

An Islamic Approach towards Environmental Education

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Abstract

A distinctly Islamic approach to environmental education is pinpointed as a result of (a) identifying, listing, sorting, and grouping the verses in the Qura'n (the holy book of Islam and Moslems) related to environmental education such as learning, exercising, and mind and knowledge development, and (b) finding connections and relationships between groups according to mutual meanings. The approach is formulated in a tripod-type structure. Allah Subhanahu Wa Taala, the one-and-only Creator, represented by the belief in, and application of his rules and directions as stated in the holy Qura'n, stands at the top of the tripod. The legs of the tripod represent faith, manifestation, and knowledge, and each leg, in turn, constitutes the top of a local sub-tripod comprising of path, reference, and end results.

Résumé

Une approche islamique distincte en éducation écologique se définit clairement comme un résultat (a) de l'identification, du classement, du tri et du regroupement des versets du Coran (le livre sacré de l'Islam et des Musulmans) reliés à l'éducation écologique tels que apprendre, pratiquer et développer l'esprit et le savoir, et (b) de la constatation découlant des connexions et des relations entre les groupes selon des perceptions mutuelles. L'approche est formulée dans une structure de type trépied. Allah Subhanahu Wa Taala, l'unique et le seul créateur, personnifiant la croyance aux règles et aux directives et leur application telles qu'énoncées dans le saint Coran, est au sommet du trépied. Les pattes du trépied représentent la foi, la manifestation et le savoir, et chaque patte, en retour, constitue le sommet d'un sous-trépied attenant qui est composé de la voie à suivre, de la source et du résultat obtenu.

Keywords: Islam; Islamic approach; environmental education; environmental management; environmental ethics

Introduction

Islam, as a religion, is the complete submission and surrender to God or Allah Subhanahu Wa Taala (SWT). It is the obedience to Allah's rules as presented in the holy book, the Qura'n, and the teachings brought by the Prophet Mohammad—peace be upon him (PBUH). To be a follower of Islam, called Moslem, one needs only to pronounce and to believe in the contents of the Declaration of the Faith: "I bear witness that there is no God but the Almighty God and that Mohammad is a messenger of God." In the

Qura'n, Moslems are considered those who sought the path of right conduct (Qura'n 72:14).

In addition to representing about one-fifth of the world's population (*Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2005), Moslems live in over 40 countries with various states of political character and economic stability. Since the failure of the Ottoman Islamic State (Khilafeh), Moslems do not have a unified state as an Islamic political, legal, and religious reference. This is important for the development and dynamics of Islam and Islamic approaches in all aspects, including environmental management and education.

The Islamic approach differs from other human-made approaches in many respects:

- The Islamic approach is directly related and connected to faith, not interest (e.g., economic, political, environmental, or other) or a scientific basis (Qura'n 21:94 and 105, 64:13, 61:11, 57:8, 49:15, 47:36, 40:58, and 27:97).
- The Islamic approach relies on the Qura'n as the only non-changing reference to all laws, rules, and regulations, including those related to the environment (Qura'n 18:1, 27, and 49, 6:38, 11:1, and 27:75).
- The Islamic approach considers the people of the earth as one nation and the Qura'n as the reference for operating, maintaining, and resolving matters, differences, and conflicts of all people and all aspects of life (Qura'n 2:213, 4:105, 5:57, and 16:64).
- The Islamic approach, with the Qura'n as the last holy book from Allah (SWT), confirms what went before it: the Torah and the Bible (Qura'n 3:2). This means that Islam considers the Qura'n, the Bible, and the Torah as the code of conduct on earth sent by Allah; however, the Qura'n is the newer and last version of that code. In this regard, the Qura'n does not contradict with the Bible and the Torah, but has a handle on them like any new code (Qura'n 5:48).
- Implementation of the Islamic approach is based on individual Moslem accountability or responsibility towards Allah (SWT) (Qura'n 17:14, 39:41, 67:2, and 11:7).
- Changes in, and/or development to, the Islamic approach or code of conduct can occur with time and space. While the text in the Qura'n is fixed, its interpretation by Moslems changes according to the state of affairs or environment facing Moslems anytime and anywhere. In Islam, Moslems are characterized by self-control from being under continuous testing by Allah (SWT) to behave according to his principles and to use the resources given to them by Allah (SWT) in balance and in the best manner possible. They will be asked by Allah (SWT) in the hereafter about their hands, legs, minds, ears, eyes, mouth, and other organs, and how they used them to do righteous and beneficial deeds (Qura'n 28:77, 11:7 and 61, 67:2, 95:4, 55:60, 39:18, 24:38, 16:90, 62:10, 10:26, 21:35, and 7:168).

