

# **Ecocriticism and Sustainable-Conscious Perspectives Fostered in *the Holy Qur'an***

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## **Abstract**

Prior to the recent decisions adopted and the initiatives undertaken by top world organizations since 2015 to protect individuals and communities from the negative impact of human anthropocentrism, numerous verses of *the Holy Qur'an* can be interpreted as drawing man's attention to realize his responsibility for achieving environmental justice. Literary theory was also contributive to the reconstruction of man's interaction with nature. Ecocriticism emerged in the 1980s and 1990s due to the human interest in environmentalism. It is the critical approach that calls literature to represent contemporary environmental crises as well as to make use of literature to reconstruct human environmentally-conscious attributes to life. The objective of this paper is to prove that the ecocritical reading of *the Holy Qur'an* reveals its embodiment of environmentally-conscious perspectives that were ahead of their time and which can be approached through the analysis of their literary construction. Thus, the contribution of both literary theory and religion to tackling environmental crises is illustrated. This paper uses the interdisciplinary approach to illuminate selected arguments raised by the forerunners of ecocriticism. In parallel, it scrutinizes the literary representation of identical or similar Islamic precepts whether explicitly or implicitly stated in *the Holy Qur'an*. The comparative analysis has shown shared advocacy of biospherical egalitarianism, condemnation of man's misuse of his sense of supremacy, and promulgation of environmentally philosophical and political thought.

**Keywords:** Ecocriticism; Egalitarianism; Interdisciplinarity; *The Holy Qur'an*; Sustainability

## **Introduction**

On October 8, 2021, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted in Geneva the resolution (48/13) which mandates that "having a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a human right" (UN). The adoption of the resolution is a further step the United Nations undertakes

to achieve its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015. The objective of these goals is to “end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity” (UNDP). Inger Anderson, the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme, points out that the resolution was born at “a breakthrough moment for environmental justice” and she assures that it will provide “a shield for individuals and communities against a plethora of risks to their health and livelihoods” (UNEP).

If the UN resolution seeks universal protection against threats caused by human anthropocentrism, *the Holy Qur’an* attempted achieving this target long ago. It established and consolidated ecological values that are artistically represented. This study applies ecocriticism, an interdisciplinary cultural approach that investigates the relationship between man and the ecosystem as represented in literature, to reread the environmental ethics embedded in *the Holy Qur’an*. It attempts answering two main questions: Is *the Holy Qur’an* remarkable for its preceding advocacy of ecological sustainability that is literary represented? Does *the Holy Qur’an* reveal green solutions that modern science proved to be true?

## **Methodology**

This study starts with shedding light on the origin and coinage of ecocriticism. Then, it discusses selected perceptions of the definition, philosophy, terminology, goals and waves of ecocriticism. In parallel, identical or similar perspectives included in *the Holy Qur’an* are comparatively illuminated. The interdisciplinary approach is applied throughout cross cultural analysis. The translation of the meaning of the verses of *the Holy Qur’an* is based on *Translation of the Noble Qur’an in the English Language* written by Muhammad Taqî-ud-Dîn Al-Hilâlî and Muhammad Muhsin Khâh and published by King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur’an, Madina, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in 1995.

## **Origin and Coinage**

Ecocriticism is the branch of scholarship that investigates the relationship between literature, culture and the physical environment. It was born “out of a shared concern about anthropogenic environmental deterioration” (Dixon 19) and grew as a manifestation of “the environmental movement of the 1960s” (Quick 4). The term ‘modern environmentalism’ originated in the American marine biologist Rachel Carson’s “A Fable for Tomorrow” (Garrard 1) published in her landmark

*Silent Spring* (1962), which was remarkable for arousing “a sense of conscience about pesticides that poison ground water and destroy biodiversity” (Howarth 74). Thus, it was not an odd that literature responds to the rising fears and doubts about man’s ability to maintain pristine nature. The term ‘ecocriticism’ was coined in 1978 in William Rueckert’s “Literature and Ecology: an Experiment in Ecocriticism” to signify “the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature” (qtd. in Glotfelty XX). Since that time, ecocriticism assumed various designations such as green cultural studies, ecopoetics, literary ecology, environmental literary criticism, and eco-theory.

### **Definition of Ecocriticism**

Due to its interdisciplinary nature, ‘ecocriticism’ encompasses within its scope several interpretations. Cheryll Glotfelty defines ecocriticism as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (XVIII). Glotfelty’s view imposes on this study a question that must be answered before analyzing the relationship between literature and the environment; If *the Holy Qur’an* describes the physical environment, is *the Holy Qur’an* literature? Many scholars have attempted answering this question. Muhammad Iqbal has proved that “the Qur’an’s importance, as literature, could not be undermined in the society in which it was authored” (129). It was the society that is historically known for its appreciation of Arabic rhetoric. Moreover, the literary qualities of *the Holy Qur’an* are analyzed in Hoda El Shakry’s *The Literary Qur’an: Narrative Ethics in the Maghreb* (2019). Based on the description of the physical environment in *the Holy Qur’an* as well as on the scholarly endeavours by Iqbal and El Shakry, as instances, this study advocates that *the Holy Qur’an* has literary characteristics and artistically describes the environment.

An outstanding characteristic of *the Holy Qur’an* is that its chapters (Surahs) assume the titles of persons as well as components and phenomena of nature. The index of titles is similar to the dramatis personae that appears at the beginning of a play. Each title signifies the content or the moral of the chapter. The titles include references to: (1) spiritual kinship illustrated by *Âl-‘Imrân* [The Family of Imran], representing the goodness of the family; (2) gender-based groups as *An-Nisâ’* [The Women], showing advocacy of women’s rights as orphans, girls, fiancées, wives, mothers, heiresses and widows; (3) religious groups such as *Al-Mu’minûn* [The Believers], reminding Muslims of Islamic tenets; (4) cultural groups exemplified by *Ash-Shu‘arâ* [The Poets], blaming the disbelieving poets of Mecca and praising Muslim poets; (5) foreign political powers as *Ar-Rûm* [The

Romans], predicting the military victory of the Romans over the Persians; (6) domestic enemies like *Al-Ahzâb* [The Confederates], portraying the allies who waged war against Prophet Muhammad; (7) double-faced groups like *Al-Munâfiqûn* [The Hypocrites], depicting those who promulgated their pretended Islamic attributes while, in reality, they were enemies to Muslims; and (8) pagans illustrated by *Al-Kâfirûn* [The Disbelievers], denouncing all manners and practices of polytheists.

The sequence of the above mentioned groups of people starts with the high spiritually-oriented people and ends with the worldly-tempted ones. From an ecocritical perspective, the spiritual groups show respect to the environment due to their rational thinking and responsible lifestyle. On the contrary, the worldly groups are dangerous to the environment. They constitute, according to Qur'anic verses, a class of corrupt people whom Allah describes as speaking well and pretending benevolence, while in reality being corrupt. Allah Says,

And of mankind there is he whose speech may please you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه و سلم), in this worldly life, and he calls Allâh to witness as to that which is in his heart, yet he is the most quarrelsome of the opponents. And When he turns away (from you "O Muhammad صلى الله عليه و سلم"), his effort in the land is to make mischief therein and to destroy the crops and the cattle, and Allâh likes not mischief. (*The Qur'an*, al-Baqarah [The Cow], 2:204-205).

