

Water Conservation in the Qur'anic Perspective: A Thematic Analysis of Ethical Water Usage in Purification Rituals

Ochrona zasobów wodnych z perspektywy Koranu:
Analiza tematyczna etycznego wykorzystania wody w rytuałach oczyszczających

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Abstract: Water conservation represents a pressing global issue, especially in light of the growing scarcity of clean water resources. As the world's second-largest religion, Islam places significant emphasis on the prudent and responsible use of water, both in religious rituals and in everyday life. This study investigates the concept of water conservation from a Qur'anic perspective, with particular attention to the ethical dimensions of water usage in purification practices. Employing critical thinking and analytical methodologies, it adopts a thematic exegesis approach within the interpretive framework of *al-Adabī al-Ijtīmā'ī*. The findings indicate that the Qur'an presents water as a fundamental source of life, a symbol of purity, and a divine blessing that must be protected. Although Islam prescribes ritual purification before certain acts of worship, current practices of water use in these contexts frequently deviate from the conservation principles espoused in Islamic teachings. Therefore, fostering a collective ethical awareness among Muslims regarding water use is essential for minimizing waste and advancing sustainable conservation efforts.

Keywords: water conservation, the Qur'an, purification rituals, ecological stewardship, sustainable resource management

Streszczenie: Ochrona zasobów wodnych stanowi palący problem na całym świecie, zwłaszcza w świetle rosnącego niedoboru zasobów czystej wody. Islam, druga co do wielkości religia świata, kładzie duży nacisk na rozsądne i odpowiedzialne korzystanie z wody, zarówno w rytuałach religijnych, jak i w życiu codziennym. W niniejszym artykule przedstawiono koncepcję ochrony zasobów wodnych z perspektywy Koranu, zwracając szczególną uwagę na etyczne aspekty wykorzystania wody w obrzędach oczyszczania. Stosując zasady krytycznego myślenia oraz metodologie analityczne, autorzy proponują egzegetyczne podejście w ramach

interpretacyjnych zasad *al-Adabī al-Ijtīmāʿī*. Odkrycia wskazują, że Koran przedstawia wodę jako podstawowe źródło życia, symbol czystości i boskie błogosławieństwo, które należy chronić. Chociaż nauki Islamu zalecają rytualne oczyszczenie przed pewnymi aktami kultu religijnego, obecne praktyki korzystania z wody w tym celu często odbiegają od zasad w nich zawartych. Dlatego też wspieranie zbiorowej świadomości etycznej wśród muzułmanów w zakresie korzystania z wody jest niezbędne do ograniczenia zanieczyszczenia i promowania działań na rzecz zrównoważonej eksploatacji zasobów wodnych.

Słowa kluczowe: oszczędne gospodarowanie wodą, Koran, rytuały oczyszczające, odpowiedzialność środowiskowa, zrównoważone zarządzanie zasobami

Introduction

Islam offers profound insights into water conservation; however, academic discourse and research on this topic remain less developed within the Islamic framework compared to Christianity (Gudorf 2010). Fundamentally, all religious traditions emphasize the interdependent relationship between humans, nature, and the Divine. In this context, Ryszard F. Sadowski urges religious communities to cultivate ecological awareness through their respective doctrinal teachings (Sadowski 2025).

The global clean water crisis has become an increasingly urgent concern (Florena, Irwansyah, and Karman 2021). Many regions worldwide experience severe water shortages due to insufficient ecological awareness, leading to pollution and excessive water consumption. Studies reveal that over 40% of the global population lives under conditions of water stress (Jury and Vaux 2007). Broadly, Tong Ling categorizes the causes of water crises into two primary factors: natural and anthropogenic (Ling 2022). When water scarcity stems from natural causes, human intervention is limited to mitigation efforts. However, when human activities drive the crisis, collective action becomes imperative to prevent and address its consequences. The two main human-induced factors contributing to water crises are environmental pollution and rapid population growth, both of which exacerbate the demand for clean water (Mehta 2012; Marshall 2011).

