

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE ON WATER AS A PUBLIC GOOD

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Abstract. *Water is universally recognized as a public good, essential for life, health, and economic stability. However, the modern trend of treating water as a commodity, subject to market forces, conflicts with the ethical principles found in Islamic teachings. Islam affirms water's status as a shared resource, emphasizing equitable access, sustainability, and communal benefit. In this view, water is not a commodity to be bought or sold, but a divine gift meant for the well-being of all living beings, and its management should reflect justice and public welfare. This paper explores the Islamic perspective on water governance, focusing on the moral obligation to treat water as a common good. The study examines primary Islamic sources, including the Qur'an and hadith, to highlight the collective responsibility to preserve and distribute water equitably. Islamic governance models assert that water management is a matter of justice, stewardship, and public welfare, with the state playing a key role in ensuring access for all.*

Keywords: *water, governance, Islam, public good*

Abstrak. *Air secara universal diakui sebagai barang publik, yang esensial untuk kehidupan, kesehatan, dan stabilitas ekonomi. Namun, tren modern yang memperlakukan air sebagai komoditas, yang tunduk pada kekuatan pasar, bertentangan dengan prinsip etika yang terdapat dalam ajaran Islam. Islam menegaskan status air sebagai sumber daya bersama, dengan menekankan akses yang adil, keberlanjutan, dan manfaat bersama. Dalam pandangan ini, air bukanlah komoditas yang bisa dibeli atau dijual, melainkan karunia Ilahi yang dimaksudkan untuk kesejahteraan semua makhluk hidup, dan pengelolaannya harus mencerminkan keadilan dan kesejahteraan publik.*

Makalah ini mengeksplorasi perspektif Islam tentang tata kelola air, dengan fokus pada kewajiban moral untuk memperlakukan air sebagai barang bersama. Studi ini menganalisis sumber-sumber primer Islam, termasuk Al-Qur'an dan hadis, untuk menyoroti tanggung jawab kolektif dalam memelihara dan mendistribusikan air secara adil. Model-model tata kelola Islam menegaskan bahwa pengelolaan air adalah masalah keadilan, pemeliharaan, dan kesejahteraan publik, dengan negara memainkan peran penting dalam memastikan akses untuk semua.

Kata Kunci : *air, tata kelola, Islam, barang publik*

Introduction

Water is universally recognized as a public good, essential for life, health, and economic development. As a vital element for the continuity of life on earth, water has become a primary concern in public policies around the world. However, in recent decades, there has been a significant shift in water management, where water is increasingly viewed as a commodity subject to the forces of the market (Shiva, 2002). This view contradicts the Islamic teachings, which consider water a shared resource that should not be privatized or controlled by individuals or private companies

In Islamic thought, water is regarded not only as a physical necessity but as a divine gift that must be managed with the principles of justice, sustainability, and public welfare. Islam emphasizes that water is a collective right, not a resource that can be privately owned. This is reflected in the Qur'an, which states: "We made from water every living thing" (Qur'an, 21:30). This verse highlights the fundamental role of water in sustaining life on earth and serves as a reminder that water is a blessing from God, meant for the benefit of all living beings. Therefore, water should be shared and managed fairly, not exploited for profit (Ali, 1989).

Aligned with this verse, hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also emphasize the importance of fair access to water as a public resource. In one hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Muslims are partners in three things: water, pasture, and fire" (Abu Daud, Sunan, Hadith No. 3470). This hadith underscores that water, along with pasture and fire, are common goods that must be accessible to every individual, regardless of their social status or financial capacity.

This principle stands in contrast to the modern practice of water privatization, which treats water as a commodity available only to those who can afford to pay (Bakker, 2007). The Islamic governance model views the state as the custodian of water, ensuring that it is distributed equitably and sustainably, particularly for the marginalized (Chapra, 2000). Islam also

stresses that privatization of water violates the principles of justice, creating barriers to equitable access.

In Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), water is considered a common good (*al-maslahah al-'ammah*), which must be distributed fairly to meet the basic needs of all people. Islamic law asserts that the state has the responsibility to regulate and ensure that water resources are accessible to every member of society, regardless of their socioeconomic status. Islamic law is grounded in the principle that social justice must be the foundation of natural resource management. Therefore, water management in Islam is not seen merely as a technical or economic issue, but as an ethical and moral responsibility that pertains to public welfare (Maududi, 1981).

Moreover, the principle of *khilafah* (stewardship) in Islam supports this communal understanding of water. As guardians (*khalifah*) of the earth, humans are entrusted with the responsibility to manage natural resources, including water, in ways that ensure sustainability and justice for future generations. In this context, the management of water should be done with attention to its sustainable use and protection, ensuring that it is available for the well-being of all human beings, not just a select few. The state, as the representative of the public good, has a key role to play in ensuring that water is distributed equitably, based on justice and fairness, in line with Islamic principles (Chapra, 2000).

However, despite the clear Islamic governance framework for water as a public good, many countries, especially developing ones, have adopted the privatization model for water services. Water privatization in many developing countries, including Indonesia, has raised significant social and economic challenges, particularly for low-income communities who are unable to afford the rising water tariffs (Isna, 2003). This further highlights the conflict between Islamic principles, which view water as a shared resource, and the reality of water being treated as a commodity under privatization.

This paper aims to explore the Islamic perspective on water as a public good and evaluate the ethical implications of treating water as a commodity.

The main focus of this study is to critically assess the principles of justice, public welfare, and sustainability in Islamic teachings related to water management. It will also critique the privatization model, examining how it contradicts Islamic governance principles, and whether the Islamic model offers a more sustainable and just alternative to privatization in water management.

Through qualitative analysis based on primary sources such as the Qur'an and hadith, along with secondary literature on Islamic economics and water privatization, this paper will discuss how Islamic water governance can offer a sustainable alternative to privatization that ensures fair access and environmental sustainability.

Literature Review

Water is widely regarded as a public good, underscoring its crucial role in human survival, environmental sustainability, and economic development. The concept of water as a public good is anchored in its non-excludability and non-rivalry characteristics, which mean that it is difficult to prevent individuals from accessing water and that one person's use does not significantly diminish another's access to that same resource (Madhoo, 2007). This fundamental understanding highlights not only the necessity of water in daily life but also frames it as a collective resource that should ideally be managed for the benefit of all.

Conceptualizing Water as a Public Good

The categorization of water as a public good emerges from its essential nature for sustaining life. The 1992 Dublin Principles, which arose during the International Conference on Water and the Environment held in Dublin, emphasize that water should be recognized as an economic good, reflecting a dual recognition of its public good characteristics while advocating for market approaches to promote efficient use (Marco, 2023). However, this dualism can create tensions between economic systems and equitable access (Madigele, 2016).

Thirst is a fundamental human need, and access to clean water is critical to health, which positions water within a human rights framework (Nurcahyono et al., 2022). The United Nations recognizes the human right to water and sanitation, reinforcing the idea that access to safe drinking water is fundamental for dignity and health (Rogers et al., 2002).

Governance and Management

Effective management of water resources as a public good necessitates strong governance frameworks. Public agencies are often tasked with the responsibility of ensuring equitable access to water while preserving the resource sustainably. According to the Global Water Partnership, integrated water resources management (IWRM) is vital to managing water as a public good in a way that balances social equity, environmental protection, and economic efficiency (Beecher, 2020).

IWRM frameworks advocate for stakeholder participation, recognizing that local communities play a critical role in conserving water and managing local water bodies. Such collaborative approaches not only empower communities but also enhance accountability and transparency within governance structures (Dellapenna, 2001). Moreover, decentralized governance can lead to more context-specific and responsive water management strategies that better serve local needs (Shen & Lein, 2010).