A previous paper by the author identified the Islamic Approach to Environmental Management—IAEM (Haddad, 2000). The Islamic Approach to Environmental Management is based on a balanced, tripod-type structure which constitutes the framework of the approach. In this structure, the head represents a nucleus, consisting of all Allah’s (SWT) management rules and regulations (see Figure 1). The three legs of the tripod represent:

- the environmental resources (the creation elements),
- the activities of or about these environmental resources (utilization of elements), and
- the impacts resulting from these activities.

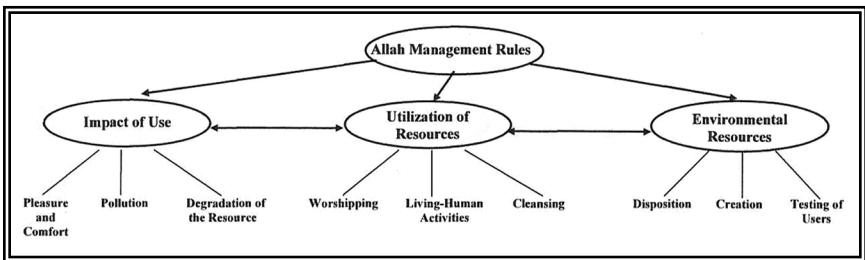


Figure 1. Schematic description of the Islamic approach to environmental management.

The Islamic approach to environmental management finds that the status of an environmental element or resource relates to and interconnects with its utilization and, consequently, its impacts. The details of each branch and sub-branch of the main tripod indicate the specificity of the Islamic approach to environmental management. For example, through the Islamic approach to environmental management Moslems (a) are given natural resources by Allah—made available, suitable, and easy to use—as a test for them to use in a balanced manner and to do righteous deeds; (b) use the resources for living, cleanliness, and to look after and think about the creation and development of all environmental resources; and (c) live happily if they follow (a) and (b); if not, they will lose resource availability through pollution and/or depletion.

In this paper, what is meant by environmental education involves the realization of the Islamic approach to environmental management by Moslems in everyday life. The goal of this paper is to present and discuss the Islamic approach to environmental education, including the applicability and adaptability of the Islamic approach to environmental management to Moslems’ behaviours and beliefs.

Environmental Education in Islam: An Overview

Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) approach in passing the message of Islam to people was based on *manifestation*, and reaching it by means of satisfaction. In Islam, manifestation means the explanation of how to apply the Qura'n in everyday life, and how to be evidence for the truth. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) demonstrated Islam to be easy (i.e., not more than ordinary people can do), comprehensive (covering all aspects of life), and beneficial for people in both life and the hereafter. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) left the setting of rules and regulations, governmental policies, strategies, action plans, and military and other affairs to the collective leadership of Moslems to discuss and decide upon (Sabeq, 1992). This practice constitutes one important basis for development in and of Islam.

Several Islamic scientists from the early days of Islam searched for approaches to environmental education by exploring the relationship between knowledge and education. Al-Kindy (801-873) proposed that certain passages from the Qura'n, whose literal interpretation would be in conflict with reality, should instead be understood as allegories to guide men¹ of reason (Hoodbhoy, 1991).

Al-Ghazaalee (1058-1111), an Islamic sciences professor at the Nizamyah University in Bagdad and one of the first to relate cause-and-effect logic and mathematics, acknowledged in his *Book of Knowledge* three basic Islamic criteria:

- the source of knowledge,
- the level of obligation to seeking knowledge by individual Moslems and Islamic society, and
- the social function of knowledge as its quality and usefulness (Bilal Philips, 2001).

Hoodbhoy (1991) tried to answer the question of the compatibility of Islam and science, and sharply criticized modern Islamic scientists for not being realistic in relating religion to science.