The clean water crisis is a pressing issue in many Muslim-majority countries. In Indonesia, most rivers suffer from varying degrees of pollution, ranging from mild to severe contamination (Yusuf 2023; Anggraeni 2024). In Saudi Arabia, water pollution is largely driven by seawater desalination processes and the discharge of chemical and medical waste, which contaminate groundwater wells (Al-Nairat 2023). Meanwhile, Egypt faces a critical pollution crisis in the Nile River, the country's sole major water source (Mahmud n.d.). These cases underscore the significant role of human activities in exacerbating the water crisis. Consequently, research on ecological awareness has become increasingly relevant, particularly

in light of claims that religious doctrines contribute to environmental degradation, as argued by Lynn White (Whitney 2015). However, several scholars have challenged this assertion (Sadowski and Ayvaz 2023; Samways 2021; Sayem 2021; Sadowski 2009).

With an estimated global Muslim population of approximately 1.91 billion (Review n.d.), water consumption within Muslim communities is naturally substantial, particularly for religious rituals. However, empirical evidence suggests that water usage in purification practices is often excessive. A study by Azeanita Suratkon et al. found that water consumption for *wudu* frequently exceeds actual necessity, resulting in significant wastage, especially in places of worship such as mosques (Suratkon, Chan, and Ab Rahman 2014).

Islam mandates purification before engaging in acts of worship, as stated in surah al-Māidah 5:6 “When you rise to [perform] prayer, wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows and wipe over your heads and wash your feet to the ankles.”

Islam strongly emphasizes the ethical use of water, both in religious rituals and daily life. However, awareness of responsible water consumption has been steadily declining among Muslims, leading to excessive water usage, including in purification practices, as noted by Azeanita Suratkon. This decline is particularly concerning given that Islamic teachings provide comprehensive guidelines on the ethical management of water, addressing both physical and spiritual needs.

The Qur’an depicts water as a fundamental symbol of life, as stated in surah al-Anbiyā 21:30 “made from water every living thing.” Furthermore, water is recognized as a symbol of purity (Shakhs and Ezzat 2018), and a profound blessing from Allah (Abbas and Hamza 2018). In this regard, Prashant Mehta argues that nations with access to uncontaminated clean water foster healthier and more dynamic civilizations (Mehta 2012). Despite these insights, water conservation remains a neglected concern in many Muslim communities, exacerbating the ongoing crisis of clean water scarcity. This issue is further compounded by the lack of adherence to Islamic teachings on responsible water usage.

This article examines the concept of water conservation in the Qur’an, with a particular emphasis on purification rituals. The focus on purification arises from the significant volume of water used by Muslims for ritual cleansing. In Islamic doctrine, purification is a prerequisite for various acts of worship, including the five daily prayers, non-obligatory prayers, *sujud tilāwah*/prostration of reading, *ṭawaf*,¹ and handling the Qur’an (Furkanĭ 2017). Given the

¹ In Islamic practice, Tawaf is the ritual of circumambulating the Kaaba seven times counterclockwise, starting from the *Hajar al-Aswad* (Black Stone). As a fundamental ritual of Hajj and Umrah, its performance is essential

global Muslim population of approximately 1.91 billion, inadequate awareness of responsible water usage could further aggravate future clean water shortages. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of water conservation from a Qur’anic perspective is both relevant and essential.

Beyond this, the article explores how humanity in general, and Muslims in particular, should manage water resources in accordance with Islamic principles. The discussion focuses on Islamic perspectives on water pollution and the ethical dimensions of water consumption. This study employs a literature-based methodology, drawing from primary sources such as the Qur’an and secondary sources, including the hadiths of Prophet Muhammad, authoritative exegetical interpretations, and scholarly perspectives in Islamic jurisprudence. The analysis is conducted through critical and analytical frameworks to elucidate the normative ethical principles embedded within the Islamic tradition.

To interpret Qur’anic verses, this study applies a thematic exegesis (*tafsīr mawḍū‘ī*) approach, utilizing the *al-Adabī al-Ijtīmā‘ī* methodology (Basri et al. 2024; M. Muhammad 2023). This framework seeks to redefine Islamic ethical principles concerning water usage and conservation. Ultimately, this article aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of water conservation in the Qur’an, ethical guidelines for water usage in purification rituals, and the broader Islamic framework for environmental sustainability.

