

Islam

Discuss the Islamic principle of 'balance'

Aim: To understand quotes from the Qur'an and their implications for how we maintain the balance of nature in our immediate environment.

Activity:

Read and discuss the quotes below, considering how pupils could work to improve the balance of nature in the school grounds; link to the science curriculum where possible.

Many plants and trees are mentioned by name in the Qur'an, often in a medicinal context: figs, olives, pomegranates, grapes, date palms, bottle gourds, Christ's thorns, tamarisk, ginger, camphor... The Muslim faith encourages adherents to look to the model of the Prophet Muhammad as an example of the simple life we should return to, to avert environmental catastrophe. There are many verses in the Qur'an that give guidance on matters relating to the environment:

- "There is not an animal on earth nor a bird that flies on its wings but they are communities like you" 6:38
- "Do no mischief on the earth..." 7:85

Humans are just one of millions inhabiting the planet, and part of life as a whole:

- "...some creep on their bellies, some that walk of two legs, some that walk on four...24:45

Elements of nature are considered common property of all creatures:

- "Ask then 'To whom does the earth and all it contains belong, if you know'" 23:84

The Qur'an tells Muslims to maintain the balance and not to upset the order of nature. There is a code of ecological legislation based on verses in the Qur'an and sayings of the prophet(s)

- "The world is green and beautiful and God has appointed you as his stewards over it. He sees how you acquit yourselves"

Success Criteria

- ✓ I can explain how the Qur'an teaches the importance of looking after our world
- ✓ I can explain how management and my own actions impact on the school grounds
- ✓ I know what I can do to make a difference to my local environment

Judaism

Reflect on Jewish scriptures and ecology

Aim: To understand that lessons on world conservation, taken from Jewish scripture, have not been learned.

Look at how the work of David Bellamy (contemporary ecologist) highlights this today:

- "It is indeed sobering that the early writings of the Jewish people encompass the basic recommendations of the World Conservation Strategy"

Judaism is considered to be a way of life, with reverence for all living things and all creation is believed to be by God. The scriptures provide moral guidelines for human behaviour, belief in the afterlife, free will, and freedom for individuals to choose their own course.

Key vocabulary:

- Chayim: 'life' - a toast
- Shabbat/Sabbath: "rest" including animals and the land itself
- Shalom: "Peace" and respect for all life and the self-regulating natural systems on earth

Activity springboards:

- Reflect on how humans have (or have not) followed the moral guidelines of Judaism in the context of the natural world.
- Read "Song of Songs", which reflects knowledge of all living things.
- Celebrate the "New Year of Trees" (Tu Bi Shewat) - a festival of nature
- Design a garden that centres around the species listed in Deuteronomy 8:8 which includes: wheat, barley, figs, grapevines, pomegranates, olives and date palm honey. Grapevines provided shade for people and animals, food in the form of fresh grapes and raisins, and wine. The vines symbolises bounty and fruitfulness.
- Write a Jewish styled prayer or blessing for the fruits above.

Success Criteria

- ✓ I understand and can explain my moral responsibility, the free will of humans and its impact on the survival of the planet.