

The Divine Singularity: Unity and Oneness in Islam

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Abstract

Man, a naturally inquisitive being, is profoundly emphasized by the holy Quran to observe the signs (*ayat*) of the Almighty in both the natural world and human existence, recognizing the interconnectedness of all the creation in the universe. This dual focus not only promotes a holistic approach to comprehending God but also reflects His unity and singularity (*Tawhid*). This research underscores the significance of acknowledging God's signs and appreciating the interrelatedness of all the creations. It will not only enhance our spiritual development but will also be beneficial for the entire eco-system, reenforcing our role as the guardians of the natural world.

Key Words: Islam, Quran, Interrelatedness, Creation, Universe

I. Introduction

"We will be demonstrating to them our signs in the immense size of the universe and within their own beings." (Al-Quran 41:53)

For its adherents, Islam places a great emphasis on the observance of God's signs (*Ayat*) in creation and oneself as a road to intellectual and spiritual development. To comprehend the exquisite beauty of the universe and the wisdom of the Almighty, the holy Quran exhorts Muslims to remain always in contemplation of the universe and their own-selves. Analysis of the Quranic verses enable us to understand the significance and importance of



comprehending these divine signs to have whole and spiritually enriched lives. The first Surah of the holy Quran (*Al-Fatihah*) mentions a world “Aalamin” which is derived from the word alam (cosmos). This word shares the same root as ilm (knowledge), alama (mark), or alam (sign post or banner). This is a Quranic way of pointing out that this universe is not only a source of knowledge but also a symbol of something beyond itself.¹ The impression “*Wal-Asr*”² in the holy Quran, signifies the genesis of a grand series of events that caused the creation of space, time, and countless dimension. Time and again, the holy Quran has mentioned this natural world as a testament to God’s existence. The holy Quran elucidates physical phenomena such as changing of day and night, rain, clouds, winds, and all the creatures as signs for the people of understanding³. It further asserts that focusing on the signs of the Almighty in creation and oneself is the foundation of one’s faith (*Iman*). The observance of the natural world forms a firm conviction regarding the existence of God. The glorious Quran holds the existence of the sky, earth, and the cycle of day and night, as signs for people of wisdom.⁴ A lot of Muslim researchers and interpreters of the past and present have explained the observance of natural phenomena as a path to the recognition of God. Al-Biruni, a renowned Muslim scientist of the 11th century, expressed that observance of the universe serves as a touchstone to determine whether it is perpetual or originated.⁵

The Quranic notion that everything belongs to God and only God encompasses everything⁶ is the foundation of holistic approach in Islam as it affirms the interdependence of the whole natural order. Cosmology and astronomy have significantly changed contemporary science and have unveiled numerous astounding natural phenomena in the cosmos. Our whole universe is interconnected; in order to know the trajectory of a single particle, we need to narrate the story of the universe. Each particle is delicately connected to all the particles in the cosmos.⁷ Islamic theology and cosmology clearly embrace the idea of interconnectedness.⁸ It fits the concept of *Tawhid*, the oneness of God, according to which the creator’s single sovereignty unites all of creation.⁹ The Muslim's perspective of the natural world, ethical behaviour,

social interactions, and global obligations is significantly altered by this comprehensive image. The theological origins of interdependence as stated in the holy Quran are explored in this research paper, coupled with the ethical and ecological repercussions of this worldview and their applicability to societal peace and global challenges. By relying on scholarly interpretations and academic sources, it is intended to offer an exhaustive understanding of the importance of realizing the interrelatedness of every single creation in the universe from an Islamic perspective.

2. Theological Foundations of Interrelatedness in the Quran

Tawhid, the Islamic concept that refuses the existence of any deity or divinity except God, is consistently highlighted in the holy Quran by defining the interdependence of all existence, which is the evidence of His divine unity. The theological foundation of the Tawhid lies in the notion that everything in the universe is the manifestation of God's creative power and will, and he has absolute control over all its creations. The holy Quran describes God as everlasting; his existence is not bound by time and space and He wields the absolute knowledge (*Al-Quran 57:3*).¹⁰ Moreover, the creation of this world is not some random incident, rather a genius design by the Divine. Our universe is originated from a single source and all its elements are interrelated in their very existence and function (*Al-Quran 21:30*).¹¹ The notion of Tawhid is not limited to the oneness of God; it concerns the interrelatedness of His creations as well. Everything in the universe is interdependent and linked to the Creator. Researchers such as Hossein Nasr argue that recognition of this relationship is mandatory to understand the universe and our role in it. Nasr also believes that contemporary ecological challenges are caused by our failure to appreciate this holistic view regarding tawhid, which is important to Islamic cosmology.¹² The Islamic philosophy of tawhid, as stressed by the notion of interrelatedness, suggests that our actions have far-reaching consequences, capable of affecting the very fabric of creation. This theological framework encourages a feeling of attentiveness, as every element in this universe is a sign of God's existence and His absolute knowledge.

