

Keeping Moral Compass in an Imbalanced World, the Qibla.

Janice Tufte

Religion and Ecology / Seattle University

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Facing our Islamic world torn apart by war, big oil, dictators and prejudice, I would like to walk you through the many challenges Muslims and the Islamic World are facing daily working to fulfill their Quranic duty to be caretakers or stewards for the earth. I will discuss obstacles, barriers, future renewables vs limited energy resources. You will be presented with a simplified overview of the “state of green affairs” regarding local and global leadership, learn about Khidr, “the Green Man” of the Holy Quran, and environmental concepts with Holy Quranic scriptures shared throughout the presentation. I hope I pique your interest and that you will have questions. I desire that you might takeaway from this talk that I as a Muslim and the Muslim Ummah (community) are important as an integral piece of the colorful mosaic of cultures when so often we are considered and addressed as the “other” and not included as “we”.

In Muslims countries, where addressing environmental concerns is not at the forefront of policy agendas, often the issues are on the back burner to be handled and researched by a small group of concerned scientists, citizens and or academia. As so many of our Muslim populated countries will be directly impacted by the series of difficult climate changes soon to be realized, it is of interest that the respective governments are not as involved as it is evident they should be. From the Quran 7:10“ *And We have certainly established you upon the earth and made for you therein ways of livelihood. Little are you grateful.*” I recommend all of you watch the Jon Shenk movie [The Island President](#), the story of President

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Mohamed Nasheed of the Maldives. This heart wrenching true story of the past Maldives President tackling the very real issue of his Island sinking, going under water literally due to climate change, is an eye opener and also shares how easily a dictatorship is able to take a country back under their rule for financial gain, not respecting development working towards a sustainable future. One day in the future the Gulf Island nations, Bangladesh, Maldives and all countries with coastal lines will be suffering from the effects of mega-storms and flooding. Facing all will be inadequate sanitation facilities, absence of required levels of potable water. Oil and Gas are the primary economic drivers in the Gulf and other arid Islamic populated nations, yet as we are well aware, though we most often ignore, water will be the biggest policy agenda item in our future. A Quranic verse 21:30 *“And We have made of water everything living”*

War. Wars... of course are a huge problem in Islamic populated countries at this time. The wars that have been initiated in the name of terrorism are many, and we cannot ignore the fact that a number of the conflicts are located in oil rich nations where faraway countries purchase these “dirty” energy sources from. I like to reference the name “dirty;” dirty energy, dirty wars. War destroys the environment, the land, the water, the air, the infrastructure and all the peoples involved are negatively impacted if not totally ruined. Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Bosnia, Somalia, Nigeria, Afghanistan and more have many facets of poisons left in their environments from the costs of War. Talking to governments and citizenry in these countries about moving forward on green energy and environmental friendly activities is a challenge for all of us to ponder on.

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If you have no clean water, you live with bombing daily from drones or unknown assailants, you have no idea where your next meal might derive from, you have no medical care to handle your many ailments due to environmental poisons, your land has been stolen so you are no longer able to sustain yourself from your own crops and or orchards any longer; we must ask ourselves how do we start greening dialogue with these brothers on our earth. How do we initiate a conversation to create a green infrastructure when re-building these Nations, the Peoples' lives? A reminder from the Quran 25:63 *"And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace"*

There is hope of course. In Islam we believe in Qadr, predestination. Quran 10:26 *"For those who do good, is good (reward) and more (than this); and darkness or ignominy shall not cover their faces; these are the dwellers of the garden; in it they shall abide."* Of course, Life goes on, and we as Muslims make choices, yet the belief in Qadr (or fate), is one of total acceptance that our lives are predetermined by Allah (God). We often watch the yin and yang of life itself, play out against all odds. It is up to us as individual Muslims to make positive choices and encourage and support others to do the same. Our armed services on all sides see first-hand the destruction that war entails. I e-mail subscribe to an American military based list serve Operation*Free whose primary mission is to secure America with clean energy. A statement paper just released from 14 high ranking Generals claims that: "Currently Climate change is a catalyst for conflict." Of course this fact should be evident to all of us. Michael Breen an Army Officer with Operation Free shares; "Climate

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change, energy, & national security on the battlefield. The impacts of climate change **will** create a more destabilized world,”

<http://www.cna.org/reports/climate>. Perhaps this more reflective way of dealing with violent conflict will spread throughout our nations and be implemented in our future to the betterment of all of us. Recognizing there is an underlying problem within our battled environments, addressing climate change however you might want to label it is a big first step.

