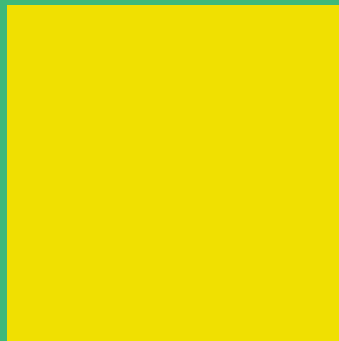


3



ENCOUNTER WITH THE ENVIRONMENT: SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL ISSUES

MODULE THREE

ENCOUNTER WITH THE ENVIRONMENT: SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL ISSUES

3.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 STRUCTURE OF THE MANUAL

This manual for the teacher is a didactic package in which the following theme is developed: “Encounter with the environment: social and ecological issues”. This package has been developed for the age group of 12 to 18 year olds and offers the teacher or supervisor of a learning group the opportunity to develop this theme at the level of their own class group.

In this manual, the teacher can work on different topics related to the overarching theme “Encounter with the environment: social and ecological issues”. Based on impulses and didactic suggestions it is possible to approach this theme from different perspectives. Impulses are elements that the teacher can bring into the classroom to start the conversation.

This manual contains a variety of impulses with different difficulty-levels. These impulses exist in various forms and are meant to contribute to the learning process. It is not obligatory to use all impulses as the teacher may select the most appropriate impulses based on the needs and interests of his/her learning group. The didactic suggestions are concrete proposals to get started with the impulses and deal with ideological reflection and communication. This ensures that the teacher can approach the different impulses corresponding to their own learning group.

The manual contains of the following chapters:

- The first chapter of this manual gives a general introduction of the Islamic views on the environment. Then the concept of Khalifa is explained, in particular that every human being has been given a divine task to take care of our nature. This chapter is part of the basic learning material for the students.

- Secondly, the manual emphasizes the importance of an Islamic environmental ethic. The second chapter therefore outlines the importance of preserving a balance in the universe. This chapter is part of the basic learning material for the students.
- The third chapter of this manual takes a closer look at social injustice as a result of bad policy of nature. In this chapter, we want to make the students aware of the bad consequences of overconsumption. This chapter (except part 5.3. Social Justice: An idea) is part of the basic learning material for the students.
- The fourth and final chapter deals with the different causes of climate change. Moreover, this chapter focuses on the human causes of climate change. In that way the teacher can discuss several human actions and their effects on nature. This is an depth chapter.
- In conclusion, this manual contains a glossary in which all difficult concepts are briefly and concisely explained at the level of the student. This is followed by a bibliography of this didactic collection.

3.1.2 CONTENT OF THE MANUAL

This manual deals with the theme: “Encounter with the environment: social and ecological issues”.

The starting point of this manual is a video in which youngsters are protesting against climate pollution. Young people across the country are encouraging each other on social media to periodically demonstrate for a new climate policy and social justice. The demonstrations take place every Monday from 10:00 am. While most of the protesters should actually be in school at that time, they argue that their actions serve a higher interest of society. While many schools implicitly agreed to the protesters’ absence for the demonstrations, they do not agree with the way some protests occur.

The problem is that many young people are experiencing an enormous frustration towards what we call “the rich polluting business people”. A small group of young people demonstrate in the driveways of wealthy people.

3.2 THE CREATURE

3.2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Quran refers to the creature as khalq. The term khalq is related to nature and the universe and can be found in 261 Quranic verses. As for example in Surat Al-Baqara verse 29: ***“It is He who created for you all of that which is on the earth. Then He directed Himself to the heaven, [His being above all creation], and made them seven heavens, and He is Knowing of all things.”***¹ (Al-Baqara:29)

Islam addresses all parts of creation, including ecology. Out of the totality of Quranic verses, 1/8 of it deals with ecology, environment and nature. After all, all human beings has been given the task of maintaining the balance of Allah’s creation. In Sura Arrahman it says: ***“And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance. That you not transgress within the balance. And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance.”***² (Ar-rahmane: 7,8 en 9)

Islam’s view on the relationship between mankind and ecology is talked about in both the Qur’an and the Hadiths.³ Everyone is repeatedly encouraged to treat nature and the earth in a sustainable way. Moreover because the entire universe was created by Allah as a unity. It is therefore up to mankind to preserve and respect that unity of nature and man.

There is a correlation between all the elements of the creature. Allah also added structure in here. That is why we speak of a well balanced creature or mizan as explained in the Quran: ***“The sun and the moon follow a fixed path. The stars and the trees worship their Lord. He has lifted up the heavens and brought balance. Don’t disturb it (this balance), keep the right size and don’t lose it.”***⁴ (Ar-rahmane: 5,6,7,8 en 9)



Figure 3.1
Source: © PRASERT /
Adobe Stock

Therefore, Muslim scholars speak of three sorts of books, namely, kitab almastoer (written book), kitab almandur (given book), kitab almaqdoer (determined book).