Butt (1991) suggested five areas to modernize the Islamic education system, including entering Islamic beliefs and values into curricula, tackling problematic issues, using the Qura'n as a main reference in system development, and integrating science and religion.

Saedy (1994) presented an approach for comprehensive reconciliation between the environment and humans. The approach is based on taking Allah's (SWT) commands in consideration and regulating the relationships of humans, among themselves and between themselves and other creatures and elements of the environment.

Izzi Dein (2000), in studying the environmental dimensions of Islam, found that the main environmental issue in Islam is balance, not only between human beings and their surroundings, but also between the inner

and outer dimensions of their make-up. Balance in Islam, for Izzi Dein, is considered part of the human search for happiness and the meaning of existence. He formulated 12 Islamic environmental principles, including the Islamic understanding of human surroundings, the relationship between Allah (SWT) and human beings, the conservation of the natural environment in Islam, Islamic law, protection and conservation, Islamic environmental economics, forms of ownership, equity of future generations' interests, objectives of consumption, government decision-making processes, and the utilization of the concept of public interest.

Arnaout (2000) related practices to knowledge-seeking and understanding the environment and environmental education, and presented some examples and case studies through analyzing and comparing Islamic to non-Islamic or western practices. He found that Islam presented a comprehensive, integrated approach to environmental protection and conservation, covering all aspects of the environment.

Qardawi (2001) found that Allah (SWT) created the environment with all its aspects, elements, and contents in order: balanced, integrated, clean, and suitable for human use. Qardawi found that solutions to environmental problems and hazards lie first in the treatment of humans and making them righteous people. He acknowledged the need for environmental law, regulations, and ethics in resolving environmental problems.

Al-Balagh (2001) presented that earth was created by Allah (SWT) for human use in natural equilibrium to make his life better. Al-Balagh discussed the need for collective work and efforts to resolve problems and protect the environment, and distinguished two Islamic principles:

- that Allah (SWT) has predestined the creation of everything to be beneficial to the creatures and life cannot do without them, and
- Allah's (SWT) actions are purposive and built on wisdom.

Hamdy (2002) described, in a broader sense, the relationship between human, nature, and environmental education by stating the importance of writing in Islam and the importance of the senses and their uses, including hearing, seeing, and thinking. He discussed the Islamic perspective regarding the close tie between faith and righteous deed, and the management of the universe and its environment through the integrated roles of humans, animals, and materials, including air, land, water, and plants.

Hasan (2002) identified three essential elements for the development of any Islamic state, including:

- individual education that takes Islamic teachings into consideration,
- the solid connection between a Moslem's life and Islamic concepts, and
- considering Islam as a way of life and not a culture only.

Iqbal (2002), in describing the new nexus of Islam and science, indicated that this relationship is not an academic exercise. Rather, it is a deep thinking process that should be based on several concepts, including:

- rooting the Islamic perspective of modern science in the spiritual universe of Islam,
- understanding the relationship between Islam and modern science,
- closely linking the development of the education and learning system to the development of Arabic language,
- translating the Qura'n concepts into a framework that can be applied to modern science, and
- ensuring that any changes to happen should be carried out by qualified institutions and teams of individuals.

Ozdemir (2002) defined the environment, from the Islamic point of view, as "Sustainer of All the Worlds." The Islamic view of the environment, according to Ozdemir, sees that everything in the universe is created by Allah (SWT) and we are Allah's (SWT) vicegerents on the earth. He discussed the importance of cleanliness, the preservation of trees and protection of animals, and the importance of preserving the earth's resources.

Amin (2003) acknowledged in "A Preface to Islam and Ecology" that the security and sustainability of earth is a major challenge to all, and that the unity to all reality (*tawhid*) and the balance of nature (*mizan*) constitute an important basis for Islamic perspectives on ecology and environmental ethics.

Sayeh and Awad (2004) indicated that Islam is a human religion that interacts with the environment. They also stated that in the Qura'n, Allah (SWT) established the exact balances and laws needed for a healthy environment; they concluded that environmental degradation is therefore caused by human negligence to spiritual and religious aspects of life. They presented a protection framework based on three steps:

- protection through cleanliness,
- protection through stewardship of basic environmental elements including food, water, and air, and
- protection from sexual diseases.

