

# A Study of Religious Perspectives on Biodiversity and the Environment

**Morteza Bayat**

Department of Law, Faculty of Human Sciences, Arak University, Arak, Iran

Email: m-bayat@araku.ac.ir

Received: 13 October 2023 / Revised: 15 November 2023 / Accepted: 16 November 2023/ Published online: 26 November 2023. Ministry of Sciences, Research, and Technology, Arak University, Iran.

**How to cite:** Bayat, M. (2023). A Study of Religious Perspectives on Biodiversity and the Environment, 7(Special Issue), 74-87. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10206928>

## Abstract

The provided text explores the intersection of religious perspectives, particularly from Judeo-Christian, Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions, with environmental concerns, focusing on biodiversity. It discusses how various belief systems shape attitudes toward nature and biodiversity, influencing ethical frameworks and worldviews. The text delves into the role of stewardship in the Judeo-Christian tradition and the concept of *Khilafah* (stewardship) in Islam. It also examines eco-theological developments within Christianity. The piece contrasts historical "sustainable consumption patterns" with the modern "era of unstable consumption patterns" and examines the ecological consequences, attributing them to factors like religious doctrines or economic and social influences. The text analyzes three ecological ethics paradigms: Anthropocentrism, Eco-Centrism, and Biome-Centrism, critiquing their strengths and limitations. Additionally, it explores the Islamic perspective on human-nature interaction, emphasizing responsible stewardship and the intrinsic value of both nature and humans. The text concludes with a comparative study of Islamic views against anthropocentric ideologies, highlighting the balanced and inclusive nature of Islamic environmental ethics.

**Keywords:** Religious perspectives, Eastern religions, Cultural dimensions of conservation, Eco-centered theories, Biome-centered theories

## Introduction

Biodiversity and environmental sustainability have become critical issues in contemporary discourse, attracting attention from various disciplines. This study seeks to explore the intersection of religious perspectives and environmental concerns, focusing on the role that diverse belief systems play in shaping attitudes toward biodiversity. Religious traditions often provide ethical frameworks and worldviews that influence human behavior and attitudes toward the natural world (Berry, 2009; Gottlieb, 2006). Understanding how different religions conceptualize and engage with biodiversity

is essential for developing holistic approaches to environmental conservation and sustainable practices (Kheel, 2008). In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the concept of stewardship emerges prominently, emphasizing human responsibility for the Earth and its inhabitants (White, 1967). This anthropocentric view has sparked debates regarding the interpretation of dominion over nature, with some arguing for a more exploitative approach and others advocating for a caretaker role (Santmire, 2000). Additionally, recent theological developments within Christianity, such as eco-theology, have sought to reconcile religious beliefs with ecological concerns, offering a nuanced perspective that aligns spiritual values with environmental stewardship (Hessel & Ruether, 2000).

Within Islam, environmental ethics are rooted in the concept of *Khilafah* (stewardship) and the interconnectedness of all creation (Nasr, 1989). Islamic teachings emphasize the responsibility of humans to maintain balance and harmony with nature, encouraging sustainable practices (Sardar, 2017). However, interpretations of these principles may vary, and contemporary scholars are engaged in discussions about the applicability of traditional Islamic teachings to current environmental challenges (Foltz, 2003).

Eastern religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, offer unique perspectives on biodiversity. Hinduism, with its reverence for all living beings as manifestations of the divine, promotes a sense of interconnectedness and respect for nature (Gadgil & Bahulikar, 1991). Buddhism, with its emphasis on compassion and non-harm, provides a foundation for environmental ethics that align with biodiversity conservation (Loy, 2003). Exploring these diverse perspectives is crucial for constructing a comprehensive understanding of the religious dimensions of biodiversity conservation. Human history, spanning several millennia, can be bifurcated based on sustainable consumption patterns. The "Age of Sustainable Consumption Patterns" saw human interaction with the environment without causing irreparable damage. However, the "era of unstable consumption patterns," from industrialization to the present, has led to negative repercussions like discharge, destruction, pollution, and instability. The awareness of these consequences emerged in the late 1960s, prompting research into the root causes of ecological crises and the proper way to interact with nature. Various intellectual systems and normative theories have addressed the correct approach to nature, contributing to different value orientations and ecological ethics. Some attribute ecological crises to religious doctrines, particularly criticizing the Jewish-Christian perspective that emphasizes humanity's dominion over nature. In contrast, others argue that the crisis results from economic, social, and political factors rather than religious teachings. Within Christianity, diverse theological

perspectives contribute to the discourse on environmental stewardship. Lynn White's seminal work (1967) ignited discussions about the Judeo-Christian worldview influencing ecological attitudes, with subsequent scholars like Berry (2009) and Hessel & Ruether (2000) proposing ecotheological frameworks that integrate spiritual values with ecological responsibility.