1. Literature Review

Environmental ethics from an Islamic perspective—particularly concerning water conservation—has attracted significant scholarly interest in recent decades. While a growing body of literature addresses Islamic ecological thought (*eco-theology*) and the management of natural resources, focused analyses of water conservation as derived explicitly from Qur’anic and Prophetic (hadith) teachings—especially as manifested in ritual purification practices (*tahārah*)—remain relatively underexplored.

a. Thematic Approaches to Water in the Qur’an

Between 2012 and 2024, only a handful of studies—six peer-reviewed articles—have thematically examined water within the Qur’anic corpus. These investigations can be broadly categorized into two themes: (1) water as a vital force sustaining life, and (2) the depiction of hydrological processes in Qur’anic discourse.

for the validity of the pilgrimage. During Tawaf, pilgrims recite Takbir and other supplications in accordance with the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (Hassan n.d.).

Mohamad Imamuddin and Waesul Kurni approached water as a divine gift, indispensable to life, employing a thematic exegesis (*tafsīr mawḍūʿī*) by systematically analyzing verses containing the term *al-māʾ* (Imamudin 2012; Kurni 2016). While these works acknowledged water's ontological and theological significance, they failed to extend their inquiry to the ethics of water conservation, particularly in relation to purification rituals.

By contrast, Zahra Zainun Nisa, Munawarah, and Imam Ahmadi focused on the Qur'anic portrayal of hydrological cycles, adopting a scientific-exegetical approach (*tafsīr ʿilmī*) to illuminate the processes of precipitation, groundwater flow, and evaporation (Nisa 2017; Munawarah 2021; Ahmadi 2021). Although informative, these studies largely emphasized cosmological phenomena, offering minimal engagement with normative ethical implications regarding water usage. Similarly, the study by Nanda Rahmatina explored strategies for optimizing water resources (Rahmatina, Wardani, and Saputra 2022)—such as equitable distribution and reforestation of watersheds—but failed to anchor these strategies within Qur'anic paradigms or ritual practice.

b. Ethical and Symbolic Dimensions of Water in Islam

Another important strand of scholarship has investigated the spiritual, ethical, and communal dimensions of water in Islamic thought. Ahmed El Shakhs and Sadia Noreen emphasized that water in Islamic texts is not merely a physical necessity but also a profound symbol of spiritual purity (Shakhs and Ezzat 2018; Noreen 2024). These studies highlighted water's sacrality and its role in maintaining ritual cleanliness; however, they stopped short of articulating a conservationist interpretation of such rituals.

Additional studies have emphasized the potential of religious institutions and leadership in promoting water ethics. Kavezeri-Karuaihe, Siraj and Tayab, and Sherifdeen Muhammad & S. Amal underscored the role of mosques, Islamic educational institutions, and religious leaders in disseminating water conservation values. They advocated for faith-based educational initiatives as effective mechanisms for fostering environmental stewardship (Kavezeri-Karuaihe et al. 2003; Siraj and Tayab 2017; S. Muhammad and Amal 2020).

Jens Koehrsen and Giulia Buccione further emphasized the transformative potential of religious leadership in shaping ecological consciousness (Koehrsen 2021; Buccione et al. 2023). In a complementary vein, Abdul Basir Mohamad and Nurbazla Ismail asserted

that Islamic legal principles inherently discourage environmental degradation and promote ecological equilibrium—values that are directly applicable to the ethics of water use (Mohamad and Ismail 2023).

c. Qur’anic Principles for Water Governance

A third body of scholarship has examined water governance through the lens of Qur’anic ethics. A.A. Akkad, in a pioneering contribution, explored Islamic perspectives on conservation technologies appropriate for arid environments, including desalinization and wastewater recycling (Akkad 1989). Abbas and Hamza later argued that Islamic jurisprudence anticipated many principles now formalized in modern environmental law, particularly concerning equitable and ethical water distribution (Abbas and Hamza 2018).

Recent scholarship has positioned water conservation as a religious and moral imperative. Junaid Anwar and Aqsa Tasgheer, along with Mustapha Yahya, contended that extravagance in water usage constitutes a sinful act and that governments bear a responsibility to ensure access to clean water (Anwar 2021; Yahya and Arts 2021). Najibullah Loodin’s thesis further proposed incorporating Islamic Water Management Principles (IWMP) into national legal systems to mitigate water-related conflicts in Muslim-majority societies (Loodin 2021).