¹ <https://quran.com/2/29?translations=101,21,20,19,18,17,84,85,22,95> (acces 7.10.2020)

² <https://quran.com/21/47?translations=43,18,101,84,85,22,20> (acces 7.10.2020)

³ I. M. HOPE, J. YOUNG, islam and ecology, , 2014, p.1.

⁴ <https://quran.com/22/18?translations=17,18,84,20,95,101,85,22,21,19> (acces 7.10.2020).

The first book refers to the Quran, the second book to reality or nature and the third book refers to mankind. Thus, man must harmonize the written book and the given book through his intellect without losing the essence of both.

This does not mean that religion has to be determined by reality and vice versa, but that reality helps people to understand their religion. It is a constant interaction between kitab almaqdoer (revelation) and kitab almaqdoer (universe) as a result of which the muslim gradually gets more insight into the two books. So when tensions arise between both domains, it is man who has to question himself.

3.2.2 MAN AS KHALIFA ON EARTH

Besides ecology in general, the Quran also draws attention to the environment. Here too, the central message is that it is the task of man to maintain and respect the balance in nature. We speak of 'laws of nature' to indicate that Allah created the unity of nature in all perfection with the correct calculations. Thus it says in Sura Al Mulk: ***"You see no imbalance in the creation of the Most Merciful."***⁵ (Al-Mulk:3).

The interpretation of the Quran makes us realize that man should not be a controller, but rather a guardian of nature. That is why man is considered a steward or khalifa: ***"And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels, I will appoint a khalifa upon the earth."***⁶ (Al-Baqara:30) The original meaning of a khalifa is the one responsible for protecting the earth and its capabilities.

The nature gives us signals or ayats when things are not going well in nature. It is then up to us, human beings, to give the right reaction and to protect nature more and in a better way. As already explained, man is part of the entire universe along with all other creations. Yet man differs from all other creations because he has the ratio and free will. People have the capacity to think about their actions and choose whether to protect something or not. So unlike animals who just follow their instincts, humans have the intelligence to understand and carry out the imposed task of protecting nature⁷.



Figure 3.2
Source: © sarayut_sy /
Adobe Stock

⁵ <https://quran.com/55?translations=18,85,22,20> (access 7.10.2020).

⁶ <https://quran.com/2/30?translations=17,101,22,21,19,20,18,95> (access 7.10.2020).

⁷ I. M. HOPE, J. YOUNG, islam and ecology, , 2014, p.1.

In concrete terms, khalifa or being responsible means that you as a person take on the following responsibilities:

1. Protect yourself (spiritually, biological, ...)
2. Protecting society (society in general, relationships, your own community and that of others, ...)
3. Protect the earth and its resources (nature, animals, energy sources, ...)

Steward or khalifa, as Linda Bogaert puts it nicely, does not mean that people are being central: *"Vice regency does not give people superiority over the creation and its parts - after all, according to the Islam, the earth does not belong to man, but is God's. Man is only a small part of the creature and lives side by side with the other creations. The following verse emphasizes the absurdity of anthropocentrism:*

"The creation of heaven and of the earth is greater than the creation of man, but most people do not know it." (Quran 40:57)

All the resources of the earth (the land, water, air, forests, ...) are being used by all human beings, but we must not forget that they are not human's property. God created these resources for man, they are gifts for man but also subject to ethical restrictions. Man can use them to meet their needs, but only in a way that does not upset the ecological balance and does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Pollution and waste of natural resources are by all means prohibited. Moreover, the natural resources are not only there for humans. All creatures have a right to the natural resources.