Human history, stretching over several millennia, undergoes a distinct dichotomy shaped by the yardsticks of "sustainable consumption." The first epoch termed the "Age of Sustainable Consumption Patterns," spans from primitive cave-dwelling to the era of industrialization. During this extended period, human interventions in the environment were characterized by a harmonious coexistence, devoid of irreparable harm, and witnessed sustainable benefits.

Contrastingly, the second epoch, the "era of unstable consumption patterns," unfolds from the industrialization of human societies to the present day. Despite remarkable strides in knowledge, technological prowess, and the swift exchange of information and capital, this era bears the unfortunate burden of adverse effects. As eloquently noted by Mozaffari (1389), the era is marred by issues such as discharge, destruction, pollution, and instability. Since the latter half of the 1960s, human awareness has been stirred by the ominous signs accompanying scientific and technological progress. It is not solely nuclear weapons that pose a threat to the planet, but equally perilous are the erratic production and consumption patterns. The amalgamation of unstable consumption patterns with technology has, regrettably, resulted in rapid and hazardous environmental degradation. This has not only deprived nature of rejuvenation opportunities but has also imperiled the lives of humans and other creatures.

These environmental damages, escalating into ecological crises, pose a severe threat to human societies, prompting a surge in research. Questions about the root causes of ecological crises and the appropriate mode of interaction with nature have become central to these investigations. Alongside normative theories on nature interaction, diverse intellectual systems have questioned intrinsic value, laying the foundation for varied approaches to ecological ethics. Key among these are human-centered theory, bio-centered theory, and ecosystem-centered theory, as highlighted by Abedi Sarvestani (1386).

The origins of ecological crises have been debated, with some attributing them to religious doctrines. Lynn White's (1907-1987) assertion, outlined in his 1967 article "Our Ecological Historical Rooting," implicated Jewish-Christian thought, asserting humanity's dominion over nature, as the root cause of environmental crises. This perspective led scholars in recent years to scrutinize Abrahamic religions for solutions to environmental challenges. Contrary to White's claim, Patrick Doubles argued against Christianity's perceived boundless dominion over the ecosystem, characterizing the Jewish-Christian attitude as a "morality of sovereignty" that mandates humility, not arrogance, toward God. Doubles dismissed the role of religious doctrines in environmental crises, attributing them instead to economic, social, and political factors influencing modern science and economics.

Scholarly attention to the intersection of religious doctrines and ecological concerns has a rich history, with

figures like Allameh Majlesi exploring traditions related to the environment. Recent decades have witnessed intensified scrutiny, yielding works such as "Bio-Environmental Ethics" by Louis Poyman, "Environmental Ethics" by John Benson, and "Islam and the Environment" by Ayatollah Jawādī Āmulī.

In the context of this study, the primary inquiry is the relationship between religious doctrines and the environment, and which of the three doctrines about human interaction with nature aligns closest with religious teachings. The article methodically reviews and critiques the three theories before delving into an exploration of the compatibility of religious teachings with each. Employing the library study method, the research employs a descriptive and comparative approach to analyze the three human-nature interaction paradigms, aligning them with Quranic verses. Anthropocentrism: The Human-Centric Paradigm in Ecological Ethics The Anthropocentric approach stands out as a prominent orientation within ecological ethics, deeply rooted in traditional ethical frameworks. At its core, this perspective posits that among all natural beings, only humans possess intrinsic worth or moral significance, while other entities are deemed unworthy of moral consideration. Advocates of this approach find themselves bifurcated into two distinct groups, each advancing unique perspectives.