They recommended an increase in environmental studies, Islamic and spiritual self-education, and public awareness.

Based on this literature review, it is evident there is a growing interest in, and contributions from scientists in explaining Islamic perspectives of environmental issues and concerns, including education. The methods used in reaching such perspectives were divergent, and mostly descriptive and non-systematic. These attempts were far from being comprehensive, integrated approaches in which verses in the Qura'n were extracted, organized, and documented or developed in a way to help cope with current societal needs.

It is important to note that because of these deficiencies, Islamic scholars do not yet collectively agree upon or approve the attempts made to date in explaining Islamic perspectives on environmental issues and concerns. There is a need, therefore, for further work on the individual and collective level to reach such basic harmony and build on it in the future. In this paper, and building on the previously developed Islamic approach for environmental management, an attempt is made to further the cause of the representation of the Islamic approach to environmental education.

Islamic Approach to Environmental Education

Methodological Approach

It is important to describe the method used in this study because it is different from other environmental management and education approaches and perspectives in Islam (some of which were described in the literature review of this paper). The method used involved:

- identifying, listing, sorting, and grouping the verses in the Qura'n relating to environmental education, such as mind and knowledge development, learning, and exercising, and then
- finding the connections and relationships between groups of verses, according to mutual meanings.

One translated source of the Qura'n was used throughout the study: *Tafseer Al-Jalalein*, as presented in the computer program *Sakhr* (1997).

It should be noted that the number of verses supporting any element within the approach was large; due to paper length limitations the verses listed are partial and representative.

General Framework

The Islamic environmental education framework, as extracted from the Qura'n, is based on a balanced tripod structure. In this structure, the head (the nucleus) is Allah (SWT), the one and only-creator, represented by the belief in and the application of his rules and directions, as stated in the holy Qura'n. The three legs of the tripod represent (a) knowledge/understanding, (b) manifestation/differentiation, and (c) faith/believing (see Figure 2).

The three legs of the tripod have common attributes: sermon and advice, healing and recovery, and guidance and mercy (Qura'n 10:57):

For We had certainly sent unto them a Book (Qura'n), based on knowledge, which We explained in detail, a guide and a mercy to all who believe. (Qura'n 7:52)

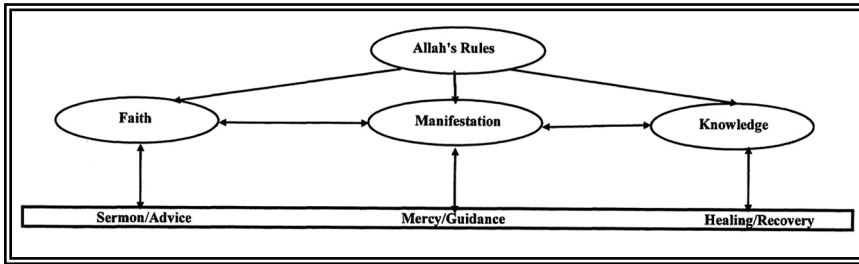


Figure 2. Schematic description of environmental education framework in Islam.

The three legs of the tripod are interconnected and interrelated, meaning that any environmental education process needs to have (a) adequate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter under consideration, based on (b) faith—believing in Allah (SWT) and the purity and appropriateness of his rules and regulations, and (c) deep, detailed manifestation—differentiation between right and wrong, good and bad, beneficial and non-beneficial, etc.:

But those among them who are well-grounded in knowledge, and the Believers, believe in what hath been revealed to thee and what was revealed before thee; and (especially) those who establish regular prayer and practice regular charity and believe in Allah and in the Last Day: to them shall We soon give a great reward. (Qura'n 4: 162)

Each of the sub-tripods has three legs: paths, reference, and end result. As the main tripod is balanced, each of the three legs constitutes a balanced sub-tripod. These were obtained from many verses in Qura'n relating to knowledge, manifestation, and faith. The following sections and Figures 3, 4, and 5 describe and discuss the details and suitability of each of the tripod legs and sub-tripods legs within the proposed approach. However, because of the sharing between the three main tripod legs of the sub-tripod titles, paths, reference, and end result, a general description of these is given first, then a description of each of the main tripod legs and its sub-tripod is presented.