3. Ethical ramifications of interrelatedness:

The holy Quran declares man as the successor (*Khalifah*) of God on earth.¹³ This designation comes with the responsibility not only to care for other creations but also to maintain the equilibrium of the natural world. The very idea of stewardship or succession is closely associated with the recognition of interconnectedness—that we humans are a part of a larger ecosystem and our actions have consequences far beyond our wildest imagination. The creation of humans was meant to bring the tree of creation to completion; they also give a fresh hue to the art of creation. Other entities were classified as either physical or metaphysical until humans evolved. But humans were destined to keep the balance between both physical and spiritual domains since they were created as a link between these two.¹⁴ Islamic teachings on stewardship apply to all spheres of life and provide a holistic approach to ethical perspectives, including social, ethical, and environmental concerns. Central to Islamic ethics, the ideas of fairness (*adl*) and balance (*mizan*) are intimately related to the concept of stewardship. Maintaining the balance of creation helps people fulfil their responsibility as stewards and preserve the ethical values expressed in the Quran.

Based on the Quran and Sunnah, Islamic moral principles encourage sustainable development and conservation of the environment. The Quran advocates for a harmonious interaction with nature, thereby making the preservation of resources and the avoidance of environmental damage a religious duty. For Muslims, nature is *ni'mah*; it's a sacred gift from Allah's abundance. We are allowed to alter it in any manner for ethical purposes. Since nature is one of God's signs (*Ayat*), it holds tremendous dignity in the eyes of Muslims.¹⁵ God informs humans that He does not like corruptors on land and forbids corruption (*Al-Quran 28:77*),¹⁶ He clearly forbids from causing environmental damage and exploitation. An emerging discipline that aims at integrating Islamic ideas with the modern environmental science principles is Islamic environmentalism. The ethical framework provided by the holy Quran motivates Muslims to take into consideration the long-term effects of their behaviour on the environment and the generations to come. This framework aligns with the modern concept of sustainable and prudent

use of natural resources. Many researchers such as Richard C. Foltz have investigated the ways in which Islamic principles might provide comprehensive answers to the environmental issues posed by the modern world. Foltz argues that holistic approach to overcome contemporary environmental challenges that honors the interdependence of all creations can be devised by integrating Islamic directives with current environmental notions.¹⁷ Islamic environmentalists advocate for the adoption of environmentally friendly behaviors that strengthen the link among all creation. This comprehensive approach complements contemporary ecological concepts since it embraces the highly complex and mutually dependent nature of the ecological structure.¹⁸

4. Societal cohesion and interrelatedness

The significance of interdependence cannot be denied in order to develop and strengthen our societies. The Islamic concept of community (*Ummah*) is reliant on the cohesion within human society. Declaring all the believers a single brotherhood (*Al-Quran 49:10*)¹⁹ emphasizes compassion, mutual respect, harmony, cooperation, and a sense of responsibility. It is essential to understand that Islam promotes universal harmony and encourages the Muslims to build bridges between the people of different faiths rather than concentrating on the differences. This vision is connected with the common pursuit for the shared benefit. Our trust, connections, and collaborations with each-others is the fuel that empowers our society and is referred to as social capital. Academic research has proved that social capital-enriched societies are more adept at enduring and rebounding from societal and economic adversities. Islam acknowledges the importance of social capital, many Quranic verses such as 4:36²⁰, 5:2²¹, and 49:10²² reinforce this concept. The sense of Interconnectedness, as introduced and reinforced by Islam, contributes significantly towards the community resilience. People who actively participate in the community and believe in creating strong social relations tend to help others in times of adversity.

5. Interrelatedness and global challenges

All the elements on our planet, whether living or non-living, are intricately linked together in order to make the earth a self-regulating system.²³ Islam promotes a universal outlook in order to acknowledge the global crisis and to devise effective strategies to tackle these challenges. The Quranic interpretations of the interconnectedness of societies are reliant on the common ancestry of human beings (*Al-Quran 49:13*);²⁴ thereby, all human societies need each other's assistance and collaboration across cultural and geographical boundaries to address modern global challenges such as environmental degradation, social injustice, and economic instability. The development of sustainable and fair solutions depends on an awareness of the connection between social, economic, and environmental systems.²⁵ Islamic ideas offer an insightful analysis of the global challenges, emphasizing justice, compassion, and stewardship, which could help us resolve these challenges in an ethical and whole-hearted manner.²⁶ Environmental degradation is a pressing issue in contemporary times, it could be effectively handled by adopting the framework recommended by Islamic environmentalism. An amalgamation of Islamic principles and modern environmental research could enable the legislature to design solutions that reflect the integration of social and ecological solutions. This approach will be more viable and sustainable to address the core factors of environmental change for the well-being of all creation.