### **1. Theory of Human Gene:**

Within this theoretical framework, the human gene is heralded as both a necessary and sufficient condition for moral value. According to Noonan, the criterion for humanity is remarkably universal — one is deemed human if born to humanistic parents (Mary, Moral Status, A Companion to Applied Ethics, p. 441). In alignment with this viewpoint, moral value is attributed to the possession of the human gene. Consequently, infants, children, individuals with disabilities, the mentally ill, and even embryos within the womb are ascribed equal moral value, as they all share the commonality of possessing the human gene (Rukn al-Dini, nd: p. 30).

Lin Wight attributes the roots of this approach to Jewish-Christian ideology, asserting that it propagates the idea that humans are destined to rule over nature, treating it solely as a source of exploitation (Louie, 1384: v. 1, p. 65). This perception casts humans as the pinnacle of moral consideration, relegating the rest of the natural world to a subordinate role, merely existing for human utility.

*The Anthropocentric lens, particularly through the Theory of Human Gene, shapes ethical considerations by placing paramount importance on human attributes, such as genetic lineage, as the arbiter of moral worth within the intricate tapestry of ecological ethics.* Theory of Moral Agent

According to the theory of moral agent, the criterion of moral value and intrinsic value in the human being is his intellect. The most important reason presented for human beings in such an exceptional situation is human rationality, which allows them to behave as they wish to other seemingly senseless species and creatures. This view is attributed to the German philosopher, Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804). Kant says: we have nothing to do with animals because they lack reason and intelligence. Animals are merely a means to an end, and they are to serve human beings. In his view, if some duties are conceived in cases of immoral animals and human beings these duties are indirectly related to man and for preserving his interests (Kant,

1369: v. 1, p. 83). According to Kant's distinction between value and dignity, what is dignified has intrinsic value and moral value; but what is of relative value is merely a tool and an instrument for human service and of no intrinsic value. So it has no moral value and right.

### **Eco-Centrism**

Ecological

Value

Orientations

Different value orientations form the basis for diverse ecological ethics, including human-centered theory, bio-centered theory, and ecosystem-centered theory. Anthropocentrism, rooted in traditional ethics, posits that only humans possess intrinsic value, while Eco-Centrism expands the moral scope to all sentient beings. Biome-centrism, advocating for a holistic approach, emphasizes the moral value of all living and non-living entities. Eco-Centrism is a skeptical, egotistical view of the existence of any supernatural being (Islami, Dabiri and Alizadeh, 1386). This approach has evolved with the advancement of knowledge in the biological sciences. Eco-Centrism opposes the approach of human ethical interaction with nature and the environment, which derives from the traditional ethics of the West and the Church, according to which man is not part of nature but is separate and out of it, usually its external master or controller. Some proponents of the Eco-Centrism view believe that the ecological crisis that afflicts today's humans is caused by religious schools such as Christianity. Eco-centrism can be seen as the first step, in which human goes beyond themselves and wishes to accept intrinsic value in other beings. In this approach, it is claimed that animals with lower and different degrees possess rational attributes such as subjective marking, problem-solving, utilizing different tools, fundamental behavior with others, the ability to feel themselves and to know themselves (Louis, 1384; Bernard Rowlin, nd). Bernard Rowlin believes that both humans and animals are sentient beings. Therefore, they have moral values and rights and are respected as a result. He argues that other natural systems that are not sentient also lack respect and moral value (Louis, 1384). Singer also believes that sentient beings have intrinsic value. (Singer, 1386). Singer and Reagan believe that achieving the status of ethical value depends on the validity of this position. This validity is what makes a creature worthy of the moral and ethical value that, in Singer's view, is being sensitive and intelligent, and in Reagan's view: benefiting the experience of life. According to this approach, the moral value goes to the limit of animals that have such validity as human beings. (Louie, 1384)

