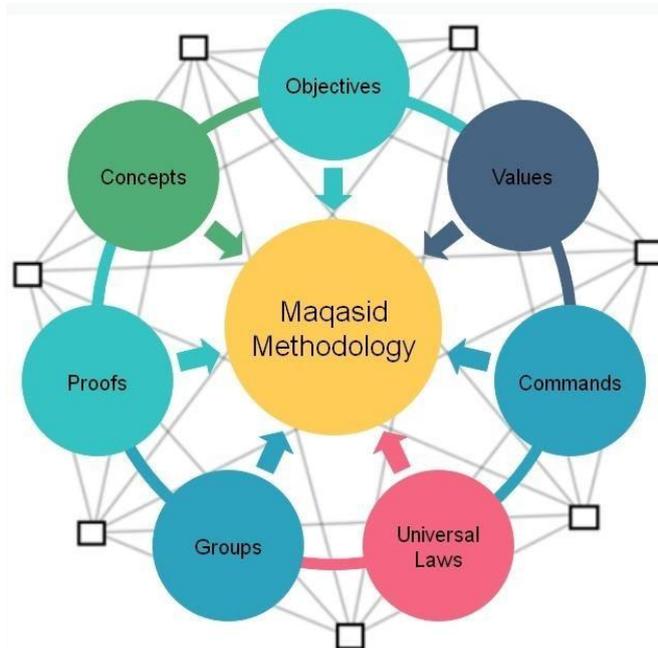


Figure 2. Composite Maqasid methodology highlighting the 7 elements of the web of meanings (modified from Auda, 2021)

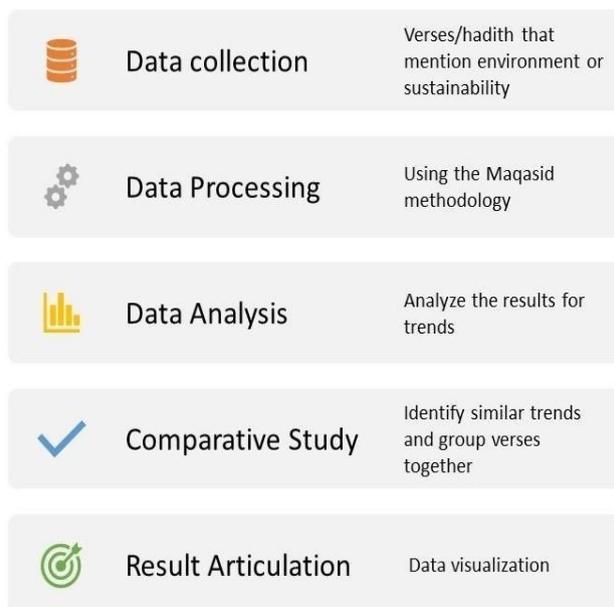


Figure 3. Research granular process outline and steps of analysis

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Using the Maqasid methodology, Surah Al Baqarah was analyzed thoroughly, and verses that contained or alluded to environmental aspects were grouped and processed accordingly. In total, 41 verses were collected and observed throughout the Surah, with the verses being well spread out throughout the Surah. As described in the methodology, each verse was analyzed using the five proposed steps, which include the cycles of reflection (*tadabbur*). Concepts, objectives, values, commands, universal laws, groups, and proofs were extracted from each verse accordingly. Results show a recurring pattern of concepts and objectives observed throughout these verses. In summary, the main elements that comprise the Islamic worldview on sustainability and environment, given this study, are:

1. Bettering versus Corruption (*Al-Islah/ Fasaad*)
2. Custodianship (*Al-Istikhlaf*)
3. Facilitation (*Al-Taskheer*)
4. Communities Like You (*Umam*)

Therefore, these four themes were redundant throughout the verses, as shown in Figures 4 and 5, which illustrate each theme and are supported by the respective verses from Surah al Baqarah. In addition, some auxiliary themes are addressed; they indicate different sustainability criteria which finally feed into the four main themes/elements. Keywords in each verse are also highlighted, showing the evidence of these themes. These same themes are interconnected in Surah Saad, where they are highlighted in sequence. Allah swt says:

Translation: "Be patient 'O Prophet' with what they say. And remember our servant, David, the man of strength. Indeed, he 'constantly' turned 'to Allah'. We truly subjected the mountains to hymn 'Our praises' along with him in the evening and after sunrise. And 'We subjected' the birds, flocking together. All turned to him 'echoing his hymns'.... 'We instructed him:' 'O David! We have surely made you an authority in the land, so judge between people with truth. And do not follow 'your' desires or they will lead you astray from Allah's Way. Surely those who go astray from Allah's Way will suffer a severe punishment for neglecting the Day of Reckoning.'" Or should We treat those who believe and do good like those who make mischief throughout the land? Or should We treat the righteous like the wicked?" (17-40:40).

In these verses, the theme of facilitation (*taskheer*) is emphasized both in the beginning (verse 18) and at the end (verses 36-38). Mountains, birds, wind, satans, and other creations have been facilitated for Prophet Dawood PBUH. Available at his command, these creations also highlight the theme of „communities like you“. The third theme highlighted is custodianship (*istikhlaf*), in which Allah swt reminds Dawood that he has been placed in authority on earth. This theme was then followed by the last theme of bettering and not corrupting (*ifsaad*). The way these themes are woven together in these verses shows us clearly that custodianship is to ensure that corruption takes no place while utilizing other nations that have been made available to us for beneficial use. This composite interconnection of these themes in Surah Saad reinforces and corroborates the original findings that these four themes constitute the Islamic worldview on the environment and sustainability.



