



Exploring the Environmental Ethics in the Life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): Seerah Insights

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ABSTRACT

The life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) offers profound insights into environmental ethics, emphasizing the harmonious coexistence of humanity with nature. This study explores the Seerah (biography) of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to uncover principles and practices that highlight the importance of environmental stewardship in Islam. By examining Quranic injunctions and their application through the Prophet's teachings and actions, the research identifies a framework of environmental ethics rooted in balance (mizan), sustainability, and accountability (amanah). Key elements of this framework include the prohibition of waste (israf), the emphasis on conservation of resources, and the encouragement of tree planting, even in times of global crises. The Prophet (PBUH) not only advocated for the sustainable use of natural resources but also actively demonstrated environmental consciousness, such as prohibiting the unnecessary destruction of vegetation during warfare and emphasizing the humane treatment of animals. His statements, such as "If the Hour is about to be established and one of you has a palm seedling, let him plant it," underline the enduring significance of environmental care as an act of worship. The study also delves into how these environmental principles can be contextualized in contemporary challenges such as climate change, deforestation, and resource depletion. By drawing parallels between the Prophet's practices and modern environmental ethics, the research illustrates the relevance of Seerah in fostering a sustainable future. This research contributes to the growing discourse on Islamic environmentalism by presenting the Seerah as a source of timeless ecological wisdom. It advocates for the integration of these principles into contemporary environmental policies and individual lifestyles, bridging the gap between spiritual teachings and ecological responsibility.

Keywords: Environmental Ethics, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Seerah, Islamic Environmentalism, Sustainability, Conservation, Waste Management, Climate Change, Ecological Balance, Natural Resource Preservation.

1. Introduction:

Environmental concerns are no longer a matter restricted to a select group or nation. This is a matter of universal concern. It is not limited to the present but leads humans to think of the possible condition of the earth in the future. This concern is beginning to be voiced around the world and in writings, and it is believed that prevention, recovery, and rehabilitation need to be put into action immediately. One way to address this environmental problem will be to consider the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, which are embedded in the Seerah—the life and times of the Prophet. (Mubin et al.2023)

The person of the Prophet Muhammad remains supreme among many Muslims. His actions and utterances after his death—alongside the Quran—are the primary and ultimate sources of legislation and are expected to care for Muslims. A lot of information about the nature of the Prophet can be gleaned from an in-depth examination of his Seerah. It may bring into alignment the present secular aspect of environmentalism with its faith-committed roots to examine the grounds and then harmonize the contemporary environmental ethic with the ethical norms and values of a specific religion—any ecological faith-based critical reading of the Prophet's life. This paper seeks to investigate the extent to which people can learn

from the life of the Prophet Muhammad in the area of environmental ethics, and the following questions are taken into account: What are the Prophet Muhammad's stances on the basis of environmental ethics? What is the Prophet Muhammad's character? Is there a place of concern for creation (environment) in his ethical model for the creatures? When making decisions on the environment, will such a prophet's character act as a criterion for a devoted Muslim? If so, does this have any contemporary implications? The research mainly employs a descriptive-analytical approach to gather the necessary data. (Ahmad & Abbas, 2022)

1.1. Background and Significance of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Islam

The Prophet Muhammad stands as the pivotal figure and the unapologetic point of view in Islam. He is connected to the direct revelation of the unaltered word of God in the Qur'an by Muslims, which defines religious doctrine and guides people's deeds. The Prophet Muhammad is not only a figure of religious importance, but he has been defined as the primary model for ethical conduct in one's life (Ali et al.2023). His teachings have an all-inclusive range from the rituals of Islam to the attitude of Muslims, from cleanliness to conservation. He advises Muslims on taking care of environmental stewardship and property. At the same time, his practical life portrayed active participation for the safety of everything.