### *Biome-Centrism*

Some see the value orientation of Biome-Centrism as narrow-minded for environmental protection, saying that there is a need for a holistic approach in which environmental protection is based on natural processes. In the holistic ecosystem ethical approach, the moral value of all beings - living or inanimate such as trees and rocks is emphasized. In this kind of ecological ethics, humans are not superior to others; they are only part of a larger whole, i.e. nature. It is on this basis that the American philosopher Paul Taylor puts forward the concept of expanded society and the concept of the expanded self. In Taylor's idea, the idea of a unified society plays a central role, by which the notion that natural beings have a common origin and are

interdependent with one another, reaches a moral commitment manifested in respect for nature. The notion of "community" on the one hand combines the idea of interdependence and on the other, commitment and mutual care. For Ness, being one with nature means becoming part of a larger being. The key to recognizing the larger self, than the smaller self, is the idea of 'Identification'. Man becomes larger when he sees himself in harmony with nature. (Benson, 1382)

### **Reviewing and Criticizing the Anthropocentrism Theory**

One of the most important reasons for anthropocentrism is human rationality, which allows him to behave in any way to other seemingly senseless species and creatures. This belief in the immobility of matter and the lack of inherent insights and values in non-human beings give humans the right to acquit themselves of the damage they cause to the biome. The consequence of anthropocentrism is the disengagement of man from the responsibility that man has for preserving the inherent values of nature. (Aminzadeh, 1381: pp. 97-106)

1. According to Lin Wight et al., this view has gained its validity from the Church (the Bible) and the influence of the Greeks and Aristotle on the West and Christianity, and this can be a strong reason for this view. This is a personal view that Aristotle has a specific view of nature and creatures and there are other views contrary to this idea. So his opinion cannot be a general view authorized for everyone.
2. Regarding the Bible, there is no room for its validity, given the ups and downs and the multiplicity of the Bible. In addition, the necessity to accept this approach of the Bible is the acceptance of conflict in the Abrahamic religions; while the scriptures and the Abrahamic religions have no conflict with each other.
3. This saying that man is a wise and rational being, and therefore has moral value and right, is accepted by all, but why other beings do not have this status? What is the problem if other creatures have ethical values and human beings, as the best creatures, have the right to exploit them while preserving their worth and dignity?

### **Review and critique of Eco-Centrism theory**

1. This approach is a positive step in disregarding the traditional Western view namely Anthropocentrism, as it pushes the subject of value and morality beyond the boundary of human beings and goes up to the animal boundary, but in practice, because man has a capitalist thought, he acts in a way that destroys everything for his own maximum profit and accumulation of capital (Foster, 1383); like socialist ideas, in which people like Saint Simon and Proudhon rejected any exploitation between humans and nature, but during the Cold War, the Socialists as competing with capitalism damaged to the environment. (Fahimi and Mashhadi, 1388)
2. It is not acceptable to say that humans and animals have the same intrinsic value and respect and that the intrinsic value of living creatures cannot be graded, since it is unlikely that even proponents of this approach will adhere to it.

3. According to Singer's theory that every sentient being has moral value and respect, human life will face many problems among these beings; since moral conflicts increase to the point that it is very difficult for humans to make decisions. For example, since this approach requires respect for all beings, the question arises as to what is the human duty to insidious creatures such as mosquitoes, flies, mice, and beetles.

4. Another problem of this theory is that sensitivity and sensibility are considered to be moral values, while sensitivity is an existential value, not an ethical one, such as reason, which is an existential value, not an ethical one.

5. Reagan cites the reason for the moral value of animals as being "prone to live." If the gift of life is meant to have the potential to continue living and enjoy what is needed and one deserves it, then there is no difference between animals and other beings because all beings, even plants, have the potential to survive. The aptitude of life is something beyond the perception and emotion of the being; that is, the being without the perception and emotion can also be susceptible to life.

### **A Comprehensive Analysis and Critique of Biome-Centrism Theory**

Biome-centrism, rooted in Taylor's theoretical framework, is characterized by three fundamental axes:

**Ultimate Goal of Life:** According to this theory, every living being is driven by an ultimate goal and purpose in life.

**Individual Pursuit of Good:** Each living being seeks its own good in a manner unique to its nature.

**Intrinsic Value Equality:** Biome-centrism posits that every living being shares the same intrinsic value, emphasizing that the intrinsic worth of humans is no greater than that of other living entities.

In comparison to Eco-Centrism, Biome-Centrism boasts a broader scope by encompassing all living beings.