The Path-System Sub-Tripod

The path-system sub-tripod describes where Allah (SWT) called people to follow the straight path and way out or way of doing things and deeds (Qura'n 72:11 and 16, 80:20, 76:2 and 3 and 29, 73:19, 40:38, 2:218, 7:146, and 6:153). These path verses were grouped in relation to knowledge, manifestation, and faith. For example, the knowledge-related path was grouped into three classes: caring for all, hearing and listening, and observing and watching over:

Say thou: "This is my Way: I do invite unto Allah—on evidence clear as the seeing with one's eyes—I and whoever follows me. Glory to Allah! and never will I join gods with Allah!" (Qura'n 17:108)

Allah (SWT) related the creation of environmental element to providing the right, straight, or affordable path or ways (Qura'n 20:53, 21:31, and 27:15).

The Reference Sub-Tripod

As a source for exploring and regulating faith, manifestation, or knowledge in our everyday lives, one may find many verses in the Qura'n discussing Allah's prophets' or messengers' role and duties, the knowledgeable people's duties in society, individual Moslem duties in everyday activities, the distinctions between various life activities and matters, the importance of acting with dignity and being strong, and individual Moslem behaviour as aiming towards righteous deeds, being truthful, and repenting to Allah when doing any bad/unacceptable deeds (Qura'n 2:213, 16:44, 3:138 and 187, 4:105, 3:30, 17:89 and 106, 8:54, 35:5, 34:28, 8:54, 59:19 and 21, 45:20 and 34, 57:25, 49:13, and 22:49). These verses were grouped in relation to knowledge, manifestation, and faith. For example, the manifestation-related references were grouped into three classes: prophets and messengers, reflection, and knowledgeable persons.

The End-Result Sub-Tripod

In the Qura'n, the consequence of doing any activity or deed—good or bad, beneficial or not—is connected and related to the path taken and reference considered (Qura'n 32:14, 28:77, 20:126, 6:44, 30:41, 10:44 and 108, 4:170, and 3:21). These consequence verses were grouped and related to faith, manifestation, and knowledge. For example, the faith consequences group was sub-grouped in three components: gaining in life and the hereafter, losing in life and the hereafter, and fulfilling justice and equity.

The Faith Sub-Tripod

Faith in Islam is connected to righteous and beneficial deeds (Qura'n 98:7, 103:3, 95:6, 85:11, 84:25, 47:12, 45:30, and 41:8) and believers should not fear shortness of income, facing injustice, or harm (Qura'n 72:13, 67:29, 64:11, 47:2, and 20:112):

But he who works deeds of righteousness, and has Faith, will have no fear of harm nor of any curtailment (of what is his due). (Qura'n 20:112)

The faith sub-tripod comprises three interrelated elements: path, reference, and end results (see Figure 3).

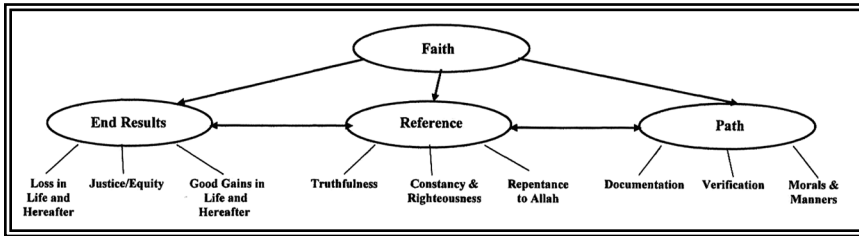


Figure 3. Schematic description of faith tripod.