The socio-political situation at the time of the Prophet Muhammad's life was in collision with the Arab tribes. In such a political environment, his ethical teachings are appealing globally. The Prophet Muhammad developed a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-judicial society in Medina. In doing so, the Prophet Muhammad provided the teaching and example that has been used to build local, original Islamic law on various environmental forums. Muslim societies have done this throughout time, as they have applied the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and the mechanics of basic Islamic principles (Medina, 2023). The Muslim civilizations follow the limited form of Islamic environmental laws, consistent with their available scientific basis. Prophetic sayings are primarily a practical framework used by Muslims for the preservation and conservation of natural resources. Today, it is easy to enforce Islamic environmental guidelines. There is an understanding that Islam is applicable to many practical matters today, which can also be applied by Muslims as environmental regulators. The Prophet's teachings on the environment are timeless and are most often found in biographical works on the life of the Prophet (Khan et al.2024).

2. Foundations of Environmental Ethics in Islamic Teachings

This paper, as part of its Seerah, will attempt to outline the foundations of environmental ethics which are derived from the Islamic understanding of the relationship between Allah Almighty as the Creator, humankind, the Universe, and the creatures within it. This paper discusses the ethical perspectives that have been drawn from the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. Spiritual belief is the belief in a relationship with God, out of which ethics are often derived. In Islam, that relationship presupposes the activity of khilafah, which comes out of the Islamic ontology, cosmology, and natural law outlined in the Qur'an and Hadith. The Qur'an and Hadith comprise the principal resources of ethical reflection and teaching in Islam and are frequently used to justify the ideals and practices of the faith. All three of the main principles of

fiqh are grounded in varying levels of reference to the Qur'an and Hadith. (Haron et al.2020)

The key ethical concept derived from the Islamic teachings is the notion of khilafah. Humans are seen as stewards, a concept that is linked by some to the biblical idea of dominion. It is our qualitative potential that means humans are not just creatures of the earth but also of the heavens. These verses provide the conceptual foundation for the ethical issues explored in this paper. A core contention of this paper is that the spiritual beliefs of Islam should lead to particular ecological practices. By looking at the sources of authority, it is possible to show how their claim to authenticity might establish greater ecological awareness for both Muslims and non-Muslims alike (Al-Attari and Essa2023). The challenge to Muslims and non-Muslims, of course, is to seize the potential for change that appears to be inherent in the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Only by doing this will it be possible to begin to address the modern ecological crisis. Thus, the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad are radical both in terms of the time in which they were revealed and in terms of the potential to transform human behavior that they demonstrate. These teachings offer a real alternative to Islam. The following section lays out the detailed Islamic perspectives on environmental ethics.

2.1. Key Concepts in Islamic Environmental Ethics

The interconnectedness of all things is one important concept of Islamic environmental ethics. There is no such thing as inanimate in the Islamic view of the world. The whole universe is pervaded by Allah's spirit, and everything is dependent on it. In the Qur'an, there are numerous verses connoting the nature and the natural phenomena of the earth and the heavens. All the Qur'anic verses underscore how creation must make use of such natural phenomena that are already made attractive to man (Gueye and Mohamed2022). If we look at all those verses in totality, some of which are referred to earlier, we find that everything is dependent on Allah all the way. According to the Qur'an, things have complex interrelationships at all levels. Any destruction of nature will have direct or indirect consequences on human beings because they themselves are part and parcel of nature.

Humans, in the Islamic viewpoint, are responsible for their behavior with the environment because they have a superiority of brain and mind in the animal kingdom that Allah has created. Khalifah is a vicegerent of Allah and is accountable to Him for his behavior with nature. Semitic religions, including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, have this kind of principle in their environmental philosophy. Tawhid, or the oneness of Allah, is a distinct and most important concept in Islam. Up until now, everything is following this rule, and if we ignore this, then we will not attain success. Islam is in a developing process toward a condition of moderation. We should have a moderate and mild way of life and should avoid extremes. Islam, in all spheres of human life, does not allow inequality (Hanic and Smolo2023). Islam has a distinct viewpoint of being a moderate society. Islam emphasizes humanism. Man is situated between extreme matter and light. Indigenous tradition is to use the resources of nature very carefully and urgently. Only use those natural resources that are beneficial for you. This is the advice of Prophet Muhammad to his followers.