However, several drawbacks warrant critical consideration:

**Conceptual Ambiguity Regarding Society:** The theory's acceptance of the concept of "society" becomes problematic when examined in both minimalist and maximalist contexts. While a minimalist interpretation aligns with the notion of interdependence, a maximalist understanding implies conditions wherein a significant portion of living creatures may not qualify as potential members of society. This is particularly evident in conditions necessitating mutual recognition, the existence of common interests, and acknowledgment of each other's rights. The question arises as to whether, under such stringent criteria, even all human beings can be considered part of a unified community, let alone extending this unity to encompass all beings. Although one could argue that all human beings may perceive each other as potential society members, the broader inclusion of all beings poses challenges.

**Overlooking Nuances and Specifics:** A notable drawback is the theory's tendency to overlook nuanced considerations. When addressing the complex and varied experiences of sentient beings, especially concerning their sensate nature, dignity, and status, a more case-by-case approach may be necessary. Failing to account for these intricacies may lead to oversights in prioritizing the needs and necessities of different species.

In conclusion, while Biome-Centrism offers a comprehensive perspective on the interconnectedness of all living beings, its practical application faces challenges in defining the boundaries of an inclusive society and in addressing the unique considerations of diverse creatures. Attention to these limitations is essential for refining and enhancing the theory's applicability in diverse ecological and ethical contexts. In order to discern which environmental perspective aligns more closely with Islamic teachings, a comparative analysis will be conducted, referencing both traditional sources and jurisprudential texts in conjunction with the religious teachings of the Qur'an. As the second and third theories are considered identical, with the latter being an extension of the former, a comparative examination will focus on Biome-Centrism and Anthropocentrism, or an Environmental Value-Oriented View. The possibility under consideration is that Islam embraces a holistic view. Supporting this assertion are several pieces of evidence from the Qur'an and Islamic jurisprudence, indicating that Islam espouses a comprehensive, inclusive, and valuable perspective on the entire world—encompassing both the human and non-human realms. Key evidence supporting this viewpoint includes:

A. **Unified Identity in the Qur'anic Worldview:** The Qur'an portrays the elements of nature and humanity as



inseparable, sharing the common identity of "From Him" and "Towards Him." This suggests that both elements coexist, mutually dependent for sustenance and interconnected in their evolutionary journey toward the divine. Each entity holds intrinsic value within this interconnected web of existence.

B. Prohibition of Environmental Destruction: The Qur'an explicitly prohibits human beings from causing corruption on earth, and environmental degradation is highlighted as a prominent form of corruption. The Qur'an defines corruption as acts of cruelty and oppression through unethical behaviors, disrupting the established order and competence of the world. Instances of corruption range from human mismanagement, such as war, to upheavals caused by human actions, such as widespread droughts and diseases.

C. Ethical Guidelines on Hunting: Islam discourages hunting for recreational purposes and permits it only when necessary for sustenance. In a hadith, Imam Sadiq (AS) emphasizes that hunting for mere amusement is not in line with Islamic principles. This indicates that Islam values the ethical treatment of nature and wildlife, allowing hunting only for genuine subsistence needs.

Collectively, the Qur'anic and jurisprudential evidence emphasizes the shared intrinsic value between nature and human beings. It asserts that the value of each is not contingent on the devaluation of the other. Consequently, theories advocating either environmental or anthropocentric valuation are deemed incongruent with the Islamic perspective. Instead, the evidence suggests that Islam aligns with a holistic ecological theory, emphasizing the interconnectedness and intrinsic value of all elements within the broader ecosystem. (Fathali, 1390)

Another possibility is that Islam has a value-oriented view of the environment, in the sense that all the things God has created have been for human beings to meet their needs and exploit them. Based on this view, the natural environment is a means of serving humanity. Evidence that supports this claim is:

A. Numerous verses in the Qur'an suggest that nature has been created for human creation:

It is He who has created all that is on the earth for you. He then created the heavens, so he arranged them in the order of the seven heavens, and he knew everything (Baqarah: 29). The word «الم» in the phrase

«لَكُمْ» is a profit one- in the sense that all that is on earth is at the service of man and that the originality