Figure 4. Themes extracted from Surah Al Baqarah case study based on the Islamic worldview on environment and sustainability

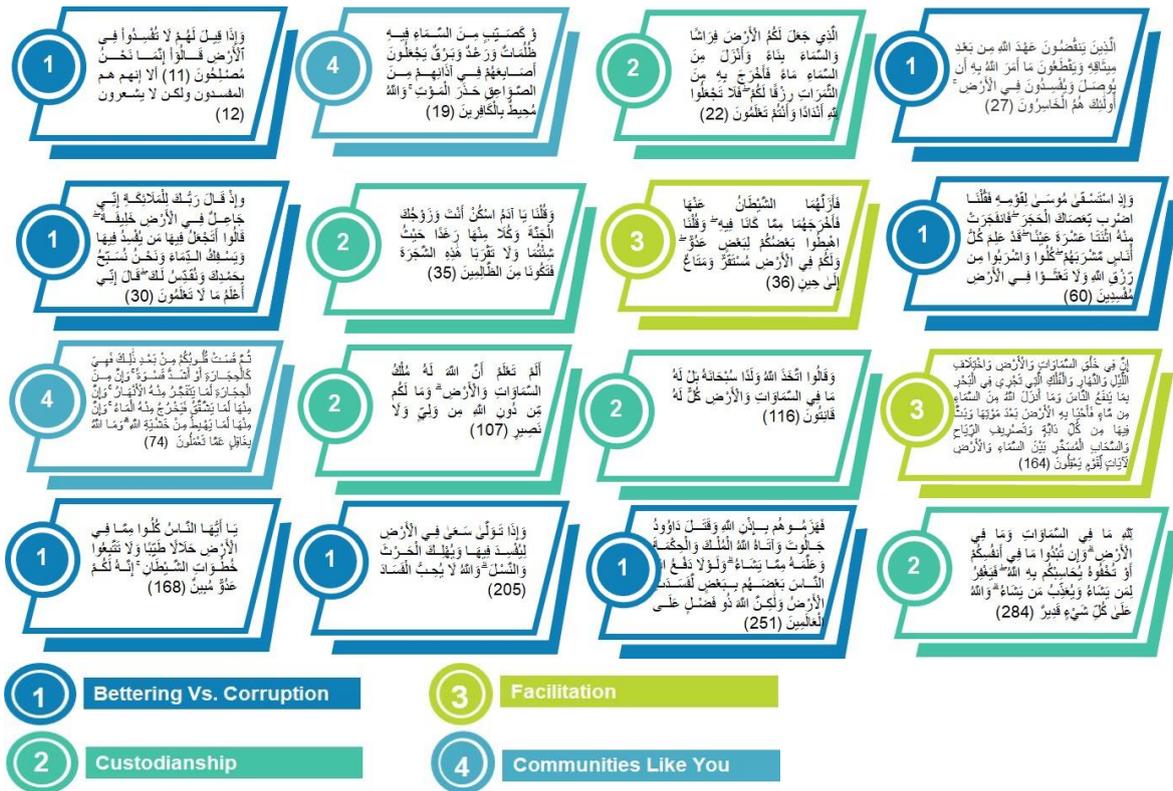


Figure 5. Themes that make up the Islamic worldview on environment and sustainability

Bettering versus Corruption (Al-Islah/ Fasaad):

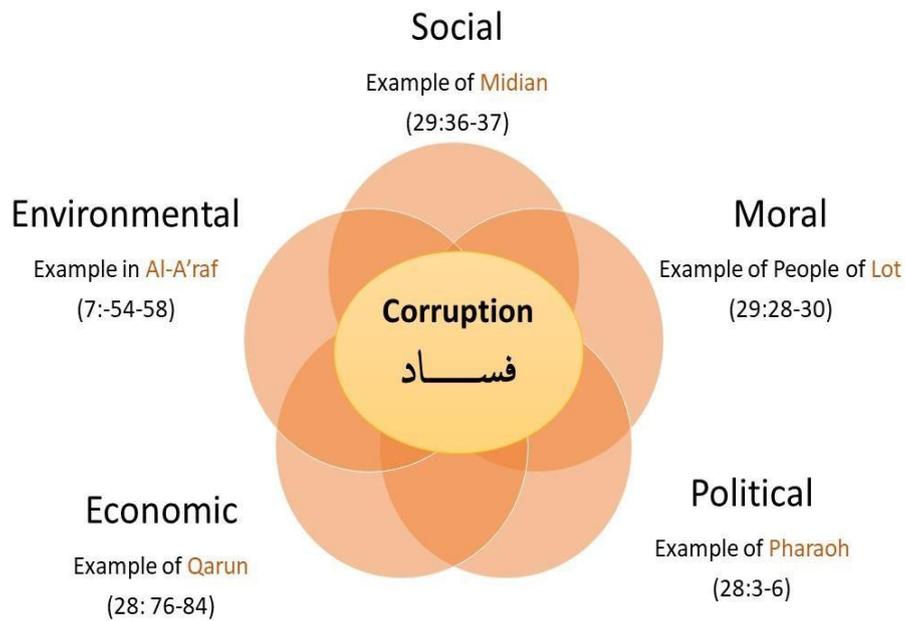
Al Islah (bettering) is the first theme that presents the Islamic worldview on sustainability and the environment. It stems from the Arabic verb (*sa la ha*). The opposite word, corruption (*fasad*), stems from the Arabic verb (*fa sa da*). The concept of corruption has been mentioned in the holy Quran 50 times; 35 of these are related to the Earth, as illustrated in Table 1. The verses of the Quran clearly indicate types of corruption: environmental, moral, social, economic, and political.

Overall, the concept of corruption in the Quran can be classified in various forms, including social, moral, political, economic, and even environmental corruption. Specifically, the story of the people of Midian illustrates social corruption, as they mistreated one another and considered cheating in various transactions a form of excellence and competence. Moral corruption is manifested in the story of the people of Lot, as they have embraced immorality publicly. Pharaoh was a pinnacle example of political corruption, as he had enslaved the Israelites and ruled through tyranny.

On the other hand, Qarun manifested economic corruption by leading an extravagant, unbalanced, and ungrateful lifestyle, resulting in injustices, the mistreatment of people’s rights, and the unwise use of wealth. Lastly, environmental corruption is clearly described in Surah Al-A’raf, after Allah swt described the facilitation of the sun, moon, stars, wind, and water. In all of these classifications and examples of corruption, the term corruption was explicitly mentioned, as highlighted in Figure 6.