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ (204) وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفٰسَادَ (205). (البقرة: 204-205)

According to these verses, there are groups of people characterized by their talent of giving good speech and their oath of good intention. However, they are the hardest enemies to nature because they devastate plantations and offspring of every kind. Additionally, Allah does not state that He does not like them. Instead, He says that He does not like mischief. This is due to the long lasting impact of corrupt deeds compared to the lifetime of corrupt people

The titles of the chapters of *the Holy Qur'an* include diversified references to the biotic and the abiotic components of the biosphere. Titles such as *Al-Baqarah* [The Cow] and *Al-An'âm* [The Cattle] illustrate the animal kingdom. *At-Tîn* [The Fig] provides an example of the plant kingdom. *An-Nahl* [The Bees] and *An-Naml* [The Ants] refer to the world of insects. *Ar-Ra'd* [The Thunder] symbolizes an audio celestial phenomenon. *An-Nûr* [The Light] describes a visual phenomenon. *Ad-Dukhân* [The Smoke] stands for air-borne gasses. *At-Tûr* [The Mount]

brings to the mind the image of steady mountains. *An-Najm* [The Star] and *Al-Qamar* [The Moon] are instances of astronomical objects. *Al-Hadid* [Iron] recalls the world of metals. *Al-Lail* [The Night] and *Ad-Duha* [The Forenoon-‘After Sunrise’] indicate the passage of time. *Az-Zalzalah* [The Earthquake] shows the shaking of the surface of the Earth. *At-Takwîr* [Wound Round and Lost its Light] and *Al-Infîtâr* [The Cleaving] refer to the supernatural phenomena that occur on the Day of Judgment. The diversity of these factors signifies the weight given to each because of its function, aesthetic value or both.

Pippa Marland associates ecocriticism with a range of critical approaches that “explore the representation in literature (and other cultural forms) of the relationship between the human and the nonhuman, largely from the perspective of anxieties around humanity’s destructive impact on the biosphere” (846). Originally, *the Holy Qur’an* represents the worry about the environmental damage caused by mankind. Allah uses the imperative form to instruct all human beings not to cause damage to the physical environment. Allah says, “And do not do mischief on the earth, after it has been set in order, and invoke Him with fear and hope. Surely, Allâh’s Mercy is (ever) near unto the good-doers” (*The Qur’an*, Al-A‘râf [The Heights or The Wall with Elevations],7:56).

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (الأعراف: 56).

Allah sets the precept that He created the universe with perfection. The created universe or environment is viewed as “not just a random form, but rather a reflection of the Truth, which is one of the Divine names” (Bin Muhammad et. al. 5). Consequently, Allah stands, at cradle, against all human activities that may cause or aggravate ecological crises. Allah also relates man’s suffering on earth to inappropriate human practices and He clarifies that the subsequent hardship affects all people. Allah says,

Evil (sins and disobedience to Allâh) has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned (by oppression and evil deeds), and that He (Allâh) may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return (by repenting to Allâh, and begging His Pardon). (*The Qur’an*, Ar-Rûm [The Romans],30:41).

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ (الروم: 41).

If Allah explicitly threatens those who cause ecological damage, He implicitly motivates people to maintain the original perfection of the universe to evade the hardship of life.

Greg Garrard defines ecocriticism as “the study of the relationship of the human and the non-human, throughout human cultural history and

entailing critical analysis of the term ‘human’ itself’ (5). Garrard’s perspective suggests that ecocriticism examines how history had culturally represented the relationship between the human and the non-human with a focus on the nature of man. More than fourteen centuries ago, *the Holy Qur’an* was ahead of its time because it did not only examine the historical human-nonhuman relationship but also artistically explained it. According to *the Holy Qur’an*, plentiful non-human creations were divinely made serviceable to mankind. Allah says that He created: (1) the cattle to provide mankind with (a) warmth (warm clothes), (b) numerous benefits, (c) food, (d) charming scenes while bringing them home from pasture in the evening and while accompanying them to the pasture in the morning, and (e) transportation as they carry heavy loads (luggage) to lands that can be reached with hardship; (2) horses, mules and donkeys to offer mankind classes of transportation as well as the joy of their adornment; (3) water, or particularly rain, to enable mankind to (a) drink, (b) grow diversified vegetation suitable for feeding animals, and (c) irrigate plantations of varied tastes, colours and benefits like olive, date-palms, grapes as well as every kind of fruit; (4) the night and the day in addition to the sun, the moon and the stars to enable man to contemplate Allah’s unique creation; (5) the colourful botanical and zoological life; (6) the sea to enable mankind to (a) eat tender fish, (b) bring forth out of it ornaments to wear and accessories for decoration, and (c) sail overseas via massive ships to seek sustenance; (7) steady mountains to provide mankind with the stability of the Earth; (8) rivers and roads so that people can reach their destinations; and (9) landmarks during the day and the stars during the night so that people may know their direction (*The Qur’an*, An-Nahl [The Bees],16:5-16).

وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنَافِعُ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٥﴾ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ تُرِيحُونَ وَحِينَ تَسْرَحُونَ ﴿٦﴾ وَتَحْمِلُ أَثْقَالَكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ لَّمْ تَكُونُوا بِالْغَيْهِ إِلَّا لِيُبَيِّنَ الْأَنْفُسَ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَّءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا وَزِينَةً وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَعَلَىٰ اللَّهِ قَسْدُ السَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَائِرٌ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَاكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٩﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لَّكُم مِّنْهُ شَرَابٌ وَمِنْهُ شَجَرٌ فِيهِ تُسِيمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ يُنْبِثُ لَكُمْ بِهِ الزَّرْعَ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالنَّخِيلَ وَالْأَعْنَابَ وَمِنْ كُلِّ النَّمْرَاتِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١١﴾ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الَّلَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۚ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَمَا ذَرَأَ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لِتَأْكُلُوا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُوا مِنْهُ جَلِيَّةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ مَوَآخِرَ فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلِعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَالْقَلَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِي أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ وَأَنْهَارًا وَسُبُلًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَعَلَامَاتٍ ۚ وَبِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٦﴾. (النحل: 5-16)

From an ecocritical perspective, these verses can be related to the anthropocentric view of nature the proponents of shallow ecology adhere to. They claim that “the whole purpose of nature is to serve mankind and humans are the masters of nature” (Mishra 168). From an Islamic viewpoint, the verses determine one facet of the human-nonhuman relationship, servitude. The other facet is that man’s supremacy is not

absolute. Allah reminds Muslims that man's controlling position is given as a matter of 'honor'. Allah says,

And indeed We have honoured the Children of Adam, and We carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with *At-Tayyibât* (lawful good things), and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preferment. (*The Qur'an*, Al-Isrâ'[The Journey by Night],17:70)

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا (الإسراء:70).

Allah assures that mankind is not preferred to 'all' other species, but rather to 'many' of them. Thus, man's sense of supremacy has exception and his power is not unlimited. If man is the master of the physical environment whose benefits are enjoyable, he is also the master of sustaining it. Man's supremacy is both an honor and a duty. This notion can be associated with Allah's warning Muslims that they should not misuse their sense of superiority to destroy nature. Allah reminds them with episodes of human history when He tormented the peoples of *Ad*, *Iram*, *Thamûd* and the *Pharaoh of Egypt* because of their respective disobedience to Allah, mischief, and transgression beyond bounds in the lands. Allah says,

Saw you (O Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم)) not how your lord dealt with 'Âd (people). Of *Iram* (who were very tall) like (lofty) pillars, The like of which were not created in the land? And (with) *Thamûd* (people), who hewed out rocks in the valley (to make dwellings)? And (with) *Fir'aun* (Pharaoh) who had the stakes (to torture men by binding them to the stakes)? Who did transgress beyond bounds in the lands (in the disobedience of Allâh). And made therein much mischief. So your Lord poured on them different kinds of severe torment. Verily, your Lord is Ever Watchful (over them). (*The Qur'an*, Al-Fajr [The Break of Day or the Dawn], 89:6-14).

