

A Muslim's Guide to *Climate Change*



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An Introduction to Climate Change?

Allah (SWT) has created the planet with a specific balanced system for us to live in and prosper. Surah Ar-Rum (30:30) highlights the importance of preserving this system and warns humanity against the damage we cause, often without fully appreciating its consequences for the natural balance of the universe. The system that Allah has created for us is essential- it provides us with the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat and countless other blessings. However, it is imperative that we do not take these blessings for granted and acknowledge the ways in which our collective lifestyles are causing damage to the planet by disturbing the natural balance of the world.

“Adhere to the fitrah (original design) of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. There is no altering God’s creation and this is the right path, though most people do not realize it”

Surah Ar Rum
(The Romans) 30:30

What is Climate Change?

As a consequence of our actions, the overall temperature of our planet is steadily rising, thus resulting in climate change. The changing climate has caused extreme and unpredictable weather to become a common occurrence across the world. The lack of stability in the climate means that severe droughts and flooding are becoming more frequent and the behaviour of these weather patterns is becoming increasingly more extreme as well.

The earth has warmed by an average of 1°C in the last century. Whilst this may seem inconsequential, it has huge ramifications for people and wildlife around the globe. Contrary to what some may believe, rising temperatures will not simply result in warmer and nicer weather. The changing climate will actually make our weather less stable, more extreme and unpredictable.

As temperatures rise, some areas will get wetter and others drier. Lots of animals (and humans!) will find they're not able to adapt to their changing climate and this will have an impact on how the earth provides for us to be able to live healthily.

The people who are least able to adapt to climate change and as a consequence endure the most suffering are the poorest in our society

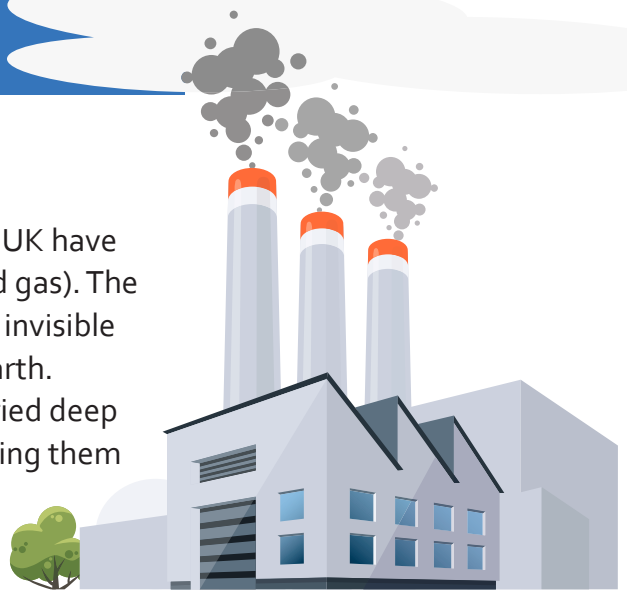
“Corruption has appeared in both land and sea as a result of people’s actions, the consequences of which they may taste, so that hopefully they will turn back”

**Surah Ar Rum
(The Romans) 30:41**

What Causes Climate Change?

Burning of Fossil Fuels

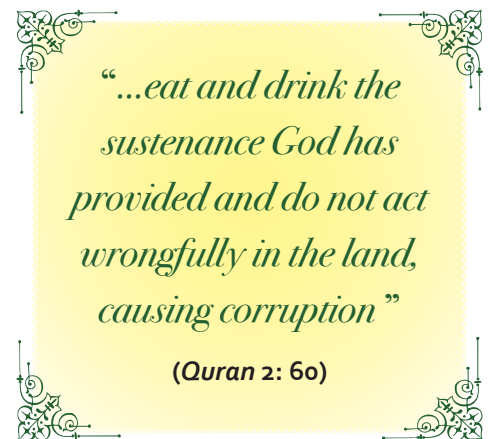
For almost 150 years, industrialised countries such as the UK have been burning large amounts of fossil fuels (such as oil and gas). The gases released into the atmosphere end up acting like an invisible 'blanket', trapping heat from the sun and warming the Earth. This is known as the "Greenhouse Effect". Fossil fuels buried deep under our earth do not cause harm - it is only when we bring them to the surface and burn them for our own purposes that they become harmful!



Farming & Agriculture

Agriculture provides us with the food we eat but the way we produce our food is one of the major causes of climate change.

Around the world forests are cleared to make room for farms and livestock and large stores of carbon gases are released into the atmosphere which in turn results in heating up the planet. When cows, sheep and goats digest their food, they burp up methane, another potent greenhouse gas contributing to climate change. Animal manure and rice paddies are also big methane sources. Fossil fuels are also used to operate farm machinery, make fertilizer and ship food around the globe, all of which generate emissions.



