

Islamic and Muslim Environmentalism

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Abstract— Kurdish environmentalism is gaining ground but has not yet become significantly influential in society. The environmental movements have long been held to belong to left wing politics and to be less identified with religious ideas, but today environmental awareness is also reaching the religious establishment. This article presents some of the current secular and religious environmental trends in Kurdistan region of Iraq. Recent scholarly interest in religions and ecology reaffirm the importance of religious models in understanding humanity's place in nature. While Islam provides detailed ethical principles on the environment, the majority of Muslim majority countries show an apparent indifference to environmental issues. Due to the complexities in Muslim majority countries in relation to environmental issues, this paper contends that there is a need for an examination of the different aspects of Muslim environmentalism, and to what extent environmental practices are influenced by Islamic environmental ethics. Therefore, this paper develops a multipronged approach whereby both environmental and non-environmental practices by Muslims are discussed, giving an overview of Islamic attitudes towards ecology and environmental practices and suggesting reasons for Muslim nonconcern for the environment. Moreover, the paper illustrates how Muslims in western and Muslim majority countries implement Islamic environmental ethics. Finally, western and eastern Muslim thinkers who have written on Islam and the environment are explored.

Keywords— Environment, Islam, Religion, Kurdistan region of Iraq.

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to present some of the secular and religious environmental trends in contemporary Turkey. The main research questions are: who are the central environmental actors in Turkey and are there differences regarding ideology and ways of working between the secular and religious fields? When discussing these questions, I will also shed light on Kurdish environmental history, but the main emphasis is on the present time, focusing on the level of environmental engagement in Kurdistan region of Iraq.

Backed by extensive research, the processes driving global warming over the last few decades have largely been traced to anthropogenic origins (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2013), or human behaviors that lead to significant environmental impact. Attendant are stark warnings concerning the existential consequences for human civilization (Hancock, 2017). These human behaviours are referred to as environmentally significant behaviours. Environmentally significant behaviours can be described either through their impact, signifying the degree to which they affect the availability of resources and alter the composition of the biosphere itself; or its intent, meaning behaviour undertaken with the expectation to change (usually, to benefit) the environment. This research

looks at the latter, with the terms pro-environmental, pro environmental behaviours and environmentalism used interchangeably. These behaviours arise as humans fulfil their range of abilities and desires, which are in turn motivated by factors such as human attitudes, predispositions, beliefs and social structures. The academic discipline of environmental psychology has looked deeply into cognitive motivators of environmentally significant behaviours, analysing causal factors and related theories leading to higher or lower frequency of environmentalism. One area of focus for environmental psychology is religion (Stern, 2000), the argument being that certain Judeo-Christian beliefs make adherents susceptible against (Hand & Liere, 1984; Kanagy & Willits, 1993; Schultz, Zelezny, & Dalrymple, 2000; White Jr, 1967) or predisposed in favour of acting pro-environmentally (Boyd, 1999; Sherkat & Ellison, 2007). However, literature increasingly contends that it is not so much having religious beliefs that decide whether or not devotees will behave pro-environmentally, but rather the manner in which they process their beliefs and accompanying texts (Gennerich & Huber, 2006; Tarakeshwar, Swank, Pargament, & Mahoney, 2001) The importance of focusing on groups motivated through religion are myriad, ranging from it being a powerful force shaping people's worldviews; having a broad and receptive

audience; significant institutional and economic resources; and connectivity that nurtures community and the achievement of collective goals (Ismail, et al. 2019). Furthermore, the corpus on environmental activism has noted that environmental activism often has a spiritual dimension, and that environmental spirituality may be considered a religion in itself. In spite of this, climate change movements have largely maintained exclusively secular credentials, wilfully shunning religiously inspired activism (Hekmatpour, et al. 2017). Further, despite growth in literature trying to understand the influence of religious beliefs on environmentalism, calls for greater efforts have been made. This applies to enhancement and consolidation of empirical measures of religion and environmentalism, as well as (the focus of this research), the link between the two (Yildirim, 2016). An overview of the literature investigating the relationship of religion on environmentalism reveals a wide range of measurements and models. A majority of religio-environmental studies have focused on Judeo-Christian samples with the United States, which has led to a general neglect of other religions and regions. Islam is one of the major religions of the world, with over 1.6 billion followers (Islam & Islam, 2015). Muslim scholars posit that Islam provides a comprehensive belief system, drawn from their holy book the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. This hold over the imagination claims to extend into the environmental domain, whereby humans are considered one part of an intricate system designed by God, in which their role includes ensuring survival, but within the confines of responsible leadership. However, despite the presence of almost a million Muslims in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, there are no major Islamic institutions addressing environmental issues, and most environmentalism is a result of private behaviours. Globally too, Muslim's practical response towards behaving pro-environmentally has been varied at best (Hancock, 2019). Furthermore, empirical measures of the psychology underpinning Muslims behaviours have been tabulated to a lesser extent than even smaller sized religions. Nonetheless, this research is less interested in the degree of environmental behaviours among

