

# **ETHICS OF ENGINEERING EDUCATION**

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## RELIGION, ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

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### ABSTRACT

In the past two decades, the global environment and community worldwide has reached great compromise that human activities for government earning more economically are causing changes to the global climate. Increased levels of carbon dioxide ( $CO_2$ ), methane ( $CH_4$ ), sulphur dioxide ( $SO_2$ ) and other greenhouse gases in the last century have raised temperatures around the planet, as diminishing glaciers, melting icecaps, and record-breaking heat waves support evidence. Records show that surface temperatures have risen about 1.4° F (0.7 °C) since the early twentieth century, and that about 0.9 °F (0.5 °C) of this increase has occurred since 1978. There were some observed changes in oceans, ecosystems, and ice cover are consistent with this warming trend. Unless of course, the mission, vision and ethics are strategies, average global temperatures will probably increase by several degrees Celsius in the next few years, with disastrous environmental consequences: desertification, flood of low-lying coastal areas, an increase in powerful hurricanes, decreased agricultural productivity, and loss of biodiversity. Although there remain some scientific uncertainties and disagreements about the extent of expected temperature increases, the magnitude of the environmental impacts, and how to mitigate global warming, there is now believe that humanity plays a significant role in changing the climate.

*Keywords: Environment, human activity, religion*

### 1. ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Environmental ethics is the discipline that studies the moral relationship of human beings to, and also the value and moral status of, the environment and its nonhuman contents. This entry covers: (1) the challenge of environmental ethics to the anthropocentrism (i.e., human-centeredness) embedded in traditional western ethical thinking; (2) the early development of the discipline in the 1960s and 1970s; (3) the connection of deep ecology, feminist environmental ethics, and social ecology to politics; (4) the attempt to apply traditional ethical theories, including consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics, to support contemporary environmental concerns; and (5) the focus of environmental literature on wilderness, and possible future developments of the discipline (Barrie, 1992).

Environmental ethics, then, might include such issues are as follows:

- Why care about nature "for itself" when only people "matter"? what difference does it make if a species, a canyon, or even a planet is destroyed? If people who are around prefer to destroy natural objects and landscapes, then so what? Why not?
- When species or landscapes or wilderness areas are destroyed, what, of value, is lost to mankind?
  - Will future generations "miss" what we have "taken from them"? (How could they if they never will know what they have "lost"?)
  - "Should Trees Have [Legal] Standing?" On what grounds, if not for mankind's sake?

- Does "land ownership" make moral sense, or is it a morally reasonable and foul concept in Western culture and Islamic methods.
- Do human beings have a need for nature that implies an obligation to preserve it? What is the evidence for this?
- Why not treat land as a "commodity" rather than a "community"?
- Do future generations (who, after all, do not exist now) have a "right" now to a clean and natural environment when their time comes?
- Can man "improve" upon nature? How? What constitutes "improvement"?
- Do the facts of environmental science have moral implications?
- Are human beings psychologically capable of caring for nature and for future generations? If they have this capacity, are we morally obligated to nurture it?

One of the most serious problems with the environmental movement today is that its moral position is badly expressed and defended -- it is more "felt" than thought through. This paper and is intended to help us to remedy that defect.

## 2. WHY UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE CHANGE

To cope with the challenges of global climate change, it is first need to understand the problem. How often and how quickly have such dramatic changes happened? Perhaps most important, what do these past abrupt reversals tell us about the direction of Earth's climate today and in the future? To answer such questions, scientists are busy unearthing signs of ancient climate in a surprising array of sources: glacial ice and moraines, stalagmites from caverns, tree rings and corals, dust and sand dunes, and the microscopic shells of organisms buried in deep-ocean sediments." Increased concentrations of greenhouse gases (i.e. carbon dioxide and methane) in the atmosphere due to human activities are the underlying cause of global warming. The greenhouse effect is a phenomenon whereby greenhouse gases in the atmosphere with special physical properties to help trap heat received from the sun, making our planet warmer than it would be otherwise.

## 3. RELIGION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The challenge of environmental crisis caused a response in the mainstream of the world religions to construct an environmental ethics, based on religious values. As a result of this awareness, studies of the religious and sacred aspects of nature and its relevance for environmental ethics increased in recent decades. Accordingly, a lively interest in the Eastern, Indian and Far Eastern religious traditions and cultures also has been observed in the recent literature on the subject (Baird 1989). These and other relevant views which try to develop an environmental ethics on somehow religious foundations is regarded as eco-theology as well as ecosophy (Nasr, 1989).

In 1967, UCLA history professor Lynn White wrote the roots of the environmental crisis lay in the Judeo-Christian ethic, which asserted man's dominion over all living creatures. Is Christianity to blame for the destruction of the natural environment? How do different religions approach our relationship with the natural world?. One of the most passionate advocates for wilderness was John Muir, who believed that humans were a part of nature, rather than its ruler. Muir's love for the natural world, including its beauty and its savagery, comes through in all his writings (Bidleman, 1995).

The Islamic understanding of the natural environment, including other things (Islamic), has its roots in the Qur'an, the very word of God, the central teophany of Islam (Bediuzzaman, 1995).