Table 3. Derivatives of the word (*fa sa da*) in the Holy Quran and their correlation to the earth

Form of the Word derived from (<i>fa sa da</i>)	Repetition	Correlation to Earth	Correlation with other terms
Fasad فساد	11	9	2
Mufsid مفسد	21	10	11
Yufsid يُفسد	8	7	1
Afsada أفسد	1	--	1
Tufsid تفسد	5	5	--
Fasadat/ فسادات / فسدتا / فسدتا	3	3	--
Nufsid نفسد	1	1	--
Total	50	35	15

**Figure 6.** Various classifications of corruption and examples from the Holy Quran

In Surah Al Baqarah specifically, corruption was mentioned once, implicitly, in a verse. Allah swt says:

"O humanity! Eat from what is lawful and good on the earth and do not follow Satan's footsteps. He is truly your sworn enemy" (2:168)

The verse says that meat, vegetables, and fruits of the earth are lawful and good; hence, anyone with any sense would not follow Satan, who is an enemy *who* wants to harm and mislead them. Following the steps of Satan is considered corruption. Explicitly, corruption was mentioned in Surah Al Baqarah seven times in seven verses, presenting four types of corruption, including social, moral, political, and environmental corruption types, as follows:

Social Corruption

"When they are told, 'Do not spread corruption in the land,' they reply, 'We are only peacemakers!' (11). Indeed, it is they who are the corruptors, but they fail to perceive it" (2:11-12). "So they defeated them by Allah's Will, and David killed Goliath. And Allah blessed David with kingship and wisdom and taught him what He willed. Had Allah not repelled a group of people by 'the might of' another, corruption would have dominated the earth, but Allah is Gracious to all" (2:251).

Social corruption is a behavioral consequence of power and greed. It is a main cause of poverty, community retraction, and ignorance. It is a fact proven in many verses of the Quran that when corruption prevails in a society, Allah replaces the bad people with good ones. Verse 12 mentions a type of corruptors who ruin things on earth. Because of their vanity and arrogance, they perceive themselves as peace-makers. Hence, they cause harm to society and the Earth.

In verse (251) of Surah Baqarah, an auxiliary concept that is competition (*tadafu*) of one people by another is directly connected to corruption. The verse refers to the Prophet David, who defeated the evil king Goliath. That is why Allah gave David the kingship and good power to spread knowledge and wisdom in the world. The moral is that if it were not the system of Allah to drive back the evil people by good people, there would be corruption on earth.

Moral Corruption

Moral corruption occurs when there is an inconsistency with others' rights or when there is improper moral behavior. As mentioned earlier, the people of Lot manifest an example of moral corruption. In Surah Al Baqarah, Allah identifies corruptors who break the covenant they made with Allah to serve Him alone and follow His way. Those who work to spread wrongdoings so as to cut off blood relations. *"Those who violate Allah's covenant after it has been affirmed, break whatever 'ties' Allah has ordered to be maintained, and spread corruption in the land. It is they who are the 'true' losers (27). How can you deny Allah? You were lifeless, and He gave you life, then He will cause you to die and again bring you to life, and then to Him you will 'all' be returned (28). He is the One Who created everything on earth for you. Then He turned towards heaven, forming it into seven heavens. And He has 'perfect' knowledge of all things (29)'Remember' when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to place a successive 'human' authority on earth." They asked 'Allah', "Will You place in it someone who will spread corruption there and shed blood while we glorify Your praises and proclaim Your holiness?" Allah responded, "I know what you do not know" (2:27-30).*

Indeed, when Allah told the angels He would place humans as custodians on earth, the angels asked Allah, seeking to understand, about the wisdom behind His will. Angels know that some humans will corrupt the earth and cause mischief while trying to be grateful and compliant with Allah swt. In fact, Allah knows there will be good people who will build up the earth, spread knowledge, and worship only Allah. The moral behind the creation of humans is revealed in the story of Prophet David, as mentioned earlier, when he killed Goliath.

Political Corruption

Political corruption occurs when a powerful governor spreads injustice, killing, or when people of a governor disobey their good governor. The first case was exemplified by Pharaoh, who governed his people with cruelty and an iron fist.

“And ‘remember’ when Moses prayed for water for his people, We said, ‘Strike the rock with your staff.’ Then twelve springs gushed out, ‘and’ each tribe knew its drinking place. ‘We then said,’ ‘Eat and drink of Allah’s provisions, and do not go about spreading corruption in the land. (60) And ‘remember’ when you said, ‘O Moses! We cannot endure the same meal ‘every day’. So ‘just’ call upon your Lord on our behalf, He will bring forth for us some of what the earth produces of herbs, cucumbers, garlic, lentils, and onions.” Moses scolded ‘them’, “Do you exchange what is better for what is worse? ‘You can’ go down to any village, and you will find what you have asked for.” They were stricken with disgrace and misery, and they invited the displeasure of Allah for rejecting Allah’s signs and unjustly killing the prophets. This is ‘a fair reward’ for their disobedience and violations.” (2:60-61).

Nevertheless, the opposite case manifested in the story of Prophet Moses with the people of Israel, who were argumentative and disobeyed the orders of their Prophet. That is when Allah gushed out twelve springs of water - a spring for each tribe of them; and gave them the best types of food. He ordered them to eat and drink but not corrupt the Earth. After that, they demanded the exchange of manna and quails, which were better and came to them without effort or work, for what was lesser and worse. They earned Allah's anger because they turned away from what Allah chose for them, from His religion, and disbelieved in His signs.

Environmental Corruption

Environmental corruption refers to the degradation of flora and fauna on land or in the seas, and corruption in natural phenomena is also considered environmental corruption. This type of corruption is mentioned many times in the Quran. “And when they leave ‘you’, they strive throughout the land to spread mischief in it and destroy crops and cattle. Allah does not like mischief” (Qur’an, 2:205).