Building on this framework, Salamah Noorhidayati, Farhat Naseem Alvi, and Hafiz Faiz Rasool called for the integration of Islamic ethical values—*mīzān* (balance), *khilāfah* (stewardship), and *amānah* (trust)—into contemporary environmental policy (Noorhidayati, Ahmadi, and Sari 2022; Farhat, Cheema, and Rafiq 2024; Rasool 2024). These contributions advocate for a comprehensive Islamic environmental ethic that synthesizes scriptural guidance with the pressing demands of modern resource conservation.

Despite the valuable insights offered by previous research, a specific and sustained analysis of how Islamic purification rituals (*wuḍūʾ*, *ghusl*) exemplify Qur’anic principles of water conservation remains absent. Existing literature tends to focus on either theological abstractions or environmental policy frameworks, often neglecting the ritualistic embodiment of conservation ethics embedded within Islamic practice.

This study seeks to fill that lacuna by examining ritual purification as an implicit Qur’anic strategy for promoting ethical water use. Through a thematic exegetical methodology, it contends that these rituals are not merely symbolic acts of devotion but serve as embodied models of sustainable resource management. By foregrounding the conservationist dimension

of *tahārah*, this study contributes to the broader discourse on Islamic environmentalism and offers a nuanced theological foundation for fostering behavioral change in water usage among Muslim communities.

2. The Concept of Water in Islamic Thought

The study of water conservation from an Islamic perspective, grounded in the Qur'an and hadith, has garnered significant attention among contemporary Muslim scholars. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes the necessity of preserving and protecting water, as highlighted in surah al-Anbiyā 21:30 and other verses, which affirm that water is the fundamental source of life for all living beings (Blankinship et al. 2024; As-Sirjaani 2021; Farhat, Cheema, and Rafiq 2024).

However, despite this recognition, human awareness of water's intrinsic value remains insufficient. Rather than being regarded as a precious and finite resource, water is often treated merely as a commodity, exploited without consideration for sustainability (Sadowski 2018). In contrast, the Qur'an teaches that water serves not only as a vital necessity for survival but also as a sacred gift that must be respected (Hossain 2001).

An analysis of the Qur'anic term *al-Mā'* (الماء) reveals that it appears 36 times, each with varying connotations. This article categorizes Qur'anic discussions on water into five principal themes while acknowledging the potential for further scholarly exploration:

a. Water as a symbol of purity

The Qur'an frequently associates water with purification, emphasizing its role in spiritual and physical cleanliness. This is evident in surah al-Nisā 4:43, al-Mā'idah 5:6, al-Anfāl 8:11, Muḥammad 47:15, and al-Mulk 67:30.

b. The imperative of water conservation

The Qur'an underscores the importance of maintaining water balance as a crucial aspect of environmental stewardship. Verses such as surah al-Ra'd 13:17, al-Kahf 18:41, Fuṣṣilat 41:39, and al-Zukhruf 43:11.

c. Water as the essence of life

Numerous Qur'anic passages affirm water as the origin and sustainer of life. This theme is explicitly stated in surah al-Baqarah 2:22 and 164, al-An'ām 6:99, al-Ra'd 13:5, Ibrāhīm 14:32, al-Naḥl 16:10 and 65, al-Anbiyā 21:30, al-Ḥajj 22:5 and 63, al-Nūr 24:45, al-Ankabūr 29:63, al-Rūm 30:24, Luqmān 31:10, al-Sajadah 32:8 and 27, al-Zumar 39:21, and al-Nāzi'āt 79:31.

d. The divine process of water formation

The Qur'an elucidates the formation of water as a divine process, reinforcing its sacred nature. This is evident in surah al-Mu'minūn 23:18 and al-Nabā' 78:14.

e. Water as a means of divine retribution

In addition to its life-giving properties, the Qur'an portrays water as an instrument of divine punishment in the afterlife. Verses such as surah al-Baqarah 2:74, al-Ra'd 13:14, Ibrāhīm 14:16, al-Kahf 18:29 and 45, al-Nūr 24:39, and al-Ḥāqqah 69:11 depict water as a medium of suffering for those who defy divine guidance.