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ ﴿٦﴾ إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ ﴿٧﴾ الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿٨﴾ وَثَمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخِرَ بِالْوَادِ ﴿٩﴾ وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ طَعَوْا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿١١﴾ فَأَكْتَرُوا فِيهَا الْفَسَادَ ﴿١٢﴾ فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ ﴿١٣﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ ﴿١٤﴾. (الفجر: 6-14)

Lawrence Buell writes that "ecocriticism gathers itself around a commitment to environmentality from whatever critical vantage point" (11). Buell's view is close to Allah's dictation that mankind should adopt a moderate consuming behavior. At the end of a long verse, Allah says, "Eat and drink of that which Allâh has provided and do not act corruptly, making mischief on the earth" (*The Qur'an*, al-Baqarah [The Cow], 2:60).

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ (البقرة : 60).

Additionally, Allah recalls the story of Qarun [Korah] who was one of Prophet Moses' people but he behaved arrogantly towards them. Qarun is portrayed as a man of treasures whose keys are burdens to strong men. While trying to convince Qarun to give up his conceit, his people advised him not to seek 'mischief in the land' Allah says that Qarun's people told him ,

But seek, with that (wealth) which Allâh has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget not your portion of lawful enjoyment in this world; and do good as Allâh has been good to you, and seek not mischief in the land. Verily, Allâh likes not the *Mufsidûn* (those who commit great crimes and sins, oppressors, tyrants, mischief-makers, corrupter). (*The Qur'an*, Al-Qasas [The Narration], 28:77).

وَابْتَغِ فِيهَا مَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنْ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفَسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ (القصص: 77).

This verse signifies that the People of Moses realized Qarun's corruption and they knew that his wealth cannot act as a barrier against Allah's torment. They emphasize that rulers should make use of what Allah bestows on them on condition that they do not victimize any form of physical existence. The verse is relevant to the advocacy that ecocriticism investigates "literature in relation to the histories of ecological or environmentalist thought, ethics, and activism" (Hutchings 172) too.

## Perception of Nature

From an ecocritical perspective, the term 'nature' is perceived as "the whole of the physical environment consisting of the human and the nonhuman" rather than "a mere fancy of its beautiful aspects like plants and animals" (Mishra 169). Thus, nature is an overall system of living creatures and non-living entities characterized by their functional duties rather than their aesthetics. In Islam, *the Holy Qur'an* maintains that function and beauty build up man's joy on earth. Whereas people can benefit from the function of fruits, mountains and cattle, they can also be delighted by their divine artistic tableaux displaying white and red streaks as well as colourful living creatures and cattle. Allah says,

See you not that Allâh sends down water (rain) from the sky, and We produce therewith fruits of various colours, and among the mountains are streaks white and red, of varying colours and (others) very black. And likewise of men and *Ad-Dawâbb* [moving (living) creatures, beasts], and cattle, are of various colours. It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allâh. Verily, Allâh

is All-Mighty, Oft-Forgiving. [*The Qur'an*, Fatir or Al-Mala'ikah [The Originator of Creation, or The Angels], 35:27-28).

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ ثَمَرَاتٍ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهَا وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بَيضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا وَعَرَابِيٌّ سُودٌ ﴿27﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالْدَّوَابِّ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ كَذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ ﴿28﴾. (فاطر: 27-28)

Because nature consists of living and non-living creations, there must be harmony between them. This harmony targets the presence of “a healthy eco-system for the benevolence of mankind as well as the earth” (Mishra 169). Its prime goal is to find “ways of keeping the human community from destroying the natural community, and with it the human community” and to constitute “the ground upon which the two communities – the human and the natural – can coexist, cooperate, and flourish in the biosphere” (Rueckert 107). The harmony can be achieved through investigating “the cultural and physical interactions of human beings and other species in–and with– their environment” (Schaumann and Sullivan 8). These modern perceptions of nature have led Suresh Frederick to demonstrate that the ‘modern ecological consciousness’ has a feeling that “the balance between human and the natural world must be maintained” and that ‘a perfect ecology’ is the “one in which plants, animals, birds, and human beings live in such a harmony that none dominates or destroys the other” (147).

In Islam, Allah consolidates that mankind is not the sole living community on earth. Allah says, “There is not a moving (living) creature on earth, not a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you. We have neglected nothing in the Book, then unto their Lord they (all) shall be gathered” (*The Qur'an*, Al-An‘âm [The Cattle], 6:38).

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَّمٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ. (الأنعام: 38)

The Qur’anic perspective highlights that the human and the natural alike have the right to life. Additionally, *the Holy Qur’an* narrates that Allah guided Prophet Noah to build an ark and accompany with him a male and a female of every type of animals because He had decided to torment Noah’s people with a great flood. Allah says,

(So it was) till when Our Command came and the oven gushed forth (water like fountains from the earth). We said: “Embark therein, of each kind two (male and female), and your family – except him against whom the Word has already gone forth – and those who believe. And none believed with him, except a few”. (*The Qur'an*, Hûd [(Prophet) Hûd], 11:40).

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّورُ قُلْنَا احْمِلْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ وَمَنْ آمَنَ وَمَا آمَنَ مَعَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ (هود: 40) .

This guidance enhances coexistence and biodiversity as two pillars of life sustainability. Prophet Suliman’s [Solomon’s] reaction to the wise Ant is another instance of a homogeneous community. Allah says,

Till, when they came to the valley of the ants, one of the ants said: “O ants! Enter your dwellings, lest Sulaimân (Solomon) and his hosts should crush you, while they perceive not”. So, he [Sulaimân (Solomon) smiled, amused at her speech and said: “My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your Favours which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds that will please You, and admit me by Your Mercy among Your righteous slaves. (*The Qur’an*, An-Naml [The Ants], 27:18).

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَىٰ وَادِ النَّمْلِ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ لَا يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ (18) فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّن قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأُدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ (19). (النمل: 18-19).

In these verses, the Ant is characterized by leadership and awareness. She commands her companions to quickly delve into their dwellings. She perceives that the ants can be ‘unintentionally’ crushed by the prophet and his companions. In response, Prophet Suliman is portrayed as light-hearted as he smiles and commands his companions to stop marching so that the ants can enter their dwellings safely.

## Perspectives of Shallow Ecology

The advocators of shallow ecology fight against pollution and resource depletion and their central goal is to advance “the health and affluence of people in the developed countries” (Naess 3). Comparatively, *the Holy Qur’an* tackles pollution as well as resource depletion and it targets man’s welfare from a wider lens, the lens of combating corruption. The term ‘corruption’ applies to all human practices that threaten biological survival on earth. If shallow ecology seeks the prosperity of the developed countries, Islam addresses the welfare of people worldwide.

Fighting against land pollution is represented through Allah’s symbolic comparison between the vegetation of a fertile soil and that of a spoiled one. Allah states that a good land, which receives pure rain, brings forth good vegetation. On the contrary, a spoiled and unhealthy land brings forth nothing but rotten crops. Then, Allah clarifies that He gives this comparison as an evidence for those who activate their minds and want to thank Him. Allah says,

The vegetation of a good land comes forth (easily) by the Permission of its Lord; and that which is bad, brings forth nothing but (a little)

with difficulty. Thus do We explain variously the *Ayât* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) for a people who give thanks. (*The Qur'an*, Al-A'râf [The Heights or The Wall with Elevations],7:58).

وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهُ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَالَّذِي خَبثَ لَا يَخْرُجُ إِلَّا نَكِدًا ۚ كَذَلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَشْكُرُونَ (الأعراف: 58).

Thus, Allah calls upon man to thank Him by maintaining the original fertility of the soil He bestowed on it.

Moderation is the principle Islam advocates to minimize resource depletion. Allah advises all human beings, not just Muslims, to acquire a rational consuming behavior. He permits all people to be delighted with their fashionable garments while they go for prayers as well as with their food and drinks provided that they do not exceed limits. Allah says,

O Children of Adam! Take your adornment (by wearing your clean clothes), while praying and going round (the *Tawâf* of) the *Ka'bah*, and eat and drink but waste not by extravagance, certainly He (Allâh) likes not *Al-Musrifûn* (those who waste by extravagance). (*The Qur'an*, Al-A'râf [The Heights or The Wall with Elevations],7:31).

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا ۚ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ (الأعراف: 31).

Allah also characterizes his faithful worshipers by their reasonable monetary management. Allah says, “And those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly, but hold a medium (way) between those (extremes)” (*The Qur'an*, Al-Furqân [The Criterion], 25:67).

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا (الفرقان: 67).

Islam asserts that man should enjoy the highest attainable standards of health. These standards can be brought closer to M. H. Al-Khayat's explanation that the human being should:

[f]eed the body when it is hungry, rest it when tired, clean it when it gets dirty, protect it against all harm, take precautions against subjecting it to illness, provide it with the necessary treatment when it suffers from disease, and not to overburden it in any way. (11-12)

Likewise, *the Holy Qur'an* reports that Allah promised Adam that he would never be hungry or naked in Paradise. Allah says, “Verily, you have (a promise from Us) that you will never be hungry therein nor naked” (*The Qur'an*, Tâ-hâ 20:118).

إِنَّ لَكَ أَلَّا تَجُوعَ فِيهَا وَلَا تَعْرَى (طه : 118).

After man's existence on earth, Allah points out that among the virtues that pushes a man forward to prove his obedience to Him is his act of

feeding the body during times of famine. Allah says, “Or giving food in a day of hunger (famine)”. (*The Qur’an*, Al-Balad [The City], 90:14).

أَوْ إِطْعَامٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ (البلد: 14).

Allah also explains that He created sleeping as a means for resting the human body as He says, “And We have made your sleep as a thing for rest”. (*The Qur’an*, An-Naba' [The Great News],78:9).

وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا (النبا: 9).

Allah commands Muslims to clean their bodies and clothes too. He instructs Prophet Muhammad to purify his garments as He says, “And purify your garments”. (*The Qur’an*, Al-Muddaththir [The One Enveloped],74:4).

وَتَيَابِغِكَ فَطَهِّرْ (المدثر: 4).

Allah informs Prophet Muhammad about the pious Muslims who are characterized by their ‘love to clean and purify themselves’. Allah says,

Never stand you therein. Verily, the mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety is more worthy that you stand therein (to pray). In it are men who love to clean and to purify themselves. And Allâh loves those who make themselves clean and pure [i.e. who clean their private parts with dust (which has the properties of soap) and water from urine and stools, after answering the call of nature]. (*The Qur’an*, At-Taubah [The Repentance],9:108).

لَا تَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا لَمَْسْجِدٍ أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيهِ ۚ فِيهِ رَجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَطَهَّرُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ (التوبة: 108).

The cleanliness Allah refers to signifies the physical cleanliness of the body as well as the inner purgation of the heart.

Islam defies practices that may hurt the human body even if they represent religious necessity. Ablution is a must for a Muslim’s prayer. However, the Muslim is exempted from ablution in case that water may hurt his body or in case that water is scarce. In such a case, the Muslim may use clean dust and rub therewith his face and hands. Allah says,

O you who believe! Approach not *As-Salât* (the prayer) when you are in a drunken state until you know (the meaning) of what you utter, nor when you are in a state of *Janâba* (i.e. in a state of sexual impurity and have not yet taken a bath) except when travelling on the road (without enough water, or just passing through a mosque), till you wash your whole body. And if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes after answering the call of nature, or you have been in contact with women (by sexual relations) and you find no water, perform *Tayammum* with clean earth and rub therewith your faces and hands (*Tayammum*). Truly, Allâh is Ever Oft-Pardoning, Oft-Forgiving. (*The Qur’an*, An-Nisâ' [The Women], 4:43).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْرُبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا ۗ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا غَفُورًا . (النساء: 43)

Islam prohibits that Muslims eat dead animals, blood, and the flesh of swine as He says,

He has forbidden you only the *Maitah* (dead animals), and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allâh (or has been slaughtered for idols, on which Allâh's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering). But if one is forced by necessity without willful disobedience nor transgressing due limits, then there is no sin on him. Truly, Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (*The Qur'an*, al-Baqarah [The Cow], 2:173).

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخَنزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ ۖ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (البقرة: 173).

This prohibition is in line with the evidence provided by modern science. According to A. H. Sakr, there are “germs, parasites and bacteria that infest swine and live in its flesh which, when it is eaten, transmits diseases to man. Among these parasites are tapeworms, round worms and hook worms”. Thus, the pig, which Sakr describes as the ‘supreme germ carrier’, becomes the cause for many diseases such as jaundice, intestinal obstruction, diarrhea, typhoid, sterility and sudden death (qtd. in Al-Kaysī 32-33).

Allah commands Muslims not to drink alcohol. Allah says, “O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks), and gambling, and *Al-Ansâb*, and *Al-Azlâm* (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of *Shaitan's* (Satan) handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful. (*The Qur'an*, Al-Mâ'idah [The Table Spread with Food],5:90).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (المائدة: 90).

Generally, drinking intoxicants is “naturally, morally, and intellectually harmful” because it can lead a person to ‘behave without grace’, ‘commit unintentional acts of insulting and harming others’, ‘commit crime or murder’, divulge secrets, and ‘trample on human rules and sanctity’ (Fayokemi 87). Specifically, the ingestion of large amounts of alcohol causes “irritation of the stomach and peptic ulcer formation. It also affects the liver and causes its inflammation, cirrhosis and ultimately liver failure” (Al-Kaysī 33). Even drinking small amounts of alcohol can “increase the risk of brain hemorrhage and strokes, or affect sleep patterns” (Sawari 138).

Islam presents a comprehensive health-conscious advocacy of man's eating healthy food. For instance, the healing qualities of honey are praised and mankind is asked to appreciate these qualities. Allah says while addressing the bees at first and the human beings afterwards, "Then, eat of all fruits, and follow the ways of your Lord made easy (for you)." There comes forth from their bellies, a drink of varying colour wherein is healing for men. Verily, in this is indeed a sign for people who think". (*The Qur'an*, An-Nahl [The Bees], 16:69).

ثُمَّ كُلِي مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (النحل: 69).

The healing qualities of honey have been recently promoted through specialized bodies in the developed countries. The National Honey Board (NHB) became effective as "an industry-funded agriculture promotion group...which operates under the U.S. Department of Agriculture oversight" (NHB). Among the achievements of the board is the promotion of the healing qualities of Honey through an article entitled "Honey-Health and Therapeutic Qualities". Moreover, olive is another plant Allah praises as He says, "And a tree (olive) that springs forth from Mount Sinai, that grows (produces) oil, and (it is a) relish for the eaters". (*The Qur'an*, Al-Mu'minûn [The Believers], 23:20).

وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ طُورِ سَيْنَاءَ تَنْبُتُ بِالذُّهْنِ وَصَبْغٍ لِلْكُلَيْبِ (المؤمنون: 20).

Modern science has proved that olive and its derivatives have abundant healthy aspects (Khalid and Sediqi 4).

Water is the essence of life. Allah says, "Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were joined together as one united piece, then We parted them? And We have made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe? (*The Qur'an*, Al-Anbiya' [The Prophets], 21:30).

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ. (الأنبياء: 30)

Consequently, human and natural access to pure water is a right. This divine revelation is prior to the publication of *The Right to Water* by World Health Organization in 2003 as well as to Hutton's explanation that in 2010 "the United Nations General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council recognized access to safe drinking water and sanitation as a human right" (2). Water, from a physiological point of view, is proved to act "as a building material; as a solvent, reaction medium, reactant and reaction product; as a carrier for nutrients and waste products; in thermoregulation and as a lubricant and shock absorber" (Jéquier and Constant 122).

All the previous Qur'anic illustrations are in line with Mansi Joshi's explanation that ecocriticism is the study of literature and environment

“from an interdisciplinary point of view where all sciences come together to analyze the environment and brainstorm possible solutions for the correction of the contemporary environmental problems” (10).

## Perspectives of Deep Ecology

The proponents of deep ecology challenge the conservative nature of shallow ecology. They promulgate keeping nature in its “original form without any interference of man as nature has its own right to survive” (Mishra 168). They reject, according to Naess, ‘the human-in-environment image’ in favour of ‘the relational, total-field image’ as they believe in the intrinsic relation between the human and the nonhuman and in ‘biospherical egalitarianism that manifests itself in the ecological field-worker’s acquirement of “a deep-seated respect, or even veneration, for ways and forms of life” (3).

The Islamic reverence for the total field image is evident in Allah’s foregrounding that one manifestation of His mercy is teaching man the meanings exclusively expressed in the *Holy Qur’an* as well as the rhetorical speech that enables man to sensitively contemplate divine words. Then, a practice immediately follows as Allah provides extended imagery of the components of the universe with each component’s astonishing quality. Allah says,

The Most Gracious (Allâh)! He has taught (you mankind) the Qur’ân (by His Mercy). He created man. He taught him eloquent speech. The sun and the moon run on their fixed courses (exactly) calculated with measured out stages for each (for reckoning). And the herbs (or stars) and the trees both prostrate themselves. And the heaven: He has raised it high, and He has set up the Balance. In order that you may not transgress (due) balance. And observe the weight with equity and do not make the balance deficient. And the earth: he has put down (laid) for the creatures. Therein are fruits and date-palms producing sheathed fruit-stalks (enclosing dates). And also corn, with (its) leaves and stalk for fodder, and sweet-scented plants. (*The Qur’an*, Al-Rahmân [The Most Gracious], 55:1-12).

الرَّحْمَنُ ﴿١﴾ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ﴿٢﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ﴿٣﴾ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ﴿٤﴾ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ ﴿٥﴾ وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ  
يَسْجُدَانِ ﴿٦﴾ وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٧﴾ أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ ﴿٨﴾ وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا  
الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٩﴾ وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنْعَامِ ﴿١٠﴾ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ ﴿١١﴾ وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ  
(الرحمن: 1-12)

In these verses, Allah refers to the sun, the moon, the star and the sky which are all away from man’s interference in their order. Then, Allah refers to the earth, the fruits, the palm-tree, the corn and the fragrant plants

in their original form. Amidst this diction, the term ‘balance’ is used as a refrain. At first, Allah mentions His authentic balance of the universe that is reflected in the form of justice on earth. Then, He prohibits any form of injustice practiced by man. Allah uses the imperative to command mankind to set justice as a basis for human-human interaction afterwards. Thus, the term ‘balance’ can be reinterpreted as equal weight and respect given to each element of nature. The structure of the above verses has rhythm that conveys a sense of scaling balance too. The first verse consists of a single noun. The verses number 2,3,4 comprise of two words in parallel. There is a verb in the simple past form followed by an object. The verses number 5 and 6 consist of three words each. This parallelism contributes to the overall sense of divine balance. Moreover, in the ninth verse Allah asks mankind, the only addressee among all mentioned objects, to observe the weight with equity and do not make the balance deficient. Consequently, it is man’s responsibility to observe and enhance the intrinsic relations between the human and the nonhuman to achieve ‘biospherical egalitarianism.

Ecocriticism gives emphasis to the ‘eco-consciousness’ rather than ‘the ego-consciousness’ of man (Mishra 168). Ursula Heise adds that deep ecology “foregrounds the value of nature in and of itself, the equal rights of other species, and the importance of small communities”. She asserts that deep ecology is “associated often with a valuation of wild and rural spaces, self-sufficiency, a sense of place, and local knowledge and sometimes with an alternative spirituality” (507).

The principles of deep ecology Mishra and Heise refer to can be brought closer to the Qur’anic development of the argument between Prophet Suliman [Solomon] and the hoopoe. Allah says,

He [Prophet Suliman] inspected the birds, and said: “What is the matter that I see not the hoopoe? Or is he among the absentees? “I will surely punish him with a severe torment, or slaughter him, unless he brings me a clear reason.” But the hoopoe stayed not long: he (came up and) said: “I have grasped (the knowledge of a thing) which you have not grasped and I have come to you from Saba’ (Sheba) with true news. “I found a woman ruling over them: She has been given all things that could be possessed by any ruler of the earth, and she has a great throne. “I found her and her people worshipping the sun instead of Allâh, and *Shaitân* (Satan) has made their deeds fair-seeming to them, and has barred them from (Allâh’s) Way: so they have no guidance.” [As *Shaitân* (Satan) has barred them from Allâh’s Way] so they do not worship (prostrate themselves before) Allâh, Who brings to light what is hidden in the heavens and the earth, and knows what you conceal and what you

reveal. Allâh, *Lâ ilâha illa Huwa* (none has the right to be worshiped but He), the Lord of the Supreme Throne. (*The Qur'an*, An-Naml [The Ants], 27:20-26).

وَتَقَفَّ الطَّيْرَ فَقَالَ مَا لِي لَا أَرَى الْهُدُودَ أَمْ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَائِبِينَ ﴿20﴾ لَا عَذَابَ شَدِيدًا أَوْ لَأَذْبَحَنَّهُ أَوْ لِيَأْتِيَنِي  
 بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿21﴾ فَمَكَثَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ أَحَطْتُ بِمَا لَمْ نَحْطُ بِهِ وَجِئْتُكَ مِنْ سَبَإٍ بِنَبَأٍ يَقِينٍ ﴿22﴾ إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ امْرَأَةً  
 تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿23﴾ وَجَدْتُهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ  
 الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿24﴾ أَلَّا يَسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي يُخْرِجُ الْخَبَاءَ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ  
 وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُخْفُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ ﴿25﴾ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿26﴾. (النمل: 20-26)