3. Seerah as a Source of Environmental Guidance

The Seerah is gifted to us by way of historical accounts of the different episodes that took place in the life of the Prophet. Through these historical incidents, we learn about the values, ethics, and ideologies by which the Prophet sought to reform society in anticipation of the moral, ethical, and spiritual responsibilities of his followers. Consequently, the Seerah is an essential resource for us to explore, understand, and implement the environmental teachings of the Prophet. The decisions of the Prophet were often influenced by an ethical awareness of the environment.

Historically contextualizing these values does not necessarily limit them to their particular time or people. It serves to show how values that we might take for granted today found particular forms in their particular time, and it also humanizes these values at the same time. The Seerah has played a vital role in formulating societal understanding of ethical norms and traditions, which are still exerting significant influence upon the growth of Muslim eco-activism (Shabbir et al.2021). Our Prophet integrated respect for the environment in every aspect of life, thus encapsulating it in the culture and becoming an integral part of societal and community practices. In service to Islamic environmentalism, these passages, re-inspected and seen through a contemporary lens, can provide an undeveloped ecological ethos. Often, they do so by implementing lessons into the daily life of the Prophet alongside additional commentary to explain the practical implications. They suggest that these passages create an environmental ethic and simultaneously embolden their readers.

3.1. Definition and Significance of Seerah in Islam

Seerah is a term with Arabic roots, which refers to the documented history of the blessed Prophet's mission on Earth. Seerah in Islam is more than just historic documentation (Ullah, 2024). It is a source that provides spiritual and ethical guidance to believers. Unlike a book of history, historical inaccuracies are not the greatest problem with the study of Seerah, because the greatest concern has to do with the psychological and spiritual effects that grow within an individual. Seerah allows the teachings of Islam to remain not only unique but practical simultaneously. It provides lessons and guidelines for every aspect of human activity. The knowledge of Seerah helps to connect the teachings of Islam to the real world. This is true also for issues of the natural world. Does Islam offer any teachings or guidelines about human interaction with the physical environment? The answer is found in the study of Seerah (Hayu and Abdullah2024).

There is a relatively small amount of scholarship that relates Islamic scriptures or scholars to the ongoing field of ecological research. Currently, the new field of Islamic Environment Studies benefits from a foundation laid by Muslims who have contributed papers or books that sometimes include stories from Seerah to expand understanding of how Islamic faith is linked with ecological justice. Students enrolled in courses such as Islamic Environmental Ethics are sometimes introduced to the story of the woman who threw garbage at Prophet Muhammad, yet he responded with prayer for her. This act supports the assertion that Islamic faith instructs people to care for the environment, as seen in the Seerah. The primary sources of Islam, the Quran and Prophetic examples, emphasize the interconnectedness of theological understandings about the creator and the natural world. Nature is a sign of Allah revealing His presence, mercy, and compassion for all forms of life. The study of the Seerah provides insight into prophets' attitudes toward natural surroundings and can inspire holistic Islamic ethics concerning environmental stewardship. (Nasir & Akhtar, 2024)

4. Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) Relationship with Nature

Borders of nature manifest the connection and disconnection between human beings and the world around them. Prophet Muhammad was the last prophet, the seal of prophets, of Islam; as a perfect creation or a half-make of Allah, his life serves as a model for Muslims in all walks of life. This also includes the relationship of a human being with surrounding nature or Earth. The Prophet's conduct with nature and its beings reveals his wisdom and insights into policies of the environment. It shows that his life enfolds directions for practical implementation. For him, therefore, the landscape was, indeed, his biography, expressing in stone, plant, topographic, and every other component of nature that he

had come to identify; there is an implied but essential soul in this life of a particular environment, pointing to the scope of the developing relationship between a man and his world. In the following, the Prophet's relationship with nature has been dealt with in the Seerah and the directions of practices — ethical conduct — with nature emanating from it. (Hasan2022)

