

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION: THE STUDY OF WORLD MAJOR RELIGIONS

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ABSTRACT

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The role of diverse religions in the world is essential in reshaping the relationship between humans and natural world. This article acknowledges principles and doctrines of various religions regarding environmental preservation and sustainability of natural earth. This study focuses on world major religions, such as Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Major theme of this work is identifying the role these religions play in tackling and mitigating current global ecological crisis. This article provides thorough examination of the spiritual guidance of religions on ecology and highlights the need for cooperative actions among religious groups and secular environmentalists. It suggested that religion can evoke ethical behavior in believers and consequently transform attitudes toward natural preservation.

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INTRODUCTION

Beyond doubt, the earth is evidently bleeding from the acute injuries inflicted by mistreatment of humanity and the natural harmony between human and natural environment is disappearing. The contemporary ecological crisis is an urgent global concern which requires global incorporated solution and sincere commitment of nations (Kevin and Edmund 1994, 7-10). Essential components for human survival, primarily water and food supplies are being threatened across the world by population and consumption pressures (Mary and John 2009). Natural environment is rapidly deteriorated with many anthropogenic activities like unprecedented industrialization of modern society, especially with the drastic growth of human population and increased demand for food and energy (Mary and John 2009). The world of nature is being violated and demolished in an incomparable way all around the world by either secularists or godly people of different faiths. However, regardless of diverse faiths and sentiments, religious beliefs certainly perform a crucial position in underpinning human existence and functioning of human being (Kay 1993, 43). Widespread destruction of species, continual loss of habitat and accelerating climate change issues are demanding interfaith efforts to reverse current trends and to move toward sustainable future for humans and nature. Therefore, the issue of religion's relations to the environment and sustainability has received significant attention in the literatures on environmental studies. Yet, not much research has been done on systematic and comparative analysis of world religions regarding to environmental doctrines and practices.

Scholars have agreed that human attitudes and actions are chiefly determined by their ideology, worldview and belief. Religion in particular have tremendous effects on behavior of individuals and organizations. Accordingly, religious belief as a social norm, influences society's attitude, behavior, ethics, moral values and overall way of life. Logically, it moulds how human, individually and collectively, see the role of responsibility to protect the natural surroundings (Racheal

2009). A prominent scholar, Ziauddin Sardar had stated in his book, *Islamic Futures* that “The roots of our ecological crises are axiomatic: they lie in our belief and value structures which shape our relationship with nature, with each other and the lifestyles we lead” (Sardar 1985, 218).

Therefore, religion is an important component in promoting society’s ethical and moral values, and mitigating undesired behaviors that harm the ecosystem. Evidently, religions as comprehensive worldview and ethics, need to be integrated with the development of sustainability movements (Mary and John 2009). It is crucial because religious worldviews and ethical practices define people's attitudes and values which shapes people's concepts of nature. Human’s sensibilities toward protecting the environment for their future generation are greatly influenced by moral imperative and value systems of religions. The role of religion is indeed indispensable in responding environmental crisis driven and perpetuated by materialism and secularization.

WORLD MAJOR RELIGIONS AND ECOLOGY

Environmental philosopher John Muir has once said that “God has cared for these trees, saved them from drought, disease, avalanches, and a thousand tempests and floods. But he cannot save them from fools” (Jensen 2006, 395). Human exploitation of God created natural environment has exceeded beyond earth's tolerance and capacity to recharge. Since 2005, United Nations' Millennium Ecosystem Assessment has determined that almost 60% of the world's vital ecosystem is seriously degraded. Environmental problems continue to aggravate although numerous and diverse secular approaches such as environmental sciences, technology, laws and regulations have contributed significantly toward resolving environmental issues. While various attempts have been made to address this crisis, the issue of religion has not received enough attention. Religiously and spiritually motivated individuals and communities have important role to play in conservation of natural environment and global sustainability.

Religious spirit and ecology of the earth are indistinguishably associated and related naturally. Given the fact that 84% of world population, more than eight in ten peoples have faith, the function of religion in humankind is certainly not trivial (Pew Research Centre, 2014). The role of religion, therefore undeniably is crucial and essential in tackling and ameliorating contemporary environmental crisis. The aspect of religion has been not much explored in the battle of environmental restoration. Religion is a vital fountain of human motivation for shaping avert environmental struggles while attaining human development objectives (Richard, Frederick and Azizan 2003).