As these verses imply, Prophet Suliman was an eco-conscious ruler. At first, he wonders about the absence of the hoopoe. This wondering reflects his sense of responsibility towards Allah's creations. Then, the hoopoe appears and brings the news about the people of Sheba. The hoopoe is not portrayed as a helpless attendant to the prophet. The hoopoe has more knowledge than the prophet as he tells him that the people of Sheba are ruled by a powerful woman and that they worship the sun. The hoopoe talks in confidence as he is sure of the news he has brought. His talking from a distanced position indicates his intelligence because he was absent and he wanted to evade Prophet Suliman's anger. The sentence he starts with signifies his good evaluation of the prophet's character and his cause. He implies that his absence was due to a critical issue. In this way, the hoopoe manages to safeguard himself, excite Suliman's curiosity, and prove his servitude to Suliman in spreading spirituality. The hoopoe's innate belief in Allah is evident in his: (1) denial that the people of Sheba worship the sun rather than Allah; (2) explanation that Satan 'has made their [the people of Sheba] deeds fair-seeming'; (3) emphasis on the monotheism of Allah. The result of this argument is that Prophet Suliman's kingdom is enlarged and his rule over the land of Sheba, after meeting the Queen of Sheba and inviting her to believe in Allah, has brought peaceful existence to new horizons. The discourse of the hoopoe is marvelous because of its implications too. Whereas Prophet Suliman starts his speech with a question, the hoopoe begins with a statement. This indicates the hoopoe's sense of equal right, importance and self-confidence, which are all based on his awareness of his local environment including Prophet Suliman's character and the way the prophet manages his kingdom. The hoopoe uses the discourse of universal ecology via his reference to the sun, the sky and the earth. The hoopoe has a special sense of place. For him, any land where Allah is not worshiped suffers certain disorder and he feels his duty to bring its order back.

## Goals of Ecocriticism

Ecocritics are mainly concerned with studying “how literature transmits certain values contributing to ecological thinking” (Tripathi 71). Likewise, almost all the Qur’anic verses mentioned in this paper are either denouncing environmental degradation or enhancing sustainability. Moreover, William Howarth states that “ecology advanced from description to advocacy after 1960, as its stories presented ethical choices that affect land and people” (75). Howarth’s view is similar to the general choice Allah proposes before Muslims. Allah asserts that He has subjected the earth to serve mankind and that He grants man sustenance provided that man seeks it. Allah says, “He it is Who made the earth subservient to you (i.e. easy for you to walk, to live and to do agriculture on it); so walk in the path thereof and eat of His provision. And to Him will be the Resurrection”. (*The Qur’an*, Al-Mulk [Dominion], 67:15).

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ دَلْوًا فَاْمَشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِهِ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ (الملك: 15).

Allah also warns man that any violation of this divine equation will subject its doer to harsh penalty. Allah says, “(Saying) eat of the *Tayyibât* (good lawful things) wherewith We provided you, and commit no transgression or oppression therein, lest My Anger should justly descend on you. And he whom My Anger descends, he is indeed perished” (*The Qur’an*, Tâ-hâ 20:81).

كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا فِيهِ فَيَحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبِي وَمَنْ يَحِلَّ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبِي فَقَدْ هَوَىٰ (طه: 81).

Thus, the two verses advocate man’s ability to enjoy life provided that he causes no harm to the ecosystem.

Robert Disch reveals that “eco-patriots in the 1970s attacked their enemies—military, political, technological, commercial—as greedy, anthropocentric forces that defamed the true course of evolution” (qtd. in Howarth 74). Within the realm of *the Holy Qur’an* and its comprehensive and foundational role, Allah uses His prophet Salih as His mouthpiece to condemn those who destroy the environment. Allah sent Prophet Salih to remind his people to obey Him. The prophet reminded them that they can enjoy their gardens, springs, green fields, date-palms, and houses hewed out in the mountains (*The Qur’an*, Ash-Shu‘arâ [The Poets], 26:142-150). Then, Salih warns them as he says, “And follow not the command of *Al-Musrifûn* [i.e. their chiefs: leaders who were polytheists, criminals and sinners]. Who make mischief in the land, and reform not”. (*The Qur’an*, Ash- Shu‘arâ [The Poets], 26:151-152).

وَلَا تُطِيعُوا أَمْرَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ الَّذِينَ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا يُصْلِحُونَ (الشعراء: 151-152).

Allah also classifies people into two groups: the pious and the wicked and He associates the wicked with practices of land corruption. Allah says, “Shall We treat those who believe (in the Oneness of Allâh – Islâmîc

Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds as *Mufsidûn* (those who associate partners in worship with Allâh and commit crimes) on earth? Or shall We treat the *Muttaqûn* (the pious) as the *Fujjâr* (criminals, disbelievers, the wicked)?” (*The Qur’an*, Sâd, 38:28).

أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِينَ كَالْفُجَّارِ (ص: 28).

*The Qur’an* condemns corrupt rulers and shows the harsh penalty they are subjected to. Allah illuminates the tragic flaw, anthropocentrism, within the character of the Pharaoh of Egypt. Allah says,

Verily, Fir‘aun (Pharaoh) exalted himself in the land and made its people sects, weakening (oppressing) a group (i.e. Children of Israel) among them: killing their sons, and letting their females live. Verily, he was of the *Mufsidûn* (i.e. those who commit great sins and crimes, oppressors, tyrants). (*The Qur’an*, Al-Qasas [The Narration], 28:4).

إِن فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا يَسْتَضِعُّ طَائِفَةً مِنْهُمْ يُدَّبِحُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ (القصص: 4).

Due to the Pharaoh’s attempt to attain divine qualities as well as his arrogance and destruction of the land, Allah punished him severely as He drowned him and his companions. Allah says,

So We seized him and his hosts, and We threw them all into the sea (and drowned them). So behold (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه و سلم) what was the end of the *Zâlimûn* [wrong-doers, polytheists and those who disbelieved in the Oneness of their Lord (Allâh), or rejected the advice of His messenger Mûsâ (Moses) عليه السلام]. (*The Qur’an*, Al-Qasas [The Narration], 28:40).

فَأَخَذْنَا هُوْدًا وَقَتَادَةَ فَتَبَدَّنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ فَنَنْظُرُ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ (القصص : 40).

Economic anthropocentrism is criticized as *the Holy Qur’an* narrates the story of the two men whom Allah had given one of them two gardens with cultivated fields and a gushing river in between. But, he was conquered by pride and skepticism that led him to disbelief in Allah. As a result, the fruits of his garden were ruined and his remorse did not save him. (*The Qur’an*, Al-Kahf [The Cave], 18:32-43).

The system of marriage in Islam legitimizes the relationship between man and woman and guarantees the natural evolution of the human race. But, when this system is violated, disorder becomes imminent. *The Qur’an* recalls the violation practiced by the people of Lût (Lot) who preferred sodomy rather than normal male-female relationship. Consequently, they deserved Allah’s torment as Allah says, “So when Our Commandment came, We turned (the towns of Sodom in Palestine) upside

down, and ruined on the them stones of baked clay, in a well-arranged manner one after another”. (*The Qur’an*, Hûd [(prophet) Hûd], 11:82).

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا حِجَارَةً مِنْ سِجِّيلٍ مَنْضُودٍ (هود: 82).

Greg Garrard (2012,p.3) believes that ecocriticism is “closely related to environmentally oriented developments in philosophy and political theory” because ecocritics “tie their cultural analyses explicitly to a ‘green’ moral and political agenda”. Likewise, Allah says, “He has created the heavens and the earth with truth, and He shaped you and made good your shapes. And to Him is the final Return”. (*The Qur’an*, At-Taghâbun [Mutual Loss and Gain], 64:3).

خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ (التغابن: 3).