As shown earlier in Table 1, corruption is linked to the earth more than 35 times—either explicitly or through terms indicating places of livelihood such as villages, land, and seas. Verse 205 of Surah Al-Baqarah highlights a group of people who strive to cause corruption by committing sins, destroying crops, and killing animals. Allah does not love corruption on earth, nor those who spread it. In this case, the Quran integrates spiritual, environmental, and economic forms of corruption and interlinks them, emphasizing their equal significance.

Finally, it is clearly demonstrated that all types of corruption are among the main causes of poverty, ignorance, killing, and disruption of life on land and sea. In Surah Al-Rum, Allah states that human behaviour is the primary cause of corruption. As a consequence, Allah allows people to experience the effects of their actions in worldly life, so that they may repent and return to Him:

“Corruption has spread on land and sea as a result of what people’s hands have done, so that Allah may cause them to taste ‘the consequences of’ some of their deeds and perhaps they might return ‘to the Right Path’” (Qur’an, 30:41).

Sustainable development within a society can be achieved by addressing these causes. Solutions presented in Surah Al-Baqarah include:

- i Spreading knowledge.
Knowledge and science are essential foundations for societal development. The first word revealed to Prophet Muhammad PBUH in the Quran was a command to read: “اقرأ”. In Surah Al-Baqarah, Allah taught Prophet Adam the names of all things. Allah says:
“Allah said, ‘O Adam! Inform them of their names.’ Then when Adam did, Allah said, ‘Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of the heavens and the earth, and I know what you reveal and what you conceal?’” (Qur’an, 2:33).
- ii Obeying Allah’s commands without excessive argumentation.
An example from Surah Al-Baqarah is the story of Prophet Moses and his people, when they

were commanded to sacrifice a cow to identify a murderer. Instead of complying, they repeatedly questioned the command:

“And ‘remember’ when Moses said to his people, ‘Allah commands you to sacrifice a cow.’ They replied, ‘Are you mocking us?’ Moses responded, ‘I seek refuge in Allah from acting foolishly!’” (Qur’an, 2:67).

“They said, ‘Call upon your Lord to clarify for us what type ‘of cow’ it should be!’ He replied, ‘Allah says, “The cow should neither be old nor young, but in between. So do as you are commanded!” (Qur’an, 2:68).

“They said, ‘Call upon your Lord to specify for us its colour.’ He replied, ‘Allah says, “It should be a bright yellow cow—pleasant to see.” (Qur’an, 2:69).

“Again, they said, ‘Call upon your Lord so that He may make clear to us which cow, for all cows look the same to us. Then, Allah willing, we will be guided ‘to the right one’.’ He replied, ‘Allah says, “It should have been used neither to till the soil nor water the fields; wholesome and without blemish.”’ They said, ‘Now you have come with the truth.’ Yet they still slaughtered it hesitantly.” (Qur’an, 2:70–71).

iii Giving and charity.

Giving is a central principle in Islam. Zakah is one of the five pillars of Islam, while zakah and sadaqah serve as effective mechanisms for addressing poverty. Allah assures believers in Surah Al-Baqarah that charity given sincerely for His sake will be multiplied:

“The example of those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah is that of a grain that sprouts into seven ears, each bearing one hundred grains. And Allah multiplies ‘the reward even more’ to whomever He wills. For Allah is All-Bountiful, All-Knowing.” (Qur’an, 2:261).

Another verse reinforces the same concept: *“And the example of those who donate their wealth, seeking Allah’s pleasure and believing the reward is certain, is that of a garden on a fertile hill: when heavy rain falls, it yields twice its normal produce. If no heavy rain falls, a drizzle is sufficient. And Allah is All-Seeing of what you do.”* (Qur’an, 2:265).

Figure 7 illustrates the first pillar of the Islamic worldview on the environment and sustainability, supported by primary sources.

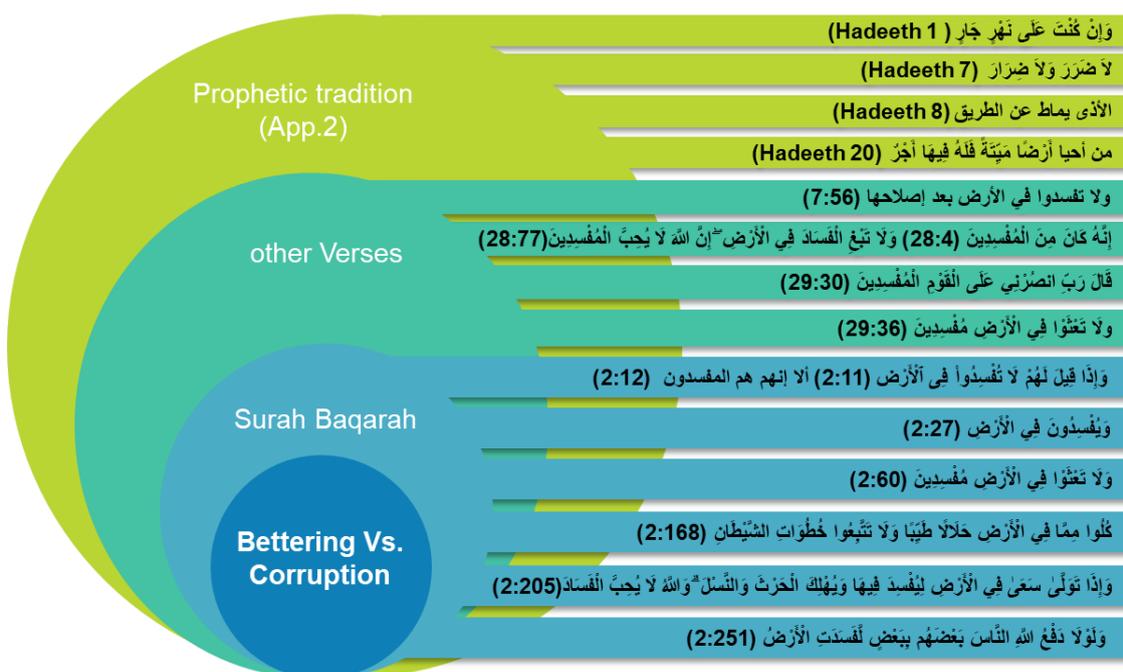


Figure 7. Primary references that support the bettering versus corruption theme

Custodianship (Al-Istikhlaf):