Economic Considerations and Challenges

Acknowledging water as a public good does not preclude the consideration of its economic aspects. Water scarcity in various regions presents significant challenges to both economic development and the equitable distribution of water resources (Dellapenna, 2001). Markets can provide efficient allocation mechanisms, but reliance solely on market forces without considering public interest may lead to inequitable access for marginalized groups.

Several scholars argue for a balanced perspective that incorporates both recognition of water's public good status and its economic valuation. For instance, water pricing strategies that aim to reflect the true cost of water may

motivate conservation and efficient use, while still ensuring that basic needs are met for all populations (Santosa, 2020; Otaki et al., 2020). Careful policy design is necessary to navigate the complexities of pricing water to meet both economic and social objectives.

Sociocultural Dimensions

The perception of water as a public good also intersects with sociocultural dimensions. Studies indicate that community identity and values significantly influence local attitudes toward water consumption and conservation efforts (Rajala et al., 2019). Engaging communities in sustainable water management fosters a sense of collective ownership and responsibility, which are essential for effective stewardship of this vital resource.

Method

Data

To explore the water management from an Islamic perspective, verses of the Qur'an and narrations of hadith as the primary source of Islam are referred to. To simplify the search of verses related to water, two softwares are used: *Al Qur'an Digital* and *The Noble Qur'an*. All translations of the Qur'an in series this dissertation are then quoted from Abdullah Yusuf Ali (Maryland: Amana Corp, 1989). To simplify the search of hadiths related to water management, *The Hadith Software* is used. All translations of the Hadith narrations in this dissertation are quoted from *The Hadith Software*.

Secondary sources in the form of books, journal articles, and papers presented in various conferences by scholars are used as well. For instance, the work of Kazemi and Nodoushan (2018) provides a foundation by examining the Qur'an through linguistic and psychological frameworks, treating it as a complex communicative text. Research from scholars like Yahya and Zainuddin (2021) delves into Hadith concerning women, advocating for contextual readings that counter misogynistic interpretations and promote equity. This theme is extended into the realm of leadership by Salim (2021),

who uses contextual analysis to argue for women's equal opportunities in leadership roles.

This thematic scope expands to address contemporary global issues, demonstrating the versatility of these texts. The research of Abokhodair et al. (2020) explores how Qur'anic verses are interpreted and disseminated in the digital age of social media, while the work of Islam et al. (2021) applies Hermeneutic Content Analysis to derive environmental ethics from the Qur'an and Hadith. Finally, the educational dimension is addressed by scholars such as Rahmiati et al. (2021), who propose pedagogical models that move beyond rote memorization to foster critical inquiry. Together, these sources form a comprehensive dataset that illuminates the dynamic and evolving interpretation of Islamic scripture in modern scholarship.

Data Analysis

This study employs a library research methodology, utilizing a qualitative approach to synthesize and analyze the selected secondary sources (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The method involves a systematic process of examining scholarly interpretations of the Qur'an and Hadith to understand contemporary trends, challenges, and applications.

The analytical process is structured as follows:

1. **Thematic Analysis:** The collected literature is categorized and analyzed based on recurring themes. This process allows for a structured comparison of different scholarly conversations and the mapping of the intellectual territory (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
2. **Analysis of Interpretative Frameworks:** The study critically examines the various methodologies used by the scholars in the source material. This involves identifying and comparing different analytical lenses—such as contextual analysis, hermeneutics, and discourse analysis—to understand how these specific frameworks shape the interpretations and conclusions drawn from the sacred texts.
3. **Synthesis and Integration:** The final step moves beyond mere summary to a higher level of analysis. The method focuses on synthesizing the

findings from various sources to construct a cohesive and integrated overview of the research area. This involves drawing connections, identifying points of contention, and highlighting overarching patterns to create new insights that are not apparent from any single piece of literature alone (Hart, 1998). The goal is to produce a comprehensive understanding of how the Qur'an and Hadith are engaged within contemporary academic discourse.