Muslims, and more so how religion influences their environmental attitudes and behaviours; since the major aim of this research is to look at the causes and not amount or types of behaviours. This in turn gives rise to exciting possibilities, in coming up with quantitative socio-psychological motivators unique to Muslim samples; advancing models that move towards creating a truly

international psychology of Islamic and perhaps even general religious, environmentalism. Thus, the main ambition of this research is to develop a 'Model of Islamic Environmentalism'. Yet, this still begs the question: why study the attitudes and behaviours of Muslims in the Kurdistan region of Iraq through the lens of religion, when various scholars of migration and religion have predicted religious decline and secularization amongst immigrant populations. In fact, the most recent studies of Muslims in the Kurdistan region of Iraq have shown that religion still plays an ongoing and crucial role for this demographic. (Mcintosh, 2018), demonstrated that over a period stretching from 1997-2012, Muslims self-identification with religion registered a slight increase, and that citizens of Turkish and Moroccan Dutch background had significantly greater chances of identifying with Islam and attending mosques compared to the religious leanings of the general population. Similarly, (Hancock, 2015) found that after a decreasing trend until 2004, the frequency of mosque attendance of Muslims stabilized, belying claims of secularization. A study on second generation Turks in four major Western European capitals (including Amsterdam) found them self-identifying as Muslims with high levels of religious identification and practices. Thus, if climate change is to be addressed, it will require the collective efforts and change in behaviours of a variety of actors, of which religious groups are an important one. Factors motivating behaviour must be understood, further enabling the conversion of understanding into effective interventions. This research will therefore delve into understanding the religious motivators of environmental attitudes and behaviours among Muslims in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, leading towards a model of Islamic Environmentalism. This will enable filling to knowledge gap of cognitive motivators of environmental behaviours of Muslims in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Policy recommendations shall follow.

Muslims have always been culturally diverse, and never more so than today when they number a billion or more and inhabit every corner of the globe. Historically, the one indisputable source of authority which all Muslims have agreed upon is the will of Allah as expressed in the revealed scripture of the

Qur'an. In addition, the Sunni majority (perhaps eighty percent of all Muslims) accept six collections of reports about the deeds and words of the Prophet Muhammad, called hadiths, as supplementary sources of authority. (Shi'ites agree with some, but not all of these reports, and have compiled collections of their own.) Islamic

environmentalists today, therefore, have attempted to derive an environmental ethic from the Qur'an and hadith, giving comparatively little attention to possible cultural contributions from the various societies in which Muslims live, on the grounds that local or regional attitudes cannot form a basis for any kind of universal Islamic ethic, since they are almost invariably perceived by Islamists as "accretions," and therefore un-Islamic. For example, a recent conference presentation depicting the survival of an age-old river festival in Bangladesh as a positive sign of the rural Bengali Muslims' continuing sense of connectedness with the river, elicited angry accusations of polytheism (shirk)—the worst sin in Islam—from Muslims in the audience. I do not address the politics of environmental activism among Muslims in this paper because, where present, they have tended to be region-specific. For example, when Palestinians seek to assert territorial claims by planting olive groves, one cannot say that doing so is an "Islamic" issue, since many Palestinians are not Muslim. The mere involvement of Muslims does not make an activity or ideology "Islamic." Only a basis in the Qur'an and the hadith does (Gould & Kearns, 2018).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Islamic Environmentalism

