



ISLAM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

محيط

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Discuss the importance of the environment in Islam
- Discuss some ways we can help the environment
- Discuss some of the dangers facing the environment today

Islam & the Environment

Everything we see around us in the natural world such as the trees, rivers and skies can be classified as the environment. It includes all the various things that we need for living, such as the oxygen from trees and the food from plants and animals. The environment also is a sign of the existence of Allah (SWT) because of its immense beauty, and just looking at the environment brings joy and peace to our hearts and reminds us of our Creator. In this lesson, we will be looking at what our religion tells us regarding the environment around us and exploring our responsibilities towards it.

SOCIAL ISLAM

JUNIOR LEVEL

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Islam regards our environment very highly and has immense respect for it. Allah (SWT) has referred to various parts of the environment such as the sun, bodies of water, trees, plants, animals and the earth in over 750 āyāt of the Holy Qur'an.



Even the term for paradise in Islam is 'jannah', which literally means a garden. Therefore, if we want the natural environment (trees and rivers) of paradise to be our home in the Hereafter, we have to look after the natural environment in this world. Allah (SWT) makes it clear that He does not love mischief such as destroying plants and animals in the following verse:

"...They strive in the earth to make mischief and destroy the crops and the cattle, and God does not love mischief." (2:205)



Our Holy Prophet (saw) and Imams (as) also highlight how we should care for the environment in many narrations, showing us that we should plant as much as we can and not destroy. The Holy Prophet (saw) especially gave farmers special respect, saying that :

“farmers are the treasures of mankind”

and:

“cultivate the land and plant on it, for by Allah, no business is more halal and sweeter than this”.

With regards to taking care of animals, we can learn a lot from the story of Prophet Noah (as), where he boarded a pair of each and every species on his boat. He did not just save the animals that were useful to human beings or the ones that we could eat, but rather cared for every single one of Allah (SWT)’s creations and boarded them all onto his ark.

Class activity

HOW CAN WE HELP THE ENVIRONMENT?

Each and every one of us can help the environment in different ways. Can you think of some of these ways?

As a class, brainstorm the different ways that we can help the environment and write them on the whiteboard. Then, each student should select one of them and make a drawing which shows it.

DON'T WASTE

You have probably come up with lots of good ideas in your brainstorming session. One of the most important things we can do to help the environment is to avoid waste. Waste harms the environment, because it means we need to make more of a certain thing, and this leads

to more energy use and more pollution. Examples of waste include:

- Wasting food by throwing it away
- Wasting electricity by leaving lights on when they are not being used
- Wasting water by turning the tap on full, when we only need a little water, or by taking extra long showers

Wasting is a sin in Islam, and the Holy Qur'an advises us that:

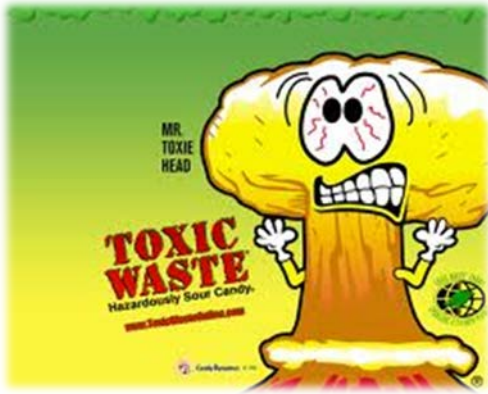
“And do not waste, for Allah does not love those who waste” (6:141)



DANGERS FACING THE ENVIRONMENT

Due to our irresponsible actions and carelessness, there are a lot of dangers facing our environment. Two of the major issues are:

- Deforestation: In the recent centuries, the human population has increased a lot throughout the world, and we humans have chopped down more and more trees in order to make way for our buildings and roads, as well as to use the wood. A lot of our houses where we live right now used to be forests full of beautiful tall trees. Trees are very important blessings of Allah (SWT) because they clean the air, converting carbon dioxide into the oxygen that we breathe. Therefore, continuing to destroy forests is very dangerous and we should work to re-plant.



- Pollution: We human beings have continued destroyed our environment by being irresponsible for our actions. Industries have spilled their toxic wastes into the seas and we have polluted the air with the fuel that is burnt by our cars and machines, as well as other sources of air and water pollution. This pollution has had a huge negative effect on plants and animals, with large populations dying or facing extinction due to our actions.

Review Questions

Q1. In regards to our environment, we should:

- a) Be careless and do whatever we like.
- b) Cut down all trees and use them to build houses.
- c) Take care of, protect, and build the environment.

Q2. The Holy Prophet (saw) regarded farmers as:

- a) The fathers of mankind.
- b) The treasures of mankind.
- c) The laziest of mankind.

Q3. Allah (SWT) in the Holy Qur'an says that He:

- a) Loves those who create mischief and destroy the crops and cattle.
- b) Does not love mischief such as destroying crops and cattle.
- c) None of the above.