The Qur'an's repeated references to water underscore its profound significance. In Qur'anic studies, such repetition serves as a signal for readers to reflect on the deeper wisdom embedded within these verses (Bajash 2020).

The Qur'an classifies water usage into two primary categories: internal and external. Internal usage pertains to essential human needs, such as drinking, cooking, and purification, as stated in surah al-A'rāf 7:31 and al-Baqarah 2:222. External usage, on the other hand, encompasses water's role in sustaining plant growth, irrigating livestock, and enhancing soil fertility.

In Islam, water is deeply intertwined with acts of worship, particularly purification before prayer. The Qur'an explicitly mandates purification in surah al-Māidah 5:6, outlining the procedures for *wuḍū'* and *ghusl*. The Prophet Muhammad exemplified moderation in water consumption, using approximately 625 milliliters for *wuḍū'* (Setya 2023). Moreover, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) prohibits excessive water usage, even when abundant sources, such as a flowing river, are available (Al-Shawkanī, n.d. 1/314). This principle reinforces Islam's fundamental commitment to water conservation and sustainable environmental stewardship.

Moreover, Islam provides explicit guidelines prohibiting water contamination. The Prophet Muhammad strictly forbade urinating in flowing water sources (Al-Ṭabrānī, n.d. 2/208), a prohibition that, as Ibn 'Ābidīn explains, serves to preserve both the cleanliness and sustainability of water (Affairs 1427, 34/14). If even minor pollution is prohibited, then the deliberate degradation of clean water constitutes a grave violation of Islamic ethical principles.

In his exegesis, al-Ṭabarī asserts that the depletion of water from the earth would lead to the collapse of both worldly prosperity and religious life (Al-Ṭabarī 2000, 12/112). This highlights water conservation as a fundamental Islamic obligation that must be understood and actively upheld. However, despite this imperative, awareness of water conservation remains inadequate in some Muslim communities, resulting in excessive water use—even during ritual purification.

Water conservation is not merely an individual responsibility but an essential aspect of Islamic teachings that emphasize the sustainability of human life and all living beings. Therefore, Muslims must cultivate greater awareness and adopt responsible water conservation practices—not only as an expression of religious devotion but also as a means of preserving ecological balance for future generations.

3. The Concept of Purification in Islam

In Islamic teachings, the concept of *tahārah* (purification) is a fundamental prerequisite for religious observance. Purification serves to cleanse individuals from both minor and major impurities, ensuring they are in a state of ritual purity before performing acts of worship. This requirement is essential for the validity of certain religious practices (FurkanĪ 2017).

Islamic purification is broadly categorized into two primary types: minor and major impurities. A person is considered in a state of minor impurity if they experience conditions such as bodily excretion, loss of consciousness due to sleep or mental impairment, or physical contact with a member of the opposite sex, according to certain juristic perspectives (Al-Ramlī 1984, 1/108-125). In such cases, *wuḍūʾ* is obligatory before engaging in worship (Al-Sharbīnī 1415, 1/120; Al-Ramlī 1984, 1/126). Conversely, major impurity results from seminal discharge—whether through sexual activity or other causes—as well as menstruation or postpartum bleeding in women. In these cases, *ghusl* (ritual bathing) is mandatory before resuming acts of worship. This purification ritual involves the complete washing of the body from head to toe to ensure absolute cleanliness.

Water plays a central role in Islamic purification rituals. Scholars classify water into three main categories: pure and purifying water, pure but non-purifying water, and impure water (Al-Zuhailī, n.d. 1/226). Pure and purifying water refers to water that originates from natural sources, such as rain or springs, and remains untainted by external substances (Al-Jazāirī 2003, 1/23). Pure but non-purifying water is water that has undergone a change in its natural properties due to the addition of substances such as perfume or soap, rendering it unsuitable for ritual purification (Al-Zuhailī, n.d. 1/233). Impure water is water that has been contaminated by filth or pollutants to the extent that it is no longer valid for purification purposes (Al-Zuhailī, n.d. 1/239).

The necessity of clean water in Islam extends beyond *wuḍūʾ* to include the purification of the body, clothing, and places of worship from *najāsah* (impurities) (Al-Naysabūrī 1985, 1/180; Affairs 1427, 2/314). Failure to cleanse oneself from impurities before performing acts

of worship renders the worship invalid. Even in the final rites of a deceased Muslim, Islamic law mandates ritual washing and *wuḍū'* (Al-Shawkanī 1987, 1/133). This underscores the fundamental importance of having access to clean, uncontaminated water, both in life and in death.