For an idea to achieve anything approaching universal acceptance by Muslims as "Islamic," it must be convincingly demonstrated that it derives from the Qur'an, or failing that, from the example of the Prophet Muhammad. Recognizing this fact, contemporary Islamic environmentalists have defined environmentalism as a facet of the Qur'anic concept of stewardship, expressed by the Arabic term *khalifa*. The following verses are cited: "I am setting on the earth a vice-regent" (Qur'an 2:30), and "It is He who has made you his viceregent on earth" (Qur'an 6:165). According to the writings of Islamic environmentalists, all aspects of creation are miraculous signs of God (*ayat*), and must be respected. The Arabic (and Persian) term for the natural environment is *muhit*, which in the Qur'an means "all-encompassing": "And He it is who encompasseth all things" (Qur'an 4:126). The Qur'anic concept of *tawhid* (unity) has historically been interpreted by Muslim writers mainly in terms of the oneness of God (in contradistinction to polytheism), but Islamic environmentalists have preferred to see *tawhid* as meaning all-inclusive. They suggest that the idea of *wahdat al-wujud*, or "unity of being," associated with the medieval

philosopher Ibn 'Arabi, can be understood in environmentalist terms. Ibn 'Arabi, however, has always been a highly controversial figure for Muslims, since many have accused him of holding pantheist or monist views incompatible with Islam's radical monotheism. In support of the more inclusive interpretation of *tawhid*, a Qur'anic verse is often cited which states that all creation praises God, even if this praise is not expressed in human language (Qur'an 17:44). Another verse states that "There is not an animal in the earth, nor a flying creature on two wings, but they are peoples like unto you" (Qur'an 6:38). There would seem to be here a basis for tempering the hierarchical notion of stewardship implied in the concept of *khalifa*. Islam has also been claimed as the religion of *fitrah*, "the very nature of things." By extension, it has been reasoned that a genuinely Islamic life style will "naturally" be environmentally sensitive.³ Traditional accounts of the deeds and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, which together with the Qur'an have formed the basis for Islamic law, emphasize compassion towards animals. The Prophet is believed to have said, "If you kill, kill well, and if you slaughter, slaughter well. Let each of you sharpen his blade and let him spare suffering to the animal he slaughters"; also, "For [charity shown to] each creature which has a wet heart (i.e., is alive), there is a reward." Muslims are urged to respect plant life as well, as in the Prophetic saying, "Some trees are as blessed as the Muslim himself, especially the palm." The Qur'an contains judgment against those who despoil the Earth: "And when he turns away [from thee] his effort in the land is to make mischief therein and to destroy the crops and the cattle; and Allah loveth not mischief" (Qur'an 2:205); and "Do no mischief on the earth after it has been set in order" (Qur'an 7:85). Wastefulness and excess consumption are likewise condemned: "O Children of Adam! Look to your adornment at every place of worship, and eat and drink, but be not wasteful. Lo! He [Allah] loveth not the wasteful" (Qur'an 7:31). The Qur'an repeatedly calls for maintaining balance in all things (Qur'an 13:8, 15:21, 25:2, and elsewhere). Certain sayings of the Prophet seem particularly relevant to contemporary issues of sustainability: "Live in this world as if you will live in it forever, and live for the next world as if you will die tomorrow," and "When doomsday comes if someone has a palm shoot in his hand, then he should plant it."