The second major pillar of the Islamic worldview on environment and sustainability is the concept and objective of custodianship (*istikhlaf*). The root of this concept in Arabic stems from (*kha la fa*), which denotes various meanings, of which: (a) introduction of something after the departure of something else, as in it takes its position. Derivatives of *istikhlaf* include Khilafah, Khalaf, Khulafaa, whereas the letters (س & ت) are tools of affirmation. In Surah Al Baqarah, the angels present a question to Allah swt in the following verse: *Remember¹ when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to place a successive 'human' authority on earth." They asked 'Allah', "Will You place in it someone who will spread corruption there and shed blood while we glorify Your praises and proclaim Your holiness?" Allah responded, "I know what you do not know."* (2:30).

In this verse, it is evident that the angels were speculating about the inheritance of other creations on Earth and referred to an earlier concept in the Islamic worldview on the environment and sustainability: corruption. This speculation stems from their knowledge of Earth and its earlier inhabitants, which has led to widespread corruption and bloodshed. Throughout the Holy Quran, references to custodianship in the various forms of derivatives mentioned above have been highlighted 15 times, eight of which were mentioned alongside the term "earth". This denotes that we are custodians of this earth and accountable for its preservation and the well-being of its habitat, natural resources, and species. Allah swt also says in the Holy Quran: *"Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good that He will certainly make them successors in the land, as He did with those before them; and will surely establish for them their faith which He has chosen for them; and will indeed change their fear into security—'provided that' they worship Me, associating nothing with Me. But whoever disbelieves after this 'promise', it is they who will be the rebellious"* (24:55).

It is evident from these verses that the reality of this guardianship is custodianship with a clear objective of bettering the earth and nurturing it, not causing corruption or destroying it. Thus, Allah swt also regulated this custodianship and only gifted it to those who have not caused corruption, where Allah swt used the term "inheritance" as a synonym to custodianship, as Allah swt says in the Holy Quran: *"Surely, following the 'heavenly' Record, We decreed in the Scriptures: "My righteous servants shall inherit the land"* (21:105).

Therefore, it is understood that this responsibility to be the caretakers of this earth must be upheld and embraced, as we regularly hold ourselves accountable for the well-being and condition of this earth across various aspects, including environmental, economic, social, and spiritual. Figure 8 illustrates the second pillar of the Islamic worldview on the environment and sustainability, supported by various primary sources.

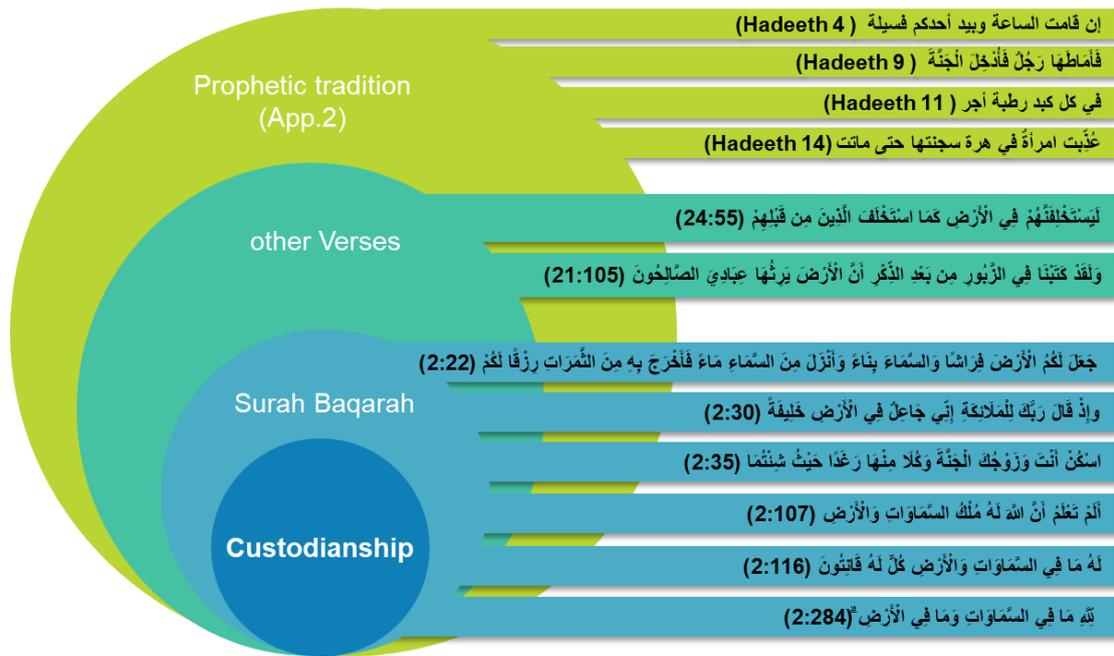


Figure 8. Primary references that support the custodianship theme

In summary, we are considered guardians and custodians of this Earth, to ensure that corruption in any form does not take hold, and we are responsible for preserving ecosystems and ensuring sustainability. Therefore, this custodianship involves sound governance, smart environments, economies, and societies. This includes establishing sustainable governance to preserve natural resources rather than exploit them. Moreover, custodianship also entails encouraging and introducing sustainable lifestyles that are not driven by greed, extravagant living, or the excessive and wasteful use of resources. Furthermore, establishing sustainable economies that are not based on opportunism and do not concentrate financial power within a limited circle of class is another aspect of economic guardianship. In general, all of these sub-elements constitute a comprehensive understanding of *istikhlaf* as a major pillar of the Islamic worldview regarding environment and sustainability.