I would like to thank Professor Cynthia Moe-Loebada and her book, “Resisting Structural Evil.” I recently saw in a facebook post a reference from the book to Christian ethics. I would like to take the liberty to reference Religious ethics regarding this statement from the book,--“that it's not true ethics if there's only moral deliberation involved.” On the same vein of thought I would like to take a moment to reflect on an observation offered this last week by visiting scholar Rabbi Hartman, that when we do not understand where someone is at in their particular opinion point in life, that it is up to us to just stand by with the “right answers”, and that while sharing environmental education with others, this is passive witnessing in action. Educating our friends, family and congregations about the extended benefits of a greening lifestyle is often met with challenges, yet the actual living out of our words is one of the best methods of education. We are all able to stand by and allow others to witness our greening actions. In simple terms we must practice what we preach when it comes to implementing recycling, renewing, reusing, and our moral compass must be on the straight path when we consider ourselves mentors.

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In Islam, all Muslims make intention of prayer, all pray facing towards one place, and that is the direction to the house of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham), the Kabba in Mecca. No matter where you are on the earth your prayers will be directed by the Qibla. The term Qibla refers to the most direct route to Mecca, the direction where Muslims bow in prayer five times a day. The compass direction or “Qibla” will vary depending on where you are on the planet earth. The physical compass tells us Muslims which direction to pray in, our moral compass leads our lives. I hope for a world ahead where all Muslims will live out a more sustainable lifestyle using the same directed meditative prayer methodology, one where we all will spend the same amount of energy and effort while renewing, reusing, and recycling in our Islamic lifestyles. www.qiblalocator.org

This last weekend we had one of our Islamic “green Heroes” present to the Muslim Student Association at the Islamic House, at the University of Washington. The Director of www.GreenMuslims.org founded in 2006, Sarah Jawaid is initiating a nationwide movement seeded within the framework of love; love for the planet, love for the people and love for our collective communities’ sustainable future. “All of our little steps add up, making a larger positive impact”, Sarah shared, something we all realize once we ourselves start making little changes and then celebrating our successes with others. Celebrating our successes is a way to move forwards, initiating green movements with the youth leading the way, exemplars making the necessary changes and living healthier lifestyles as witness to our faith, or creator.

There is a book, [Green Deen: What Islam says about Protecting the Planet](#) author Ibrahim Abdul-Matin: When asked about how Islam works in

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harmony with environmentalism, Ibrahim focused on a saying of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, that “the earth is a mosque”. **In this perspective, everything on the planet is sacred.** Islam also lays out a framework to explain why human beings can have a negative effect on the environment. “There’s a passage in the Qur’an 30:41 that says: *‘Corruption has appeared on the land and in the sea because of what the hands of humans have wrought. This is in order that [Allah] give them a taste of the consequences of their misdeeds that perhaps they will return to the path of right guidance’.*”

The group Green Prophet www.greenprophet.com located in the Middle East is talking Green and is being heard globally. They are educating on carbon reduction, organic farming, renewables and how we need to be the difference we want to see and be. Over 12,000 followers on just their facebook page they have sparked interest that hopefully will garner support spreading positive global changes with Islamic focused green messaging.

There are mysteries in the Quran. We as Muslims are required to accept these mysteries and miracles without question. Muslims believe in the miracle birth of Issa (Jesus) and Maryam (Mary) is considered the holiest woman in Islam, with the 19th chapter of the Quran named after her. One mystery not often talked about and a source of interesting discussion is the story of Al-Khidr. In researching for this presentation I came upon this article insert; “Al-Khidr literally means 'The Green (one)', though Muslim commentators are not agreed on who he exactly was. Some say he is a prophet while others say he is a wali (meaning one who is close to God,) in other words, a saint of sorts * There can however be no doubt that it is

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he who figures in the Qur'an as the unnamed servant of God who initiates Musa (Moses) into the mysteries or rather paradoxes of life. He is referred to as the mentor of Moses. Quran 18 -Al Khaf 60-82 is the story of Al Khidr. Who he was is clearly mentioned in a hadith or saying of the Prophet Muhammad recorded in the Sahih Al-Bukhari where he figures in an episode identical to that related in the Qur'an. He is here called Khidr and described as a man covered with a garment. Another tradition of the Prophet recorded in Bukhari has it that Al- Khidr was just called because if he sat over a barren white land, it turned green with vegetation." Al Khidr, (or who we refer to as the Green one), was rightly guided and walked Moses through a series of trials where Moses was told ahead of time to just accept what he saw and heard. Moses was only to be an observer in this partnered journey he was being led through. Moses being Moses, challenged the scenarios and was again reminded of his role in this journey, that there were reasons for what Al-Khidr was walking him through and to accept the circumstances as they were, as the consequences were predetermined by Allah.(SWT) I suggest everyone read about Al-Khidr in the 18th chapter of the Quran.