However, water consumption for *wuḍū'* is often excessive. The Prophet Muhammad exemplified *wuḍū'* with as little as 625 milliliters of water. If every Muslim adhered to this practice, the total daily water usage for *wuḍū'* would amount to just 3.125 liters per person, based on the calculation of 625 milliliters per ablution for five daily prayers ($5 \times 625 \text{ ml} = 3.125$ liters). Unfortunately, many Muslims use significantly more, particularly in mosques with abundant water supplies (Suratkon, Chan, and Ab Rahman 2014). In some cases, individual *wuḍū'* consumption reaches several liters, leading to the unnecessary waste of thousands of liters daily in large mosques. This overuse is often due to the habit of leaving taps fully open without considering water conservation. Islam explicitly condemns *isrāf* (wastefulness) (M. Muhammad et al. 2024) and emphasizes water conservation as an essential ethical and environmental obligation for Muslims.

Awareness of the importance of water conservation must be instilled from an early age, ensuring that individuals uphold the principle of purity while preserving water resources. Islam not only emphasizes physical cleanliness but also advocates for environmental stewardship. Contaminating water equates to neglecting the divine trust bestowed by Allah, who has provided water as a vital source of life for all living beings.

Thus, the concept of purity in Islam extends beyond a mere prerequisite for valid worship; it embodies a profound moral responsibility toward environmental sustainability. This principle should serve as a fundamental guideline in daily life, fostering the preservation of cleanliness and the sustainable management of water resources for the benefit of all.

4. Water Conservation in Islam: Reconciling Ritual Obligations and Environmental Ethics

The issues of water wastage and pollution, as previously discussed, should not be prevalent in Muslim-majority countries, as they directly contradict Islam's fundamental teachings. Water holds a central role in purification rituals required for worship, and Islam strictly prohibits its excessive use, as exemplified by the teachings of Prophet Muhammad. Given its indispensable role as a prerequisite for obligatory acts of worship, any form of water wastage or contamination by Muslims ultimately obstructs the fulfillment of religious duties.

In surah al-Mā'idah 5:2, exhorts: “And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression.” This verse carries profound implications, underscoring the collective responsibility to preserve natural resources, including water. Protecting water aligns with the principle of cooperation in righteousness, whereas polluting it constitutes a transgression that harms both individuals and society. Therefore, maintaining water purity is not only a practical application of Qur’anic teachings but also a religious and moral imperative in Islam.

Water pollution and wastage, which contribute to water scarcity and hinder access to purification, can be considered deliberate obstructions to the fulfillment of obligatory acts of worship in Islam. Such actions constitute a form of injustice (*zulm*) that incurs divine wrath, as emphasized in surah al-Baqarah 2:114, “And who are more unjust than those who prevent the name of Allah from being mentioned [i.e., praised] in His mosques and strive toward their destruction. It is not for them to enter them except in fear. For them in this world is disgrace, and they will have in the Hereafter a great punishment”

In his exegesis, ‘Alī al-Ṣābūnī explains that no injustice is greater than preventing others from worshipping Allah (Al-Ṣābūnī 1997, 1/78). This ethical imperative is further reinforced in Surah al-Mā'idah (5:32), which declares: “...or cause corruption in the land—it is as if he had slain all of humanity.” The verse powerfully conveys that acts of environmental degradation are tantamount to grave moral crimes (M. Muhammad et al. 2024). Consequently, water conservation is not merely an ecological concern but a profound Islamic duty grounded in the preservation of creation and the prevention of corruption.

Islam unequivocally condemns water pollution as a transgression against communal well-being. The Prophet Muhammad affirmed this principle in his hadith: “There should be neither harm nor reciprocation of *ḥarm*” (Al-Bayhaqī 2003, 6/114). Water contamination not only endangers human life but also disrupts the natural ecosystem, violating Islam’s core ethical principles of social responsibility and environmental stewardship.