Figure 3.3
Source: © onephoto /
Adobe Stock

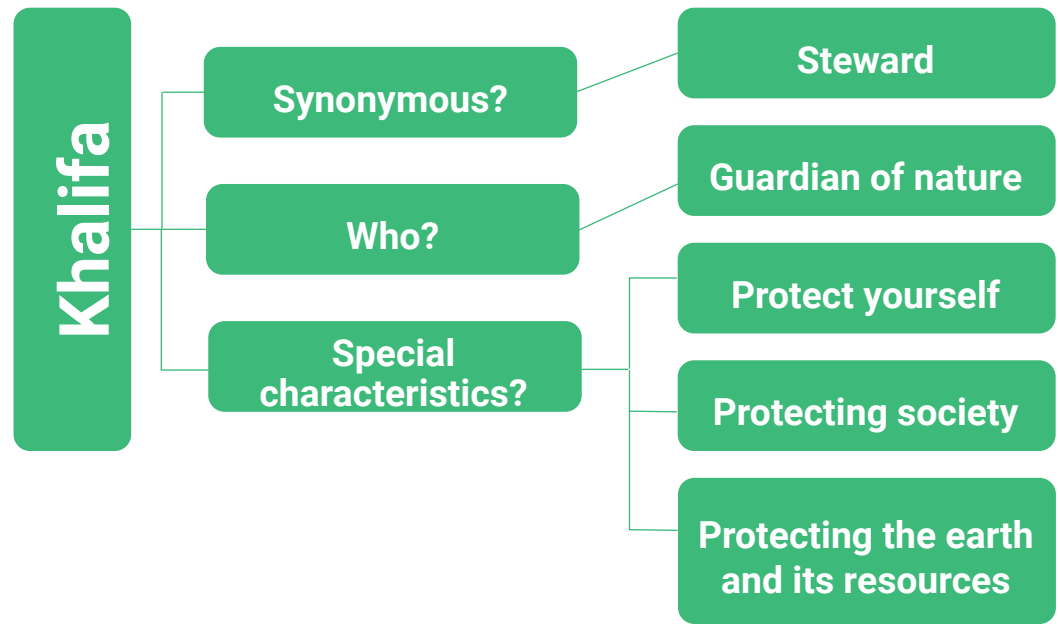
"And He it is Who sends the winds as publishers of good news for His mercy. And We send down pure water from heaven, to those we have created, man and animals, to drink." (Quran 25: 48-49)⁸

⁸ <https://users.ugent.be/~hdeley/bogaert/bogaert1.htm> (access 07.10.2020).

3.2.3 EXERCISES

Exercise 1: Fill out Exercise

Complete the scheme with the correct answer.



Exercise 2

Read the statements below and put a mark in the right column.

Statement	True	False
1. 1/8 of the Quran is about ecology, environment and nature.	X	
2. Animals have a free will and a ration. That's the reason why they have the task of taking care of nature.		X
3. A khalifa is responsible for protecting himsel/herself, the society and the earth.	X	
4. The creation of Allah is unbalanced or not a mizan.		X

3.3 ISLAMIC ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

3.3.1 HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR

In the section on human beings as khalifa's we have already discussed the fact that the Quran draws a lot of attention to the environment in general. It is not enough to just follow the rules stipulated in the Five Pillars of Islam to be a good Muslim. There are other (un)written ethical principles such as respecting and protecting the environment. As humans, we should be careful and frugal with the resources, we should pollute nature as little as possible and carry out a sustainable and ecological behavior. These principles of responsible behavior are not less important than the well-known Five Pillars of the Islam.

The hadith tells us more about the lifestyle of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. It also confirms that the Prophet considered environmentally responsible behavior as part of the authentic Islamic way of life. Fun fact is that most of the prophets were shepherds, which meant they were constantly in touch with nature and animals. The Prophet also asked Muslims to be careful with nature in every situation, even during difficult times like war.



This is emphasized by Abu Bakr As-Siddiq, a close companion and successor of the Prophet Muhammad. He said to one of his military commanders: ***"I advise you the following ten things (regarding the rules of warfare). Do not kill women or children, the elderly or***

***the sick. Do not cut down or burn trees, especially if they are fruit-bearing trees. Do not destroy uninhabited places. Do not kill animals except for providing food. Do not burn or separate bees. Do not steal any of the items that were confiscated during the battle. And don't act cowardly.*"**⁹ (Al-Muwatta, Volume 21, Hadith 10)

The Quran constantly reminds us of the beauty of nature. Surah Al Ghashiyah in verses 16-18 explicitly invites to be aware of the beauty of nature by regularly observing and enjoying it: ***"Don't they look at how the camels were created? And how the mountains stand firmly? Don't they look at how spread out the earth is?"***¹⁰ (Al-Ghashiyah: 17,18,19,20) If we take the time to look at nature in a more conscious way, we will be able to realize the greatness and the beauty it has in it.

⁹ I. MALIK, al-Muwatta, Beiroet, Dar Iyha Attourat Alarabiya, 1985, p. 212.

¹⁰ <https://quran.com/15/19?translations=22,85,101,84,20,21,19,18,17,95> (acces 07.10.2020).

Figure 3.4
Source: © Jon Anders
Wiken / Adobe Stock

3.3.2 EXERCISES

Exercise 1

Fill out the missing words.

the environment – resources – respecting and protecting – *khalifa* – ecological behavior - Five Pillars of Islam

In the section on human beings as **khalifa** we've already discussed the fact that the Quran draws a lot of attention **the environment** to in general. It's not enough to just follow the rules stipulated in the **Five Pillars of Islam** to be a good Muslim. There are other (un)written ethical principles such as **respecting and protecting** the environment. As humans, we should be careful and frugal with the **resources** we should pollute nature as little as possible and carry out a sustainable and **ecological behavior**. These principles of responsible behavior are not less important than the well-known Five Pillars of the Islam.