Faith Path

The faith path consist of three interrelated components: morals/manners, verification/validation, and documentation/recording (Qura'n 47:21, 45:21, 42:15, 2:44, and 17:3):

Now then, for that (reason), call (them to the Faith), and stand steadfast as thou art commanded, nor follow thou their vain desires; but say: "I believe in the Book which Allah has sent down; and I am commanded to judge justly between you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord: for us (is the responsibility for) our deeds, and for you for your deeds, there is no contention between us and you. Allah will bring us together, and to Him is (our) final goal." (Qura'n 42:15)

But any that (in this life) had repented, believed, and worked righteousness, will have hopes to be among those who achieve salvation. (Qura'n 28:67, 20:82, 19:60, and 25:70)

Only those are Believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their persons in the Cause of Allah: such are the sincere ones. (Qura'n 49:15)

O ye who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do. (Qura'n 4:135)

O ye who believe! persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allah; that ye may prosper. (Qura'n 3:200)

There are among men some who serve Allah, as it were, on the verge: if good befalls them, they are, therewith, well content; but if a trial comes to them, they turn on their faces; they lose both this world and the Hereafter: that is loss for all to see. (Qura'n 22:11)

Faith Reference

The faith reference sub-tripod consists of three components: repentance/obedience, constancy/righteousness, and truthfulness/fulfillment:

But, without doubt, I am (also) He that forgives again and again, to those who repent, believe, and do right, who, in fine, are ready to receive true guidance. (Qura'n 20:82)

And say: "Work (righteousness): soon will Allah observe your work, and His Messenger, and the Believers: soon will ye be brought back to the Knower of what is hidden and what is open: then will He show you the truth of all that ye did." (Qura'n 9:105)

Faith End Results

The faith end results sub-tripod includes three components: good gains in life and in the hereafter, justice and equity, and loss in life and in the hereafter (Qura'n 24:55, 66:6, 40:40 and 58, 65:11, 63:9, 64:9, 46:19, 45:15, 35:37, 38:28, 34:37, 29:4, 28:84, 30:41, 11:16, 7:181, and 22:14).

But whoever believes, and works righteousness, he shall have a goodly reward, and easy will be his task as we order it by our command. (Qura'n 18:88)

Those who reject Our Signs and the Meeting in the Hereafter, vain are their deeds: can they expect to be rewarded except as they have wrought. (Qura'n 7:147)

Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new Life, a life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions. (Qura'n 16:97)

O ye who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to Piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do. (Qura'n 5:8)

O ye who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do. (Qura'n 4:135)

Manifestation Sub-Tripod

The manifestation sub-tripod comprises three interrelated elements: path, reference, and end results (see Figure 4). Manifestation is how the materialization of life facts and truths is made in Islam. Islam goes into detail in how Moslems should behave in every moment and every activity they

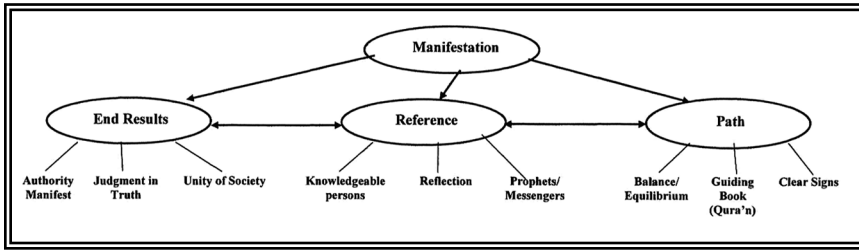


Figure 4. Schematic description of manifestation tripod.

undertake. If a Moslem buys or sells, plants crops, conducts a craft, takes a loan, deals with parents and relatives, deals with neighbors, does research and development, etc., he or she should follow, in order as available, the clear signs and rules set for the specific activity in:

1. the Qura'n,
2. the prophet teachings, and
3. the human knowledge and experience developed with time and accepted by Moslem scholars.

Manifestation Path

The manifestation path includes three components: clear signs, guiding book (Qura'n), and balance/equilibrium. It was drawn from Allah's (SWT) words:

We sent aforetime Our Messengers with Clear Signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance (of Right and Wrong), that men may stand forth in justice. (Qura'n 57:25)

Not equal are the blind and those who (clearly) see: nor are (equal) those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, and those who do evil. Little do ye learn by admonition. (Qura'n 40:58)

Our Lord! Send amongst them a Messenger of their own, who shall rehearse Thy Signs to them and instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom, and sanctify them: for Thou art the Exalted in Might, the Wise. (Qura'n 2:129)

And We sent down the Book to thee for the express purpose, that thou shouldst make clear to them those things in which they differ, and that it should be a guide and a mercy to those who believe. (Qura'n 16:64)