Islam and the environment

Religious attitudes towards nature Islam is the third of the Abrahamic religions, sharing its religious heritage with Judaism and Christianity. What is relevant here is the environmental context of early Islam. Islam arose amongst the Arab Bedouin, who were desert nomads and herders. Since prehistory, the Arab Bedouin were acutely aware of their environment and venerated the forces of nature. The stark environment of the Arabian desert fostered an attitude of submission among the Arab Bedouin. The prophet Muhammad (570–631) began to preach Islam among his Bedouin kinsmen from this environment. Early Islam was characterized by its simplicity and reverence for nature. As Islam spread into Africa, Asia and Europe in the seventh century, it maintained its naturalistic attitude. A key feature of early Islam, which has informed Muslims for 14 centuries, is its emphasis on nature. The Qur'an and the prophetic traditions are the main sources of Islamic environmental ethos that have been integrated within Islamic jurisprudence. Both Muslim lay people and scholars often read these two sources when making deliberations on the environment (Aoki, 2015). The three founding ideas of Islam's ecological ethics are tawhid (Divine unity), khilafah (trusteeship), and 156 Cont Islam (2012) 6:155–171 akhira (the hereafter). The cornerstone of tawhid is that Allah created the universe and that all existence reflects unity in plurality (Chittick 1986; Dutton 1996; Sanjotis 2004; Foltz et al. 2003). According to Muslim scholars, the universe is governed and regulated by the principles of unity, balance, and harmony that characterise the interactive unifying principle—tawhid. The Qur'an (14:19–20; 46:3; 15:85–86) repeatedly quotes that the universe is characterised by proportion, harmony, and beauty, which are the hallmarks of Divine craftsmanship (Sanjotis 2004: 101; Wersal 1995: 453; Ozdemir 2003; Nasif 1987). Scholars have argued that, in Islam, the universe is maintained in balance, and is regulated by the interdependency of ecological systems (Wersal 1995: 453; Faruqi 1980: 24–31). Consequently, nature provides a source of inspiration and guidance for understanding Divine action in creation. In human terms, tawhid is the basis of human action and thought, penetrating every dimension of subjective and social life (Sardar 1985: 225; Shariati 1979). The second concept of Islamic environmental ethics is stewardship (khilafah) (Idris 1990; Khalid and O'Brien 1992). The Qur'an declares that human beings are stewards of Allah's creation "Behold, the Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth" (Qur'an 2:30). Furthermore, human beings need to refrain from mischief (actions leading to the corruption of the

environment). "Do no mischief on the earth after it hath been set in order, but call on him with fear and longing in your hearts: for the Mercy of God is always near to those who do good" (Qur'an 7:56). The importance of ecology in Islam is affirmed by the fact that one-eighth of the Qur'an exhorts Muslims to meditate on nature. The sociologist Ali Shariati contends that the notion of stewardship should include its spiritual dimensions (Sonn 1995). Similarly, Khalid (1996: 20), notes that included in the concept of stewardship is the notion that humans are friends of the earth, not its masters. The third concept of Islamic environmental ethics is akhira (the hereafter). This indicates that humankind is not only obligated as Allah's steward on the earth, but will also be held accountable in the hereafter if there is any straying. Zaidi notes that intimated in the hereafter is that humans undergo a test of their stewardship (Zaidi 1981: 41). For Manzoor (1984) and Faruqi (1980: 30), and (Weeramantry 1988: 61), this means that each generation of humans is obliged to improve the condition in which preceding generations have left the earth. No generation has a right to pollute the earth in a manner that depletes its resources and degrades its biological systems (Weeramantry 1988: 61). In addition, the level of environmental maintenance is open to Divine judgement at the Day of Reckoning. Some ahadith (accounts of the Prophet Muhammad's teachings), note that cruelty to animals and wanton defacement of nature is forbidden and warrants Divine punishment. Alternately, kindness shown to animals bestows God's reward (Ibn Kadamah 1992; Wescoat 1995). The following two prophetic accounts are mentioned to this effect: Ibn 'Umar, a companion of the Prophet (narrated by Al-Bukhari) reported that the Prophet said: "A woman who tied a cat will go to Hellfire; she neither fed it, nor allowed it to find food on its own." Another companion of the Prophet called Al-Sharid (narrated by Ahmad) reported Cont Islam (2012) 6:155–171 157 that he had heard the Prophet say: "If you kill a sparrow wantonly it will hasten to God on the Day of Judgement saying : O

Lord! So and So killed me for play and not for use!"

Scholars like Zaidi (1981: 35), Faruqi (1980: 30–31), and Ateshin (1989: 179) (see also Wersal 1995) maintain that humans have the rights and privileges of living from the earth in a sustainable manner, or usufruct. Of course, what humans define as sustainable will differ from culture to culture, and indeed, between individuals. From this viewpoint, then, both the Qur'an and the prophetic traditions unequivocally prescribe a criterion for responsible human