Allah theorizes that the best form of existence is the one He created. Thus, if the activism of mankind has no negative impact on the universe, the divine balance within the globe will be maintained. Allah also implies that man’s interference in reshaping the world or any of the existing creatures may cause deterioration in the emerging shapes even if the deterioration is not perceived on the short run. For this reason, Allah mentions the act of changing Allah’s creation as one beguiled by Satan who swears to mislead people. At first, Allah says that Satan said, “Verily, I will mislead them, and surely, I will arouse in them false desires; and certainly, I will order tem to slit the ears of cattle, and indeed I will order them to change the nature created by Allâh”. Then, Allah’s warning addressed to mankind is stated in his saying, “And whoever takes *Shaitân* (Satan) as a *Walî* (protector or helper) instead of Allâh, has surely suffered a manifest loss”. (*The Qur’an*, An-Nisâ’ [The Women], 4:119).

وَأَصْلَانَهُمْ وَأَمْنَيْنَهُمْ وَلَا مَرْئِيَهُمْ فَلْيُبَيِّنَنَّ آدَانَ الْأَنْعَامِ وَلَا مَرْئِيَهُمْ فَلْيَغَيِّرَنَّ خَلْقَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرًا مُبِينًا (النساء: 119).

## Waves of Ecocriticism

Scott Slovic has identified the five waves of ecocriticism that have lasted from 1980 to the present. He states that the first wave (1980-present) has shown emphasis on “Anglophone environmental literature, particularly with a focus on wilderness and other non-urban settings and concern” as well as on “ecofeminist critique of patriarchal social structures” (167). If the *Holy Qur’an* is written in Arabic, it has similarity to the other characteristics of ecocriticism Slovic demonstrates. Allah swears by the fig, the olive, Mount Sinai and Mecca that He created man with perfection. Allah says, “By the fig, and the olive. By Mount Sinai.

By this city of security (Makkah). Verily, We created man in the best stature (mould). (*The Qur'an, At-Tin [The Fig], 95: 1-4*).

وَالَّتَيْنِ وَالرَّيْثُونَ ﴿١﴾ وَطُورِ سَيْنِينَ ﴿٢﴾ وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ ﴿٣﴾ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾ . (التين: 1-4)

Whereas the two plants endure the hardship of wilderness, Sinai and Mecca are desert cities historically known for their non-urbanism. The sterile life in Sinai can be related to its name in ancient hieroglyphs, *Toshret*, which means the land of aridity and bareness (State Information Service 9). If ecofeminism is based on “the belief that the oppression of nature and of women is caused by the social patriarchal system” (Wiyatmi 517), *The Holy Qur'an* reveals the condemnation of using nature to oppress women in male-dominated societies. Islam came to forbid the polytheists’ burial of their infant girls in the sand due to their sense of dishonor. Allah says,

And when the news of (the birth of) a female (child) is brought to any of them, his face becomes dark, and he is filled with inward grief! He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that whereof he has been informed. Shall he keep her with dishonor or bury her in the earth? Certainly, evil is their decision. (*The Qur'an, An-Nahl [The Bees], 16:58-59*).

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُمْ بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ يَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوءِ مَا بُشِّرَ بِهِ أَيُمْسِكُهُ عَلَىٰ هُونٍ أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ فِي التُّرَابِ ۗ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ . (النحل : 58-59)

Thus, Islam advocates women’s prime right to live. Allah also praises the Wife of the Pharaoh who was oppressed by her patriarchal society. Allah says,

And Allâh has set forth an example for those who believe: the wife of Fir‘aun (Pharaoh), when she said: “My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise, and save me from Fir‘aun (Pharaoh) and his work, and save me from the people who are *Zâlimûn* (polytheists, wrong-doers and disbelievers in Allâh). (*The Qur'an, At-Tahrim [The Prohibition], 66:11*).

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ . (التحریم : 11)

The second wave of ecocriticism (1995-present) has witnessed: (1) “the arising of social justice as a key lens through which to read environmental texts”; (2) “a broadening of interest in cultural expression by non-Euro-American artists/writers; (3) “an increasing interest in artistic texts emphasizing environmental experience in varied locations, not only wild or ex-urban places”; (4) “the study not only of literature but various other forms of human cultural expression through environmental

lenses”(Slovic 167). The ecocritical aspects Slovic refers to are mentioned in four verses of the *Qur’an*. Allah says,

And a sign for them is the dead land. We give it life, and We bring forth from it grains, so that they eat thereof. And We have made therein gardens of date-palms and grapes, and We have caused springs of water to gush forth therein. So that they may eat of the fruit thereof – and their hands made it not. Will they not, then, give thanks? Glory to Him Who has created all the pairs of that which the earth produces, as well as of their own (human) kind (male and female), and of that which they know not. (*The Qur’an*, Ya-sin, 36:33-36)

وَأَيَّةٌ لَهُمُ الْأَرْضُ الْمَيِّتَةُ أَحْيَيْنَاهَا وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبًّا فَمِنْهُ يَأْكُلُونَ ﴿33﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ نَجِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ  
وَفَجَّرْنَا فِيهَا مِنَ الْعُيُونِ ﴿34﴾ لِيَأْكُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿35﴾ سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ  
كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ وَمِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿36﴾. (يس : 33-36)

These verses build up an image that is full of ecological discourse in Arabic. Allah’s use of the term ‘sign’ indicates that the intellectual perception of social justice is based on the physical description that follows. The association of the pronoun ‘We’, that refers to Allah, with the ‘action verbs’ indicates that Allah’s order of the universe guarantees sustainability. When rain falls, grains grow and become edible for man, animal, and bird. Springs are vital during dry seasons. The term ‘garden’ signifies the diversified sufficiency of dates, grapes and other fruits. Additionally, the verses show that if man plants seeds there are crops, and if man does not plant seeds, Allah makes certain crops available without the least effort exerted by man. Consequently, sustainability is achieved and understood through this artistic cultural tableau. Moreover, once the rain is sent down, the earth starts quivering and swelling and the activism of organisms starts operating. The emerging movement was observed many centuries later by Robert Brown (1773-1858), a Scottish botanist, who described the random motion of particles suspended in a liquid or gas medium. This pattern of motion was called the ‘Brownian motion’ (Nelson). Thus, the Qur’anic verse artistically depicts the journey from death to life and the output combines both aesthetics and environmentalism.

The third wave (2000-present) is characterized by “the emergence of postcolonial and other forms of cross-cultural ecocriticism” (Slovic 167). In the postcolonial versions of ecocriticism, “the issue of environmental justice has become especially relevant, and the unequal distribution of environmental risk and disaster caused by the industrialized world in different cultures and social classes is critically examined on both a regional and global scale” (Middeke 254). Prior to the two western views of Slovic and Middeke, *the Holy Qur’an* provides a unique experience that

is similar in targeting environmental justice but it provides different positioning of involved parties. *The Qur'an* tells about the good ruler *Zul-Qarnain* (Dhu al-Qarnayn) who travelled to the east and the west to spread justice among different cultural groups including those people who lived before two mountains and who sought his help due to their suffering because of the mischief of Gog and Magog in the land. *Zul-Qarnain* managed to put an end to the environmental risk in that region through erecting a barrier between the helpless people and the corrupt Gog and Magog using blocks of iron and molten cooper. Thus, the temporal authority of *Zul-Qarnain* did not target the manipulation of the treasures of foreign lands but the assistance to their people to bring their suffering to an end. He also used his industrial culture to combat the unequal distribution of the disastrous risks of Gog and Magog. Allah says,

Until, when he reached between two mountains, he found, before (near) them (those two mountains), a people who scarcely understood a word. They said: “O Dhul-Qarnain! Verily, Ya’jûj and Ma’jûj (Gog and Magog) are doing great mischief in the land. Shall we then pay you a tribute in order that you might erect a barrier between us and them?” He said: “That (wealth, authority and power) in which my Lord had established me is better (than your tribute). So help me with strength (of men), I will erect between you and them a barrier. “Give me pieces (blocks) of iron;” then, when he had filled up the gap between the two mountains-cliffs, he said: “Blow;” then when he had made them (red as) fire, he said: “Bring me molten copper to pour over them”. So, they [Ya’jûj and Ma’jûj (Gog and Magog)] could not scale it or dig through it. (*The Qur'an*, Al-Kahf [The Cave], 18:93-97).