3.4 ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

3.4.1 RESPONSIBLE USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

In a society with social justice, every person has the same right and access to the basic needs. Ecology and nature can be linked to this topic of social justice. A good example is a society in which everyone is entitled to water as a basic need.

The Quran emphasizes the crucial role of water. Water is considered a source of life and one of the most precious resources.¹¹ The word water or ma'a occurs more than seventy times in the Quran¹². Some examples are:

"And Allah has sent water from heaven, and He revives the earth with it after its death. Verily in this is a sign for those who listen."¹³
(An-Nahl:65)

"And have you seen the water that you drink? Is it you who brought it down from the clouds, or is it We who bring it down? If We willed, We could make it bitter, so why are you not grateful?!"¹⁴ (Al-Waqi'ah: 68,69,70)

Water is an essential source for the creation and development of life. For example, it is necessary for the livelihood of humans, of animals and it is necessary for plant growth. Humans and animals need drinking water. Finally, we can barely imagine a life without the possibility to take a shower or a bath; water provides us good hygiene.



Figure 3.5
Source: © willyam /
Adobe Stock

It is clear that water will always play a vital role in the universe. But it is also becoming clear that we are dealing with the problems of water scarcity, dryness,.... Water is not inexhaustible and might, at some point, run out. It is therefore our responsibility to prevent water shortages by creating sustainable solutions.

As a khalifa, we must be aware of the scarceness of energy sources and carry out a sustainable and ecological behavior.

¹¹ S. CATOVIC, J. YOUNG, Islamic sacred texts related to water, New Jersey , p.1-5.

¹² More examples can be found on: https://www.faithinwater.org/uploads/4/4/3/0/44307383/islamic_sacred_texts-water-greenfaith.pdf

¹³ <https://quran.com/16/65?translations=101,22,17,21,19,18,20,84,95> (access 29.07.2020).

¹⁴ <https://quran.com/56/68-78> (access 07.10/.2020).

3.4.2 USING NATURAL RESOURCES FAIRLY

Figure 3.6
Source: © VectorMine /
Adobe Stock



It is a common knowledge that humans consume a lot. We often consume much more than what we actually need to survive. Think of the food scraps after every meal that end up in the garbage. It is important to find a balance in that consumption. Even if there would be an abundance of certain natural resources, it wouldn't have been just to unnecessarily exhaust these resources. Ending overconsumption by consuming in a balanced way, would help to achieve the goal of unity and conservation of nature.¹⁵ A real khalifa always keeps these goals in mind.

The Quran explicitly states not to waste nor to overconsume. Surah Al A'raf points out that consuming is obviously not forbidden, but that it must be done in a balanced way: **"O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid, and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess."**¹⁶ (Al-A'raf: 31)

Balanced consumption makes it easier to equally distribute natural resources in order to achieve a society with social justice. Yet we see that this has become more and more difficult over the years. If everyone only thinks about himself when consuming, he will not be able to remind himself that the supply of natural resources must also provide other people, animals and plants for a living. This creates an unequal and unjust distribution of natural resources. This is the negative effect the Quran tries to warn for.

¹⁵ S. OZKAYA, *Islam en Ecologie: De ecologische ethiek van de islam gezien vanuit de visie op de relatie tussen mens en natuur*, Leiden, 2013, p. 14.

¹⁶ <https://quran.com/7/31-41> (acces 07.10.2020).

3.4.3 SOCIAL JUSTICE: AN IDEAL

Social justice is an ideal. It is what we want to achieve. It is an ongoing battle that has no end. Social justice is not easy to obtain. For example, when we fight against poverty, we must be aware that poverty cannot be solved completely. There is a wisdom in this, in the sense that people learn to take care of each other, which creates a strong bond within the community or "Umma". But the fact that poverty will never be solved doesn't mean we shouldn't pursue it. It remains an ideal. This is not about achieving the goal, but rather the pursuit of the goal. In other words, it is not the result that is central, but the effort to achieve the end goal. Because absolute justice is a divine attribute according to Islam. Allah alone is the one who is righteous in the full sense of the word and this means that the human being, despite his great effort to achieve righteousness within a society, he will always fall short.

From this we can infer that we must be ambitious and use all peaceful means to achieve social justice. But at the same time, we should also be humble and know that cannot perfection is unattainable . This is the true meaning of "tawwakul" (trust in Allah).

It is also important to know that social justice is a means of achieving peace. Peace in ourselves as well as in society. So, justice is a prerequisite for both inner peace and social peace. In a peaceful society, everyone is equal. It is no coincidence that the Prophet Mohammed was the first to draft the Treaty of Medina when he arrived in Medina. In it, the Prophet Muhammad considered in 57 articles all citizens of Medina as equal citizens:

1. This is a prescript of Muḥammad, the Prophet and Messenger of God (to operate) between the faithful and the followers of Islam from among the Quraish and the people of Madina and those who may be under them, may join them and take part in wars in their company.