trusteeship of the earth. Wersal (1995: 454) suggests that usufruct pertains to all creatures, and not just humans, a view that is supported in the works of Al-Hafiz Masri and Gulzar Haider (Timm 1993: 50). It has often been observed that Islam cannot ordinarily be described as a religion and that it prescribes a way of life that goes beyond the performance of rituals. The word for religion (dīn) is found in the Qur'an (anglicized spelling: Koran; this is Islam's sacred text on which much of this essay is based). The word dīn, which appears in 90 different places, often in contexts that place it outside the purely ritual. Dīn in essence describes an integrated code of behavior which deals with personal hygiene, at one end of the spectrum, to our relationships with the natural order at the other. It provides a holistic approach to existence, it does not differentiate between the sacred and the secular and neither does it place a distinction between the world of mankind and the world of nature. However, this Islamic mode of expression is now severely attenuated, having been swept aside by the forces of history, like the other older traditions, into a domain which treats the natural world exclusively as an exploitable resource. As what we now understand by modernity advanced, as the secular ethic progressively seeped into the Muslim psyche and as industrial development, economic indicators and consumerism became the governing parameters of society, there has been a corresponding erosion of the Muslim perception of the holistic and a withering of its understanding of the sacred nexus between the human community and the rest of the natural order: "The creation of the heavens and the earth is far greater than the creation of mankind. But most of mankind do not know it"

(Qur'an 40:56). For these and other reasons, Muslims in various parts of the world have in recent times sought the reversal of these trends through the reestablishment of Islamic governance based on the

Islamic code known as the Shari'ah. Deeply embedded in its matrix are detailed and sometimes complex rules, which lay down the basis for Islamic environmental practice. Islamic jurisprudence contains regulations concerning the conservation and allocation of scarce water resources; it has rules for the conservation of land with special zones of graded use; it has special rules for the establishment of rangelands, wetlands, green belts and also wildlife protection and conservation. Much of the traditional institutions and laws associated with sound environmental practice in Islam have now fallen into disuse.

The Islamic View of the Environment

Firstly, I should say that according to Islam, everything in the universe is created by God. It is God Who adorns the skies with the sun, the moon and the stars, and the face of the earth with flowers, trees, gardens, orchards, and the various animal species. It is again God Who causes the rivers and streams to flow on the earth, who upholds the skies (without support), causes the rain to fall, and places the boundary between night and day. The universe together with all its richness and vitality is the work and art of God, that is, of the Creator. It is again God Who creates all plants and animals as pairs, in this way causing their procreation. God created man subsequently to all these. We are God's vicegerents on the earth; it has been given us in trust. Just as we are not the lords of nature and the world, so the world is not our property which we can dispose of as we wish or as we are able. Nature was created by God and it belongs to God. Everything in nature is a sign of God's existence; that is, a token or missive. The Qur'an expresses this truth as follows: We shall show them our signs in the [furthest] regions [of the earth], and in their own souls (Ahmad, 2017). 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 God 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 subjugated between the sky and earth — [here] indeed are signs for a people who thinks. The above verse illustrates why Muslim scholars look on nature as a book, even calling it "the book of the universe," in this way pointing out that just like the Qur'an, the universe makes known to us our Sustainer and Creator. And the book of the universe has been entrusted to us to preserve and protect.

Should those who hold the Qur'an in respect and awe, not touching it unless purified by ablutions, not also treat the book of the universe respectfully and lovingly? Our duty, therefore, as God's vicegerents and trustees, is to show respect for the trust, and to preserve it carefully, in no way wasting its natural resources when using or consuming them (Sharif, 2016).

Sustainability of Environment from Islamic Point View

Islam is the name of religion which arose in what is now known as Saudi Arabia in 610. Its initiator was the prophet Mohammed (Peace Be upon Him). The message of God revealed to him is contained in the Holy Qur'an. The prophet Mohammed (Peace Be upon Him) taught the