Facilitation (*Al-Taskheer*):

The third main theme is facilitation, meaning that everything on earth is arranged to serve humans; however, this facilitation does not contradict the fact that all creatures are communities like humans. Facilitation came in the Qur'an in its general linguistic meaning, and in one of its explicit derivatives stemming from the Arabic word (*sa kha ra* سخر). Facilitation is the act of guiding one environmental element or natural phenomenon toward a specific human purpose. Facilitation in Quran includes the facilitation of cattle, birds, fruits and water, the facilitation of ships in the sea with the wind, facilitation of the clouds and the rain, facilitation of lands and mountains, making the day for work, the night for silence, the sun for warmth in the winter, the moon lights and stars are signs of guidance at night. Figures 9 and 10 illustrate the three derivatives of facilitation in the Qur'an and the correlated environmental elements or natural phenomena.

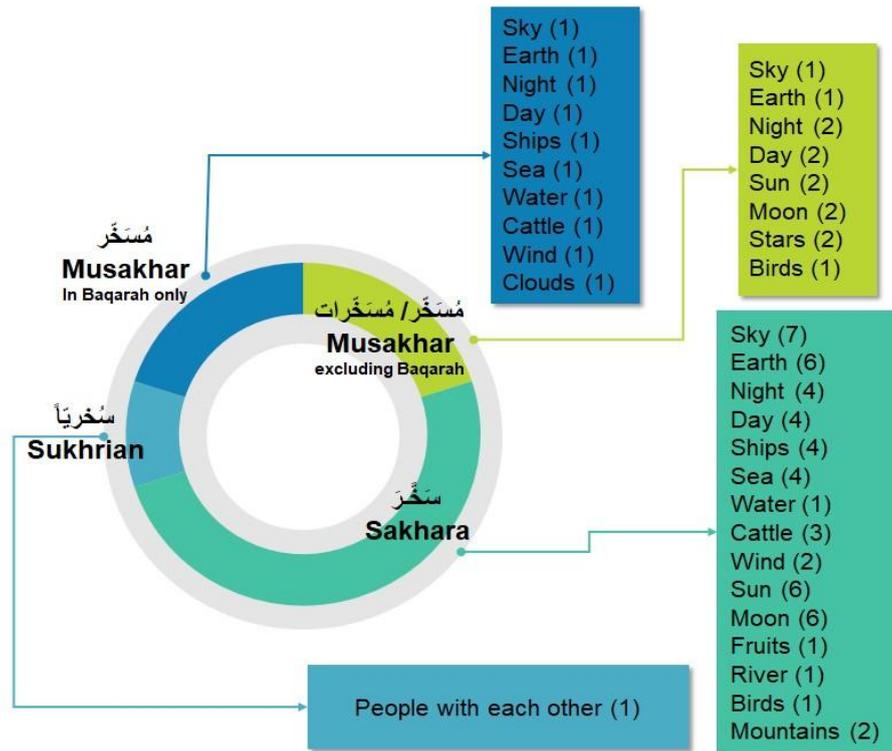


Figure 9. Facilitation theme in the Quran

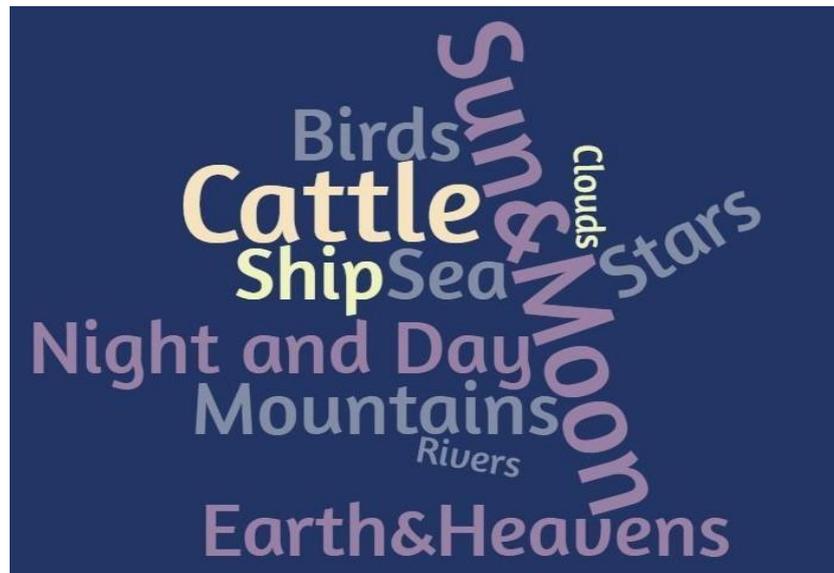


Figure 10. Environmental elements or natural phenomena correlated to facilitation in the Quran

Facilitation was also mentioned in Surah Al Baqarah implicitly, Allah says: *“He is the One’ Who has made the earth a place of settlement for you and the sky a canopy; and sends down rain from the sky, causing fruits to grow as a provision for you. So do not knowingly set up equals to Allah ‘in worship” (2:22).*

Allah reveals in this verse that He made the earth like a carpet for humans to walk on and constructed the sky over us. He made rain falls producing different crops from the earth for the good of humans. Our Prophet Mohammed PBUH taught us that everything in the universe is made available for the good of humans, who should be thankful for the praises of Allah. For instance,

Prophet PBUH taught his companions to praise Allah when they ride an animal for a trip. We say when riding means of transportation. In other verses, Allah emphasizes that the environmental elements that are facilitated are governed by a balanced system. None of them infringes on the others, and they can indicate punctually. Allah says: *“They ask you ‘O Prophet’ about the phases of the moon. Say, “They are a means for people to determine time and pilgrimage.” Righteousness is not in entering your houses from the back doors.1 Rather, righteousness is to be mindful ‘of Allah’. So enter your homes through their ‘proper’ doors, and be mindful of Allah so you may be successful” (2:189).*

The verse tells that Allah facilitated the phases of the moon for people to measure time, so that they know when to do their acts of worship, such as the months of Hajj and fasting, and the completion of the year for Zakat; they also fix the time frames of transactions, such as the deadlines for paying blood money or debts. Figure 11 illustrates the third pillar of the Islamic worldview on the environment and sustainability, supported by primary sources.