2. They shall constitute a separate political unit (Ummah) as distinguished from all the people (of the world).

3. The emigrants from the Quraish shall be (responsible) for their own ward; and shall pay their blood-money in mutual collaboration and shall secure the release of their own prisoners by paying their ransom from themselves, so that the mutual dealings between the believers be in accordance with the principles of goodness and justice.

4. And Banū 'Awf shall be responsible for their own ward and shall pay their blood-money in mutual collaboration, and every group shall secure the release of its own prisoners by paying their ransom from themselves so that the dealings between the believers be in accordance with the principles of goodness and justice.

5. And Banū Ḥārith ibn-Khazraj shall be responsible for their own ward and shall pay their blood-money in

mutual collaboration and every group shall secure the release of its own prisoners by paying their ransom from themselves, so that the dealings between the believers be in accordance with the principles of goodness and justice.

6. And Banu Sa'ida shall be responsible for their own ward, and shall pay their blood-money in mutual collaboration and every group shall secure the release of its own prisoners by paying their ransom from themselves, so that the dealings between the believers be in accordance with the principles of goodness and justice.

7. And Banū Jusham shall be responsible for their own ward and shall pay their blood-money in mutual collaboration and every group shall secure the release of its own prisoners by paying their ransom so that the dealings between the believers be in accordance with the principles of goodness and justice.

8. And Banū an-Nadjār shall be responsible for their own ward and shall pay their blood-money in mutual collaboration and every group shall secure the release of its own prisoners by paying their ransom so that the dealings between the believers be in accordance with the principles of goodness and justice.

9. And Banū 'Amr-ibn-'Awf shall be responsible for their own ward and shall pay their blood-money in mutual collaboration and every group shall secure the release of its own prisoners by paying their ransom, so that the dealings between the believers be in accordance with the principles of goodness and justice.

10. And Banū Nabīṭ shall be responsible for their own ward and shall pay their blood-money in mutual collaboration and every group shall secure the release of its own prisoners by paying their ransom so that the dealings between the believers be in accordance with the principles of goodness and justice.

11. And Banū Aws shall be responsible for their own ward and shall pay their blood-money in mutual collaboration and every group shall secure the release of its own prisoners by paying their ransom, so that the dealings between the believers be in accordance with the principles of goodness and justice.

12. (a) And the believers shall not leave any one, hard-pressed with debts, without affording him some relief, in order that the dealings between the believers be in accordance with the principles of goodness and justice.

(b) Also no believer shall enter into a contract of clientage with one who is

already in such a contract with another believer.

13. And the hands of pious believers shall be raised against every such person as rises in rebellion or attempts to acquire anything by force or is guilty of any sin or excess or attempts to spread mischief among the believers ; their hands shall be raised all together against such a person, even if he be a son to any one of them.

14. And no believer shall kill another believer in retaliation for an unbeliever, nor shall he help an unbeliever against a believer.

15. And the protection of God is one. The humblest of them (believers) can, by extending his protection to any one, put the obligation on all; and the believers are brothers to one another as against all the people (of the world).

16. And that those who will obey us among the Jews, will have help and equality. Neither shall they be oppressed nor will any help be given against them.

17. And the peace of the believers shall be one. If there be any war in the way of God, no believer shall be under any peace (with the enemy) apart from other believers, unless it (this peace) be the same and equally binding on all.

18. And all those detachments that will fight on our side will be relieved by

turns.

19. And the believers as a body shall take blood vengeance in the way of God.

20. (a) And undoubtedly pious believers are the best and in the rightest course. (b) And that a non-associate (non-Muslim subject) shall give any protection to the life and property of a Quraishite, nor shall he come in the way of any believer in this matter.

21. And if any one intentionally murders a believer, and it is proved, he shall be killed in retaliation, unless the heir of the murdered person be satisfied with blood-money. And all believers shall actually stand for this ordinance and nothing else shall be proper for them to do.

22. And it shall not be lawful for any one, who has agreed to carry out the provisions laid down in this code and has affixed his faith in God and the Day of Judgment, to give help or protection to any murderer, and if he gives any help or protection to such a person, God's curse and wrath shall be on him on the Day of Resurrection, and no money or compensation shall be accepted from such a person.

23. And that whenever you differ about anything, refer it to God and to Muḥammad.

24. And the Jews shall share with the

believers the expenses of war as long as they fight in conjunction.

25. And the Jews of Banū 'Awf shall be considered as one political community (Ummah) along with the believers—for the Jews their religion, and for the Muslims theirs, be one client or patron. He, however, who is guilty of oppression or breach of treaty, shall suffer the resultant trouble as also his family, but no one besides.