Muslim followers some lessons that touch their lives. These lessons have been recorded and compiled in the Hadith. Muslims learn from these two books, Qu'ran and Hadith. The rules in those two books and the body of legal opinion recorded by Muslims lawyers relating to all facts of social life in Islamic society are called (Shariah). Shariah covers all areas of economic, social, political and also ecological aspects. Islam is not just religion; it represents an entire sense of community and a way of life. It defines both a world view and a guidance framework for actions in all spheres of life (Karagiannis, 2015). Sustainable development is not a new concept to Muslims. The Qur'an and the Hadith provide the framework for the spiritual and physical welfare of humanity. There are over 500 verses in the Qur'an giving Muslims guidance on matters relating to the environment and how to deal with it, and there are numerous examples from the prophet Mohammed's life (PBUH) and his sayings, which provide a model for justice and equity. The Islamic perspective embraces that everything on the earth was created for humanity and is God's award to people. However, it is an award with conditions, and it is unquestionably that carries responsibilities. The earth then is a testing ground of the humankind. The tests are a measure of man's acts of admiration. On this subject Qur'an says: "Allah sends down water from the sky and by it brings the dead earth back to life. There is certainly a Sign in that for people who hear. There is instruction for you in cattle. From the contents of their bellies, from between dung and blood, we give pure milk to drink, easy for drinkers to swallow. And from the fruit of the date palm and the grapevine you derive both intoxicants and wholesome provision. There is certainly a Sign in that for people who use their intellect. Your Lord revealed to the bees: Build dwelling in the mountains and the trees, and also in the structures which men erect (Hancock, 2015). Then eat from every kind of fruit and travel the paths of your Lord, which have been made easy for you to follow. From inside them comes a drink of varying colours, containing healing for mankind. There is certainly a Sign in that for people who reflect" (AnNahl (16), 65-59:273-274). Mohammed (PBUH) also asked his followers that:

"Not to harm women, children and the infirm, not to harm animals, destroy crops or cut down trees". **Environmental Sustainability**

According to Khalid (2017) environmental sustainability could be conceptualized as: meeting the resource and services needs of current and future generations without

compromising the health of the ecosystems that provide them, and more specifically, as a condition of balance, resilience, and interconnectedness that allows human society to satisfy its needs while neither exceeding the capacity of its supporting ecosystems to continue to regenerate the services necessary to meet those needs nor by our actions diminishing biological diversity. (Hummel & Daassa, 2019) is of the opinion that environmental sustainability is the ability to maintain the qualities that are valued in the physical environment. It involves making decisions and taking actions that are in the interest of protecting the natural world, with particular emphasis on preserving the capability of the environment to support human life. Conceptualizing it from the socio-economic and political perspective, environmental sustainability is about making responsible decisions that will reduce business' negative impact on the environment. It is not simply about reducing the amount of waste being produced or using less energy but is concerned with developing processes that will lead to businesses becoming completely sustainable in the future (Ekara Helfaya, et al. 2019).

Environment is the sum total of physical components surrounding living organisms, including social and political factors which provide conditions for development and growth of those organisms. It could be viewed as a set of interrelated systems – biophysical, social, economic, and political which man transforms to meet his needs (Härmälä, 2019). The biophysical system provides life-support systems for all life. A social system provides rules and structures that enable people to live together. An economic system provides ways of producing, distributing, and consumption of goods and services. The political system makes decisions on structures of power regarding the exploration and exploitation of economic goods and services for the benefit of citizens. Environment is therefore a super-system which every other system on the planet earth depend on for their sustenance (Hew, 2018).

III. RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENTALISM

According to (Abdelzaher & Abdelzaher, 2017), it was the left wing that brought environmentalism, or environmental thinking in the modern sense, to Turkey, and since conservative Muslims for most part have been right wing, they have regarded the liberal left wing, including environmentalism, with suspicion; they have not been able to accept it and have referred to environmentalism as being foreign to their values or goals (IF mgt 2012/038). The polarization of the right and left wings not only affects

environmentalism but is a part of the history of – for example – feminism as well. (Hodge, et al. 2015), states, that with the growth of an environmental movement in the late 1980s, some Islamic groups have also turned their attention to ecological concerns. Unlike the secular movement, the Islamic response has not included an active social movement involving protests, demonstrations, meetings or platforms. Rather, the Islamic contribution to the ecological debate has been to publish criticisms of modernity and its effects on the environment. The Islamic response has for a long time remained on an abstract and theoretical level and according to Balancar the Islamic sources of environmentalism in Turkey are often found in Said Nursi and his writings, even though this has not yet been seen in practice. There are some movements, especially among young Muslims, such as the organization Ekmek ve Adalet (Bread and Justice), that have criticized the lack of environmental justice. Pusch has categorized the critical writings according to theological, popular and intellectual approaches to environmental protection. Theological works tend to argue that environmental protection is in line with Islam and quotes the Qur'an and the hadith to support this view. Up until recent decades Muslim environmentalists have mainly confined their attention to the publication and dissemination of scholarly works on environmental awareness and have organized both national and international conferences, panels, workshops and symposia. One example of this is a conference with the title