The Egyptian Fatwa Council, for instance, has issued Fatwa No. 6849, explicitly prohibiting any form of river pollution. This fatwa declares water pollution *ḥarm* for three fundamental reasons: it harms the environment, deprives people of the blessing of water granted by Allah, and violates the human right to access and utilize water (‘Allām 2022b). Furthermore, Fatwa No. 7298 extends this prohibition to excessive water consumption—even in the context of *wuḍū’*—categorizing it as *ḥarm* (‘Allām 2022a).

While Islam provides an alternative purification method through *tayammum*, which permits the use of pure dust in the absence of water, as stated in surah al-Mā'idah 5:6 “and do

not find water, then seek clean earth.” Islamic jurisprudence, however, imposes specific limitations on *tayammum*. Unlike water, which can be used repeatedly for multiple acts of worship as long as its purity remains intact, *tayammum* is valid only for a single obligatory prayer (Al-Anṣārī 2000, 1/86). Thus, the loss of access to water is not merely an environmental crisis but also the deprivation of a divine blessing that facilitates essential religious practices.

According to Na‘īmah ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Nāṣif, Islam was the first religion to establish regulations, wisdom, conservation principles, and ethical guidelines for water usage (Nāṣif 2007). However, despite Islam’s comprehensive teachings on water conservation, other religious traditions have demonstrated a more proactive response to contemporary water crises (Gudorf 2010). The Qur’an strongly emphasizes the prohibition of wastefulness and pollution, as evident in surah al-Baqarah 2:60, al-Qaṣaṣ 28:77, al-Rūm 30:41, al-Fajr 89:12, and Yūnus 10:81. Yet, awareness of these teachings remains limited among many Muslims. Therefore, promoting Islamic perspectives on water conservation is essential, particularly by reinforcing the intrinsic link between purification rituals and responsible water stewardship.

The classification of water and purification rituals, as discussed above, underscores the intricate nature of water-related discourse in Islamic teachings, particularly within *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). A crucial takeaway is that Islam provides a meticulous framework emphasizing the significance of water, ultimately fostering a deeper awareness of water conservation. Polluting water equates to betraying Allah’s trust, as He has sent down water from the heavens as a means of purification, as stated in surah al-Baqarah 2:222, al-Māidah 5:6, al-Anfāl 7:11. Furthermore, water is recognized as the essence of life, as elaborated in surah al-Baqarah 2:22 and 164, al-An‘ām 6:99, al-Ra‘d 13:5, and other verses.

Moreover, Islamic teachings promote water conservation by explicitly prohibiting wastefulness and pollution, both of which are deemed impermissible under any circumstances. The prudent and efficient use of water is a fundamental moral and religious duty entrusted to humankind, ensuring the preservation of ecological balance and the prevention of environmental degradation (Jabłoński 2011).

Conclusion

The Qur’anic perspective on water conservation extends beyond ecological concerns, encompassing a profound spiritual dimension, particularly in the ethical use of water for purification rituals. Both the Qur’an and hadith emphasize that water is not only a fundamental source of life but also a sacred means of purification, necessitating its responsible and sustainable use. Islam prescribes efficiency in water consumption and strictly prohibits

wastefulness, even in acts of worship. The Prophet Muhammad exemplified this principle by performing *wuḍū'* with only 625 milliliters of water and *ghusl* with no more than one *ṣā'* (approximately 2.5 liters).

Islamic jurisprudence further underscores the imperative of water conservation, with scholars asserting that excessive water use in religious rituals—such as *wuḍū'* and *ghusl*—is not only discouraged but can be deemed *ḥarm* if done intentionally without necessity. Despite these doctrinal foundations, awareness among Muslims regarding water conservation in purification practices remains limited. Many individuals inadvertently misuse water during *wuḍū'*, leaving taps running excessively or exceeding the prescribed number of washes without justification. Such practices contradict the Islamic principle of moderation and sustainability in the utilization of natural resources.

Thus, the ethical use of water in purification rituals must be guided by the principles of sustainability, efficiency, and adherence to Islamic teachings. Water preservation is not merely an environmental responsibility but a divine trust (*amanāh*) with profound theological and social implications. To cultivate a deeper awareness, comprehensive educational initiatives and community outreach programs are essential to instill water conservation principles within religious practice, ensuring a harmonious balance between spiritual devotion and environmental stewardship.

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