Deforestation

Forests absorb huge amounts of carbon dioxide – a greenhouse gas – from the air, and release oxygen back into it. Rainforests around the world are designed to be efficient at doing this and they also act like our planet's air conditioner – limiting climate change. Sadly, many rainforests are being cut down to make resources such as wood, palm oil and to clear the way for farmland, roads, oil mines, and dams.



How Is

Climate Change Affecting Us

Climate change will affect many aspects of our lives in the UK, our environment, business and public services.

Weather & Temperatures

It is likely that average temperatures in the UK will rise - the likelihood is that we will see hotter summers becoming more frequent and colder winters becoming increasingly rare.

The amounts and frequency of rain will change as well - winters will become wetter and summers will become hotter and more prolonged. We are already seeing an increased level of local flooding with more flash flooding occurring, causing significant damage to our property and belongings.

Severe weather events are likely to increase, such as flooding, droughts, heat waves, gales and snowfall.



Health

The food we eat and the water we drink will be affected by the climate. There will also be a change in the types of heat and cold related illnesses. For example the risk of diseases such as skin cancers and heat strokes are likely to increase. The elderly and very young will be most vulnerable to temperature changes.

Farming and crops will be affected by changes in weather throughout the UK which could impact on the types of crop grown, where they are grown and their availability.



Homes and lifestyle

We may suffer water shortage, if pipes freeze in winter or drought occurs in summer. The cost of living will increase, with food, fuel and insurance costs rising. Our homes may be damaged by floods and gales and extreme weather may affect where you work, schools and transport links.

Biodiversity & Wildlife

The natural world is made of many different varieties of plants and animals that live in complex and balanced cycles where they depend on one another to live and thrive. This variety is known as "Bio Diversity"

Some birds, fish, land animals and plants are under threat as their environment changes due to temperature changes. Some of these species will not be able to adapt to these changes in their environment. Biodiversity boosts ecosystem and productivity - every species, no matter how small, has an important role to play. As humans, we depend on the services that ecosystems provide, such as fresh water, pollination, soil fertility and stability, food and medicine. Ecosystems weakened by the loss of biodiversity are less likely to deliver those services, or even worse collapse! The ever-growing human population puts pressure on biodiverse ecosystems.

What Can You Do ?

The religion of Islam is inherently environmental and shows concern for everything around us. As Muslims we can have a huge responsibility to protect the environment. We should use the guidance from the Quran and Sunnah to live sustainably and justly on earth, and its teachings to stimulate individuals and communities into action.

Allah swt has entrusted us to act as custodians of the planet, this means that each individual should act as its guardian; they will be held accountable for their actions if they neglect and damage the earth. Guardianship allows humans to make use of the environment for their survival, but this must never be taken to the level of exploitation.

Research shows that as individuals, there are three areas in our personal lifestyles that can make the greatest difference in reducing climate change. These are the areas of transportation, diet and home energy use:



Transportation

The majority of Britain's greenhouse gas emissions come from transport, traveling by car or by plane are major sources of our households' carbon footprints. We need to explore opportunities to walk, cycle and use public transport more often.



Diet

Moving towards a plant-based diet and significantly reducing consumption of meat and other animal products, is an important way we can reduce our own carbon footprint and improve our health. Reducing or eliminating our food waste can also hugely benefit the environment. Ultimately small changes to our eating habits can make a big difference – by simply switching to a more vegetarian meal plan, or even just saving our leftovers and eating them the next day, we are playing our part in improving the wellbeing of our planet.

*It is He who has
appointed you stewards
in the earth...*

Surah Al An'am
(The Cattle) 6:165



Home Energy

Reducing the amount of energy we use at home is one of the simplest ways we can make a difference. We can also choose energy providers that supply renewable or green energy, helping to reduce the environmental impact of the energy we do use.

Campaigning For Action on Climate Change

We all need to take responsibility for climate change and it is important to take action in our own lives. We all contribute to climate change and so we all hold some responsibility, and some power. However, individual action is not enough on its own, climate change is a systemic global issue and we need collective action by our government and councils to take a lead role in tackling climate change.

Consider getting involved in campaigning for climate action:

- Decide which topic you would like to champion
- Lobby your MP on climate action
- Dedicate your social media to educating others and to make a call for action
- Join a local environmental campaigning group in your area

Even though the scale of climate change can seem overwhelming, there are lots of reasons for hope. Individuals and community groups around the world are taking a stance – from school children going on strike, to building our own clean, affordable community energy systems, passing climate emergency council motions and generally creating greener, fairer communities. For the sake of Allah (swt) and His Messenger, we can all come together and force our leaders to create the big systemic changes that we need.

“Whoever sees an injustice, he must change it with his hand. If he is not able to do so, then he must change it with his tongue. And if he is not able to do that, then he must feel it within his heart. But that is the least of his faith”

Hadith - Sahih Muslim

“
...and whatever good you do,
Allah knows it”

Surah Al Baqarah (The Cow) 2:197





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