Further, love and appreciation for the creation of God are the central elements of religious order (Miur, 2001). Every religions in the world traditionally explicated particular ethical responsibility for the ecosystem and God's creations (Gatta, 2004, 4). Multi-religion disciplines have bestowed certain moral sense for other fellow beings and come up with ethical accountabilities of human, even though fellow human beings are presented as the most superior and valuable creatures among all the living things (Karen, Asunciaon and Berit 2014). It is evidenced that historically all religions in the world have appreciated the solidarity between earth and religious value, and hence, setting religious obligations to be aware of the creations in the earth. Acquisitiveness and hostilities are prohibited and self-control and preservations are asserted in many religious traditions and their shared ethical values (Nasr 1996). Nevertheless, modern human societies have ignored the perpetual insight of the earth's spiritual existence (Gatta 2004). Scientific innovations and advancements have prioritized the technological achievement over the health of nature which is the origin of all the existence. Greed and self-indulgence have driven man to neglect morality clearly portrayed in religious doctrine (Bruce 1995). However, over the past few years, some researchers and leaders of diverse religions came to realize the importance of the origin of the universe and precious environmental teachings as religious ecological wisdom (David 1984). Interfaith coalition for protection of environment and

environmental stewardship become topical nowadays to rediscover the sacredness of nature (David 1984).

Contemporary ecotheologists are simultaneously discerning how to connect religious concepts to secular environmental thinking and heal the wounded earth (Tim 1994). That is to say, there is an important interrelation between religion and ecology and the interrelatedness is crucial in today's degraded environment. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the multifarious religions' spiritual aspirations, beliefs, ethical orientation, sacredness and rituals related to transcendent divine creations.

Christianity

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28)

"The earth does not belong to us; it is the Lord's, including everything in it" (Psalm 24:1)

There are diversity of perspective among discrete Christian doctrines in respect to the relationship between religion and environmentalism (American Academy of Religion 2014). However, Christianity has a long historical and holistic reflection on nature and human responsibility and the emphasis of ecological obligation is rooted on stewards of God's creations (Jay 2009). It is very fascinating that there are many controversial and ambiguous views stating "Christianity as ecologically harmful" and "Christianity as ecologically responsible" (David 2010).

The criticisms of Bible as basically composing pessimistic impact on the emergence of modern ecological crisis make the arguments based on several facts. For instance, the critiques state that the Bible disconnect God, goddesses and spirits from nature and it is anthropocentric and demonstrate that human beings are superior who are

appointed heavenly to dominate all other living and non-living things (Sallie 2010). Besides, the judgments and criticisms are primarily rooted from the words of several scholars like Lynn White and Arnold Toynbee who hold anti-nature view of the world. Those deistic view of the natural world make their claims upon Old Testament (James and Robert 2010). Arnold Toynbee said in *The Toynbee-Ikeda Dialogue* that “Man was divorced from his natural environment, which was divested of its former aura of divinity. Man was licensed to exploit an environment that was no longer sacrosanct” (Arnold 1976). Again, Lynn White made similar point in his book “*The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis*” that “To a Christian a tree can be no more than a physical fact. The whole concept of the sacred nature is alien to Christianity and to the ethos of the West.

For nearly two millennia Christian missionaries have been chopping down sacred groves which are idolatrous because they assume spirit in nature”. “Especially in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen. Men shares in great measures, God’s transcendence of nature. Christianity, in absolute contrast to ancient paganism and Asia’s religions...not only established a dualism of man and nature but also that it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper ends” (White 1967, 264). These philosophers hold strong anthropocentric view which claim that God is primarily concern about human beings and assign them mastery and superiority over all other creations. These anthropocentric standpoints are also supported by several early Christian theologians like Plotinus (205-70 C.E.), Thomas Aquinas (1225-74), St. Bonaventure (1221-74) and Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) (Normand 2010).

According to their point of view, the creation of the universe is to reflect God’s goodness and it is hierarchical in nature. God is at the apex of the order followed by human being who is the most spiritual and sublime and other non-spiritual beings are at the bottom and they represent to serve higher creatures. Moreover, those anthropocentric and human domination of nature are popular in justifying modernism and industrialism in 16th to 18th century Western

Europe (Normand 2010). Their sentiments separate humanity and God from the earth and eliminate the sacredness of nature. Western culture's harsh and limitless exploitation of the earth is shaped by those notions (Patrick 1977).