Prophet Muhammad was consistent in respecting all forms of life, whether animals, plants, or rocks. This consistent respect for nature indicates his understanding of an ecosystem and his recognition of links between all manifested life forms. The Prophet also interpreted them through revelation. Consequently, he protected and furthered the care of the environment. The Prophet used to discourage cutting down anything in full, particularly palm trees, not even in war or in the frenzy of enthusiasm. The following instances occur one after the other in the Prophet's life. They illustrate concern not to damage the order of nature — not to interfere in the balance and harmony maintained naturally between different kingdoms for the common good of the whole creation. In Islam, then, the whole of the earth's creation indicates its Lord. Muslims should maintain the balance and harmony of the natural environment (Alvi & Cheema, 2023). Erratic cutting of trees, for example, resulting in the denuding of hills from peasantry for food and fodder, would distort the landscape, destroy the habitat of wildlife, increase the loss of soil due to erosion and deluge in mud, and permit more arbitrary water regimes. Muslim believers need a forested, beautified landscape, a sanctuary of biological quality and balance, an integrated complex of scenic attractions, soil and water dynamics, flora and fauna, and social and cosmic intangibles. The Prophet's outlook and strategy derive the basic ethical and valid principle from a revelation. Properly tended palm gardens formed the source of radiant wellsprings, of technical flowers, and of shade; they abounded in food and shelter, making Arab villages and homes picturesque and charming. The Prophet recognized the aesthetic pleasure and often spoke in admiration about the splendid beauty of landscapes rich in trees and blooming flowers. The value of trees and flowers in Islam was thus utilitarian and aesthetic, expressed in the ethical responsibility to love nature (Kolkailah, 2023).

4.1. Respect for Animals and Plants

The Prophet was a mercy not just for humans, but for the entire universe. Animals and plants benefit from his mercy. The teachings and actions of the Prophet towards animal and plant life are mentioned, as well as the stories related to this respect. According to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, animals are not regarded as human possessions and are not supposed to be treated without regard. If an animal is sacrificed, it is to be performed in the most merciful manner. Animals have rights that are supposed to be observed. (Mazroaa, 2024)

The Prophet instructed people to show respect to plants, too. He said, "If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person, or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as a charity from him." The Prophet illustrated that planting vegetation is a charitable act, and taking care of trees is essential. People thought there were a range of possible reasons to prevent the Prophet from planting the trees himself in Madinah. The Prophet advised the Arabs to perform Hijra in the Hijr season of the Gazwa-e-Zafr. The Prophet then went to the suburban areas of Ruhubah for refreshment. He stated the very noticeable sign that "One who can come beyond Ruhubah on the hillock can enter Madinah." Hazrat Sayyidna Sa'ad bin Khayz Abu Raqar Cali was the Mu'azzin of the Prophet in those days. A villager named As'as bin Zurarah missed the declaration due to sleep. After several soldiers had missed the sign, Hazrat Sayyidina, (Hossini et al.2023)

The issue of environmental ethics: the respect for all life forms, which includes human and non-human beings, has its roots in Islamic tradition. The Islamic importance of

animals and the environment is not new; it existed during the time of the Prophet, whose care, love, and respect for animals and the environment is repeated time and time again in condolence. Is it not these examples from the Seerah that shed light on the current discussions on animal welfare and the environment? Can they not be called part of the environmental ethical discussion, many of which have been handed down to us?

The answers to the statements are not very difficult: they can be addressed by delving into the existing biographies of the Prophet on the subject. The sub-themes of the environment can more than easily be found in the various volumes of Seerah. Animals, like human beings, have rights. They should also not suffer abuse or neglect. It is forbidden to practice destruction and ravage of animals and plants. It has been narrated on the authority of Abu Ayyub Ansari that the Prophet forbade animals to be imprisoned for a long time, having seen retaliation in one place (Ghazali & Kamal, 2023). Concerning the right to justice, God's Messenger has been recorded as describing that a woman who imprisoned a cat would have hellfire unless she fed it, nor would she give the cat liberty so that it could feed itself - the depth of the hadith does obviously express a concern and give an indication that it is better to give the right to liberty for the animal.