26. And the Jews of Banū an-Nadjar shall have the same rights as the Jews of Banū 'Awf.

27. And the Jews of Banū Hārith shall have the same rights as the Jews of Banū 'Awf.

28. And the Jews of Banū Sa'ida shall have the same rights as the Jews of Banu 'Awf

29. And the Jews of Banū Jusham shall have the same rights as the Jews of Banū 'Awf.

30. And the Jews of Banū Aws shall have the same rights as the Jews of Banū 'Awf.

31. And the Jews of Banū Tha'laba shall have the same rights as the Jews of Banu 'Awf. Of course, whoever is found guilty of oppression or violation of treaty, shall himself suffer the consequent trouble as also his family, but no one besides.

32. And Jafna, who are a branch of the Tha'laba tribe, shall have the same rights as the mother tribes.

33. And Banū ash-Shutaiba shall have the same rights as the Jews of Banū 'Awf; and they shall be faithful to, and not violators of, treaty.

34. And the mawlas (clients) of Tha'laba shall have the same rights as those of the original members of it.

35. And the sub-branches of the Jewish tribes shall have the same rights as the mother tribes.

36. (a) And that none of them shall go out to fight as a soldier of the Muslim army, without the per-mission of Muḥammad (b) And no obstruction shall be placed in the way of any one's retaliation for beating or injuries; and whoever sheds blood shall be personally responsible for it as well as his family; or else (i.e., any step beyond this) will be of oppression; and God will be with him who will most faithfully follow this code (saḥifdh) in action.

37. (a) And the Jews shall bear the

burden of their expenses and the Muslims theirs. (b) And if any one fights against the people of this code, their (i.e., of the Jews and Muslims) mutual help shall come into operation, and there shall be friendly counsel and sincere behavior between them; and faithfulness and no breach of covenant.

38. And the Jews shall be bearing their own expenses so long as they shall be fighting in conjunction with the believers.

39. And the Valley of Yathrib (Madina) shall be a Haram (sacred place) for the people of this code.

40. The clients (mawla) shall have the same treatment as the original persons (i.e., persons accepting clientage). He shall neither be harmed nor shall he himself break the covenant.

41. And no refugee shall be given to anyone without the permission of the people of the place (i.e., the refugee shall have no right of giving refuge to others).

42. And that if any murder or quarrel takes place among the people of this code, from which any trouble may be feared, it shall be referred to God and God's Messenger, Muhammad and God will be with him who will be most particular about what is written in this code and act on it most faithfully.

43. The Quraish shall be given no protection nor shall they who help them.

44. And they (i.e., Jews and Muslims) shall have each other's help in the event of any one invading Yathrib.

(45) (a) And if they (i.e., the Jews) are invited to any peace, they also shall offer peace and shall be a party to it; and if they invite the believers to some such affairs, it shall be their (Muslims) duty as well to reciprocate the dealings, excepting that any one makes a religious war. (b) On every group shall rest the responsibility of (repulsing) the enemy from the place which faces its part of the city.

46. And the Jews of the tribe of Aws, clients as well as original members, shall have the same rights as the people of this code: and shall behave sincerely and faithfully towards the latter, not perpetrating any breach of covenant. As one shall sow so shall

he reap. And God is with him who will most sincerely and faithfully carry out the provisions of this code.

47. And this prescript shall not be of any avail to any oppressor or breaker of covenant. And one shall have security whether one goes out to a campaign or remains in Madina, or else it will be an oppression and breach of covenant. And God is the Protector of him who performs the obligations with faithfulness and care, as also His Messenger Muḥammad.

3.4.4 EXERCISES

Exercise 1

Answer the following questions.

a) What characterizes a society with social justice? Give an example:

In a society with social justice, every person has the right and access to basic needs. Example: everyone has the right to water, everyone has the right to electricity, ...

b) How many times does the term ma'a or water occur in the Quran?

More than seventy times.

c) How can we achieve the goal of unity and conservation of nature?

By consuming in a balanced way. By not overconsuming, but always thinking about the other and thus enabling an equal distribution of natural resources.

Exercise 2

The students read the text and fill in the missing words.

Ideal - a strong bond - absolute justice– ambitious - humble

Social justice is an **ideal**. It is what we want to achieve. It is an ongoing battle that has no end. Social justice is not easy to obtain. For example, when we fight against poverty, we must be aware that poverty cannot be solved completely. There is a wisdom in this, in the sense that people learn to take care of each other, which creates **a strong bond** within the community or "Umma". But the fact that poverty will never be solved doesn't mean we shouldn't pursue it. It remains an ideal. This is not about achieving the goal, but rather the pursuit of the goal. In other words, it is not the result that is central, but the effort to achieve the end goal. Because **absolute justice** is a divine attribute according to Islam. Allah alone is the one who is righteous in the full sense of the word and this means that the human being, despite his great effort to achieve righteousness within a society, he will always fall short.

From this we can infer that we must be **ambitious** and use all peaceful means to achieve social justice. But at the same time, we should also be **humble** and know that cannot perfection is unattainable . This is the true meaning of "tawwakul" (trust in Allah).