Despite the fact that Christianity confronts many ambivalent ideas and criticisms from ecological view, the religion itself exhibits substantial concern over justice, compassion and benevolence and innumerable number of verses from Bible witnessed Christianity as a source of ecological spirituality (Lindberg and David, 1986). The Bible have no passages that advocate that nature was viewed as inferior and to be simply exploited and misused by human (Henry, 2010). Psalm 96:11-13 postulates that:

“Let the heaven be glad, and let the earth rejoice; Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; Let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the wood sing in it! Before the LORD, for he comes, For he come to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, And the peoples with his truth”.

According to the Bible, natural world is definitely not seen as lifeless or beyond the framework of divine moral that is permitted to manipulate and abused by human being albeit it is neither sacred nor divine (Michael, 1996). Besides, there are numerous esteemed Christian theologians such as Irenaeus (CA. 130-200), Augustine (354-430) and Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) who confirmed that the bounty and aesthetic pleasure of the planet are greatly admired in the doctrine of Christianity (Callahan, 1985). In this regard, one of the most prominent Christian Scholar, Augustine wrote that ultimate motive of the entire creation is pleasing the aesthetic sense and glorifying God for those creations. Again, Francis has asserted enormous admirations for many aspects of the natural creations disregarding human or non-human beings (Roger 2009).

Hence, Christians specifically have moral obligation to protect and care for the nature. In Christianity, Human's rule and dominion over nature is as a steward or a caretaker. Human are not positioned as reckless exploiter and they are not sovereign over other creations. God is the ultimate Lord

of the nature. Human being as trustees and stewards must abide ethical behavior toward conservation of the ecosystem. The Bible has powerful and influential teachings of ecological worldview and it opposes utilitarian worldview (Calvin 1994). As it is written in Genesis 1:28,
“Who stipulated that man should, and would, multiply, fill the Earth, subdue it, and rule over it as His representative a steward” (Calvin, 2010).

Christian ecologist and the churches play an integral role in re-examining those spiritual teachings to develop ethical ecological consciousness and to put them into practice. Most importantly, realistic and responsible standpoints are crucial to rejuvenate the damaged done by rapacious humanity in pursued of material gain.

“No need to recall the past, No need to think about what was done before. See, I am doing a new deed, Even now it comes to light, can you not see it?” (Isaiah (43:18-19)

Judaism

Notwithstanding the effort to express spiritual dimension of environmental ethics is rather new to Judaism, it converges with environmentalism and sustainability on several aspects (Daniel 1998). Ecological issues are dealt as a priority throughout Jewish history and sacred textbooks like Hebrew Scriptures and Talmud (Daniel 1998). Nonetheless it also views human as the most central and highest-ranking living creature of God. People are the pinnacle of creations and entire natural world is for the enjoyment of humanity. Humanity has unique power to use nature's bounty, however every God's creations has its own innate value and human holds highest responsibility to protect and not to plunder them (Sears 2014). In fact, the concern for natural world plays a crucial role in Jewish law, theory, sacramental and other rituals and human relation to the environment is a significant segment of Jewish faith and dogma (Berkes 2008).

Ecological concerns are intelligibly ruminated in foundational pillars of Judaism. Jewish law (*Halakah*) reflect protection of non-human being and prohibiting the abuse of public realm and the divine rule of *Bal-tashchit* principled to

avoid senseless destruction and waste (Sean 1990). Furthermore, the fundamental concept and environmental ethics of Judaism is rooted in the implication that God created the universe and only He has the complete ownership and control over the universe. One of the most rudimentary teachings in this context is, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." (Psalm 24:1). Thus, human must appreciate that they do not have unconditional exemption to corrupt and harm other fellow creations of God (Elizabeth 1992). Human being possesses limitless value, coordination and uniqueness which make them the representatives and stewards of God to maintain the order of creation with consciousness and dutiful manner. It is explained in the following verse;

“When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the Lord your God”

Leviticus: 19

In Jewish view, humanity must perceive every creation with love and appreciation and regard them as sacred and divine as the fulfilment of religious duty and fearing of God (Rabbi 2014).