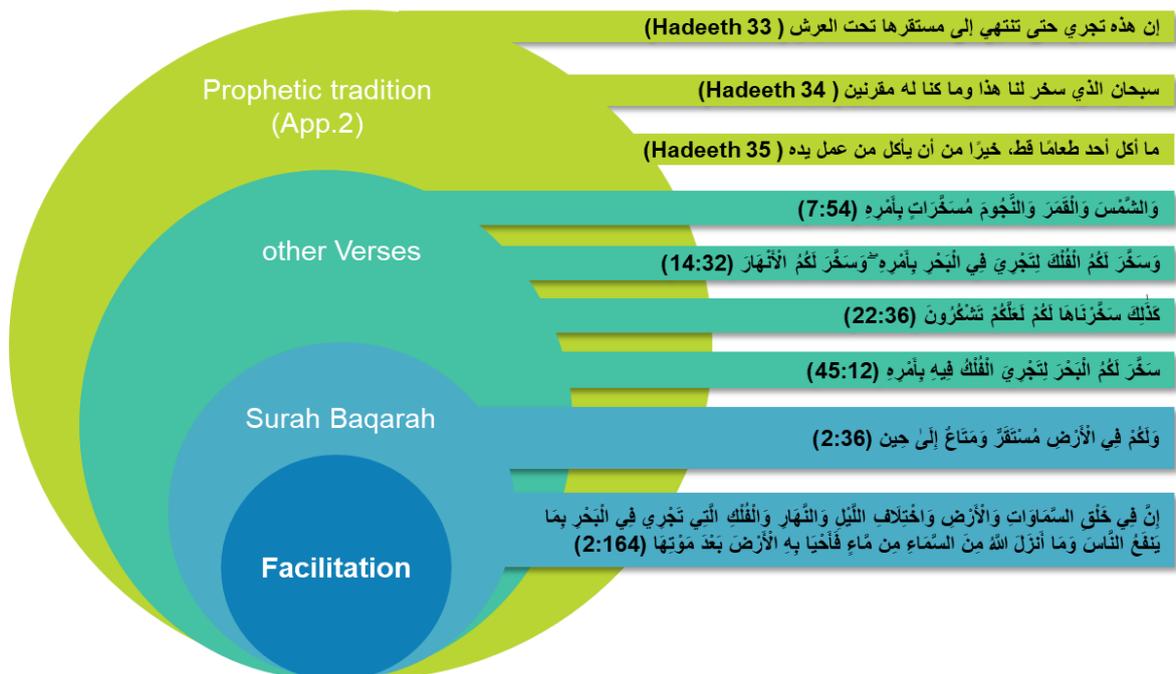


Figure 11. Primary references that support the facilitation theme

Communities Like You (*Uman*):

The last major theme constituting the Islamic worldview on environment and sustainability is the mere presence of communities just like us, outside the human race. Here, the revelation refers to kingdoms such as ant colonies, bee hives, flocks of birds and fish, mountains that can feel and come in various types, as well as trees and similar species that have emotional capacities and community bonds. Allah says in the Holy Quran: *“All living beings roaming the earth and winged birds soaring in the sky are communities like yourselves. We have left nothing out of the Record. Then to their Lord they will be gathered all together.” (6:38).*

In this verse, it is evident that all living beings enjoy community bonds just as we do. In fact, they have their social structure, family networks, languages, lifestyles, routines, and even emotions. More fascinating, they are in sync with the rest of Allah's creation and offer praise and gratitude to Him swt in their respective forms. Allah swt says in the Holy Quran: *“Do you not see that Allah is glorified by all those in the heavens and the earth, even the birds as they soar? Each ‘instinctively’ knows their manner of prayer and glorification. And Allah has ‘perfect’ knowledge of all they do.” (21:41).*

The Revelation teaches us that these living beings are communities just like us, and even though they have been created for our benefit, we must exercise our duty as guardians to ensure no harm or destruction befalls them or disturbs their order. Moreover, Allah swt says:

“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth; the alternation of the day and the night; the ships that sail the sea for the benefit of humanity; the rain sent down by Allah from the skies, reviving the earth after its death; the scattering of all kinds of creatures throughout; the shifting of the winds; and the clouds drifting between the heavens and the earth—‘in all of this’ are surely signs for people of understanding.” (2:164).

This verse in Surah Al Baqara is very rich as it introduces many norms, objectives, and concepts. We understand that the alternation between day and night, a natural phenomenon, is a sign for people to reflect on, inviting them to ponder further. Similarly, other natural resources are mentioned, such as the sea, winds, and clouds, which denote various forms of energy, including tidal and wind energy. Similarly, Allah swt mentions the mountains throughout the Quran, underscoring their diversity and power. In fact, the Prophet PBUH had been reported to have said:

“Uhud is a mountain which loves us and which we love.”

The Prophet PBUH informed us of Mount Uhud's emotional capacity: it can love, hate, and experience other emotions. Other living organisms, like the camel that complained to the Prophet PBUH about its master's bad treatment, are events that highlight the fact that these communities have languages as well as emotions of grief and pain that we must consider when treating them or dealing with them, despite our inability to comprehend or understand them. In fact, our inability to understand does not mean these communities lack emotional capacities or community networks. Lastly, these communities are a source of inspiration and learning for humanity. Until today, we have not had pre-programmed sonar systems that whales or dolphins enjoy, or that butterflies use for their migration. Our 21st-century human civilization has recently been inspired by the murmurations of bird and fish flocks, leading to the development of Particle Swarm Optimization, an essential algorithm in artificial intelligence for various applications. One of the main values we derive from this fourth pillar in the Islamic worldview is humility and modesty. We ought not to be arrogant and selfish, but rather considerate and humble, to be enabled to observe the deep and hidden signs of Allah's miraculous creation. Figure 12 summarizes the primary and secondary references supporting this pillar.