Manifestation Reference

The reference to the manifestation process in the environmental education process were the prophets and the messengers, reflection, and knowledgeable people:

There is no god but He: that is the witness of Allah, His angels, and those endowed with knowledge, standing firm on justice. There is no god but He the Exalted in Power, the Wise. (Qura'n 3:18)

Mankind was one single nation, and Allah sent Messengers with glad tidings and warnings; and with them He sent the Book in truth, to judge between people in matters wherein they differed; but the People of the Book, after the Clear Signs came to them, did not differ among themselves, except through selfish contumacy. Allah by His Grace guided the Believers to the Truth, concerning that wherein they differed. For Allah guides whom He will to a path that is straight. (Qura'n 2:213)

It is He Who has sent amongst the Unlettered a Messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom, although they had been, before, in manifest error. (Qura'n 62:2)

And He has subjected you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth: behold, in that are Signs indeed for those who reflect. (Qura'n 45:13)

And that those on whom knowledge has been bestowed may learn that the (Qura'n) is the Truth from thy Lord, and that they may believe therein, and their hearts may be made humbly (open) to it: for verily Allah is the Guide of those who believe, to the Straight Way. (Qura'n 22:54)

Of those We have created are people who direct (others) with truth, and dispense justice therewith. (Qura'n 7:181)

Manifestation End Results

Manifestation end results are either unity, judgment in truth, or authority and power manifest:

Mankind was one single nation, and Allah sent Messengers with glad tidings and warnings; and with them He sent the Book in truth, to judge between people in matters wherein they differed; but the People of the Book, after the Clear Signs came to them, did not differ among themselves, except through selfish contumacy. Allah by His Grace guided the Believers to the Truth, concerning that wherein they differed. For Allah guides whom He will to a path that is straight. (Qura'n 2:213)

We will, without doubt, help Our Messengers and those who believe (grant them victory), both in this world's life and on the Day when the Witnesses will stand forth. (Qura'n 40:51)

We did indeed send, before thee, Messengers to their (respective) peoples, and they came to them with Clear Signs: then, to those who transgressed, We meted out Retribution: and it was due from Us to aid (grant them victory) those who believed. (Qura'n 30:47)

And those to whom knowledge has come see that the (Revelation) sent down to thee from thy Lord, that is the Truth, and that it guides to the Path of the Exalted (in Might), Worthy of all praise. (Qura'n 34:6)

A similar (favour have ye already received) in that We have sent among you a Messenger of your own, rehearsing to you Our Signs, and purifying you, and instructing you in Scripture and Wisdom, and in new knowledge. (Qura'n 2:151)

(They must be raised up), in order that He may manifest to them the truth of that wherein they differ, and that the rejecters of Truth may realize that they had indeed (surrendered to) Falsehood. (Qura'n 16:39)

Knowledge Sub-Tripod

Knowledge in Islam has distinguished meaning and is the theory and practice of religious and materialistic human sciences, learning and educational processes, and research and development (Qura'n 27:44, 40, 11, and 14, 24:41, 22:71, 45:13, 59:21, and 10:101, 24, and 14) (see Figure 5).

Knowledge represents an important part of the Islamic point of view on environmental education, starting from the Qura'nic milestone that Allah (SWT) encompasses the knowledge of everything in Qura'n, and that the Qura'n is a guiding book for believers in all aspects (Qura'n 65:12, 41:54, 11:92, 8:47, 4:126 and 108, and 3:120):

It gives guidance to the Right, and we have believed therein: we shall not join (in worship) any (gods) with our Lord. (Qura'n 72:2)

Nay, here are Signs self-evident in the hearts of those endowed with knowledge: and none but the unjust reject Our Signs. (Qura'n 29:49)

And We granted them Clear Signs in affairs (of Religion): it was only after knowledge had been granted to them that they fell into schisms. (Qura'n 45:17)

And those to whom knowledge has come see that the (Revelation) sent down to thee from thy Lord, that is the Truth, and that it guides to the Path of the Exalted (in Might), Worthy of all praise. (Qura'n 34:6)

Say: Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who are endued with understanding that receive admonition. (Qura'n 39:9)

Knowledge Path

The knowledge path includes caring for all, listening and hearing (being close and listening with sight observation), and observing and having broad vision and mind (Qura'n 7:145, 49:13, 28:77, 16:78, 67:22, 46:26, 32:9, 17:36, 2:164 and 181, 3:186, 4:46 and 140, 11:24, 39:21, 7:57, 31:20, and 29:20):

Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night and the day; in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind; in the rain which Allah sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the change of the winds, and the clouds which they trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth;—(Here) indeed are Signs for a people that are wise. (Qura'n 2:164).