Results and Discussion

Principles of Water Management in Islam

Water as Social Good

In Islamic economics, public ownership includes not only public utilities (like roads and rivers) but also the natural resources that support them (Chapra, 2000). From this perspective, public property refers to resources that all people have equal rights to use. These typically include water, fire (energy), pasture (food), and salt, all of which are considered collective necessities (Ahmad & Behjatian, 1988).

The society as a whole has the right to access and use these resources because they are essential for survival. Everyone can benefit from such goods, provided their use does not harm others (Zuhaily, 1985). As stated in a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

“Muslims have common share in three (things): grass, water, and fire.”
(Abu Daud, Sunan, Hadith No. 3064)

In another narration, the Prophet said:

“A Muslim is a brother of a Muslim. Each one of them may benefit from water and trees.” (Abu Daud, Hadith No. 3470)

Because of water's essential nature, no one may obstruct access to it, especially when doing so threatens the well-being of others.

Ibn Taymiyyah expanded this concept, stating that the hadith examples (water, pasture, fire) are illustrative—not exhaustive—and thus include all essential resources such as oil, salt, and minerals (Ibn Taymiyyah, Fatawa, as

cited in Maududi, 1981). Likewise, water includes not only rivers and springs but also deep seas, lakes, ponds, and aquifers (Ibn Khalf, 1994).

Mannan (1984) added that "water" in this context includes irrigation systems, dams, underground water, and utilities used to channel water for public consumption. The term "grass" may symbolize agriculture and all extractive industries, while "fire" includes all forms of energy, such as thermal, hydro, atomic, or nuclear.

Khan and Khan (2006) interpreted the hadith about fire by explaining that its use (e.g., heat and light) cannot be restricted from others – even if they cannot take away the fuel or infrastructure. For instance, someone lighting a fire in a desert cannot prevent others from benefiting from its warmth.

Both Abu Yusuf and al-Qudama supported the view that governments are responsible for providing essential services like water, especially those requiring large infrastructure, such as canals and irrigation systems (Al-Malki, 2006). Meanwhile, Nomani and Rahnema (1995) emphasized that the Islamic state's role should be one of supervision and guardianship over public goods like water.

Water Must Not be Traded

From the Islamic perspective, natural resources, including water, are not tradable commodities. This prohibition covers the trading of water itself, water services, water sources, and all utilities connected to water provision. Islam prohibits private ownership of collective resources that are vital for human survival (Maududi, 1981; Mannan, 1984).

This prohibition is based on the Islamic legal maxim:

“What cannot be accessed except with money, and people are in need of it, then trading it is haram.”

According to this principle, essential resources such as water must be excluded from private monopolies and commodification. When access to water depends on financial ability, it leads to injustice – especially for the poor.

This contradicts the core values of justice, equity, and collective welfare in Islamic economics (Zuhaily, 1985).

The collective ownership of water and similar resources exists to prevent hardship. If such essential resources were to be privatized, they could lead to the exploitation of the public and unequal access (Muhammad, 1975).

Hadiths also support this stance. As mentioned earlier, water, fire, and pasture are shared resources among Muslims. Ibn Taymiyyah extended the scope to include other modern equivalents like oil, gas, and minerals (Maududi, 1988). Ibn Khalf (1994) specified that water covers rivers, springs, seas, and other natural water sources.

Mannan (1984) argued that the term "water" includes underground reservoirs, canal systems, and electricity sources tied to hydropower. The classification of "fire" similarly includes thermal, hydro, nuclear, and other energy resources (Khan & Khan, 2006).

For example, as noted by Khan and Khan, if someone builds a fire in the desert, they cannot prohibit others from enjoying its light and warmth—although others may not take away the fuel itself. This analogy is consistent with Islamic views on non-excludability in public goods.

On matters of infrastructure, Abu Yusuf and al-Qudama maintained that governments must manage and invest in large-scale public works like canals (Al-Malki, 2006). Nomani and Rahnema (1995) further reinforced the notion that the Islamic state should supervise and protect water systems as a public trust.