"When a person observes God's works and God's great and marvellous creatures, and they see from them God's wisdom that is without estimate or end, immediately they will love God, praise God and long with a great desire to know God's Great Name ... And when a person thinks about these things they draw back and are afraid and realizes that they are small, lowly and obscure, endowed with slight and slender intelligence, standing in the presence of God who is perfect in knowledge" (Mishneh Torah: 2)

Jewish spiritual leader, Rabbi Moshe Levinger has also mention that, “All my days I have been careful never to pluck a blade of grass or a flower needlessly, when it had the ability to grow or blossom. You know the teaching of our sages that not a single blade of grass grows here on Earth that does not have an angel above it, commanding it to grow. Every sprout and leaf says something meaningful, every stone whispers

some hidden message in the silence—every creation sings its song.”

Further, in the introduction of the first chapters of the Torah, Judaism enacts an elemental relationship between human beings and animals. There is due equilibrium between simultaneously authorizing the use and eating of animals for human and forbidding irrelevant brutality to animals is the encompassing commandments of Jewish law concerning the treatment of animals.

“Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it” (Genesis 9:3-4)

Briefly, Judaism have innumerable charters which deals with ecological balance and environmental ethics. Righteousness, fairness and egalitarianism are the central values of Jewish faith and balanced distribution of natural capital is crucial tenants of this religion (Hugh 1992). Environmental ethics are vital to the Jews as loving and respecting the world of nature is the duty of their faith. Daily rituals of Jews must be committed in sustaining the earth and its environment.

Buddhism

Buddhism is a system of belief within many others which not only mentor the followers to a comprehensive soul of love and purity but also guide them to a world of peace and harmony (Evelyn 2014). Buddhism is often viewed as one of the most environmentally concerned religions (Ven 2014). Elementally, Buddhism advocates ethical behaviour toward physical and material achievements and promotes spiritual purification. Buddhism sees all life as interrelated and interdependent and humankind is an essential facet of nature, therefore, when nature is impaired, humanity will eventually be agonized. Natural environment is awake and conscious but it is neither sacred nor evil that can be conquered and mistreated (Rita 2010).

The deep reality of nature in Buddhism cannot be detached from human's enlightened nature (Evelyn 2014). Buddhist doctrine does not differentiate human being with non-human beings in natural surroundings and consider human to be part of it. The axiom of Karma and resurrection put the entire human life in the framework of constant array of cycles, which mirror the operation of other natural world like water cycle, food cycle and cycle of animal species (Susan 2010). The fundamental acceptance of Buddhism suggests that every existence including human body is impermanent but subjected to eternal spiral of processes like reincarnation and metempsychosis (Hsuan 2005). The principles of non-harming and respect for all living things are stemmed from the beliefs that nothing is constant and every manifestation of life on the planet are given same series of life (Hsuan 2005). Accordingly, the practice of prudence is refraining from bad deeds and a good Buddhist must be self-disciplined and avoid misusing other fellow beings. Buddhism believe that Buddha's blessing is on the human who avoid misdeeds and abuse non-human beings (Hsuan 2005).

“Him I called indeed a Brahman who withholds the rod of punishment from other creatures, whether feeble or strong, and does not kill nor cause slaughter. Him I call indeed a Brahman who is tolerant with intolerant, mild among the violent, and free from among the greedy” (The Dhammapada)

Needless to say, protecting the life and promoting peace and security of all life forms are the central faith of Buddhism and love, compassion and kindness are deeply expressed through out Buddhist teachings (Stephanie 2010). In Buddhism, human being has no superiority and mastery over other living things in the universe, thus, deserve no right to exploit the nature. In addition, Buddhist teachings contradict materialism and utilitarianism and advocate ecological sustainability. For example, Buddhist monks are not prohibited to cut trees and must keep their worshiping place hygienic and most importantly, all lay Buddhists must purify their hearts with loving kindness (Cooper and Joy 1998). His holiness Dalai Lama has mentioned that “So when you say environment, or preservation of environment, it is related with

many things. Ultimately the decision must come from the human heart, isn't that right? So I think the key point is genuine sense of universal responsibility which is based on love, compassion and clear awareness” (His Holiness The 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet 2014).

Buddhism strongly believes that nature have significant impact on human livelihood and the human attitude and life style also effect nature significantly. The result of human ignorance and selfishness have resulted in a great destruction of planet. It is important for Buddhist across the world to realize the ethical perspective of Buddhism regarding to environmental protection and the responsibility to safeguard the resources of the earth.