لَكُمْ

«

of the permissibility is deduced; namely at first glance man has the authenticity to seizure in all nature; in addition, the authenticity of the subscription is understood, that is, natural gifts do not belong to a particular person, and they are all equally shared. This initial sharing is prioritized in the traditions and hadiths, with rulings such as Tahjir, Hayāt, and Īhyā, and no one has the advantage over the other. In the general sense, man has the right to conquer nature. (Sadiqi Tehrani, 1405-1407). According to Allameh Tabataba'i, regarding the hierarchy of being, the creatures that are in the material world each have privileges toward those lower than them. Humans have been distinguished from other beings by the gift of reason and have been allowed by God to conquer and dominate the inferior ranks. (Tabatabaei, 1402)

B. The Quranic verses emphasize the concept that humanity has been granted the right to conquer and dominate nature for various purposes. The Quran provides instances of this dominion, illustrating the multifaceted relationship between humans and the natural world:

C. Conquest for Nutrition:

D. "The same God who made the earth a comforting place for you and created paths there and sent water from the sky with which We created various kinds of plants (from the dark soil). Eat both yourself and your livestock. Certainly therein are clear signs for the wise." (Ṭā Hā: 53 & 54)

E. "And he is the one who calmed the sea to eat fresh flesh from it." (Naḥl: 14)

F. Utilization for Cover and Burden:

G. "Of the cattle are some for burden and some for meat: eat what Allah hath provided for you, and follow not the footsteps of Satan: for he is to you an avowed enemy." (An'ām: 142)

H. Employment for Transport and Food:

I. "It is Allah Who made cattle for you, that ye may use some for riding and some for food." (Ghāfir: 79)

J. "It is Allah Who has subjected the sea to you, that ships may sail through it by His command, that ye may seek of His bounty, and that ye may be grateful." (Jāthiyah: 12)

K. Utilization for Accommodation and Guidance:

L. "It is Allah Who made your habitations homes of rest and quiet for you; and made for you, out of the skins of animals, (tents for) dwellings, which ye find so light (and handy) when ye travel and when ye stop (in your travels); and out of their wool, and their soft fibers (between wool and hair), and their hair, rich stuff and articles of convenience (to serve you) for a time." (Naḥl: 80)

M. "It is He Who made the stars (as beacons) for you, that ye may guide yourselves, with their help, through the dark spaces of land and sea: We detail Our Signs for people who know." (An'ām: 97)

N. Islamic traditions and Quranic verses attribute the right to conquer nature to the endowments of reason and authority, rendering man superior to other beings. An insightful hadith from Imam Sadiq (AS) emphasizes the unique position of humans, stating that intellect, coupled with the ability to control one's desires, places humanity in a superior position even compared to angels. While the authenticity of this hadith is debated, some scholars consider its sanad reliable, attributing it to the infallible Imam.

According to Allameh Tabataba'i, another facet of human excellence lies in their total authority to accept divine will and obey commandments. This indicates that man's relationship with nature is one of conquest as long as he maintains existential value and remains faithful to God, implying a wide range of actions within ethical and divine boundaries. (Jawādī Āmulī, 1386: p. 168) A comparative study of the Islamic view with three mentioned views

While Islam acknowledges the elevated status of human beings and their role as divine stewards, it also emphasizes the responsibility that comes with this position. Unlike contemporary anthropocentric ideologies that may portray humans as replacing God on Earth, Islamic teachings stress that the human caliph, as the representative of God, must uphold certain attributes of divine action to fulfill the entrusted responsibility. The Qur'an consistently refers to humans as custodians of the Earth, imposing a duty to prevent corruption and actively engage in its improvement.

Several Quranic verses caution against causing corruption on Earth and mandate the obligation to reform it. This emphasis on responsible stewardship implies that the caliph's actions should mirror divine attributes, aligning with the principles of trust and guardianship. The Quranic and jurisprudential evidence collectively underscores the equal intrinsic value of nature and humans, where the worth of one is not contingent on the devaluation of the other. Contrary to theories advocating either environmental or human-centered values exclusively, Islam aligns with a balanced perspective that encourages the proper and harmonious use of the Earth's resources. This perspective discourages destructive domination over nature and instead advocates for responsible and balanced utilization. The ecological view, which posits equal intrinsic value for all living beings, faces conflict with Islamic teachings. In Islam, humans are accorded a higher intrinsic value than other creatures, challenging the bio-centric notion that all living beings share identical intrinsic value and respect, with intrinsic value being non-gradable. In summary, the Islamic view promotes responsible stewardship, acknowledging the unique role and higher intrinsic value of humans while advocating for the balanced and considerate use of nature. This stands in contrast to extreme anthropocentrism or biocentrism, presenting Islam as adhering to a comprehensive intermediate theory of environmental ethics. (Fath Ali, 1390)