Qur'anic Guidance on Water Preservation and Priority

There are numerous verses in the Qur'an that highlight water as a divine gift, a source of life, and a resource to be used wisely. Water is not merely a physical necessity—it is a moral trust from Allah. Thus, it must be managed justly and sustainably.

One striking example of divine regulation over water can be seen in the story of Prophet Musa (Moses):

“And remember Moses prayed for water for his people, We said: ‘Strike the rock with thy staff.’ Then gushed forth therefrom twelve springs. Each group knew its own place for water. So eat and drink of the sustenance provided by Allah, and do no evil or mischief on the (face of) the earth.” (Qur’an, al-Baqarah: 60, translation by Yusuf Ali, 1989)

This verse shows how Allah provided for twelve tribes by ensuring each group had equal access to their share of water. It exemplifies equity in distribution, clear resource allocation, and avoiding conflict – all foundational principles in Islamic public policy (Ali, 1989).

Commentators such as Yusuf Ali (1989) explain that this allocation was designed to prevent conflict and protect community welfare. It also reflects the principle that water provision is a divine right, not a market transaction.

Additionally, the Qur’an repeatedly reminds believers not to waste water, even when it is abundant:

“But waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters.” (Qur’an, al-A’raf: 31)

This verse teaches that sustainability is a moral obligation. Even in acts of worship like ablution (wudu), the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) discouraged wasting water, even when performing it at a flowing river (Hadith, Musnad Ahmad).

Hence, water in Islam is treated as a collective amanah (trust). Its use is subject to accountability, both socially and spiritually. Misuse, hoarding, or commercial exploitation of water – especially at the expense of the poor – is contrary to the Islamic worldview of justice, compassion, and communal welfare (Chapra, 2000; Maududi, 1981).

The collective ownership covers the national wealth which belongs to all people irrespective of their financial status. If they are allowed to be owned by private hands, it might create hardship and trouble to the society. The Islamic

stress on public ownership of the basic sources of public utilities is evident from the Prophet's saying:

“Muslims have common share in three (things): grass, water and fire.” In another hadith, Prophet (pbAbuh) also mentioned that “a Muslim is a brother of a Muslim. Each one of them may benefit from water and trees.”

As water is very urgent for the sustenance of living being, therefore there should not be any obstruction to get access to use or consume it. According to Ibn Taimiyah, water, grass, and fire are given only as examples; other things having the same characteristics may also be included in this list. He regards all minerals coming out of free land as collective property, e.g. naphtha, gold, silver, salt, oil, etc (Ibn Taimiyah, *Ikhtiyaaraat*). By qiyas in Islamic law, water may include deep seas, lakes and ponds. Abu Yusuf (in Kahf, 1994, p.29) mentioned that it could include rivers and springs. Mannan elaborated more about “water”, according to him, it includes all water resources beneath the sea, irrigation through construction of dam facilities, and hydro-electricity. “Grass” may be in the form of changed background stand for agriculture or extractive industries including all minerals below the surface of ground. “Fire” may be in the form of all kind of fuels, and energy thermal, hydro, atomic, or nuclear. Khan and Khan (eds, 2006) interpreted of what is meant by fire being common is that people cannot be excluded from its light and warmth. The example given is that, if a man lights a fire in a desert he cannot prevent other people from utilizing its warmth and heat, though they cannot carry away the cinders.

Regarding to the provision of public goods, both Abu Yusuf and Qudama were of the opinion that the government was responsible for providing such goods which involve huge expenditure, such as building big canals. While according to Nomani and Rahnema (1995), the role of the Islamic state in the public goods is supposed to be one of supervision and guardianship.

There are some narrations in Al Quran related to how water should be treated, i.e. water should be treated as a social good. In one description, one of

the miracles of Prophet Musa is to pour out water from the rock in order to fulfil the need of people at that time.