Hinduism

Hinduism, an ancient religion is extremely convoluted and multiplex (Ranchor 2002). It shares some specific beliefs with Buddhism, but substantially it is administered by three conceptions, namely *Brahman* (a divine force which manifests itself in everything), *Karma* (the law of cause and effect) and the goal of *Moksha* (enlightenment) (Stefano 2002). The fundamental principle is to live an uncomplicated life and to despise the fantasy of material contentment and crave (Rachel 2004). Hindu religion wants its followers to live a simple life and People are meant to learn to enjoy spiritual happiness, so that to derive a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment, they need not run after material pleasures and disturb nature's checks and balances (Alliance of Religions and Conservation 2014).

In recent year, many scholars and Hindu theologians have started to recognize and proposed the contribution of the traditional path and doctrine of Hinduism in the process of environmental healing especially in India (Pankaj Jain 2013). The association between humanity's demeanour and natural environment can be found in every rudimentary principles of Hinduism and environmental ethics is characterized in many aspects of faith. Intrinsically, Hinduism acknowledge its proclamation in *Atharva Veda Bhumi Sukta* that “The Earth is our mother and we are all her children”.

In the Hindu religion, the sanctity of life is distinctly entrenched and God alone has complete sovereignty over all the creations including human. Human have no supremacy over all living things including their own life. Therefore, human and non-human existence are of equal value and the earth itself is not considered for human alone. It is for all the creatures. *Prajapati* is the creator of nature (sky, earth, ocean and other species) and he is either protector or eventual destroyer of it. Human beings hold no authority to damage nature without appropriate justification (Prajapati 1993).

The way of living and attitude of Hindus are principally established on the absolute apprehension of the dogma of Veda and *Upnishads* and *Vedas* is accredited to be the revealed and heavenly knowledge. The concern for the correspondence between humanity and natural world, and cautionary explanation of human's role in protecting the environment are disclosed in *Vedas* and many other Hindu's divine texts. The theme of the belief provides absolute manifestations of natural world through five cardinal elements of nature, the earth (*prthivl*), water (*ap*), fire (*agni*), air (*vayu*) and space (*akasa*) (Christopher 2000). As an example, it can be observed in *Vamana Purana* that;

“Let all the great elements bless the dawning day; Earth with its smell, water with its taste, Fire with its radiance, air with its touch, And sky with its sound.” (Vamana Purana 12:26)

Moreover, 19th century's Hindu chief disciple and famous monk, Swami Vivekananda had also acclaimed in his works that:

“The Hindu man drinks religiously, sleeps religiously, walks religiously, robes religiously, The mission of the race is religion and because that has not been touched the race lives on (Swami 2001)”

The Hindu's traditional religious faith is still the basic rituals rigidly followed by many Hindus in India and other Hindu dominated countries (Ranchor 2002). For instance, before building a house, Hindu priests are usually invited to function *Bhoomi Pooja* (asking permission from *Bhoomi Deva* god) for the sake of worshiping to placate mother of earth and ask for clemency for disrupting her (Whitney 2011).

Other than that, some particular animal, plants, trees, rivers and lakes are treated to be sacred and glorified in festivals and insulting and abusing nature is believed to be blasphemy (Hindu Priest in Melbourne 2014). Lastly, the ecology and environmental consciousness can be observed through the reflections on Hinduism's religious texts, theologian's annotations and ritual activities. Current challenging ecological crisis should awaken spirit of Hinduism in respect to caring and sustaining Mother Nature. As Mahatma Gandhi alerted "nature has enough for everybody's need but not for everyone's greed".

Islam and the order of Nature

Islam, the third and last of the three religions founded primarily on the revelation of God to humankind, succeeding Judaism and Christianity, is the world's second largest religion and has a specific imperative role to play in the contemporary world (Akhtaruddin 1997). Principally, in the light of today's devastating and depleting environment, the aspect of Islam is indispensable (Nasr 1993).