The Qur'an has always influenced and still influence the view of the place we occupy within the ecosystem. For the main purpose of the Qur'an, according to M. Iqbal is "to awaken in man the

higher consciousness of his manifold relations with God and universe" (Iqbal, 1990). The Quranic perspective of environment and of man-nature relationship has been studied in recent decades by Muslim scholars (Nasr, 1990). Nevertheless, the writer will restrict here few notes on some important passages of the Qur'an about the nature and place of human beings within it, and then point out the implication of this understanding for the possibility of developing an environmental ethics within an Islamic context. When the Qur'an is carefully studied from an ecological point of view, the following points may be observed. First of all, the Qur'an regards not only nature but all universes as the creatures of God, while the former being regarded as the prime miracle of God. Therefore, nature has a metaphysical significance on the one hand, and an order which maintains in itself on the other. Nature, according to the Qur'anic perspective, may also point to what is beyond itself; in this sense, the role of nature is similar to that of a mirror which reflects the power, beauty and wisdom of its Creator. Therefore, according to the Qur'an everything in the natural world is a sign (*aya*) of God and as such it is continuously praising Him. The natural world as presented and described by the Qur'an, as will be mentioned below, is a living, holistic, orderly and perfect world, populated by angels, jinn, human beings and animals. Above all, the universe, with all its causal processes, is *the prime sign (aya) and proof of its Maker* (Fazlur, 1980). In the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night and the day; in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind; in the rain which Allah sends down from the skies and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the change of the winds and the clouds which they trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth; (here) indeed are signs for a people that are wise. Another important Qur'anic notion to be noted about the universe is that "everything was created by measure" and therefore is "dependent upon God, and whenever a creature claims self-sufficiency or independence (*istisqna'*, *istikbar*), it thus claims infinitude and share in divinity (*shirk*). When God creates anything, He places within it its powers or laws of behavior, called in the Qur'an "guidance", "command", or "measure" whereby it fits into the rest of the universe: He gave everything its creation and then guided [it,] <sup>[Quraan surah 17]</sup> He who created [things and (created them) well, and who measured [them] out and thus guided [them]. <sup>[Quraan surah 18]</sup> Lo, to Him belong both creation and commanding. <sup>[Quraan surah 19]</sup> Indeed, We have created everything with a measure. <sup>[Quraan surah 20]</sup>

#### 4. FORECAST HOW THE CLIMATE MIGHT CHANGE

There have been many studies that have resulted in models and charts concerning climate change and global warming global climate models throughout the world are improving at a faster rate regional models due to the complexity of narrowing the focus. The scenario to do is to assume the future rate of emissions, and combine this with the best knowledge of physics of the climate system, and then let the computers paint pictures of the future. Such pictures, called "scenarios," are not predictions in the usual sense of a weather forecast for the next few days. The most advanced climate models now project that unless global warming emissions are reduced, average U.S. temperatures could rise another 2 to 10°F by the end of the century. In 2002, the National Academy of Sciences' Committee on Abrupt Climate Change published *Abrupt Climate Change*: This publication indicated that current climate models underestimate the size, speed, and extent of those changes. The more rapid the climate change, the more likely the events will have immediate human and ecological consequences. Researchers do not know enough on rapid climatic alterations to accurately predict the consequences, making surprise inevitable. Human activities,

such as the burning of fossil fuels and changes in land use, have increased the abundance of small particles in the atmosphere. These particles can change the amount of energy that is absorbed and reflected by the atmosphere. They are also believed to modify the properties of clouds, changing the amount of energy that they absorb and reflect. Intensive studies of the climatic effects of these particles began only recently and the overall effect is uncertain. It is likely that the net effect of these small particles is to cool the climate and to partially offset the warming of increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases. These human activities have led to increased atmospheric concentrations of a number of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, chlorofluorocarbons, and ozone in the lower part of the atmosphere. The levels of carbon dioxide have increased each year worldwide. Furthermore, these increases are consistent with other estimates of the rise of carbon dioxide emissions due to human activity over this period.

The effect for short plan and long plan are as follows

- Time of rain fall will change and the quantity as well which may affect all the human beings life.
- Directions of wind will change accordingly and that one also will increase desertification.
- The map of plant distribution will change and that will lead to group of migration and will lead to war among different people and cultures.
- One of the worse side effects is the weakness of wave near the oceans which may lead to a very cool temperature at Europe and very high temperature at Africa and will lead to flood.
- Global Climate Change will lead to lose things that we cannot call back as losing the Delta as in Egypt, Delta River Mikong in China and so on.
- It is sad that Global Climate Change will be for poor people whom they cannot survive it.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The Western worldview that separates religion and science, value and fact, in particular differs from Islamic tradition, which sees all facets of life and affairs as interconnected by virtue of their common source—the Creator. As traditional Islamic values have been abandoned to adopt modern Western technologies, environmental problems have intensified in the Muslim world. They urged a return to Islamic ideals that reflect a sacramental view of the physical universe, and they champion the revival of an Islamic science that synthesizes empirical study and symbolic cognition.

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