### **Conclusion**

The industrialization of human societies has unfortunately resulted in negative consequences, including discharge, destruction, pollution, and instability. Despite advancements in knowledge, the acquisition of powerful technology, and the rapid turnover of information and capital, these damages have evolved into an ecological crisis. This crisis prompts the question of the root causes of environmental issues and how humans should interact with nature. Three prominent perspectives in this discourse are Anthropocentrism theory, Eco-Centrism theory, and Biome-Centrism theory. In this study, the Islamic viewpoint is examined concerning these theories to determine which aligns more harmoniously with Islamic principles. According to the Anthropocentric view, only humans possess intrinsic value among all creatures, and they

have no moral commitment to other beings. Eco-centrism theory, in contrast, asserts that every living thing, including humans, is intrinsically valuable and must have a moral commitment to it. Biome-centrism theory extends moral value to all creatures, both animate and inanimate, such as plants and animals. In examining Islamic teachings, it becomes evident that some verses of the Qur'an and traditions align with the Anthropocentric view, emphasizing the distinction of humans from other creatures and permitting them to conquer the environment for the benefit of intellect and acceptance of Divine Providence and Guardianship. However, this permission does not negate the inherent value of other beings, and it does not imply that human beings have absolute authority. Instead, Islamic teachings emphasize that human interaction with the environment should be responsive, committed, and responsible. The key difference between the Islamic view and other perspectives lies in the attitude toward humans and nature. In Islam, humans are regarded as the caliphs of God, distinct from other creatures and permitted to possess. However, this permission is not absolute, and Islamic laws impose limits on this possession. The Islamic view aligns with the comprehensive intermediate theory of the environment, acknowledging the unique status of humans without granting them absolute authority. It does not elevate nature to equal or greater value than humanity. Instead, it promotes a balanced and responsible approach to environmental stewardship. This literature review highlights the richness and diversity of religious perspectives on biodiversity and the environment. By examining the ethical frameworks embedded in different religious traditions, this study aims to contribute to the broader dialogue on sustainable practices and environmental conservation. Recognizing the cultural and spiritual dimensions of biodiversity conservation is essential for fostering a collaborative and inclusive approach that transcends disciplinary boundaries.

## References

- A Group of Authors. 1386 H.S. Applied Ethics; New Challenges and Explorations in Practical Ethics, Research Institute of Islamic Science and Culture, Qom.
- A Group of Authors. 1389 Hs. Research in Applied Ethics, Qom, University of Qom.
- Abedi Sarwestani, A. 1386 HS. "The Ethical and Value Orientation of Islamic Ecosystem, Nature and Consequences", published in the book Ethics and the Environment, by Kavus Seyyed Imami, Tehran, and Imam Sadiq University.
- Aminzadeh, B. 1381 HS. "Religious Worldview in the Environment: An Introduction to Islam's Attitude to Nature", Environmental Studies, no. 30, pp. 97-106.
- Anne Warrn, Mary, nd. Moral Status, a Companion to Applied Ethics. Ed, R, G.frey.
- Benson, J. 1382 HS. Environmental Ethics, Translated by Gholamhosein Vahabzadeh, Jihad Daneshgahi, Mashhad.
- Berry, T. (2009). The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-First Century. Columbia University Press.
- Fahimi, A. & Mashhadi, A. 1388 HS. Intrinsic Value and Instrumental Value in Environmental Philosophy, Qualitative Theological Philosophical Research Quarterly of Qom University, no. 1, pp. 195-216.
- Fathali, M. 1390 HS. The Biological Environmental Theory of Islam with Emphasis on the Beliefs of Mesbah-Yazdi, Ethical Knowledge, no. 3, p. 102.
- Foltz, R. C. (2003). Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust. Harvard University Press.
- Foster, J. B. 1383 HS. Marx's Ecology of Materialism and Nature, Translated by Akbar Masoum Beigi,

