

Islam and the environment

Islam is not just a “religion.” Its teachings are not just about stating that God is the One and only, how to worship Him, or how to perform prayers. Islam also prescribes a way of life that goes beyond performing such rituals.

The Arabic word for religion is ‘dien,’ which means “a way of life.” The Qur’an (anglicized spelling: Koran, the sacred text of Islam) often places religion outside the purely ritual context.

Islam describes an integrated code of behavior that deals with personal hygiene at one end of the spectrum and relationships with nature and the natural order at the other. It provides a holistic approach to existence; it does not differentiate between the sacred and the secular, nor does it place a distinction between the world of humanity and the world of nature. Among the teachings of Islam is how Muslims were ordered to preserve and protect the environment and keep it as intact as possible while using the Earth’s resources cautiously for humankind’s benefit.

Islam views environmental challenges as an indicator of a moral and ethical crisis. Looking at the creation of humans, Earth, and the cosmos

as signs of the Creator is a key in Islamic values. Islam tells humans that we are created for a reason; the Quran says, “He is the One Who has placed you as successors on earth and elevated some of you in rank over others, so He may test you with what He has given you.” [Qur’an 6: 165]

The Islamic worldview defines the ‘good life’ as living lightly on Earth with temperance or moderate abstention and caring for both people and nature. Islamic discourse offers hope and optimism about the possibility of attaining harmony between humans and nature. Earth will find a balance if humans rethink their lifestyles and mindsets, as stated in the Quran: “Corruption has appeared in both land and sea because of what people’s (own) hands have wrought, so that they may taste something of what they have done, that they may turn back (to God’s teachings)” [Qur’an 30:41]. The verse tells us that the environment is humans’ responsibility and that humans should learn from their negative impact on the Earth.

Among the teachings of Islam regarding the environment, water stands as the most essential ingredient of life. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon



Guest Column

HATIM HEGAB

him (pbuh), has often ordered Muslims not to waste water, especially during the washing before prayers (called Wudu). In his Hadith (Hadith: sayings of Prophet Muhammad, considered the second source of legal-ization in Islam, after the Quran), it is narrated that Prophet Muhammad passed by one of his companions (a follower of Prophet Muhammad) named Sa’d while he was performing wudu’, and he said, “What is this extravagance, O Sa’d?” Sa’d said, “Can there be any extravagance in wudu?” The Prophet said, “Do not waste water, even if you are by the side of a flowing river.”

The Quran also stresses the importance of water, stating that every living creature was created from water: “Do the unbelievers not see that the heavens and the Earth were joined together, and We split them apart(?) And We made from water every living thing. Will they not believe(?)” [Qur’an 21:30]

God also told us that He created all water resources on Earth: “Or, who made the Earth a habitat, and caused rivers to flow through it, and set mountains on it, and placed a partition between the two seas(?) Is there a god alongside Allah(?) But most of them do not know.” [Qur’an 27:61] and “Allah is He Who created the heavens and the Earth and sent down water from the sky, causing fruits to grow for your sustenance. And He committed the ships to your service, sailing through the sea by His command, and He committed the rivers to your service.” [Qur’an 14:32].

Trees are positioned as essential environmental elements that should be kept and preserved at all costs, even during wartime. When some of his followers had to cut down a tree to widen the road, he told them it would have been better if they had found a way around that tree. The incident was so significant that Prophet Muhammad received a revelation (verses from the Quran) to alleviate the sorrow of the followers. The Quran says, “Whatever (palm-) trees you cut down or leave standing on their roots, it is by Allah’s will. So that He may disgrace the disobedient.” [Qur’an 55:5].

One of the most excellent teachings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is found in this Hadith: “If the Final Hour (the Day of Judgment) comes (unto you) while you are planting a shoot of a plant, and if you can continue planting it, you should do so.” The Hadith confirms that trees are to be respected and preserved at any time, even at the end of life. Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said, “There is none amongst the Muslims who plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, person, or animal eats from it, but it is regarded as a charitable gift for him. They will be rewarded for it.

In Islam, humans, trees, animals, and non-living things (such as rocks) are also considered sacred. God said in the Quran, “Praising Him are the seven heavens and the Earth, and everyone in them. There is not a thing that does not glorify Him with praise, but you do not understand their praises. He is Patient and Forgiving.” [Qur’an 17:44] This verse tells us clearly that all creatures, even those without souls (such as non-living entities), praise God and should be treated with respect and kindness.