“And remember Moses prayed for water for His people, we said: ‘Strike the rock with Thy staff.’ Then gushed forth therefrom twelve springs. Each group knew its own place for water. So, eat and drink of the sustenance provided by Allah (SWT), and do no evil or mischief on the (face of) the earth.”

There were twelve springs; the number was based on the number of the tribes living at that time.

The collective ownership of national wealth in Islam ensures that public goods benefit everyone, regardless of their financial status (Muhammad, 1975). If such goods were privatized, it could lead to hardship and inequality. Islamic teachings emphasize that basic public utilities must remain collectively owned. This is evident in the Prophet’s saying:

“Muslims have common share in three (things): grass, water and fire” (Abu Daud, Sunan, Book 017, Hadith No. 3470).

Another narration reinforces this view:

“A Muslim is a brother of a Muslim. Each one of them may benefit from water and trees” (Abu Daud, Sunan, Book 013, Hadith No. 3064).

Because water is essential for life, Islam prohibits any obstruction to its access and use. Ibn Taymiyyah explains that “water, grass, and fire” serve as examples—by analogy (*qiyas*), other vital resources like oil, salt, gold, and silver are also considered collective property (*Ikhtiyaraat*, cited in Islahi, 1988). Abu Yusuf includes rivers and springs under water, and Mannan (1984) expands this to irrigation systems, underground water, hydroelectricity, and dams.

"Grass" can represent agricultural and extractive resources, while "fire" may symbolize energy sources—thermal, hydro, atomic, or nuclear (Khan & Khan, 2006). Fire, according to Islamic interpretation, cannot be owned in a way that prevents others from benefiting from its warmth and light—even if the source itself (e.g., the burning wood) is not shared.

In terms of public infrastructure, Abu Yusuf and al-Qudama believed that governments must provide goods requiring large investments, such as canals (Al-Malki, 2006). Nomani and Rahnema (1995) also argue that the Islamic state should supervise and safeguard public goods in the interest of collective welfare.

The Qur'an also highlights how water should be treated: as a social good. For example, Allah provided for the twelve tribes of Israel by ensuring equitable access:

“And remember Moses prayed for water for His people. We said: ‘Strike the rock with thy staff.’ Then gushed forth therefrom twelve springs. Each group knew its own place for water. So, eat and drink of the sustenance provided by Allah, and do no evil or mischief on the (face of) the earth.” (Qur'an, al-Baqarah: 60, translation by Yusuf Ali)

This verse emphasizes fair distribution and preservation of water as divine sustenance. The number of springs was tailored to the number of tribes, ensuring justice and peace among them.

The story refers to the twelve tribes of the sons of Prophet Ya'qub. The descendants of these twelve sons were the "Children of Israel". The twelve springs were made so to prevent any confusion or jealousies among them. This story is also mentioned in al-A'raf 160.

The story refers to the twelve tribes of the sons of Prophet Ya'qub. The descendants of these twelve sons were the "Children of Israel" (Ali, 2006, p. 32). The twelve springs were made to prevent any confusion or jealousy among them. This story is also mentioned in al-A'raf 160.

There are several hadith that explain it is forbidden to withhold excess water from those who need it. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that Allah (SWT) will not look at, purify, or forgive people who refuse water to others on the Day of Resurrection; they will receive severe punishment (Bukhari, Shahih, vol. 3, book 40, hadith no. 547; also in vol. 3, book 40, hadiths no. 544, 547, 557; vol. 48, no. 838; vol. 9, book 89, hadith no. 319; vol. 9, book 93, hadith no. 538; Shahih Muslim, book 1, hadith no. 196).

In another narration, when Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was asked what thing is unlawful to refuse, he replied: “water” (Abu Daud, Sunan, book 3, hadith no. 1665).