5. Conservation and Stewardship in the Prophet's Life

However, not only did the Prophet encourage planting, he also prohibited cutting down fruit trees. Here again, we find an example that models stewardship for the environment, particularly perennial resources. That is, cutting down a fruit-bearing tree may remove its productive value indefinitely. Another example that recalls reforms implemented by the Prophet in Medina exemplifies this spirit. The policies of extracting wealth from oasis agriculture included through leases that the Prophet had entered with them. Instead of making quick gains, the Prophet cut down palm trees, reasoning that the contracts were no longer fair since the owners of the trees had left Medina, increasing the profitability of date production. (Abolfotoh, 2022)

Ultimately, the Prophet's teachings remind us that people are moral actors whose informed epistemologies encourage them to avoid wasting, without needing to see the effects of this on other beings. Indeed, these narrations resonate with definitions of sustainability. While these narrations did not consider the ecological connection between consumption and environmental repercussions, they appreciated the material hardship of wasteful ways. Again, we find that the Prophet's values are clearly applicable to contemporary environmental issues, and that this Prophet set an example as a steward of resources, as an implementer of conservation. Muslims are thus obliged to see ourselves as stewards of the environment. (Munawwar-Rachman2024)

5.1. Water Conservation and Management

There are different aspects of water management and stewardship that can be learned from the life of the Prophet Muhammad. Water is central to Islam and is not only a sign of life and an indicator of sustenance, but also has a unique place in the religious and spiritual life of Muslims. There are various sayings of the Prophet Muhammad which advocate respect towards water. In principle, water must be used with care, not be overused or wasted, and not be used for non-productive purposes. The concept of environmental ethics also advocates for the sustainable use of natural resources, in particular, water as one of the two most important resources mentioned in environmental literature. This practice of the Prophet is highly relevant to the practice of our era when the world is battling harsh water scarcities. (Barratt et al.2022)

The following hadith gives recommendations for consumption of water: "The Prophet Muhammad forbade the practice of breathing into a vessel, and then drinking from it." This is a communication encouraging moderation in the use of the divine endowment and

ensuring prudent use of water. In another hadith, it is narrated by Jarir, "The Prophet Muhammad said: 'Do not waste water, even if you perform your ablution on the bank of an abundantly flowing river.'" Some sayings of the Prophet Muhammad also give benefit to the local community for better access and usage of the water resources. Many sayings of the Prophet Muhammad also respect the equitable access and usage of water resources to all elements of society. For example, it is narrated that the Prophet Muhammad said: "When people would run about trying to find water, Uthman will give general access to a spring of water and establish a public facility for it (Malam2021). Then, whoever wishes to drink may drink free of charge and take as much as he needs." This is indeed a very beautiful practice to allow access to clean water supplies in an equitable manner. Water conservation and management are strongly evident in the Seerah. These studies and recommendations that we have discussed were part of the Prophet's own practice and also found in his teachings. Hence, water conservation and water rights are integral to Islamic teaching in general, and to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad in particular.

6. Lessons for Modern Environmental Challenges

Lesson 1: Decisive action and collective responsibility. During the time of the Prophet, it was clear that the environment was polluted and that changes for the better took dear resources and much effort. Yet that change was made possible by organizing a community system of work and wealth distribution to establish the very first large-scale environmental volunteer-driven society with rules of governance between various groups. This understanding of his Sunnah substantiates the call for coordination between various communities in society following our faith, in joint action for protection and renewal, where the role of judgment as amanah is clear: what this means in terms of responsibilities and in terms of rewards. The fact that Muslims hand over the command and ownership to Allah allows them to care for their land, plants, animals, and people as their very own trust. Whereas institutional religion pushed forward community volunteering for public benefits such as war and the building of public infrastructure, this was the first instance historically of such an expansive community movement for a science-backed environmental cause. (Kashwan and V2021)