In spite of being one of the most comprehensive and pragmatic religion that encompasses physical and spiritual guidance for human life, many important facets of Islamic wisdom, for example Islamic ecological understanding, are not widely expressed in today's literatures and researches (Osman 2007). However, Prince of Wales, Charles has spoken in a speech delivered at the Seminar on the "Sense of the Sacred: Building Bridge between Islam and the West" in 1996 that "Islamic civilization at its best, like many of the religions of the East—Judaism, Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism—has an important message for the West in the way it has retained a more integrated and integral view of the sanctity of the world around us. I feel that we in the West could be helped to rediscover those roots of our own understanding by an appreciation of the Islamic tradition's deep respect for the timeless traditions of the natural order. I believe that process could help in the task of bringing our two faiths closer together. It could also help us in the West to rethink, and for the better, our practical stewardship of man

and his environment in fields like healthcare, the natural environment and agriculture, as well as in architecture and urban planning” (Prince Charles of England 1996).

In this respect, Seyyed Hossein Nasr has also argues that on the arrival of modernity, the secular world have disoriented and absolutely perplexed about the traditional understanding of religion and nature, however, the sense of sacred and a reversal to heal the transcendent nature can be observed in fundamental themes of Islam (Anne 2014).

The material biosphere within which human (*insan*) is positioned to accomplish his boundless mission of commitment and adherence to God with obedience and loyalty (*ubudiyyah*) is significant in Islam (Hussein 1986). Islamic faith is entrenched on the belief that God is active, omnipotent, omniscient, compassionate, impartial and benevolent to human beings and the holy Quran distinctly stipulates that Allah created the whole universe, the world and formed light and darkness. He conceived human from earth and He is aware of every phenomenon within his creations (Nomanul 2010). The theory of ecological conservation in Islam can be corroborated with many verses from the Quran as follows.

“Praise be Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, and made the darkness and the light. Yet those who reject Faith hold (others) as equal, with their Guardian-Lord. He it is created you from clay, and then decreed a stated term (for you). And there is in His presence another determined term; yet ye doubt within yourselves! And He is Allah in the heavens and on earth. He knoweth what ye hide, and what ye reveal, and He knoweth the (recompense) which ye earn (by your deeds)” (The Qur'an 6: 1-3)

In Islam, the interrelatedness and interdependence between nature and other creations of the God are the fundamental doctrines of the religion and enlightened and enclosed within the scheme of Islamic concept of the world (Nawal 2010). Furthermore, Islam circumscribes the concept of a corresponding exchange of peace among God’s creations (M.Izzi 2007). Ismail al-Faruqi has noted in his book “Islam and Other Faith” that, “Nature in Islam is not an enemy. It is

not a demonic force challenging and inciting humanity to conquer and subdue it....Nature is perfectly fitted theatre where humanity is to do good deeds” (Ismail 2010, 202). This analogy is primarily rooted on the three underlying and intrinsic acceptance that the entire universe and every constituents in it are created by God, every single creations in this cosmos represent the sacredness and godliness of the God and the creation of this totality worships the same God. Thus, in Islam human responsibility of respecting and safeguarding the nature stems from adoration of God’s grandeur, magnificence and potency (Marjorie 2010).

First and foremost, the word Islam means “peace”, denoting peace between God and Man and among humankind. Islam is defined as complete submission to the will of the God and Muslims are the believers who submit to God’s will. Cardinaly, the intention of this complete compliance to God is not in the sense of distinctive salvation, but the triumphant enactment of godly plan and the execution of impartial and amicable social arrangement among the creations of God (Roger 1996). Therefore, Islam is a monotheistic religion where by all the rituals, sacraments and religious observance revolve around social fulfilment and promote social harmony and peace. Islam is not just a form of faith and worship, it is a typical pattern of behavior or way of living that cultivate conformity and unity within the elements of nature through the divine textual authority, The Quran and traditions and narrations of the life of Prophet (SWT), Hadith (Sleha 2014). In fact, there are multitudinous numbers of Qur’anic verses and Hadiths that expound the significance of honoring and appreciating the signs of God in His creations.

“Don’t you know that to God belongs the skies and the earth; Without him you have neither a patron nor a supporter” (The Qur’an 2:107)

Islamic environmentalism is intertwined with the attitudes of faith, jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and also Sufism (*tasawuf*). The Caliph, Trust, Loving (*Rahim*), Justice, Scale (*Mizuan*), Balance (*Tawazun*), Facade (*Fasad*), Beauty (*Jamal*), Freshness (*Nasim*) and Holiness are the elemental concepts of

ecological principle that demonstrate the value of nature in Islam (Abu Bakar 2010).