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمَا قَوْمًا لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلًا (93) قَالُوا يَا ذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِنَّ يَأْجُوجَ  
وَمَأْجُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجًا عَلَىٰ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ سَدًّا (94) قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّي فِيهِ رَبِّي  
خَيْرٌ فَأَعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا (95) آتُونِي زُبَرَ الْحَدِيدِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا سَاوَىٰ بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ قَالَ انْفُخُوا  
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَعَلَهُ نَارًا قَالَ آتُونِي أُفْرِغْ عَلَيْهِ قَطْرًا (96) فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا أَنْ يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا لَهُ نَقْبًا (97).  
(الكهف: 93-97)

The fourth wave (2008-present) has been known for: (1) “the recognition of how the human body exists in constant physical relationship with the more-than-human world and how material phenomena express embodied narratives”; and (2) “a growing interest in practical aspects of human experience (food, waste management, transportation, architecture, etc) as forms of cultural expression” (Slovic 167). A similar approach is found in Islam. *The Holy Qur'an* determines

that Allah invites ‘men of understanding’ to ‘contemplate’ His Creation. Allah says,

Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding. Those who remember Allâh (always, and in prayers) standing, sitting, and lying down their sides, and think deeply about the creation of the heavens and the earth, (saying): “Our Lord! You have not created (all) this without purpose, glory to You! (Exalted are You above all that they associate with You as partners). Give us salvation from the torment of the Fire. (*The Qur’an*, Al-‘Imran [The Family of Imran],3:191-192).

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ (190) الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَفُجُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ قَوْلًا عَذَابَ النَّارِ (191). (آل عمران : 191)

Allah expounds the influence of the natural phenomenon of the succession of night and day on the human being as He says,

And We have appointed the night and the day as two *Ayât* (signs etc.). Then, We have obliterated the sign of the night (with darkness) while We have made the sign of day illuminating, that you may seek bounty from your Lord, and that you may know the number of the years and the reckoning. And We have explained everything (in detail) with full explanation. (*The Qur’an*, Al-Isra’ [The Journey by Night], 17:12).

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ آيَاتَيْنِ ۖ فَمَحْوِنَا آيَةَ اللَّيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَا آيَةَ النَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً لِّبَنَاتِنَا ۖ فَضَلَّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَلِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابِ ۗ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ تَفْصِيلًا. (الإسراء 12)

Whereas the night is for relaxation, sleeping and recharging power, the day is for physical activity. Both phenomena enable people to measure time and manage their social activities. They also contribute to the equal distribution of temperature worldwide. Furthermore, the Islamic advocacy of social solidarity and consumption management can be illustrated by Allah’s reminding Muslims, on the harvest day, to pay a certain percentage of the harvest to the poor, and not to waste edible food by extravagance. Allah says,

And it is He Who produces gardens trellised and untrellised, and date-palms, and crops of different shape and taste (their fruits and their seeds) and olives, and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in taste). Eat of their fruit when they ripen, but pay the due thereof (its *Zakât*, according to Allâh’s Orders 1/10<sup>th</sup> or 1/20<sup>th</sup>) on the day of its harvest, and waste not by extravagance. Verily, He likes not *Al-Musrifûn* (those who waste by extravagance). (*The Qur’an*, Al-An’am [The Cattle], 6:141).

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَ جَنَّاتٍ مَعْرُوشَاتٍ وَغَيْرِ مَعْرُوشَاتٍ وَالنَّخْلَ وَالزَّرْعَ مُخْتَلِفًا أَكْلُهُ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَانَ مُتَشَابِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ كُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَآتُوا حَقَّهُ يَوْمَ حَصَادِهِ وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ. (الأنعام : 141)

The fifth wave (2015-present) is associated, as Slovic demonstrates, with an increasing tendency of ecocritics “to go public in order to have a more direct influence on society” (67). This tendency to go public originated in Allah’s commandment to Prophet Muhammad to invite people in public to believe in Islam and Islamic ecological thinking is inclusive. Allah says, “Therefore proclaim openly (Allâh’s Message – Islâmic Monotheism) that which you are commanded, and turn away from *Al-Mushrikûn* (polytheists, idolaters, and disbelievers). *Qur’an*, Al-Hijr [The Rocky Tract] ,15:94)

فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ. (الحجر: 94)

Additionally, the environmental ethics referred to in almost all the Qur’anic verses cited in this paper are intended to address humanity at large, not just the specific groups of Muslims.

## Conclusion

This study has examined the environmentally-conscious perspectives promulgated by the forerunners of ecocriticism and their identical or similar Islamic tenets embedded in *the Holy Qur’an*. The paper has found that ecocriticism and *the Holy Qur’an* establish a similar view of the relationship between the human and the natural world. If *the Holy Qur’an* gives mankind preference over many other creations, it gives weight to the species, elements and phenomena of the ecosystem. Whereas ecocritics expresses worry about man’s destructive impact on the biosphere, *the Holy Qur’an* commands all human beings not to damage the environment, motivates mankind to maintain the pristine nature created by Allah, condemns human activities that aggravate ecological calamity, criticizes threats to biodiversity, and proposes solutions for modern ecological and health problems. If ecocriticism perceives nature as comprising of the human and the nonhuman rather than its aesthetic value, *the Qur’an* asserts that both function and beauty constitute man’s view of nature. The survival of a homogeneous community is another shared goal. *The Qur’an* invites people to combat corruption, fight against land pollution, manage resources, and attain standards of health, which are all principles of shallow ecology. The Qur’anic verses promulgate maintaining the intrinsic value of nature, call for biospherical egalitarianism, venerate ways and forms of life, emphasize man’s eco-consciousness rather than ego-consciousness, and assert equal life of other species, which are all pillars of deep ecology. The representation of wilderness, ecofeminist critique of patriarchal societies, advocacy of social justice, examination of

cross-cultural ecocriticism, study of the relationship between the human body and natural phenomena, invitation to man's moderate consuming behavior, and publicization of ecological tendency, are all manifestations of the five waves of ecocriticism that have illustrations in *the Holy Qur'an*. Finally, it is proved that *the Qur'an* was ahead of its time because of its preceding advocacy of environmentalism prior to the ecocritics' claims and the recent resolutions adopted by the United Nations since 2015 as it promotes ecological thinking, criticizes anthropocentric forces that defame evolution, and develops environmentally philosophical and political theory.

### Endnote

All verses of *The Holy The Qur'an* are cited as follows: The Qur'an (in italics) , followed by a comma, the title of the Surah (chapter), the translation of the title into English between two square brackets, the number of the chapter, colon, the number of the verse(s). This pattern appears more accurate especially for non-Muslim readers so that they can easily trace the cited verse(s).

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