'International Symposium on Environment and Religion', organized in 2008 by the theological faculty at Istanbul University (Ali, 2016). The more popular Islamic publications have treated the issue of the environment as well. In these articles the discourse of the 'bad West' can be blamed for the ecological problems, while 'good Islam' is held up as an antidote. The vast majority of the Islamic debate concerning environmental questions has taken place at the intellectual level. The Islamic newspaper Zaman was the first publication in Turkey to introduce a regular section on the environment. Since the end of the 1990s, however, Islamic interest in the environment has declined. As with other issues of public concern, Islamic interest in environmental questions has followed broader national trends. When society became aware of ecological issues and problems at the end of the 1980s, environmental pollution became an important topic in Islamic circles. Similarly, as secular ecological protests declined in the 1990s, so did the interest of Muslims (Raquib & Khan, 2019).

IV. DISCUSSION

The above discussion reflects that the objectives of human development and security cannot be achieved without environmental protection. Additionally, the conceptual framework with reference to human security and its relationship with environment and the current situation of degradation of the environment in Pakistan is presented as an example.

The analysis made in the paper presents a bleak picture of the country. The situation is even more disappointing for a country where religion is considered a most important factor in the daily life. The question arises from the discussion that whether the notion of tawhid, khalafah, and akhirah are applied in their real essence with respect to human security and environmental safety. According to Islamic faith, the inattention to these aspects means the creation of a vicious circle of human underdevelopment. Figure: 1 indicates how this cycle keeps on rotating. While human insecurity is the major cause of human underdevelopment, it is itself the violation of the concepts of tawhid, khalafah, and akhirah due to which a Muslim community remains undeveloped against the objective of Islam. In the Islamic teachings, the protection of environment is extremely important. In Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the religious aspect of environment education is no less important than the scientific knowledge and technology related to this sector. This situation also highlights the fact that the technology alone is not enough to win the war against the forces responsible for degradation of environment. Here, the foremost important point is to initiate a systematised process of Islamic environmental education in the country. An adequate financial resource allocation is essential for this purpose. Figure: 2 indicate that Islamic environmental education supported through adequate financial resources should be started in mainstream education and madrassahs. Both these systems should also coordinate with each other in this regard. This would lead to environmental security, physical and spiritual development. These developments would promote environmental protection leading to a high level of human security which will provide a solid base for human development. Once this cycle is started, its various components will be mutually supportive to achieve the desired objectives.

V. CONCLUSION

The intertwining of Islam and the American Environmental Ethic/Understanding/Movement is, I believe, still a

relatively new concept. There are basically no existing comprehensive surveys of the

Muslim American population and their environmental inclinations. There is also very little study or even coverage of their environmental awareness, knowledge, or activities. I think that this illustrates a distinct weakness within the environmental movement itself, but also a weakness in the understanding of human identity. There is this tendency to divide the world, things, people, etc into dualities or just approach something in an “all or nothing type way.” For instance, in regard to the environment it is although you are choosing “man” or “nature.” Paul Wapner in his most recent book *Living Through the End of Nature* highlights that this is the problem in the environmental movement. The focus on the competing identities of man and nature has taken away from the fact that the two have to work together if we are to achieve a sustainable planet. In fact, he concludes, we are in a post nature world where there is really no distinction between the two any more. And I think one can apply this concept to our human communities as well. It is not man versus wild. Or America versus Islam. Or Muslims versus Christians. When it comes this issue we are in the same boat, quite literally. Paul Wapner suggests that

“ambiguity” is the saving grace for the environmental movement. “Ambivalence is not some horrid sensibility that makes us weak-kneed and ineffective. Rather, it is a source of wisdom, and I will assert, political strength. Life is full of mysteries. We may know that we evolved along with other creatures, and that our bodies operate according to physical and chemical laws, but we have no clue about what it all means, what is absolutely best for our lives, and how to pursue meaningful agendas in a world that is quickly changing, and in which we ourselves are shifting our affiliations as well as finding new passions and interests” (Wapner 2010, 27). This means not choosing between nature and man, but protecting and embracing that hybridity for which we are all a part. Can this offer some clues to the American Muslim community on how to approach political activism? Muslims in America are definitely hybrids in terms of identity, so why not embrace that as part of their political activism? Maybe this calls for a decentered Muslim identity politics to help alleviate the problem of dualistic identity markers. It seems as identity markers, dualities, and cultural binaries only makes bigger human boundaries making issues such as the environment, poverty, social justice, and education harder to tackle although they impact everyone. If we eliminated such boundaries maybe this would allow for American Muslims to speak to Muslims