Lesson 2: Tackling and redirecting consumerist behavior. The surplus generated from the marketplace and the innovation in land use presented use cases of dominant import to globalization, based on the Quran and Sunnah. A high proportion of animal products traded within the Mediterranean, the fish industry's oil surpluses in existing oil refinery practices, a demand mechanism that strongly values fish as food, as well as ongoing trade and depletion in general during the build-up to the Prophet's time, underscored the current issues of forest destruction, food fisheries, and agricultural links through trade (Siddiqui, 2024). The economic incidence factor, or rather, the tax rate that applies to value added at the receiving/giving handover of goods within the marketplace was in favor of businessmen rather than the state based on the same religious texts, alternative to farmers being the victims of the value-added carbon trading policies of recent globalization that tend not to address the demand for waste production or indeed waste itself, instead accelerating consumerism. It is evident that the role values play in driving market demand, by increasing taxes for overconsumption and waste disposal, favors what is instead required: a reintegration between family nutrition, food systems, and land (Hamza et al., 2024). Therefore, the institutionalization of links between environment and community management from 1400 years ago is of direct importance in the structuring and insertion of policies that discourage current globalized economic activities that have systematically destroyed the environment.

6.1. Climate Change and Pollution

The Hadith of Prophet Muhammad in the practical sense of the Islamic ethical and ecological paradigm is the main goal of this part. In a moral context, the security and defense of animals represent the first step in understanding pollution and the destruction of species. This should become a religious obligation resulting from a prophetic paradigm. The cluttering and waste of God's favor represent a desecration of the earth. In this chapter, all these ethical positions are practically embodied. Given our holistic way of living with environmental issues in Islamic teaching from the perspective of the Prophet's biography, we clarify that our modern materialistic view of environmental issues is current, complex, varied, and completely syncretic. This duty is its negligence or buy-in (Abadi et al.2022). Conservation of everyone's wealth from overuse and waste of resources, and no one is affected by his damnation. The dependence on preservation for other people makes it mandatory for us to engage in issues such as climate change, for sustainable development, which is currently in short supply in Muslim countries, by learning from modern science and technology, a vital component. Ironically, however, the Prophet instructed us to take proactive standing action in a competitive thinking mode with the rest of the people we compete with. Forty years ago, the Prophet described the potential impacts of the winter season and the societal norms that shaped him. Today, researchers are discovering the need for a developing and equitable policy response to bring peace and tranquility to the world community. It is important for us to recognize the urgency and gravity of the situation at hand. Climate change is not merely a fleeting issue, but rather a pressing crisis that demands our immediate attention and action. The consequences of our inaction are dire, affecting not only our environment but also the delicate balance of our ecosystems. We must strive to protect and preserve the natural world, for it is a precious gift from God that must be cherished and safeguarded for future generations. The Hadith provides us with a guiding light, illuminating the path towards a sustainable and harmonious future. Let us heed its wisdom and embark on a journey of environmental stewardship, mindful of our duty to protect and care for all living beings. Through education, awareness, and collective effort, we can make a significant difference and create a better world for ourselves and generations to come (Muhamad et al., 2020).

It is our responsibility to take concrete actions to combat climate change pollution, recognizing that our actions have an impact on the delicate balance of our planet. Together, let us rise to the challenge and combat climate change pollution, standing firm in our commitment to preserve the beauty and sanctity of our planet. By engaging in sustainable practices, promoting renewable energy, reducing waste, and advocating for environmentally friendly policies, we can pave the way for a brighter future. Let us cultivate a deep appreciation for the natural world, fostering a sense of reverence and awe for the intricate ecosystems that sustain us. In our pursuit of environmental stewardship, let us work towards creating a society that celebrates and protects the diversity of life on Earth. We must strive for equitable policies that prioritize the well-being of all species and ensure a just transition towards a low-carbon economy. By embracing the principles of conservation and sustainable development, we can foster a world in which future generations can thrive (Halfon et al., 2022).