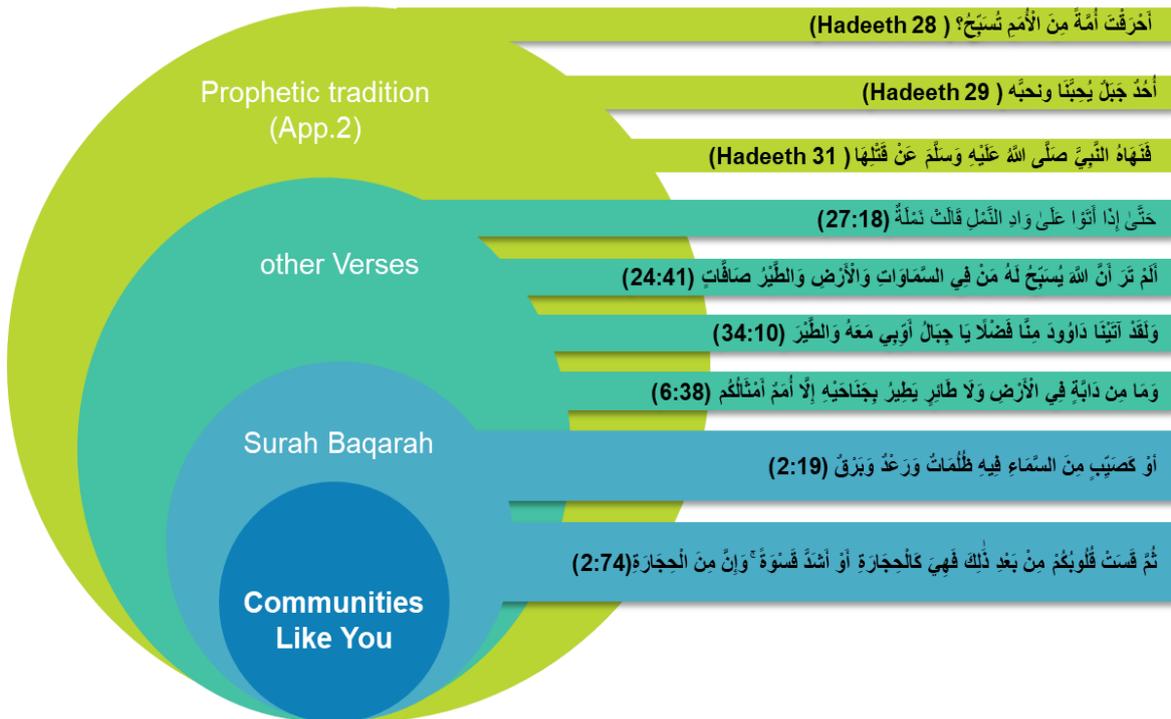


Figure 12. Primary references that support the „communities like you“ theme

Summary of Results

The main concepts emphasized include custodianship, corruption, facilitation, communities like yours, and references to natural systems and processes. These concepts are closely correlated with the objectives of upholding custodianship, betterment (*islah*), contemplation and pondering, and achieving ultimate servitude to Allah swt. Some universal laws highlighted include the Law of Facilitation (*taskheer*), the Law of Custodianship (*istikhlaf/khilafa*), the Law of Replacement (*istبدال*), and the Law of Competition (*tadafu*). Groups that are addressed in the literature include humans, animals, mountains, other species, and plantations. The values extracted from the Islamic worldview include respect and preservation, as well as humility and responsibility. We treat each group with respect, and as custodians, we ought to preserve the safety and well-being of these groups. Similarly, we observe humility and avoid arrogance or self-entitlement toward other groups or toward each other. Lastly, the value of responsibility and accountability is evident and redundant, suggesting the establishment of internal and external regulatory processes to ensure accountable, sustainable action.

CONCEPTS	OBJECTIVES	UNIVERSAL LAWS	GROUPS	VALUES
Custodianship	Custodianship	Facilitation	Humans	Respect
Corruption	<i>Islah</i>	Custodianship	Animals	Preservation
Other Communities	Pondering	Replacement	Mountains	Humbleness
Natural Phenomena	Servitude to Allah (s)	Competition	Plantations	Responsibility

Figure 13. Summary of findings for the Islamic worldview on environment and sustainability

In summary, the following points can be concluded from this paper:

1. The Islamic environment is a healthy environment that combines spiritual, social, economic, and moral aspects holistically and creates a healthy balance in people's lives.
2. The purpose of human creation is to worship Allah swt. Fulfilling this servitude can manifest in various ways, such as custodianship, bettering the earth, and respecting other communities on earth, such as humans.
3. Concepts in Surah Al Baqarah are provided in main and auxiliary themes. Bettering, corruption, custodianship, and „communities like you“ are the main themes. Some auxiliary themes are thinking and reflection, value of knowledge, argument and dissatisfaction, balance and charity, all of which present Islamic concepts and reflect Islamic purposes from an environmental and sustainability perspective.
4. Understanding the main concepts of the environment and sustainability in the holy Quran is key to finding the objectives, universal laws, groups, values, proofs, and norms provided in these verses.
5. The objectives related to the environment and sustainability are custodianship, betterment (*Islah*), contemplation and pondering, and achieving ultimate servitude to Allah swt.
6. In the same context, universal laws include the Law of Facilitation (*taskheer*), the Law of Custodianship (*istikhlaf/khilafa*), the Law of Replacement (*istibdal*), and the Law of Competition (*tadafu*).
7. The addressed groups include humans, animals, mountains, other species, and plantations.
8. The values extracted include respect and preservation, humility, and responsibility.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the Maqasid methodology has been applied to analyse the Quran and Sunnah to develop a comprehensive and holistic Islamic worldview on the environment and sustainability. Abundant references to environment, sustainability, and energy aspects were highlighted, processed, and analyzed.

Assessment of environmental sustainability from an Islamic worldview features a unique characterization of the environment. It defines the environment holistically and distinctively by combining spiritual, social, economic, moral, ethical, intellectual, and religious aspects into its core meaning. This worldview recognises other species as communities that enjoy social structures and kinship just as humans do. While some species are used by humans, they help preserve the Earth and its inhabitants from all forms of corruption. Upholding a code of ethics is part of the custodianship entrusted to humankind.

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