overseas to their foreign attachments about issues like the environment without the fear of political and social backlash associated with certain foreign relations. Furthermore, when it comes to making everyone an “environmentalist” in their own right, we have to learn to incorporate our other identities into that equation. In a recent article about the notion of “responsible citizenship” entitled “The Muslim Brotherhood in America: Citizens with Foreign Attachments?” Dr. Nimer discusses the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood has not passed the American responsible citizenship test. He indicates that they have been unable to develop a clear vision of their goals and mission here in America. Furthermore, they have not been willing to engage their critics or dispel suspicions regarding their activities (Nimer, 2010).

Thus, “ambiguity” here is not the best method here in terms of their political ethics or methodology in playing power politics as far as defining one’s mission and objectives. But, maybe for the time Muslim activists, especially those dedicated to the environment here in the United States, should follow the example of the Turkish Gulen Movement in its quasi identity ambiguity (Nimer, 2010). It is an Islamic group that focuses on social welfare activities around the world but chooses to remain apolitical and does not focus so much on the “Islamicness” or even “Muslimness” of the group, but the goals of human social welfare programs like education, poverty reduction, and ignorance that affect all communities worldwide, which ultimately a manifestation of certain core values. This would definitely suit well for an issue like the environment, which definitely affects us all. And this may help both Muslim activism and environmentalism enter in the national political landscape by being more inclusive and truly monumental movements without too strong political identifications that turn people away. The environment needs globally minded citizens. As I mentioned in the “Why is this

Important” section of this paper, I noted a study from Yale University by Enderle et al. that highlighted the lack of diversity within the American Environmental community. Paul Wapner also acknowledges this in the way he promotes this notion of openness and ambiguity for the future of the movement. This is why highlighting expressions of different layers of environmentalism is so important for the future. It is a necessary part of diversity that can contribute to a global environmental movement that we desperately need. Everyone truly needs to become an environmentalist in their own way hence the importance of recognizing religion as a source of core values that can facilitate environmental

behaviors. The more people that are involved the better it will be in the future and the easier the mission will become. It is a diversity of ideas, connections, people, beliefs, and cultures that will truly help in contributing to the future of a sustainable planet. This research set out on an ambitious course, in being one of the first attempts at finding the religious and attitudinal determinants of environmental behaviour of Muslims in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. To achieve this, a review of literature was undertaken, and various part of theories drawing from the value-belief-norm theory, the post critical belief scale and environmental attitudes inventory, were grouped into the Islamic Environmentalism Model. The initial results, though with some interesting findings, were found wanting. Variables or religion, attitudes and behaviours all had to be curtailed in order to fit a working model. This already reduced the ability to derive meaningful results. Furthermore, a number of relationships could not be tested. Preservationist attitudes though were found to be significantly and positively related to proenvironmental behaviours. Future work in this area should focus on this relationship. In addition, while pro-environmental behaviours were found to be positively related to Second Naiveté and negatively to Literal Affirmation, these relationships were not found to be significant. Lastly, there was no mediation found within the overall model. Nonetheless, these shortcomings seem to stem from the design process and implementation rather than structural flaws. For instance, considerable number of respondents demonstrated their discomfort with how some questions on religion were worded. This may have biased the results. Furthermore, it can be surmised that since the post critical belief scale was developed for Catholic Christians raised in a secular context, further work will need to look at developing items that can meaningfully capture transcendence and interpretation specifically for Muslims. Another possible limitation was the small sample size of this study. Fontaine et al (2003) for instance had a sample size of 4,000 compared to the presently almost 180. A model of such complexity and number of variables could reasonably lead one to infer that more respondents are required for relationships to show up. Future studies will have to increase sample size before continuing to changes in the model and/or theory. Furthermore, this sample is biased towards higher educated female Muslims in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. A policy recommendation given present results would be for public actors to focus efforts at targeting environmental messages on those who are already predisposed towards a preservationist environmental

attitude. Such messages need not be couched in religious imagery in order to stimulate environmental behaviours among Muslims in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, thus requiring no changes from the approaches already in use.

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