Prophet Muhammad’s teachings include stories that emphasize the

importance of treating all living beings with respect. For instance, he mentioned that a woman was condemned to hellfire for starving a cat, while a man was granted paradise for offering water to a thirsty dog.

Islam also teaches people the importance of respecting other living creatures. Once, Prophet Muhammad saw two followers using an animal for target practice while competing in archery. He asked them to stop immediately, informing them that this act would anger God, as they were harming a living creature. Even a tiny ant should not be harmed, as it has done no wrong. The Quran has chapters named after insects and animals, such as Chapter 16 (The Bees) and Chapter 27 (The Ants), highlighting the marvels of God’s creation.

Saving the environment and preserving the Earth’s resources are among the most essential teachings of Islam. This teaching can be summarized in the following verse from the Quran: “Eat and drink, but do not waste. Surely He does not like the wasteful.” [Qur’an 7:31].

To contact the author: hatim@gmx.us

For more information, please visit: www.icstillwater.org/islam

King Charles stresses importance of kindness as he skips pre-Easter service amid cancer treatment

By Danica Kirka
Associated Press

LONDON – King Charles III on Thursday stressed the importance of friendship and acts of caring in a recorded message delivered to a traditional pre-Easter church service, which the monarch skipped as he continues to undergo cancer treatment.

Queen Camilla represented her husband during the Royal Maundy Service at Worcester Cathedral, presenting bags of specially minted coins to peo-

ple being honored for public service. The event is held every year on the Thursday before Easter, known as Maundy Thursday in Britain.

The personal message from Charles comes after the recent announcements that both the king and the Princess of Wales had been diagnosed with cancer. While the message made no direct reference to the royals’ health problems, it marked the king’s first public comment since his daughter-in-law revealed she was undergoing chemotherapy.

Charles said that Jesus set an “example of how we should serve and care for each other,” and how as a nation “we need and benefit greatly from those who extend the hand of friendship to us, especially in a time of need.”

The service, which dates back to the year 600, commemorates the Last Supper, when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples as an act of service and humility.

Sovereigns no longer wash the feet of the needy as they did in medieval times. Instead,

Camilla presented purses filled with special coins, known as Maundy money, to 75 women and 75 men, a number dictated by the king’s age.

The service “reminds me of the pledge I made at the beginning of the Coronation Service – to follow Christ’s example ‘not to be served but to serve,’” Charles said in his message. “That I have always tried to do and continue to do, with my whole heart.”

The king stepped back from public appearances in early February, when he announced that

he would undergo treatment for an undisclosed type of cancer. He has continued to carry out his state duties, including regular meetings with the prime minister and reviewing and signing government documents.

The Princess of Wales, wife of Prince William, announced last week that she, too, was being treated for an undisclosed type of cancer. The news came after the princess, formerly Kate Middleton, underwent abdominal surgery in January.

Worship at the church of your choice this week

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet,
you also should wash one another's feet.
If I have set you an example that you should do as I have
done for you.



John 13:14-15

Stillwater Bible

Proclaiming Christ, Training Believers

JB Bond, Senior Pastor

Sundays

Worship Service.....8:30 a.m.

G.R.O.W. Groups.....9:45 a.m.

Worship Service.....11:00 a.m.

Kids' Church.....11:20 a.m.

Tuesdays

Cornerstone @ The Union (RM 297).....7:30 p.m.

Wednesdays

Stillwater Bible Institute.....6:30 p.m.

Impact Youth.....6:30 p.m.

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9:45 a.m. - Sunday School

11:00 a.m. - in person, online

On KSPI radio AM 780 & FM 94.3 and the Stillwater FPC Facebook page

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421 E. Richmond Rd • 377.0923

www.sunnybrookccc.org

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9:45 am

11:15 am

SUNDAY SCHOOL

8:30 am

9:45 am

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Address – 1223 S. Perkins. Rd.

Phone: 405-372-2411

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Zion Lutheran Church - LCMS

Sunday - 8:00, 10:30 AM

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en Español 1 p.m.

Tuesday Mass

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Wednesday Mass

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Friday Mass

12:10 p.m.

Saturday Mass

9 a.m.

Saturday Vigil Mass

5 p.m.

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Wednesdays at 5 p.m. and

Saturdays from 9:45-11 a.m.

372-6886

www.sfxstillwater.org

The Islamic Society of Stillwater

616 N. Washington St.

Friday (Weekly) Prayers

1:40 PM - 2:10 PM

For Daily Prayer Times

www.icstillwater.org