Exercise 2

Assignment:

Let the students read the constitution of Medina in groups of 2 or 3. Together they search for the requested articles. As a result, the students will know what is written in the “constitution of Medina”. They will create an image about the context of Medina on the basis of the legislation.

The answers may differ!

1) Give 3 articles that emphasize equality.

1) Article 6

2) Article 11

3) Article 17

2) Give 3 articles about peace.

1) Article 19

2) Article 50

3) Article 51

3) Give 3 articles about the weaker members of society (women, slaves, poor, refugees ...)

1) Article 3

2) Article 45

3) Article 52

3.5 CLIMATE CHANGE

3.5.1 HUMAN BEINGS AS A KHALIFA AND CLIMATE CHANGE

While climate change is a timeless phenomenon, in recent years it has become, a more alarming global problem than it has ever been. The climate can change caused by natural factors, but also because of our human behavior. Humans have a major impact on global warming and global warming also has a major impact on humans. We are daily confronted with visible consequences of climate change. Think of heat waves, the high sea level, dryness, heavy forest fires, extreme rainfall, tropical storms,... .

As already mentioned, nature gives signals or ayats through these natural phenomena to show that its balance has been disturbed. In the context of climate change too, it is up to us to give the correct reaction to the ayats by being a khalifa in order to restore that balance by creating a sustainable and environmentally responsible behavior.



Figure 3.7
Source: © jozsitoeroe /
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3.5.2 EXERCISES

Exercise 1: CHANGE

Answer the following questions.

Environment	Example
Me	Example: Try to eat less meat.
At school	
At home	
With friends	
At the mosque	

Exercise 1: Crossword Puzzle

Find the correct word in the crossword puzzle.

1. Raw materials
2. Dryness
3. Pollution
4. Warming up
5. Water

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
1	G	A	H	A	G	J	N	Y	K	H	H	B	V	E	F	V	U	I	L	I
2	O	Q	H	I	I	P	K	H	W	W	A	T	E	R	M	F	K	P	U	K
3	P	F	G	R	A	P	I	Q	D	R	Y	N	E	S	S	N	G	O	I	S
4	K	G	W	O	L	A	J	I	M	L	D	D	D	M	Y	O	G	L	G	H
5	R	A	W	M	A	T	E	R	I	A	L	S	O	E	N	A	M	O	J	O
6	I	S	A	R	A	J	K	I	H	G	Y	T	G	J	K	M	J	U	J	P
4	T	H	I	O	N	P	O	L	L	U	T	I	O	N	G	Z	J	T	K	G
8	I	H	I	H	J	L	L	O	P	Q	R	S	N	B	J	O	M	O	P	H
9	F	F	O	W	A	R	M	I	N	G	U	P	G	V	G	H	T	J	K	L

3.6 GLOSSARY

Hadth

All that is attributed to the Prophet Muhammad of words, deeds, implicit approvals, appearance and personality.

Khalifa

An trustee on Earth or protector of nature.

Ratio

Reason, the human mind able of thinking and understanding.

Ayats

Verses from the Quran.