A story from the time of Prophet Salih highlights this principle. The Thamud people were punished because they monopolized water. This is described in several Qur’anic verses:

“For we will send the she-camel by way of trial for them. So, watch them (O Salih), and possess thyself in patience! And tell them that the water is to be divided between them; Each one's right to drink being brought forward (by suitable turns).” (al-Qamar: 27-28)

“To the Thamud people (We sent) Salih, one of their own brethren: He said: ‘O my people! Worship Allah. You have no other god but Him. Now hath comes unto you a clear sign from your Lord! This she-camel of Allah is a Sign unto you. So, leave her to graze in Allah’s earth, and let her come to no harm, or you shall be seized with a grievous punishment.” (al-A’raf: 73)

“He said: ‘Here is a she-camel: she has a right of watering, and you have a right of watering (severally) on a Day appointed. Touch her not with harm, lest the penalty of a great Day seize you.’” (ash-Shu’ara: 155-156)

According to Yusuf Ali, several lessons can be inferred from this story. First, the she-camel was a signal divine test to confront the arrogance of the rich, who tried to block access to water for the poor and their cattle. Instead of honoring this trust, they killed the she-camel, which led to a dreadful punishment: an earthquake that buried them with their fine houses (Nomani & Rahnema, 1995).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Islamic framework for water management is fundamentally rooted in the principle that water is a collective social good and a divine trust (*amanah*), not a tradable commodity. This perspective is consistently upheld across the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the

interpretations of classical and contemporary Islamic scholars, presenting an integrated ethical model for resource governance.

The foundation of this framework is the Hadith establishing that all people have a common share in "water, grass, and fire." This establishes a clear mandate for the public ownership of essential resources. Consequently, Islamic jurisprudence prohibits the commodification and privatization of water, as treating it as a market good would inevitably lead to the exploitation of the vulnerable and contradict the core values of social justice (*adl*) and equity.

The Qur'an reinforces these principles through powerful narratives. The story of Prophet Musa and the twelve springs serves as a divine blueprint for equitable and conflict-free resource allocation, while the destruction of the Thamud for monopolizing water access is a stark warning against hoarding and injustice. Furthermore, the strong prohibition against wastefulness (*israf*), even in times of abundance, embeds sustainability and conservation as a moral and spiritual obligation for every individual and community.

Ultimately, the Islamic approach defines the role of the state as a guardian and supervisor of these vital resources, responsible for ensuring fair access and developing necessary infrastructure for the collective welfare. By prioritizing human dignity over profit, this ethics-driven model offers a timeless and relevant alternative to purely market-based solutions, advocating for a just and sustainable stewardship of the planet's most precious resource.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion that Islamic principles frame water as a collective trust and a social good, a series of integrated recommendations can be proposed to translate this ethical vision into practical reality.

At the governmental level, the most crucial step is for policymakers to formally enshrine water as a public trust or a constitutional right, thereby legally protecting it from full privatization and commodification. To enforce this, it is recommended that independent regulatory bodies be established to act as "guardians" of these public resources, ensuring equitable distribution and preventing monopolies. This legal framework should be supported by innovative economic models. Instead of trading water itself, development should focus on non-profit service models that cover the costs of purification and delivery. Furthermore, Islamic financial instruments like Waqf (endowment) and Sukuk (Islamic bonds) should be utilized to fund essential infrastructure, ensuring investment aligns with the non-commodity nature of water.

Beyond top-down policy, fostering a societal ethic of stewardship is essential. This can be achieved by launching public awareness campaigns that frame water conservation as a profound moral and spiritual duty. It is recommended that religious leaders and institutions integrate the teachings against wastefulness (*israf*) and the powerful Qur'anic parables on water into sermons and community education. This effort can be complemented by promoting community-based water management initiatives, which empower local populations to take shared responsibility for their resources.

Finally, to ensure the longevity and adaptability of this framework, further academic and scholarly work is necessary. Researchers should conduct applied case studies on existing water management systems to

identify best practices and areas for reform. Simultaneously, contemporary Islamic legal scholars (*fuqaha*) should be encouraged to develop a detailed, modern jurisprudence (*fiqh*) of water that can address complex 21st-century challenges – such as transboundary water disputes and advanced water recycling – within this timeless ethical framework.

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