- Other Publication, np.
- Gadgil, M., & Bahulikar, R. A. (1991). The Use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Forest Management: An Example from Western Ghats of India. *Forest Ecology and Management*, 45(1-4), 1-11.
- Gottlieb, R. S. (2006). *A Greener Faith: Religious Environmentalism and Our Planet's Future*. Oxford University Press.
- Hessel, D., & Ruether, R. R. (2000). *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-being of Earth and Humans*. Harvard Divinity School.
- Hessel, D., & Ruether, R. R. (2000). *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-being of Earth and Humans*. Harvard Divinity School.
- Hur Āmulī, M. 1403 AH. *Wasā'il al-Shi'a ilā Tahsil al-Shari'ah*, research by Abd al-Rahim al-Rabbani al-Shirazi, Beirut, Dar Īhyā al-Turāth al-Arabī, Fifth Edition.
- Islāmī, M. T. & Dabiri, A. & Alizadeh, M. 1386 HS. *Islamic Applied Ethics*, Institute of Islamic Science and Culture, Qom.
- Jawādī Āmulī, A. 1386 HS. *Islam and the Environment*, Qom, Isrā'.
- Kant, I. 1369 HS. *The Metaphysical Foundation of Ethics*, translated by Hamid Enayat and Ali Qaysari, Tehran, Kharazmi.
- Kheel, M. (2008). *Nature Ethics: An Ecofeminist Perspective*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Louie P. 1384 HS. *Environmental Ethics*. Translated by Mohsen Salasi et al., Tehran, and Development Publication.
- Loy, D. R. (2003). *The Dharma of Dragons and Daemons: Buddhist Themes in Modern Fantasy*. Wisdom Publications.
- Majlesi, M. T. 1406 AH. *Rawzat al-Muttaqin fi Sharh man La Yahzr al-Faqih*, Qom, Islamic Cultural Institute of Guchanpour, Qom.
- Makarem Shirazi, N. et al., 1379 HS. *Tafsir Nemooneh*, Tehran, Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyah.
- Mohaqqiq Damad, S. M. 1373 HS. *Nature and the Environment from the Islamic Perspective*, Culture Letter, no. 13, p. 78-89.
- Mozafari, M. H. 1389 HS. *Principles of Exploiting Environmental Resources from the Quran's Perspective*, published in the book of *Ethics and Environment*, by Kavus Seyyed Imami, Tehran, Imam Sadiq University.
- Nahj al-Balāghah, translated by Seyyed Mohammad Dashti, Qom, al-Hadi.
- Rowlin, B. nd, *Mindfulness, the Criterion of Moral Value*.
- Nasr, S. H. (1989). *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis in Modern Man*. Kazi Publications.
- Rukn al-Dini, S. H. nd, *Moral Dignity of Environment and Its Challenges with an Emphasis on Islamic Thought*, PhD Thesis, Qom, University of Ma'aref.
- Sadeghi Tehrani, M. 1405-1407 AH. *Al-Furqān fi Tafsir al-Qur'an bel Qur'an*, Beirut, al-Wafa institute. Sadūq, Mohammad ibn Ali, nd. 'Ilal al-Sharāyi', Qom, Dawari Publications.
- Santmire, H. P. (2000). *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology*. Fortress Press.
- Sardar, Z. (2017). *Reading the Qur'an: The Contemporary Relevance of the Sacred Text of Islam*. Oxford University Press.
- Sayyed Imami, K. 1389 HS. *Ethics and Environment (Islamic approach)*, Tehran, Imam Sadiq University.
- Singer, P. 1386 HS. *The Ethics of the Environment*. Translated by Alireza Al Bouyeh, *Journal of Critique and Opinion*, no. 45 and 46, pp. 141-169.
- Tabataba'i, S. M. H. 1402 AH. *Al-Mizan fi al-Tafsir al-Qur'an*, Qom, Islamic Publications, Fourth Edition. The Bible.
- The Holy Quran.
- White, L. Jr. (1967). *The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis*. *Science*, 155(3767), 1203-1207.
- Zamakhsharī, M., 1407 AH, *al-Kashshāf an Haqā'iq Ghawāmiḍ al-Tanzīl*, Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-Arabī.