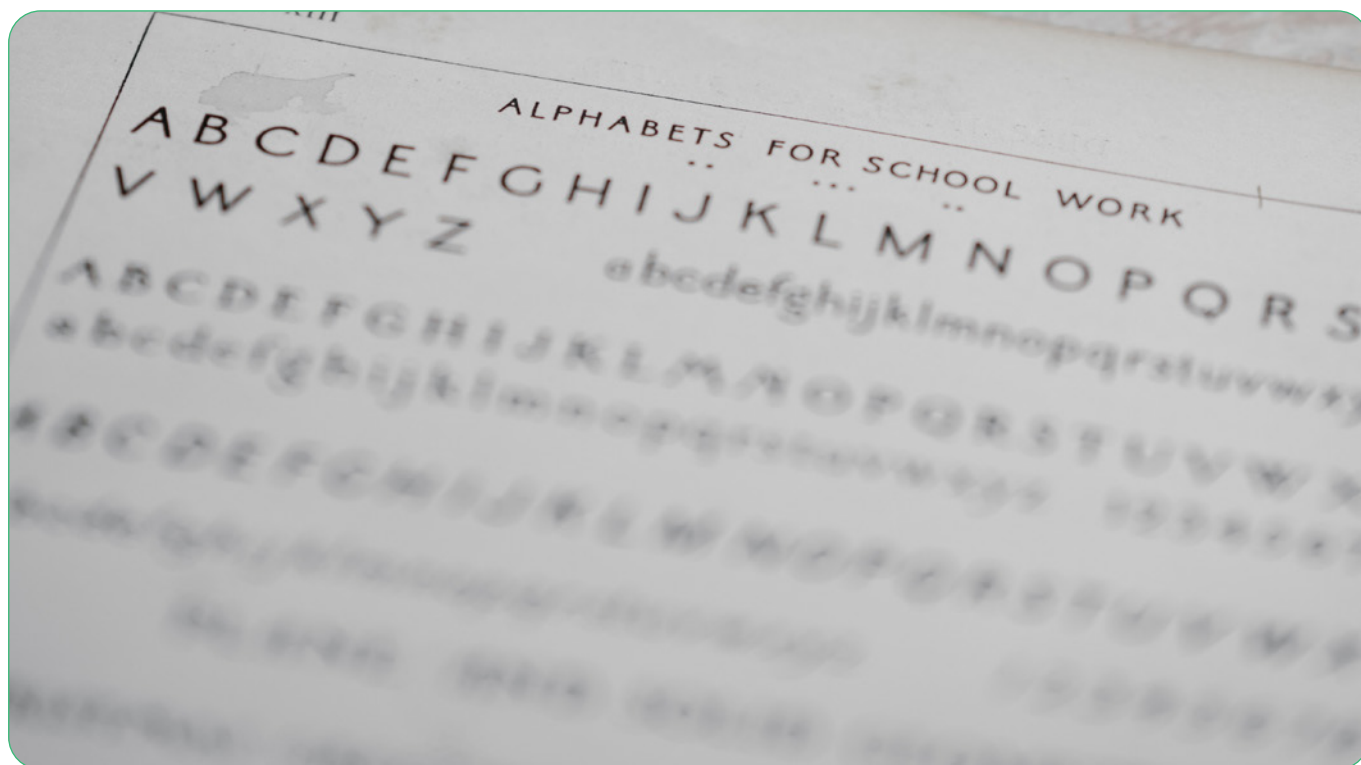


Photo: © Annie Spratt | Unsplash

3.7 TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO

Ahmed and Pieter-Jan are watching the news.

Television:

After the climate march, the students finished their protest in front of the house of the well known businessman Tarik Hadid. The students also destroyed the garden of mister Hadid. According to them, Tarik Hadid is also responsible for the problem of environmental pollution.

The climate march is an initiative of students in order to make the government and polluting companies to take their responsibility.

Ahmed:

"Oh no, I know these people. Tarik Hadid is weekly present at our local mosque to pray. But I also know the students! I've heard that Tarik is very upset because they destroyed his garden and I actually understand that.

Pieter-Jan:

"Really?"

Ahmed:

"These students have gone too far, don't you think?"

Pieter-Jan:

"I understand their concerns but this is not the right way to create awareness."

Ahmed:

"Indeed, I understand them too. They should enter into a dialogue with each other."

Pieter-Jan:

"Why don't you bring them together then? Maybe you can bring them around the table and even mediate?"

Ahmed:

"What a good idea! You know what? During Islam class we learned about the importance of taking care of our planet. Now I have to set up an ecological project. The aim of the project is to create awareness and small changes in your own environment. I can start my project with this situation! We must be encouraged to take responsibility for the environment. I can bring the students and mister Hadid together in our mosque."

Pieter-Jan:

"Wow, that's a good idea. It's a win-win."

Meeting in the local mosque:

Ahmed has invited everyone to enter into a dialogue about climate change.

Mr. Hadid is a major investor of the mosque. He is a progressive thinker and always open to new ideas.

Ahmed: "Mr Hadid, we are so thankful that you wanted to speak to the students."

Mr Hadid: "You are welcome Ahmed, I am curious why exactly you invited us to meet in the mosque."

One of the students:

"In the Quran it is said that Allah has made us, humankind, as protectors of the universe." (35:39) "He is the one who has appointed you as a proxy on earth."

We want to apply this Islamic environmental ethics in our mosque. The mosque is the most important place of worship. Allah has given us the responsibility to take care of our earth. Taking care of nature is one of our tasks as human beings.

Our Prophet Mohamed lived in the nature which made him aware of the importance of animal welfare,... All our prophets were also shepherds and took care of animals and nature. That's quite a difference from how most of us live now. We are no longer in touch with nature."

Mr Hadid:

"Okay, I know what you mean. But what is your concrete proposal? How can the mosque become more ecological in your opinion?"

One of the students:

"We want to make people aware of environmental pollution and global warming. We strongly believe, Mr Hadid, that people like you can make a difference."

Mr Hadid:

"Okay guys, you have a lot of interesting things to say. I want to hear more about your ideas.

Ahmed:

"We have developed a plan with multiple suggestions.

For example, we can start a community-garden project. This project provides resourceful green spaces on which we can grow sustainable food while also creating community cohesion. In this way, Muslims come into closer contact with each other and with nature.

We can also set up a water project by for example putting up signs to make people aware to limit their use of water. There are also several hadiths about the use of water we can refer to.

We also need to reduce the use of plastic.

(While the plans are being explained, they appear on the screen in clouds of thoughts)

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