6. Conclusion

The significance of the observance of the signs of God in the cosmos and the interrelatedness of all creation from a Quranic perspective are discussed in this paper. The theological basis of tawhid emphasizes the oneness of God and the interrelatedness of all creation. While, the ethical guidelines, as provided by the holy Quran, encourage responsible stewardship and preservation of the environment. Understanding the interconnectedness of all creation has important effects on personal behavior as well as social institutions. It promotes social cohesiveness and resilience, a feeling of duty and compassion towards our natural inhabitant, and offers a sustainable and

holistic mechanism to address global concerns. Future research can look at how Islamic values might be applied practically in contemporary social and environmental contexts. Combining Islamic concepts with modern science and policy will enable scholars to develop original approaches addressing the related problems facing society presently.

References

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- ² Al Quran 103:1 - (I swear) by the Time.
- ³ Al Quran 2:164 - Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth; the alternation of the day and the night; the ships that sail the sea for the benefit of humanity; the rain sent down by Allah from the skies, reviving the earth after its death; the scattering of all kinds of creatures throughout; the shifting of the winds; and the clouds drifting between the heavens and the earth—in all of this are surely signs for people of understanding.
- ⁴ Al Quran 3:190-191 - Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the day and night there are signs for people of reason. They are those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth and pray, "Our Lord! You have not created all of this without purpose. Glory be to You! Protect us from the torment of the Fire.
- ⁵ Golshani, M. (2005). Does Science Offer Evidence of a Transcendent Reality and Purpose? *Journal of Islam & Science*, Vol. 1 No. 1
- ⁶ Al-Quran 4:126 - Whatever in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah, Allah encompasses everything.
- ⁷ Swimme, B., & Berry, T. (1992). *The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era*. HarperSanFrancisco.
- ⁸ Majid, A. and Hashmi, S. A. (2017). A Study of Cosmology and the Quran in the Traditional and Contemporary Tafseer Literature. *J. Appl. Environ. Biol. Sci.*, Vol. 7 No. 11 (pp.254-260)
- ⁹ Al-Quran 112:1-2 - He is Allah, Absolute oneness, Allah the Everlasting Sustainer of all.
- ¹⁰ Al-Quran 57:3 - He is the First and the Last, the Highest and Most Near, I and He has 'perfect' knowledge of all things.
- ¹¹ Al-Quran 21:30 - Do the disbelievers not realize that the heavens and earth were 'once' one mass then We split them apart? And We created from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?
- ¹² Nasr, S. H. (2003). *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*. HarperSanFrancisco.
- ¹³ Al Quran 35:39 - He is the one Who has placed you as successors on earth.
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- ¹⁵ Faruqi, I. R. al and Faruqi, L. L. al (1986) *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*, MacMillan, New York.
- ¹⁶ Al Quran 28:77 - Do not seek to spread corruption in the land, for Allah certainly does not like the corruptors.

¹⁷ Foltz, R. C. (2003). Islamic Environmentalism: A Matter of Interpretation. In R. C. Foltz, F. M. Denny, & A. Baharuddin (Eds.), *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust* (pp. 249-278). Harvard University Press.

¹⁸ Aslam, M. (2012). Environmental Ethics in Islam: Principles, Violations, and Future Perspectives. *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* Vol. 16 No. 3 (pp. 224-239)

¹⁹ Al-Quran 49:10 - The believers are but one brotherhood, so make peace between your brothers.

²⁰ Al Quran 4:36 - And be kind to parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, near and distant neighbours, close friends, 'needy' travellers, and those 'bondspeople' in your possession.

²¹ Al Quran 5:2 - Cooperate with one another in goodness and righteousness, and do not cooperate in sin and transgression.

²² Al Quran 49:10 - The believers are but one brotherhood, so make peace between your brothers.

²³ Lovelock, J. (2000). *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*. Oxford University Press.

²⁴ Al-Quran 49:13 - O humanity! Indeed, we created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may 'get to' know one another.

²⁵ Capra, F. (2002). *The Hidden Connections: A Science for Sustainable Living*. Doubleday.

²⁶ Syed Alaudeen Seyed Ibrahim, S. A. and Thameem, U. (2024). *Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān: exploring higher objectives and intellectual insights*. *Al-Burhān Journal of Qur'ān and Sunnah Studies*, Vol. 8, No.1