This brings us to a conclusion and I would like to share with you one of my favorite Ayats (verses) of the Quran told in story format: 33:72
Indeed, we offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant.

A hadith reports that Muhammad said about Qadr:

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Ali (r) narrated that one day the Prophet (s) was sitting with a wooden stick in his hand with which he was scratching the ground. He raised his head and said, "There is none of you, but has his place assigned either in the Fire or in Paradise." They (the Companions) inquired, "O Allah's Messenger! Why should we carry on doing good deeds, shall we depend (upon Qadar) and give up work?" The Prophet (s) said: "No, carry on doing good deeds, for everyone will find it easy (to do) such deeds that will lead him towards that for which he has been created". Then he (s) recited the verse: "As for him who gives (in charity) and keeps his duty to Allah and fears Him, and believes in al-Husna, We will make smooth for him the path of Ease (goodness) (Surah al-Lail 92:5-7) . Sahih Muslim

Some Verses

Quran 17:44 "And there is not a thing but that it glorifies Him with His praise but you do not understand their glorification" Communications, Unity with Plants and Animals

A Quranic verse 21:30 "And We have made of water everything living" reminder water is life sustaining Quran 25:63 "The servants of the Lord of Mercy are those who walk lightly on the earth, and who, when the foolish address them, reply, 'Peace'" Humility and Respect for the Earth

Quran 57:1 "All that is in the heavens and on earth extols God's limitless glory: for God alone is almighty, truly wise!" The wholeness, interconnectedness and unity

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Quran 2:30 / Quran 33:72 “We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the hills but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it. And man assumed it” The story of the Angels and Animals feeling from God’s request to care for the earth and man accepting this grand job in ignorance

Quran 35:39 “it is He who made you [people] successors to the land. Those who deny the truth will bear the consequences: their denial will only make them more odious to their Lord, and add only to their loss.”
Stewardship

Quran 7:10 “And We granted you dominion on Earth, and made for you in it a habitat; little do you give thanks!” Humility regarding what we have harmed in the environment and future interdependence

Quran 2:22 “He] who made for you the earth a bed [spread out] and the sky a ceiling and sent down from the sky, rain and brought forth thereby fruits as provision for you. So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know”

* Quran 2:204 “There is [a kind of] man whose views on the life of this world may please you [Prophet], he even calls on God to witness what is in his heart, yet he is the bitterest of opponents. When he leaves, he sets out to spread corruption in the land, destroying crops and live-stock- God does not like corruption. Wreaking havoc with war and carelessness/ no equanimity

Quran 30:41 "Since they have become oblivious of God, corruption has appeared on land and in the sea as an outcome of what people's hands have wrought: and so God will let them taste the evil of their own doings,

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so that they might return [to the right path]." Interdependence, Power, Greed Pollution

Quran 7:31 "And eat and drink and be not extravagant, surely He does not love the extravagant; And do not squander wastefully. Surely the squanderers are friends of Satan and Satan is ever ungrateful to his Lord."

Regarding Greed and Sustenance

Quran 7:56 "Do no mischief on the earth, after it has 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" The impact of oil, war and use of resources

Quran 41:53 " We shall show them Our signs in every region of the earth and in themselves, until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that your Lord witnesses everything?" Reflection on the impact that fossil fuels and petroleum products are having on the environment

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"Green Dean" Author Ibrahim Abdul-Matin (policy advisor with past NYC Mayor Bloomberg) PlaNYC <http://www.greenprophet.com/2010/11/eco-muslim-connects-environment-islam/>

(1. See more at: <http://www.greenprophet.com/2010/11/eco-muslim-connects-environment-islam/#sthash.MRAI2qWS.dpuf>

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Quranic verses and wisdom

<http://www.greenmuslims.org/greenscripture/>

Posting Green Messages from across the Muslim blogosphere

<http://aworldofgreenmuslims.wordpress.com/tag/eco-islam/> Article with 80 Imams working to present in Mosques the importance of environmental stewardship

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/08/30/muslims-go-green-for-rama_n_699945.html

http://www.spiritandflesh.com/Paganism_Islam_Green_Man_Al_Khidr.htm Assif Hussein 2 a <http://khidr.org/> 2b Surah Al Khaf 60-82

<http://www.iqrasense.com/stories-of-the-prophet/the-story-of-moses-and-ai-khidr-al-kahf-18-60-82.html>

Islamic Wisdoms Nahj al-Balaaghah re: Imam Ali in a letter to his governor said: 'You should be more concerned with the construction (physical development) of the land than collecting the land tax'.

Hurr Amili, Wasaa'il al-Shi'almam re: Hasan is quoted as saying: 'In respect to your worldly affairs, act as if you are going to live here forever, and in respect to your afterlife act as if you are going to die tomorrow!'