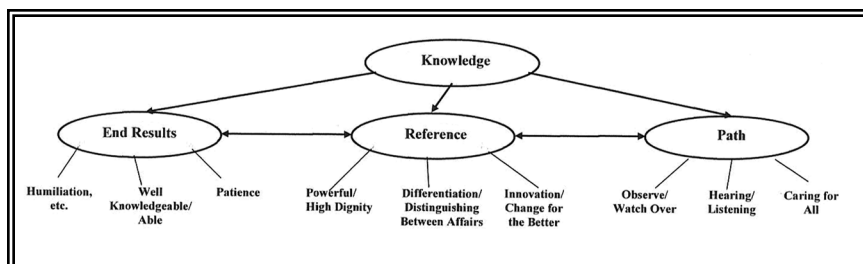


Figure 5. Schematic description of knowledge tripod.

Knowledge Reference

The knowledge reference includes appreciation of knowledge and knowledge sources, differentiation/distinguishing between various affairs (right-wrong, strong-weak, good-bad, etc.), and being powerful with high dignity:

The religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His Will): nor did the people of the Book dissent there from except through envy of each other, after knowledge had come to them. But if any deny the Signs of Allah, Allah is swift in calling to account. (Qura'n 3:19)

Knowledge End Result

The knowledge end result includes patience, being knowledgeable and being able to do a job in the best manner, and the penalty for falling short is in the form of grievous humiliation:

But to those who receive guidance, He increases the Guidance, and bestows on them their Piety and Restraint. (Qura'n 47:17)

Those who listen to the Word, and follow the best in it: those are the ones whom Allah has guided, and those are the ones endowed with understanding. (Qura'n 39:18)

And Allah doth advance in guidance those who seek guidance: and the things that endure. Good Deeds, are best in the sight of thy Lord, as rewards, and best in respect of (their) eventual returns. (Qura'n 19:76)

And when he learns something of Our Signs, he takes them in jest: for such there will be a humiliating Penalty. (Qura'n 45:9)

Those who conceal the Clear (Signs) We have sent down, and the Guidance, after we have made it clear for the People in the Book, on them shall be Allah's curse, and the curse of those entitled to curse. (Qura'n 2:159)

But those who had been granted (true) knowledge said: "Alas for you! The reward of Allah (in the Hereafter) is best for those who believe and work righteousness: but this none shall attain, save those who steadfastly persevere (in good)." (Qura'n 28:80)

Conclusion

Based on the outcome of this analysis, it is concluded that:

- Islamic scholars do not yet collectively agree upon or approve the attempts made to date in explaining Islamic perspectives on environmental issues and concerns, and further work is needed to reach basic harmony and build on it in the future.
- The methodology used in this analysis shows the way to a comprehensible, transparent structure, and proved to be worthwhile.
- The approach to environmental education in Islam is formulated in a tripod-type structure.
- The manager of all activities of Moslems is Allah (SWT), the one and only-creator, represented by the belief in and the application of his rules and directions. Allah (SWT), and in this structure to environmental education in Islam represents the head or the nucleus of the tripod.
- The main tripod is comprised of three interrelated elements: knowledge/understanding, manifestation/differentiation, and faith/believing.
- Each of the three legs of the main tripod constitutes a balanced sub-tripod relating to knowledge, manifestation, and faith, and consisting of: paths, reference, and end results.
- This representation is brief and, therefore, further detailing of the structure is needed along with bringing various applications of it into everyday life.

Note

- ¹ A number of original sources in this paper use "man," "mankind," "he," or "his" throughout. In keeping with the original sources, this language has not been changed to reflect current editorial guidelines.

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