Moreover, the relationship between man and nature in Islamic interpretation is reflection, glorification and gratitude of God's creations, moral accountability toward conservation, constraining from annihilation and reawakening. The elemental and pivotal conviction of faith in Islam is the proclamation of the concept of *al-tawhid*, Unity of God or oneness of God as a creator of the entire universe. Osman Bakar has mentioned in his work, "Environmental Wisdom for Planet Earth: The Islamic Heritage" that for the believers, believing in God is affirming His Divine Unity and recognizing every consequences either for human life or for human compliance and cognition (Osman 2007). *Tawhid*, the primary principle of monotheism, indicates the credence to the outright oneness of God, ruler and sovereign in every respect. This oneness of God is not only the spirit and quintessence of Islamic faith and conviction, but also the moral destiny of the believers. Apparently, there will be no divine rule in Islam without the paradigm of *Tawhid* and since Islam as a religion itself is to serve and obey God. Precisely, Ismail Al-Faruqi has noted in his book *Al Tawhid* and "Its Implication for Thought and Life" that, "Without *al tawhid*, therefore, there can be no Islam" (Ismail 1992). He has also expressed in "The Cultural Atlas of Islam", that "The duality in Islam is of, God and non-God; creator and creature. The first order has but one member, Allah the Absolute and Almighty. He alone is God, eternal, Creator, transcendent. Nothing like unto Him; He remains forever absolutely unique and devoid of partners or associates. The second is the order of space-time, of experience, of creation. It includes all creatures, the world of things, plants and animals, humans, *jinn* and angles, heaven and earth, paradise and hell and all their becoming since they came into beings. The two orders of creator and creations are utterly and absolutely disparate...Neither can the Creator be ontologically transformed so as to become the creature, nor can the creature transcend and transfigure itself so as to become in any way or sense Creator (Ismail and Lois 1986)". The objectivity of

Tawhid constitutes the underlying principle that none of the creatures are sacred nor divine except God and it is crucial to accentuate that Islam does not acknowledge nature or any other creatures as sacred like many other religious beliefs (Barbara 2010).

Therefore, the perspective of *Tawhid* delivers nature as an utter creation of God which echo the glory of sacredness, however, it does not modulate nature as either secular or profane. Moreover, Islam holds a transcendent view of nature and obliges human for respect and glorification of nature as God's creation as it asserts that God owns the entire universe and nature is an innate endowment for human to do good deeds (Ziauddin 1989). Thus, human being have an intimate relationship with the universe and other creations reflecting kindred, appreciation, approbation, contemplation, devotion and sympathy.

“It is God who created heaven and earth...that you may distinguish yourselves by your good deeds” (The Quran 11:7)

Accordingly, the elemental doctrines of Islam portray supreme and remarkable tribute for nature and earth and consider humans as a component of the creations and does not bestow superiority over any other creatures. Besides, Islam interrelates human to nature and human and nature to God and the obligation of human to protect nature, reflecting the sacredness and creation of God with respect and devotion to the source of nature, the Almighty God. In a nutshell, Islam indoctrinates Muslims to perceive nature as a sacred book that perform as a complementary to The Quran and carries invaluable divine messages for man to realize his creator and appreciation of nature is the basis of this realization (Osman 2007).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Overall, every religions consider abusing and exploiting the natural earth as unjust, immoral, unethical and hence impermissible and sinful. Religions traditionally have own moral teachings regarding treatment of nature and encourage people to cultivate ethical behavior toward natural

surroundings. All religions and cultures are intolerant to irreverence of human towards nature. Definitely, religions have a central role in the formulation of ethics oriented worldviews that guides human behavior to overcome planetary crisis. Religion have capacity to evoke awareness in human beings and motivate care for the natural environment. Religions offer unique moral values, rules, responsibilities and guide the believers in their relationship with nature. Those precious dimensions of environmental remediation will remain absolutely rhetorical and theoretical unless collaborative efforts among religion sectors and secular sectors are developed. The role of religion in environmental ethics and conservation must be acknowledged by institutions, government and non-government organizations, and integrated in environmental education programs and public policy. It is crucial and indispensable to implement moral and spiritual values of environment in transforming sustainable future. The effectiveness of any religion in environmental conservation depends upon individual's understanding and faith of values in their religions, and how those values are transmitted and adapted.

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