Education and awareness play a crucial role in tackling climate change pollution. By spreading knowledge and understanding about the causes and consequences of climate change, we can empower individuals and communities to take action. Let us invest in educational programs that promote environmental literacy, inspiring a sense of responsibility and agency in the face of this global challenge. Furthermore, collective effort is essential in addressing climate change pollution. By joining forces and

collaborating with like-minded individuals, organizations, and governments, we can amplify our impact and bring about meaningful change. Let us forge partnerships that transcend borders and leverage our collective strengths to drive sustainable solutions. The time to act is now. The urgency of the climate crisis necessitates immediate and decisive action. Let us seize this opportunity to unite as global citizens, transcending differences and working towards a shared vision of a sustainable and resilient future. By embracing the teachings of the Hadith and integrating them into our daily lives, we can become custodians of the Earth, safeguarding its beauty and preserving its resources for generations to come. Together, we can make a difference. Together, we can combat climate change pollution and forge a path towards a more sustainable and just world. Let us rise to the challenge and fulfill our duty to protect and cherish the planet we call home (Nawaz, 2020).

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the examination of relevant literature gives us some insight into the importance of environmental teaching in the life of the Prophet, including His daily life in the light of the norms of appreciation in dealing with free natural realities, sustainability in the usage of natural resources, the need for establishing balance, and a recognition of an ethic that demands obeisance to animals and plants, as well as the spiritual domain in which animals live and breathe. The concern regarding the ethical teachings and person of the Prophet in their relationship to the care of the Earth, inherited from this largely forgotten pre-modernity, makes the integration of ethical teaching with modern ecological concerns seem cursory rather than urgent. Although the Prophet did not conceive of some grandiose systematic treatise on the role of the environment, this essay seeks to show that teaching in the context of His Seerah reveals a deep concern for man-Khalifa's own spiritual life. Although its approach is modest, its import is considerable. The approach given here should not be seen as something static but as an invitation to competently harvest various practical dimensions of ethical approaches that successfully interweave with modern ecological challenges so that greater advantage could be taken of Islamic environmental resources. The Seerah raises the issue of corporate spirit, which lies in the fertile field of collective behavior that may enrich Muslim ethical reflection on ecological concerns. Ultimately, it seeks Islamic commitment so that the Earth we inhabit is well-managed and responsibly cared for, as responsible stewards of planet Earth.

7.1. Summary of Key Findings and Insights

The exploration of the life of the Prophet as a vehicle for delivering an ethos of ecological and natural theology has revealed a few insights into the environmental ethics implicit in the Prophet's mission and practices during his time. One important lesson is the belief in humans being appointed vicegerents of the Earth and its resources. The second insight is the Prophet's respect for nature, as he disliked wasting natural resources such as food and water. The third key insight is that the Qur'anic world clearly outlines the principles of conservation and preservation of plant and animal species and associated ecosystems. An even more direct point is that these values were centered by the Prophet's Seerah. The Prophet's Seerah played a transformative role in nurturing the ethics and building compassion for all sentient beings during the early years of Islam.

And the best summary of these ecological values embraced within the Prophetic Seerah is the call to plant a seed or cure a sick animal. It is fair to question the relevance of these Prophetic insights today when the environmental movement has already developed into a modern science and policy challenge. Is not ecological ethics simply a case of religious people echoing ecological values of a largely secular age and seeking to integrate them within an Islamic framework? Ecology and

environmentalism emerge as entirely separate subjects, which is an unhelpful abstract exercise. One of the conclusions of the Prophet's life is that the Prophet's words and practice can be read as an 'inspiration', a tradition which was 'not simple' that can serve 'culture as a resource'. In other words, the ethical pathway to ecological renewal and safe biotechnological advance is to put our minds into gear and then turn back to traditions such as the Seerah as 'curative', a process of rekindling and integrating our being with becoming instead of boxing the past as a fantasy. Through this renewed engagement, we can go forth with others and 'perform our lives in a new environment as a collective cosmic effort'. Our concern to partake in ecological issues, therefore, should not be seen as a mere abstract moral obligation between oneself and the environment. Many current environmental concerns as well as others in the future can only be resolved collectively by referring to the life and practice of the Prophet, following the collective example of the prophetic community to assist in resolving mass environmental crises.

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